

# Expansion of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument: Honoring Cultural and Biological Legacies

Photo Credit: Kydd Pollock, TNC

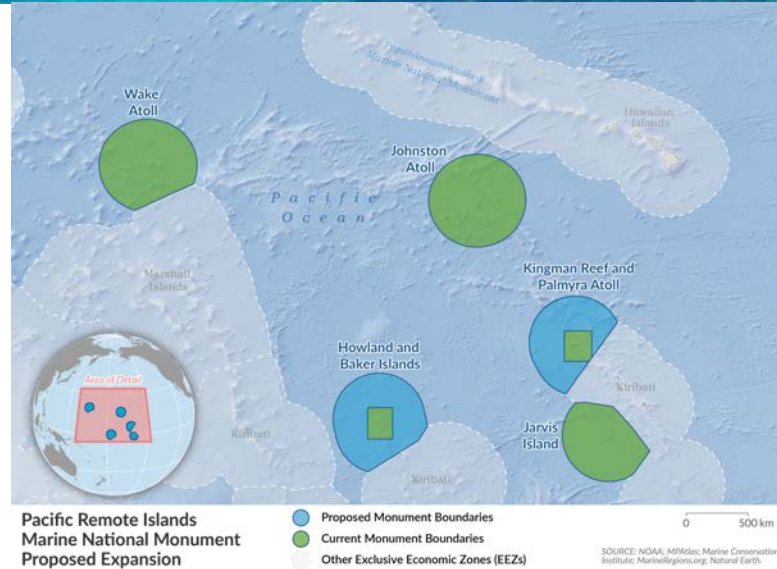
The Pacific Remote Islands (PRI) contain some of the last wild and healthy ecosystems in the world's ocean. The waters of PRI are home to resilient coral reefs; threatened and endangered wildlife; species found nowhere else on Earth; and the waterways of ancient and modern Indigenous voyagers.

## Proposed Expansion

PRI was originally established in 2009 by President George W. Bush, and was expanded in 2014 by President Barack Obama under the Antiquities Act. The Expand PRI Coalition is requesting that President Joseph Biden extend PRI to the full extent of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), making it the largest highly protected marine protected area in the world.

## Biodiversity

The waters of PRI are home to many threatened, endangered, and critically endangered species including sharks, rays, whales, seabirds, turtles, and more. The unprotected areas of PRI contain 98 seamounts, known to be ecological hot spots with yet-to-be discovered species.



## Our request to President Biden includes:

- Expand the protection of Howland and Baker Islands, and Kingman Reef and Palmyra Atoll to 200 nautical miles, the full extent of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone to protect terrestrial, nearshore, pelagic, and deep sea ecosystems
- Rename this area to reflect the significance of the PRI area in Pacific Islander cultures

Photo credit: Image courtesy of George Kahanu, Sr.; credit: Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum.



Hui Panalā'au members, 1936

## Cultural Significance

More than 130 young men, mostly Native Hawaiian, made up the Hui Panalā'au. Sent to Howland, Baker and Jarvis from 1935-1942, they enabled the U.S. to claim jurisdiction of this area in the Pacific. In ancient times, PRI had a rich history of oceanic voyaging, serving as stopping points for Polynesian voyagers. Today, PRI has the potential to become a premier education site for Pacific Islander voyaging. To perpetuate these cultures and traditions, it is critical to protect these ocean ecosystems from further human impact.

## Timing and Impacts

There are crucial connections between coral reefs and open ocean ecosystems that require additional protection. Highly mobile wildlife, such as seabirds, sharks, and turtles, are not adequately protected within the current monument boundaries. With threats from deep-sea mining, climate change, and overfishing, the time to permanently protect these areas against future exploitation is now. Expanding the two remaining areas of PRI to the full extent of the U.S. EEZ would serve as a gift to future generations.

To contact the Expand PRI Coalition: [expandPRI@gmail.com](mailto:expandPRI@gmail.com)



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