

2013 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Dr. Wendy Cover, NMSAS

SWAINS ISLAND EXPEDITION

In August 2013, Jean Michel Cousteau of the Ocean Futures Society and the Director of National Marine Sanctuaries, Dan Basta, participated in an expedition to Swains Island. They traveled along with maritime archaeologists, led by Dr. Hans Van Tilburg of the ONMS Maritime Heritage Program. A biological assessment of the outer reef and reef flats was completed (the first since Swains was added to the sanctuary) that provided a much broader picture of the state of the reefs in this remote and unique island system.



Veronika Mortenson NMSAS

ENGAGING PARTNERS AND VISITORS

In 2013, the sanctuary engaged in various tourism partnerships to support resource protection and the local economy. Partners included the National Park of American Samoa, the cruise ship industry, village-based ecotourism experiences and local businesses. Additionally, National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NMSAS) hosted the resident-led "Festival of Sites," highlighting the sanctuary's special places and giving tourists a preview of Samoan life. NMSAS also featured a new film "Penina Tutasi –Amerika Samoa" to increase exposure and awareness of the sanctuary. In 2013, the Ocean Center accommodated an impressive 12,000 visitors.



Falaleomalie Mortenson, NMSAS

SANCTUARY WELLNESS PROGRAM

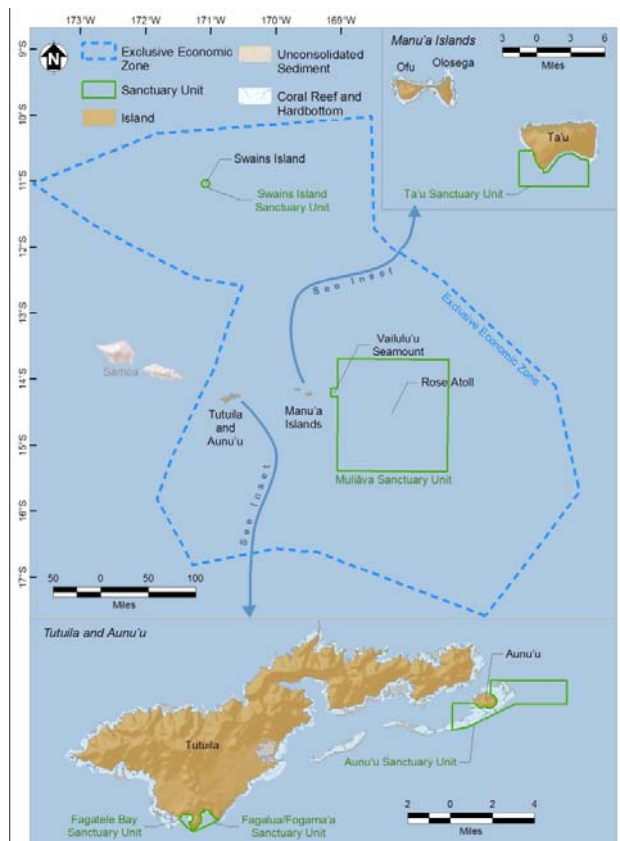
In May 2013, the Tai Bo Fitness Program was launched to promote healthy minds and bodies, while connecting the community to the importance of protecting special places within the sanctuary. Each Tai Bo session involves about 60 people from partner agencies and the general community. This innovative program brings together resource protection and community needs in an area of the world that has some of the highest percentages of obesity, diabetes and threats to natural resources. Through this blending, the program creates numerous opportunities for alliances to protect sanctuary resources.



LT Charlene Felkley, NMSAS

OCEAN SWIMMING/OCEAN SCIENCE (OSOS)

OSOS, which has educated over 125 students, propelled into its second successful year. The curriculum teaches students ocean safety, swimming, marine science and how to be effective ocean stewards. OSOS strengthens agency collaborations (American Samoa DOE and American Samoa Aquatic Agency) and provides a valuable service to the Territory, local communities and future marine resource managers. This program, while raising awareness of conservation issues, also addresses an important need for swimming instruction, as American Samoa has a high incidence of drowning accidents.



The National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa is the largest of the 13 sanctuaries in the National Marine Sanctuary System. While originally established the sanctuary in 1986 to protect and preserve the 0.25 square miles of coral reef ecosystem within Fagatele Bay, NOAA expanded the sanctuary in 2012 to include Fagalua/Fogama'a (the next bay east of Fagatele) on Tutuila Island, as well as areas at Aunu'u, Ta'u and Swains islands, and a marine protected area at Rose Atoll (which was named Muliāva as known by the Manu'a residents) including nearby Vailulu'u Seamount.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Drawing attention to people, place and culture, the Hokule'a voyage in August 2014 to American Samoa and Samoa is a Pacific-wide celebration to honor our Polynesian forefathers. The voyage will signify a cultural heritage revival for our youth and society.
- Sanctuary units and surrounding reefs in American Samoa are experiencing outbreak levels of coral eating, crown-of-thorns sea star (COTS). Monitoring and removal of COTS to protect coral reef health will be conducted by sanctuary divers from the Pacific and mainland sites.
- The Festival of Sites (village-to-visitor) eco-tour development will continue in 2014 with the launch of Tour Excursions (visitor-to-village). The sanctuary team will work with partners to cultivate sustainable markets through establishing "Eco-Place Opportunities" in villages adjacent to the sanctuary.

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is committed to supporting lives and livelihoods across the nation and in sanctuary communities through socioeconomic research and monitoring to understand the economic and social drivers of sanctuary resources and improve management practices.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. For more information on the National Marine Sanctuary System, visit: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>