

## = Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument =

The Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument ( originally named the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument ) is a World Heritage listed , U.S. National Monument encompassing 140 @, @ 000 square miles ( 360 @, @ 000 km<sup>2</sup> ) ( an area larger than the nation of Germany ) of ocean waters , including ten islands and atolls of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands , internationally recognized for both its cultural and natural values as follows :

" The area has deep cosmological and traditional significance for living Native Hawaiian culture , as an ancestral environment , as an embodiment of the Hawaiian concept of kinship between people and the natural world , and as the place where it is believed that life originates and to where the spirits return after death . On two of the islands , Nihoa and Makumanamana , there are archaeological remains relating to pre @-@ European settlement and use . Much of the monument is made up of pelagic and deepwater habitats , with notable features such as seamounts and submerged banks , extensive coral reefs and lagoons . It is one of the largest marine protected areas ( MPAs ) in the world . "

## = = Description = =

The area was proclaimed the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument by U.S. President George W. Bush on June 15 , 2006 ; it was renamed Papahānaumokuākea in 2007 , and inscribed on the World Heritage list as Papahānaumokuākea on 30 July 2010 , at the 34th Session of the World Heritage Committee , Brasilia .

The area is managed in partnership with the Department of Commerce , the Department of the Interior , and the State of Hawaii . The name for the area was inspired by the names of the Hawaiian creator goddess Papahānaumoku and her husband Wakea .

Although it is not a sanctuary , the ocean area is part of a system of 13 National Marine Sanctuaries administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ( NOAA ) . The Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge , with an area of 254 @, @ 418 @. @ 1 acres ( 397 @. @ 53 sq mi ; 1 @, @ 029 @. @ 6 km<sup>2</sup> ) in the monument , is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ( FWS ) .

The monument supports 7 @, @ 000 species , one quarter of which are endemic . Prominent species include the threatened green sea turtle and the endangered Hawaiian monk seal , the Laysan and Nihoa finches , the Nihoa millerbird , Laysan duck , seabirds such as the Laysan albatross , numerous species of plants including Pritchardia palms , and many species of arthropods . According to the Pew Charitable Trusts , populations of lobster have not recovered from extensive harvesting in the 1980s and 1990s , which is now banned ; the remaining fisheries are overfished .

The National Marine Fisheries Service ( NMFS ) reports that many species populations have not yet fully recovered from a large @-@ scale shift in the oceanographic ecosystem regime that affected the North Pacific during the late 1980s and early 1990s . This shift reduced populations of some important species such as spiny lobster , seabirds and Hawaiian monk seals ; the proclamation calls for a commercial fishing phase @-@ out by 2011 . The monument will receive strict conservation protection , with exceptions for traditional Native Hawaiian uses and limited tourism .

## = = Area and administration = =

As the 96th National Monument of the United States , it preserves much of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands ( NWHI ) under the Department of the Interior 's Fish and Wildlife Service ( FWS ) , the Department of Commerce 's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ( NOAA ) .

The monument covers roughly 140 @, @ 000 square miles ( 363 @, @ 000 km<sup>2</sup> ) of reefs , atolls and shallow and deep sea ( out to 50 miles ( 80 km ) offshore ) in the Pacific Ocean ? larger than all of America 's National Parks combined . It contains approximately 10 percent of the tropical shallow water coral reef habitat ( i.e. , 0 to 100 fathoms ) in U.S. territory . It is slightly larger than Australia 's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park , approximately the size of the country of Germany , and just slightly

smaller than Montana .

About 132 @, @ 000 square miles ( 340 @, @ 000 km<sup>2</sup> ) of the monument were already part of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve , which was designated in 2000 . The monument also includes the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge ( 590 @, @ 991 @. @ 50 acres ( 2 @, @ 391 @. @ 7 km<sup>2</sup> ) ) and Battle of Midway National Memorial , the Hawaii State Seabird Sanctuary at Kure Atoll , the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands State Marine Refuge , and the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge . NOAA is responsible for most oceanic areas of the new monument ; the FWS continues to manage the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge . An emergency landing strip on Midway Atoll for trans @-@ Pacific flights remains open .

The islands included in the monument are all part of the State of Hawaii , except Midway Atoll , which is part of The United States Minor Outlying Islands insular area .

= = History and establishment = =

The genesis of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands ( NWHI ) as a protected area began on February 3 , 1909 , when U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt created the Hawaiian Islands Bird Reservation through Executive Order 1019 , as a response to the over @-@ harvesting of seabirds , and in recognition of the importance of the NWHI as seabird nesting sites . Its status was later upgraded to the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge in 1940 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt . A series of incremental protections for the NWHI followed , leading to the establishment of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge in 1988 , Kure Atoll State Wildlife Sanctuary in 1993 , and the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve in 2000 .

President Bill Clinton established the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve on December 4 , 2000 , with Executive Order 13178 . Clinton 's executive order initiated a process to designate the waters of the NWHI as a National Marine Sanctuary . A public comment period began in 2002 . In 2005 , Governor of Hawaii Linda Lingle declared parts of the monument a state marine refuge .

In April 2006 , President Bush and his wife viewed a screening of the documentary film Voyage to Kure at the White House along with its director , Jean @-@ Michel Cousteau ( son of documentary film maker Jacques @-@ Yves Cousteau ) . Compelled by the film 's portrayal of the flora and fauna of the region , Bush moved quickly to protect the area .

On June 15 , 2006 , President George W. Bush signed Proclamation 8031 , designating the waters of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands a national monument under the 1906 Antiquities Act . Using the Antiquities Act bypassed the normal year of consultations and halted the public input process on the eve of the dissemination of the draft environmental impact statement for the proposed Northwestern Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary . This was the second use by Bush of the Antiquities Act , following the declaration of the African Burial Ground National Monument on Manhattan in February 2006 . The legislated process for stakeholder involvement in the planning and management of a marine protected area had already taken five years of effort , but the abrupt establishment of the NWHI as a National Monument , rather than a Sanctuary , provided immediate and more resilient protection , revocable only by an act of the United States Congress .

After the signing of the proclamation , Joshua Reichert explained the importance of the timely designation in an interview on the News Hour with Jim Lehrer :

Monument status is quicker ; it 's more comprehensive ; and it 's more permanent . Only an act of Congress can undo a monument designation . The sanctuary process , it takes longer ; it involves more congressional input , more public debate , more hearings and meetings . And he [ George W. Bush ] obviously made a decision today to , actually , take a bold step and create something which is going to be immediate , that the law applies immediately to this place now .

The NWHI accounted for approximately half of the locally landed bottomfish in Hawaii , and these fish are highly valued by local chefs and consumers . The NWHI bottomfish fishery is a limited entry fishery , with eight active vessels , which are restricted to 60 feet ( 18 m ) in length . Frank McCoy , chair of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council , said :

We are pleased the President recognizes the near pristine condition of the Northwestern Hawaiian

Islands waters . We believe the abundance and biodiversity of the area attests to the successful management of the NWHI fisheries by the Council the past 30 years and indicates that properly regulated fisheries can operate in the NWHI without impacting the ecosystem . The small NWHI bottomfish fishery has not and would not jeopardize the protection of the NWHI that President Bush is pursuing by designating the area a national monument .

The National Marine Fisheries Service has published reports attesting to the health of the NWHI bottomfish stocks . Commercial bottomfish and pelagic fishing as well as recreational catch @-@ and @-@ keep and catch @-@ and @-@ release fishing were also deemed compatible to the goals and objectives of the proposed NWHI National Marine Sanctuary .

On February 27 , 2007 , President Bush amended Proclamation 8031 , giving the monument the Native Hawaiian name , " Papahānaumokuākea " . On March 1 , first lady Laura Bush visited Midway Atoll , and on March 2 , a renaming ceremony was held at Washington Place in Honolulu , Hawaii . At the ceremony , Laura Bush and Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced the new Hawaiian name and helped raise public awareness about the monument . On May 15 , 2007 , President Bush announced his intention to submit the monument for Particularly Sensitive Sea Area ( PSSA ) status , which would " alert mariners to exercise caution in the ecologically important , sensitive , and hazardous area they are entering . " In October 2007 , the Marine Environmental Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organization adopted the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument as a PSSA .

The designation of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument as a particularly sensitive sea area ( PSSA ) received committed support from the US delegation to the International Maritime Organization . Particular note is made of the contribution of Ms. Lindy S Johnson , author of " Coastal State Regulation of International Shipping . " Ms. Johnson worked passionately for the PSSA designation for the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument as well as for other land- and sea @-@ based sources of marine pollution , environment and navigation , marine protected areas , ship strikes of right whales , noise and marine mammals as well as protecting coral .

= = World Heritage Site status = =

On January 30 , 2008 , the U.S. Department of Interior added Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument to a tentative list of 14 proposed sites for consideration on the UNESCO World Heritage List . The Federal Interagency Panel for World Heritage officially accepted the recommendation in November 2008 . As a mixed site with natural and cultural resources , the International Union for the Conservation of Nature ( IUCN ) commented on the natural features of the monument , and the International Council on Monuments and Sites ( ICOMOS ) assessed its cultural aspects .

The national monument was inscribed on the World Heritage List in July 2010 as simply " Papahānaumokuākea " .

= = Mokupāpapa Discovery Center - A Window into the Monument = =

In May 2003 , the Mokupāpapa Discovery Center originally opened in the restored S. Hata building . [ 20 ] In 2013 , The Discovery Center moved down the street a few blocks into the legendary and historical Koehnen Building , reopening in March 2014 . It displays both static and interactive educational exhibits all focused on the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands , which are protected along with their surrounding waters , as the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument . [ 21 ] The name comes from Mokupāpapa in the Hawaiian language which means " flat / low reef island " . This name was used in chants of Ancient Hawaii , perhaps referring to the area now known as French Frigate Shoals , or the northwestern islands in general . [ 22 ] The Northwestern islands stretch for hundreds of miles northwest of the main Hawaiian islands ; the discovery center is on the southeastern @-@ most island in the chain , Hawai'i Island , which is the youngest and farthest away from the much older kōpuna islands in the Monument . [ 22 ] A 3 @, @ 500 @-@ US @-@

gallon ( 13 @, @ 000 l ) salt @-@ water aquarium displays some of the fish found on Hawaiian reefs . One entire wall is covered by a large mural painted by local artist Layne Luna depicting the coral reef ecosystems found in the leeward islands . Layne Luna also created several life @-@ sized models of life sized sharks , fish and manta ray that hang from the ceiling . Another exhibit plays a recording of the creation chant of Hawaiian mythology known as Kumulipo . Signs are in the Hawaiian language and English . Admission to the new center is still FREE although donations are accepted to support all of the National Marine Sanctuaries . It is open Tuesday through Saturday 9AM to 4PM , closed on Federal holidays . [ 20 ]

= = Ongoing research = =

Federal researchers continue to study the monument 's marine resources . A 2010 expedition reached the Kure atoll and its divers reached 250 feet ( 76 m ) revealing new species of coral and other animals . The Waikiki aquarium is attempting to culture the new corals and present them in an 2011 exhibit dedicated to the monument .

On 3 August 2015 divers found the wreck of the USNS Mission San Miguel ( T @-@ AO @-@ 129 ) within the Monument . She had sunk there on October 8 , 1957 when she ran aground on Maro Reef while running at full speed and in ballast . Researchers will map and study the wreck in situ .

= = Gallery = =

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument on Wikimedia Commons .