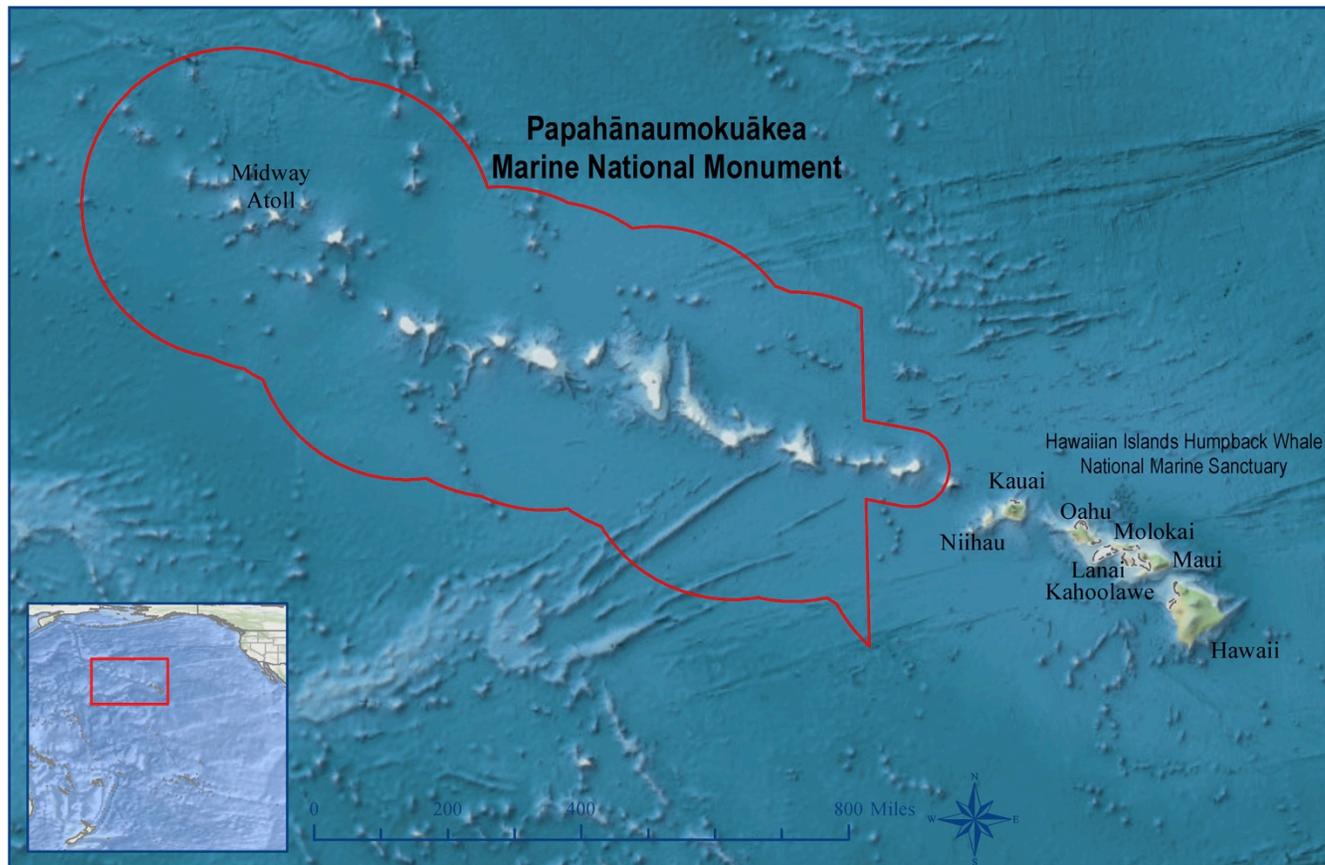


FY19 Accomplishments



BACKGROUND

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument is one of the largest conservation areas in the world, protecting more than 580,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean. The coral islands, seamounts, banks, and shoals of the monument include some of the healthiest coral reefs in the U.S. and provide an amazing geological record of the area. The monument supports a dynamic habitat containing an incredible diversity of coral, fish, birds, marine mammals, and other flora and fauna, many of which are unique to the Hawaiian Archipelago.

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument is part of the National Marine Sanctuary System, which is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. National marine sanctuaries are managed for the conservation of their natural and cultural resources, while supporting sustainable recreation, tourism and compatible commercial activities. The network includes a system of 14 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.



Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument



Photo: NOAA

A symposium held this year saw more than 200 attendees and featured 46 speakers and poster exhibitions.

Monument hosts a science symposium

The Symposium on Science in Support of Archipelagic Management included presentations on: terrestrial and marine ecosystem composition and function, monitoring of natural resources, protected species research, issues in conservation genetics, climate change, biodiversity, and research techniques. Research from multiple archipelagos across the Pacific Ocean was presented. Over 200 attendees listened to 46 presentations over the course of the two-day symposium.

Mounting a successful research expedition to Papahānaumokuākea

The NOAA ship *Rainier* carried out a 22-day expedition to the monument this summer to survey coral reef communities and explore deep reef habitats. The expedition also assessed damage done to reefs at French Frigate Shoals by Hurricane Walaka in 2018. The cruise made an unexpected discovery of extensive areas of reef at Pearl and Hermes Atoll that were covered with thick mats of an unidentified invasive alga. With the time remaining on the cruise, the research teams conducted over 170 surveys at depths ranging from shallow reefs to over 300 foot depths to document the spatial extent of the invasive algal outbreak.



Photo: Heather Spalding

University of Hawai'i scientific diver Taylor Williams helped document mats of invasive algae at Pearl and Hermes Atoll.

Mokupāpapa Discovery Center highlights

Mokupāpapa Discovery Center has expanded the number of programs and partnerships in FY19. School group visits to the center and community events increased. Several new programs were added including an ROV program for students and expanded programs with the Native Hawaiian community. The center also hosted two new art exhibits, held a "Get Into Your Sanctuary" event with over a dozen local partners, and worked with the Japan Visitors Bureau to bring more Japanese groups to the center.



Photo: Andy Collins/NOAA

Get Into Your Sanctuary Day 2019 at Mokupāpapa Discovery Center had 558 visitors with 13 partners participating.

Looking Ahead to FY20

- The monument will celebrate two significant anniversaries this year. 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and its associated Reserve Advisory Council. 2020 also marks the 10th Anniversary of Papahānaumokuākea as a UNESCO "Mixed" World Heritage Site. It is the only site in the United States that is inscribed for both its natural and cultural values to mankind.
- Eight videos on the "Voices of Papahānaumokuākea" will be released in acknowledgment of the UNESCO World Heritage anniversary.
- The monument will release its State of the Monument Report, a multi-agency effort to describe the health of the natural and cultural resources of the monument.