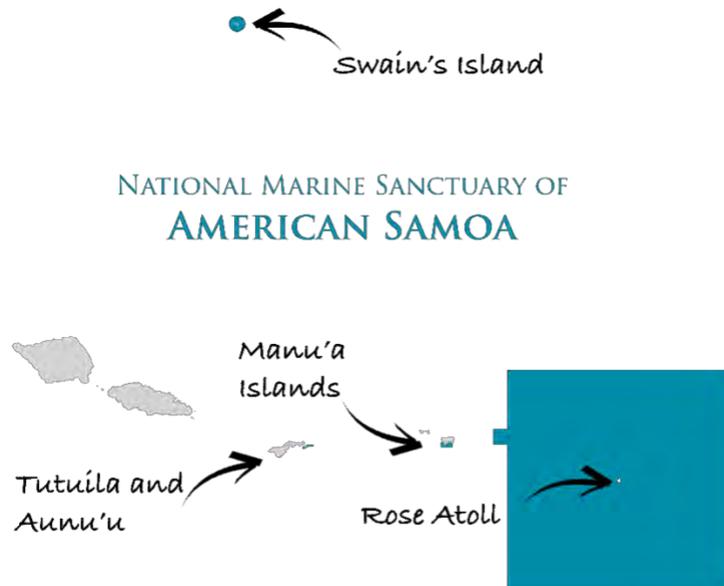


## National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Accomplishments

Fiscal Year 2020

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa was designated in 1996 to protect 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. The sanctuary is located in the cradle of Polynesia's oldest culture and is comprised of six protected areas, covering 13,581 square miles of nearshore coral reef and offshore open ocean waters across the Samoan archipelago. Of all the areas in the National Marine Sanctuary System, National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa is the most remote and is thought to support the greatest diversity of marine life.



Visit [americansamoa.noaa.gov](http://americansamoa.noaa.gov) for more information.

### Sanctuary featured in PBS “Changing Seas” documentary

The sanctuary was prominently featured in the television series *Changing Seas*, in the episode “American Samoa’s Resilient Coral Reefs.” The sanctuary hosted the South Florida Public Broadcast Service’s film crew and collaborated with local partners, including National Park of American Samoa, Department of Marine & Wildlife Resources, Coral Reef Advisory Group, and NOAA’s Tula Observatory to document the various monitoring and research efforts being conducted on coral reefs in American Samoa’s protected waters. The film highlighted the unique connection between the ocean and Samoan cultural narratives and was followed by a live virtual screening with the sanctuary and local science experts. The film was well-received by worldwide viewers and is available to watch for free online.



The sanctuary’s coral reefs at Ta`u Island include massive *Porites* coral heads that are among the oldest and largest known in the world. Photo: South Florida PBS

## The sanctuary kicks off condition report

The sanctuary initiated the condition report process, an important component of the sanctuary's adaptive management cycle. Taking place virtually over a six-week span, various topic experts who have contributed research in American Samoa were invited to participate and assess drivers and pressures impacting habitat, living resources, maritime heritage resources, and ecosystem services in sanctuary managed areas. The information, data, and trends gathered will be used as a tool to determine if the sanctuary is achieving resource protection and improvement goals.



The sanctuary supports a highly diverse marine area that includes hot spots for coral cover and fish biomass. Photo: Greg McFall/NOAA

## Teacher/student kits packaged for summer learning

The sanctuary's education team reimagined and repackaged its annual summer program into an easy-to-use kit that includes all the information, activities, and materials needed to develop marine science interests while encouraging experiential and peer learning. The kit enables formal and informal educators to easily teach marine science topics, helping students understand complex subjects simply and quickly while also having fun in their home or community. Over the summer, the kits were used in three different programs, benefiting 56 students. The kits will continue to be offered to schools and parents throughout the year.



A group of students playing a game during the summer program. Photo: Angel Ifopo

## Looking Ahead

- The sanctuary will highlight the significance of *fautasi*, a type of traditional Samoan boat, as a living maritime heritage resource in American Samoa by publishing the *Fautasi Heritage Magazine*, which provides historical documentation and cultural context from experts and traditional leaders.
- The sanctuary will adapt education and outreach into virtual programs and increase Ocean Literacy skills by creating online resources such as webinars and educational video content to interact with local and off-island audiences through online platforms.
- To prepare for climate vulnerability assessments and management plan updates, the science team will further develop and implement ecological and socioeconomic monitoring efforts and update science information in education and outreach programs with a focus on climate change impacts.

## NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



The National Marine Sanctuary System is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 600,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. The network includes a system of 14 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.