



WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

December 3, 2010

I am pleased to send my heartfelt congratulations to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State of Hawaii on this wonderful milestone -- the 10th anniversary of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve.

When I signed this Executive Order in December 2000, I did so proudly, knowing that our actions would protect close to 140,000 square miles of vibrant and diverse habitats. As home to thousands of species -- many endemic to its borders and countless more yet to be discovered -- this reserve is a vital representation of our commitment to preserving our nation's local ecosystems. It marks a territory that honors both Hawaii's natural beauty and its peoples' sacred traditions.

Perhaps even more incredibly, the groundbreaking model developed here has extended far beyond the Reserve's boundaries to set a worldwide standard for marine wildlife protection. I'm proud to have been part of this effort, and I join you in thanking President George W. Bush for designating this as the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

Our National Marine Sanctuaries help maintain a healthy and sustainable balance in our environment, in ways we are only beginning to understand. I look forward to NOAA's continued leadership of this program, and I extend my gratitude to all those who protect our nation's ecosystems for future generations.

Hillary joins me in wishing you a wonderful celebration.

*Bill Clinton*