



National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Accomplishments Fiscal Year 2022

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.

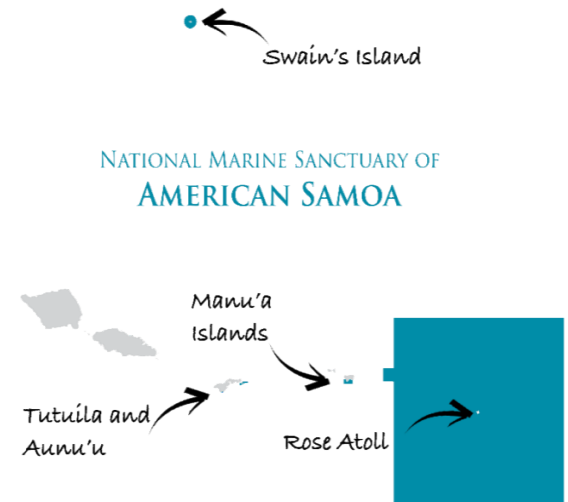
Visit americansamoa.noaa.gov for more information.

Sanctuary Celebrates 10th Anniversary

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa celebrated its 10th anniversary since expansion to the largest national marine sanctuary in the system. Events were held in September, including an re-opening event at the Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center, a tautai festival, ocean film festival, and family fun carnival day. An estimated 1,000+ public and private partners, students, and community members participated in the week-long events. The sanctuary also premiered short films illustrating 10 years of highlights and accomplishments, and another film including interviews from esteemed partners over the years.

Expanded Education Opportunities

The sanctuary expanded education opportunities to engage more students through new programs including: Ocean Tales, a reading program in partnership with American Samoa Department of Education, First Lady Ella Mauga, and Good Lady Marian Ale; Ocean Guardian Schools at two local schools to build stewardship and community-service; and Pacific Exchange Network that link with other sister sanctuary education groups and schools across the Pacific region to give students an opportunity to connect their indigenous ocean experiences. These education opportunities are in addition to the ongoing established programs such as the underwater remotely operated vehicle workshops and competitions and school visits.



10th anniversary opening event at the Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center. Photo: NOAA



Ocean Tales reading program featured First Lady Ella Mauga as a guest reader in a classroom visit. Photo: NOAA

Pacific Island Region Climate Strategy Workshop

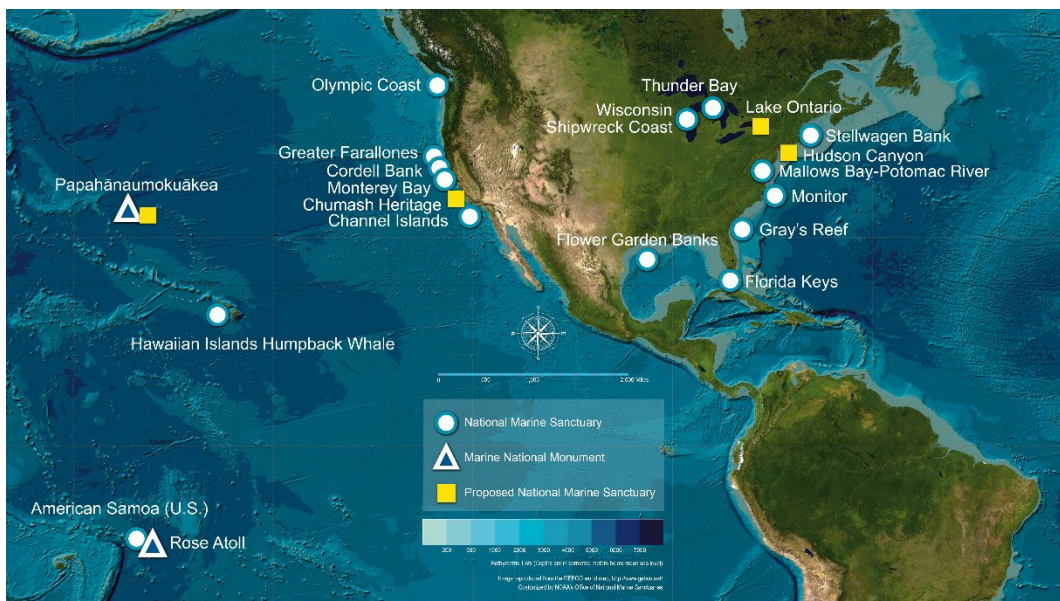
In June, the sanctuary worked with partners to lead a series of Pacific Island regional workshops focusing on climate action strategies. Workshops were held virtually and participants from national marine sanctuaries in the Pacific discussed and brainstormed gaps and solutions to achieve site-based climate needs and identify collective strategies for meeting those needs. The overall goal of the regional strategy is to identify frameworks for adaptation and build capacity to prioritize and implement climate work at our sites through research, education and outreach, and cultural connections.



A research scientist free dives at Fagatele Bay for reef health monitoring checks. Photo: NOAA

Looking Ahead

- The sanctuary will kick off the beginning of the Management Plan Review after completing the Condition Report in December 2022. The sanctuary will host an internal planning workshop with the site, region, and HQ staff to review National Marine Sanctuary Act and environmental compliance requirements applicable to the site.
- The R/V Manuma will be back in operation to conduct monitoring and collaborate with research partners. Key projects for the upcoming fiscal year will be focused on climate change, ocean acidification, stony coral tissue loss preparedness efforts.
- The sanctuary will be a pilot site to develop a strategy for sustainable tourism. American Samoa has a unique tourism landscape, and natural resources are the biggest draw for visitors. The sanctuary will foster partnerships with local tour operators and travel authorities to identify hotspot destinations and create opportunities for sustainable and regenerative eco-tourism.



The National Marine Sanctuary System is a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 620,000 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.