

## National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa



Photo: Wendy Cover, NOAA

The sanctuary protects some of the largest *Porites* coral heads in the world.



Photo: NOAA

Samoan culture and traditions are highly valued in the sanctuary.



Photo: Veronika M. Mortenson, NOAA

The Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center celebrates the importance of American Samoa's natural and cultural resources.

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa is located in the cradle of Polynesia's oldest culture and thought to support the greatest diversity of marine life in the National Marine Sanctuary System. The sanctuary is comprised of six protected areas, covering 13,581 square miles of nearshore coral reef and offshore open ocean waters across the Samoan archipelago. The sanctuary protects extensive coral reefs, including some of the oldest and largest *Porites* coral heads in the world, deep water reefs, hydrothermal vent communities and rare marine archaeological resources. Additionally, the sanctuary encompasses important fishing grounds, the southernmost point in the United States and waters surrounding one of the world's smallest atolls. The sanctuary contains the only true tropical reef within the National Marine Sanctuary System, and is the most remote location within that system. NOAA co-manages the sanctuary with the Government of American Samoa and works closely with communities adjacent to the sanctuary, all within the context of Samoan cultural traditions and practices.

**Research and Monitoring**  
The sanctuary's mission requires a rigorous, objective, scientific foundation to understand ecosystem structure and function, evaluate the

status of sanctuary resources, examine the socioeconomic impacts of management actions and implement effective, sustainable and adaptive management strategies. The sanctuary prioritizes the establishment of baseline conditions, the development of long-term monitoring programs and ecosystem-based management. Issues currently facing the sanctuary include crown-of-thorns starfish removal, introduced (alien and invasive) species, marine debris and climate change.

### Education and Outreach

Education and outreach at the sanctuary promote awareness of and appreciation for this special place in Polynesia for present and future generations. The sanctuary provides programs and holds events that reach out to the local, regional, national and international communities. For instance, the Citizen Science program engages volunteers in scientific study to inform the research and monitoring of and management at the sanctuary. Moreover, the two separate summer programs, Ocean Swimming/Ocean Science, for high school students, in partnership with the American Samoa Aquatics Agency, and Ocean Star, for children ages 8-12, consist of marine science curriculum, ocean safety (swimming) lessons, field trips and a series of guest speakers.



Photo: Greg McFall, NOAA

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa contains the only true tropical reef in the National Marine Sanctuary System.



# National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa

## Location

6 national marine sanctuary protected areas in the Samoan Archipelago

## Protected Area

13,581 square miles

## Designation

Fagatele Bay, April 1986  
American Samoa, October 2012

## Habitats

Coral reef  
Deep reef slope  
Open ocean  
Shallow reef flat

## Key Species

Anemonefish  
Butterflyfish  
Coral and coralline algae  
Crab and lobster  
Dolphin  
Giant clam  
Grouper  
Hawksbill sea turtle  
Octopus  
Parrotfish  
Shark  
Southern humpback whale  
Sponge  
Surgeonfish

## NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



## Find Us

P.O. Box 4318  
Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799  
684-633-6500  
Fax: 684-633-6511

## On the Web

<http://americansamoa.noaa.gov>  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Marine-Sanctuary-of-American-Samoa/517901871554731>

## Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Network of marine protected areas  
Encompasses more than 600,000 square miles  
Established October 1972

## On the Web

[sanctuaries.noaa.gov](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov)  
[www.facebook.com/NOAAOfficeofNationalMarineSanctuaries](https://www.facebook.com/NOAAOfficeofNationalMarineSanctuaries)  
Instagram: @noaasanctuaries  
Twitter: @sanctuaries  
Tumblr: @noaasanctuaries



Photo: Greg McFall, NOAA

Traditionally, giant clams are a favorite food in the Samoan culture.



Photo: Veronika M. Mortenson, NOAA

Samoans perform a cultural dance to introduce visitors to Samoan culture and the sanctuary.



Photo: Wendy Cover, NOAA

Rose Atoll's fringing reef has a pink hue due to the dominance of coralline algae.

<http://americansamoa.noaa.gov/>