

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Accomplishments

Fiscal Year 2021

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa began as the tiny 0.25 square mile Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary in 1986. In 2012 it was expanded 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 comprises six protected areas, covering 13,581 square miles 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.

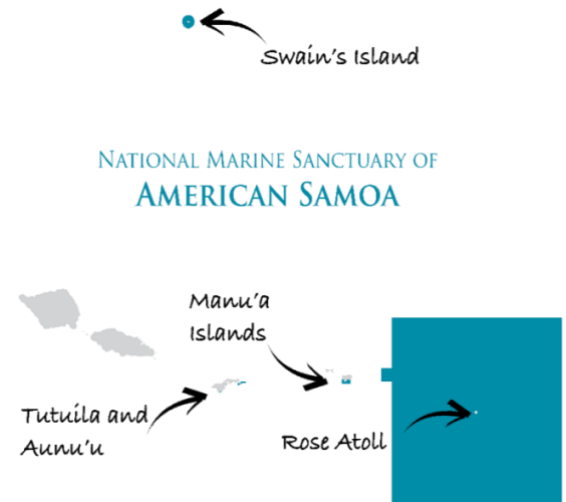
Visit americansamoa.noaa.gov for more information.

First MATE Regional ROV Competition in American Samoa

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa and the American Samoa Department of Education successfully co-hosted the first Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) American Samoa Regional Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) Competition. More than 40 students from different high schools participated in the competition to demonstrate applied Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics skills. Additionally, the sanctuary education team continued to provide virtual tours, summer science in the village kits, and a new Sanctuary Teacher Resource Library, reaching close to 300 students.

Palau Sister Sanctuary Collaboration

NOAA and the Palau International Coral Reef Center signed a five year "sister sanctuary" partnership between National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa and Palau National Marine Sanctuary to strengthen bonds between Pacific Island nations and further increase capacity and focus for ocean conservation-related activities. In the first year of sister sanctuary partnership, the two sanctuaries met monthly to share cross-cultural resource management issues and solutions, explore new regional partnership opportunities, and develop an action plan for collaboration to improve research, community outreach, and education in both sites.



Students prepare a remotely operated vehicle for competition. Photo: NOAA



Spinner dolphins can be found within both sister sanctuaries. Photo: NOAA

Launch of Fautasi Heritage Magazine

In April 2021, National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office, and the Office of Samoan Affairs launched and published the *Fautasi Heritage of American Samoa* magazine. This document commemorates *fautasi* as a significant living aspect of maritime cultural heritage in American Samoan history. The magazine contains a collection of historical and cultural resources supporting the preservation of *fautasi* and American Samoa's maritime cultural landscape.



Distinguished guests attend a launch event celebrating the new magazine. Photo: NOAA

Looking Ahead

- The sanctuary plans to release an updated condition report in early 2022 highlighting the increasing threat that climate change poses to sanctuary resources and the human communities that depend on them. The information in this report will inform climate vulnerability assessments and the upcoming management plan.
- In addition to the National Marine Sanctuary System's 50th Anniversary in 2022, the sanctuary will celebrate 10 years since expansion of the sanctuary in 2012. Festivities throughout the year will focus on celebrations of Samoan culture and the marine environment, the foundations of our sanctuary.
- The sanctuary is implementing the Climate Change Action Plan to improve monitoring and research on climate impacts, conduct vulnerability assessments, promote public awareness, and maximize the resilience of marine resources and sanctuary communities, all supporting the upcoming management plan review.



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 15 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.