

# Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

## Maritime Heritage

### Management Issue

Maritime heritage resources have not been thoroughly inventoried in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM or Monument). Until relatively recently, many maritime heritage sites in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) remained uninvestigated because of their remote location and the challenges of conducting work in these remote atolls. With the support of several partners, NOAA is leading the important process of identifying, documenting and protecting these maritime heritage resources in the Monument. The main Hawaiian Islands have experienced the illegal removal of historic artifacts, as well as the potential destruction of historic material from nearshore construction and dredging projects. By comparison, the NWHI maritime heritage resources are relatively intact and undisturbed. NOAA, the State of Hawai‘i, and FWS have the statutory responsibility to inventory, evaluate, and interpret these heritage resources, and together increase maritime heritage preservation in the Monument and awareness of these unique resources throughout the State.

### Description

Preliminary surveys of the maritime heritage resources of the Monument began in 2002 and continued opportunistically in 2003 and annually since 2005. Initial investigations in the NWHI led to the discovery of several vessels and aircraft lost in the vicinity of the atolls. As many as 60 vessels and 67 aircraft have been reported lost in the Monument. The sites span several hundred years, including World War II era vessels and aircraft, as well as over ten whaling vessels reported lost in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus far, 22 of these sites have been discovered and inventoried. Detection of sites is the result of extensive archival research, remote sensing efforts, diver searches in areas of high probability, towboard surveys and reports of potential maritime heritage sites from partner scientists and divers.

While excavation may be appropriate in certain circumstances, in situ management is considered the first or preferred alternative in the overall research design. In situ management does not preclude recovery, but does set forth a “precautionary” approach in terms of the artifacts and their environment. Proposed heritage work in the NWHI region emphasizes a low-impact approach, to an extent consistent with the Monument’s conservation goals and guiding principles. Recovery of specific, unique artifacts has occurred in instances where research and outreach goals are able to be met through proper conservation and display of these artifacts.



*A trypot discovered at the unidentified shipwreck at French Frigate Shoals. Trypots were used aboard whaling ships to render whale blubber into oil. Photo credit: ONMS*

### Questions and Information Needs

- 1) How do we thoroughly inventory maritime heritage sites in the NWHI?
- 2) How can we utilize cutting edge technology to search for new maritime heritage sites?
- 3) What are innovative methods of searching for new maritime heritage sites?
- 4) How can documentation and monitoring activities on maritime heritage sites become compatible with ecosystem monitoring techniques?
- 5) How have shipwreck and sunken aircraft sites become part of the ecosystem?
- 6) Do shipwreck sites help or harm the environment? At what point do they become a hazard?
- 7) How do shipwreck sites tell the human story of the Monument?
- 8) How can we engage the public in the discovery and interpretation of the shipwreck sites in the Monument?
- 9) How do shipwreck sites connect to the local Hawaiian community?
- 10) How do shipwreck sites connect Hawai‘i to the broader, international community?

*Updated: September 2014*

*For More Information -- <http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/assessment>*

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- 11) How do we connect maritime heritage activities on land and at sea?
- 12) How do we tell the story of seafaring in the NWHI?
- 13) How do we educate visitors, scientists and the public about the protection of maritime heritage sites in the NWHI?
- 14) How do we organize PMNM maritime heritage data?
- 15) How do we best partner with other agencies and organizations to accomplish PMNM maritime heritage goals?

### Scientific Approach and Actions

- Identify, collect, and review publications, data sets and documents
- Plan and carry out coordinated field mapping surveys of selected sites
- Complete a status report on potential environmental hazards
- Develop a status report on maritime heritage artifact recovery operations, and recover and conserve maritime heritage artifacts as appropriate
- Develop and implement an internal maritime heritage resource database
- Incorporate maritime heritage materials into Monument education and outreach projects
- Coordinate interagency management of the maritime heritage resources of the Monument
- Enhance protective measures for sites through the National Register nomination process
- Develop and implement a Monument Maritime Heritage Research, and the Education and Management Plan

### Potential Key Partners and Information Sources

NOAA/NMFS/Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center, Coral Reef Ecosystem Division; NOAA OMAO; NOAA OAR; US Fish and Wildlife Service; University of Hawai‘i Marine Option Program; University of Hawai‘i/Hawaiian Institute of Marine Biology; State of Hawai‘i; Naval Historical Center/ US Navy; Native Hawaiian Cultural Practitioners; National Park Service Submerged Resources Center



*A NOAA archaeologist documents an anchor discovered at the shipwreck site of the British whaler Gledstanes sunk at Kure Atoll. Photo Credit: ONMS*

### Management Support Products

- Development of maritime heritage inventory
- Development of reports and articles
- Present findings and discoveries at public meetings, workshops, symposia and conferences
- Develop education and outreach products including short films, interpretive materials, magazine articles, exhibits, etc.
- Develop a maritime heritage database (internal as well as public)
- Development of displays and exhibits at the Mokupapapa Discovery Center

### Planned Use of Products and Actions

- Complete inventory of maritime heritage resources in the NWHI
- Development of outreach strategies to inform other managers and scientists about best management practices for maritime heritage resources
- Conduct remote sensing activities in areas of high probable losses
- Integrate maritime heritage activities into the local Hawai‘i curriculum
- Develop a greater understanding of maritime heritage resources and the associated human stories
- Development of interpretive materials for maritime heritage sites at Midway
- Develop inventory and database of maritime heritage sites within the Monument

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- Further develop maritime heritage exhibits at the Mokupapapa Discovery Center

### **Program References**

#### PMNM Management Plan

- Action Plan 3.3.4 Maritime Heritage Action Plan (MH-1, MH-2, and MH-3)
- *Other Action Plans:* Native Hawaiian Culture and History, Historic Resources Action Plan, Emergency Response and Natural Resource Damage Assessment, Permitting, Native Hawaiian Community Involvement, Coordinated Field Operations

#### Other Documents

- Monument Goals 3, 4, 5 and 7.

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