Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) is the largest conservation area in the world, protecting 582,578 square miles of the Pacific Ocean. The extensive coral reefs found in Papahānaumokuākea are home to more than 7,000 marine species, one-quarter of which are found only in the Hawaiian Archipelago. Many of the islands and shallow water environments are important habitats for rare species such as the threatened green turtle and the endangered Hawaiian monk seal. On less than six square miles of land, over 14 million seabirds representing 22 species breed and nest. Land areas also provide a home for four bird species found nowhere else in the world. The monument’s vision is to forever protect and perpetuate ecosystem health and diversity and the Native Hawaiian cultural significance of Papahānaumokuākea. In 2010, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated the monument as a mixed World Heritage Site. In 2016, the monument was expanded from 139,818 square miles to 582,578 square miles.

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument is jointly administered by the Department of Commerce, the Department of the Interior and the state of Hawai‘i, and in collaboration with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Research and Monitoring
Scientific, cultural and maritime research are important parts of the monument’s overall operations. The focus of the monument’s coral reef research program includes shallow and deep mesophotic reef characterization and monitoring. Reef surveys have recorded the diversity and abundance of fishes, algae, corals and other reef invertebrates at numerous locations throughout the archipelago. Historic resources, such as shipwrecks, have also been documented on shallow reefs by monument and national marine sanctuary Pacific Region archaeologists. Research in deeper offshore waters has utilized multibeam sonar and submersibles to document rarely seen biological resources and topographical features contained within monument waters. The results of these shallow and deep water research efforts will aid in the management of these vast ocean resources.

Education and Outreach
The focus of the education and outreach program is to increase understanding of ecosystem management, develop an ocean stewardship ethic and train the next generation of leaders to be both scientifically and culturally grounded. The monument’s visitor center, the Mokupāpapa Discovery Center in Hilo, interprets the natural science, culture and history of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and surrounding marine environment.

www.papahanaumokuakea.gov
### Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

**Location**
- 140 miles northwest of the Main Hawaiian Islands

**Protected Area**
- 582,578 square miles

**Designation**
- June 2006, Expansion 2016

**Habits**
- Abyssal
- Atolls
- Bank
- Hypersaline lake
- Islands
- Lagoon
- Pelagic
- Reef
- Seamount
- Slope

**Key Species**
- Calcareous algae
- Corals
- Endemic reef fish
- Green sea turtle
- Hawaiian monk seal
- Jack
- Laysan albatross
- Sharks
- Spinner dolphin

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**National Marine Sanctuary System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Olympic Coast</th>
<th>Greater Farallones</th>
<th>Cordell Bank</th>
<th>Papahānaumokuākea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale</td>
<td>Monterey Bay</td>
<td>Channel Islands</td>
<td>American Samoa (U.S.) (Including Rose Atoll)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**On the Web**
- Email: hawaiireef@noaa.gov
- [https://www.facebook.com/Papahanaumokuakea](https://www.facebook.com/Papahanaumokuakea)

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**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](https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov)
- Instagram: @noaasanctuaries
- Twitter: @sanctuaries
- Tumblr: @noaasanctuaries

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In 2015, NOAA’s Office of Exploration and Research discovered the largest sponge in the world in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

A Hawaiian monk seal rests on a beach in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands contains rich and diverse deep-water fauna, including this newly discovered species of octopus.

[www.papahanaumokuakea.gov](http://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov)