

NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM RESERVE RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Non-Government (Voting)

William Ailā, Jr. (Chair)
State of Hawai'i

Linda Paul (Vice-Chair)
Conservation

Rick Gaffney (Secretary)
Recreational Fishing

Solomon Pili Kaho'ohalahala
Native Hawaiian Elder

Pelika Andrade
Native Hawaiian

Don Schug
Research

Mark Hixon
Research

Audrey Newman
Conservation

Richard Lee
Ocean-Related Tourism

Bonnie Kahapea-Tanner
Education

Judith Cucco
Citizen-at-Large

Vacant
Native Hawaiian

Vacant
Research

Vacant
Conservation

Vacant
Commercial Fishing

Government (Non-Voting)

Athline Clark
Papahānaumokuākea MNM

Kim Hum
HIHW National Marine Sanctuary

Brandon Jim On
NOAA Office of Law Enforcement

Maile Norman
U.S. Coast Guard

Janice Fukawa
U.S. Department of Defense

Joshua DeMello
WPRFMC

Jared Underwood
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Malia Chow
NOAA Fisheries PIRO

Na'u Kamali'i
Office of Hawaiian Affairs

Vacant
Marine Mammal Commission

Meeting June 29, 2022
9:00 am to 12:30 pm
Via Google Meet Teleconference
Meeting Minutes

RAC Voting Members Present: William Ailā (Chair), Audrey Newman (Conservation Primary), Judith Cucco (Citizen-At-Large Primary), , Don Schug (Research Primary), Nakoa Goo (Native Hawaiian Alternate), Haunani Kane (Research Alternate), Rick Gaffney (Recreational Fishing Primary and Secretary), Linda Paul (Conservation Primary and Vice-Chair), Thorne Abbott (Acting Conservation Primary), Bill Walsh (Acting Research Primary), Heather Howard (Education Alternate).

RAC Voting Members Absent: Pelika Andrade (Native Hawaiian Primary), Bonnie Kahapea-Turner (Education Primary), Richard Lee (Ocean-related Tourism Primary), Solomon Kaho'ohalahala (Native Hawaiian Elder Primary), Mark Hixon (Research Primary).

RAC Non-Voting Members Present: Neal Langerman (Research Alternate), Doug Fetterly (Conservation Alternate), Paul Badgley (Ocean Activities Alternate), Richard Hall (NOAA-NMFS-PIRO), Janice Fukawa (USDOD), Cynthia Vanderlip (DLNR-DOFAW), Joshua DeMello (WPRFMC), Maile Norman (USCG), Brandon Jim On (NOAA-OLE), Cindy Among-Serrao (HIHWNMS).

RAC Non-Voting Members Absent: Kate Thompson (HIHWNMS), Kealoha Pisciotta (OHA), Amanda Boyd (USFWS), Dan Polhemus (USFWS), Ryan Okano (DLNR-DAR), Robert Leinau (Research Alternate), Brian Neilson (DLNR-DAR), Jeannine Rossa (DLNR-DAR), Jared Underwood (USFWS).

ONMS Staff and Others Present: Athline Clark (ONMS-PMNM), Kanoe Morishige (ONMS-PMNM), Eric Roberts (ONMS-PMNM), Kristina Kekuewa (ONMS-PIR), Katie Denman (ONMS), Michelle Barbieri (NOAA-NMFS), Kaipo Perez (NOAA-NMFS-PIRO), Jason Leonard (ONMS-PMNM), Frederick Styer (OET), Daniel Wagner (OET), Kilo Ka'awa Gonzales (ONMS-PMNM), Ann Barlow (NOAA-NMFS-PIRO), Tammy Harp (public).

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MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome (Ailā, Jr.)

The meeting opened with a welcome by Chair Ailā, and opening protocol conducted by Kanoë Morishige.

Roll call, Introductions, Review and Approval of Agenda (Ailā Jr.)

Roll call was taken by Eric Roberts.

Review and approval of the agenda was conducted by Chair Ailā. Representative Gaffney moved to accept the agenda, and Representative Paul seconded the motion. The agenda was unanimously adopted.

Review & Approval of April 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes (Ailā Jr.)

Review and approval of the meeting minutes were conducted by Chair Ailā. Representative Gaffney moved to accept the summary and Representative Cucco seconded the motion. The minutes for the April 13th meeting were adopted unanimously.

Monument Co-Manager Agency Updates/Highlights

- NOAA-ONMS (Clark)
 - Next week's talk by Dr. Carol Price on Sharks in the Atlantic. Recorded talks are available at the following website:
<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/teachers/webinar-series-archives.html>
 - Upcoming research using albatross as “spies in the sky” to note fishing boat activity to and from feeding grounds.
 - Mokupāpapa Discovery Center (MDC): “Earth-Sea-Sky” partnership established with the National Park Service and Imi Loa Astronomy Center
 - The latest PMNM newsletter describes current activities occurring at ONMS. The newsletter is released three times per year to coincide with the Hawaiian lunar calendar.
 - MDC reopened for business, and received >1,000 visitors during the first week. There are new exhibits being planned and new partnerships operating at the Center including a robotics program.
 - MDC welcomed an additional new partnership, Four Square, to the facility: the Lyman Center, Tsunami Center, the Hawaiian Culture Center, and MDC. The partnership is aimed at revitalizing downtown Hilo.
 - E/V Nautilus returns to PMNM in collaboration with Ocean Explorer Trust, providing ship-to-shore lessons in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i and American Sign Language. Collaborations were established with charter schools across Hawai‘i, including schools on Ni‘ihau, providing great new outreach opportunities to Native Hawaiian communities.
 - Upcoming Marine Coral Reef Task Force meeting to be held in Kona (Sept)
 - Note: 30x30 initiative information to be covered
 - Research & Field Operations: PMNM field team preparing for mission to Midway Atoll. Purchase of a new field team truck for hauling field boats. Field team has no vessel charters to the Monument this summer, but is

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collaborating with other co-managers and university researchers to lead research on *Chondria tumulosa* at Midway.

- PMNM supported the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway events at Punchbowl Cemetery and the Pacific Aviation Museum, providing assistance with emceeing, cultural protocol, artwork, and event arrangements.
- “Get Into Your Sanctuary Day” event to be held at Ma’ili Beach Park on August 6, 2022.
- Upcoming: Third Thursday Educational Webinars (July 21, August 18, September 21).
- DLNR DOFAW (Vanderlip)
 - Summer field team of two researchers currently at Holaniku (Kure Atoll)
 - Removing *Verbesina encelioides*; currently finding one or two plants per week. *V. encelioides* almost completely eradicated on central plains of Green Island, and the current area of focus is the southwest sector, with only a few thousand plants remaining for removal.
 - Conducting seabird fledgling counts to gather information on reproductive success.
 - Team of three researchers to be deployed for the fall season. Team will monitor Laysan ducks, conduct opportunistic *V. encelioides* removal, and conduct outplanting of native plants.
 - DOFAW working to secure a team of four researchers for the 2023 Kure winter field team. Planned deployment: Mid October 2022–Spring 2023

Supporting Agency Updates/Highlights

- US Coast Guard (Norman)
 - Coast Guard cutter Juniper deployed within PMNM to visit Midway between May and June 2022. Retrieved a buoy and chain system that snapped loose near Midway Atoll.
 - Maile Norman to provide an activities report.
- WPRFMC (DeMello)
 - The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council’s obligatory seat for American Samoa was up; William Sword from Pago Pago Game & Fishing Association was reappointed. Two At-large seats were available. First seat was selected from Guam, Dr. Judi Guthertz, and the second seat was Shaelene Kamaka’ala from Hawai’i.
 - Council will draft fishing regulations for the proposed NMS as amendments to existing regulations. Final rule will likely be completed March/April 2023 in conjunction with proposed sanctuary and EIS package rollouts. The Council is only considering fishing regulations for the expansion area. RAC members are urged to follow the WPRFMC meeting calendar at <https://www.wpcouncil.org/calendar/>. The next WPRFC meeting is in September. You may request to provide public comment via Webex at meetings. WPRFMC will inform RAC of other upcoming opportunities for the RAC to learn and/or participate.

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Presentations

Hawaiian Monk Seal Research Updates (Barbieri)

- Limited data were collected in 2020; 2021 was the first year back out in the field.
- 2021 Teams deployed via charter vessel Kahana II, and returned on NOAA Ship Oscar Elton Sette. Field camps were deployed at 5 sites, with surveys at Nihoa, Mokumanamana, and Kuaihelani (Midway).
- Support from partners: Marine Turtle Program at Lalo; Ryan Jenkinson (DLNR) support for early deployment; DLNR and PMDP at Kamole, Kapou and Manawai; USFWS for opportunistic seal observations; and USCG supported a field rescue in coordination with USFWS (2020).
- 2021 Population Estimates
 - Estimated range-wide population growth rate averaging 2% per year since 2013.
 - Range -wide population estimate: 1,570 monk seals (first time population has exceeded the 1,500 mark in two decades).
 - MHI, population growth is increasing steadily.
- 2021 Field Season Research & Recovery in PMNM
 - 57 full surveys completed.
 - 135/171 pups tagged & vaccinated.
 - 24 interventions (translocation, entrapment, disentanglement, injury treatment).
 - Released 1 rehabilitated seal pup.
 - Galapagos shark seen at Tern Island (noteworthy, as Galapagos shark historically not recorded there, seal predation low at Lalo).
 - To mitigate Galapagos shark predation at Lalo, once pups wean, translocate weaned pups from fringe islets in Lalo (e.g. the Gins) to Tern Island, where shark predation is not (normally) observed.
- 2022 Season So Far:
 - Deployed field camps in May.
 - Two seals rescued/transported to Ke Kai Ola (Marine Mammal Center in Kona).
 - Year 2 of Huli 'Ia incorporation into field camp surveys.
 - Teams return Aug./Sep. 2023.
 - Kamole: 2nd highest number of pup births ever recorded.
 - Assisted in retrieving moorings for ONMS.
 - Question asked: What is the impact on research of the reduced number of vessels available to move researchers to and from PMNM?
 - Response from Barbieri: Logistics working group will be used to ensure most efficient use of available ships to conduct work within the monument. Monk seal program is exploring the option of shifting to alternating years of full field research effort with short rapid assessments in years in between.

Marine Turtle Program Update (Hall)

- Deployed 3 turtle biologists at Lalo in May 2022.
 - One tagged turtle mortality recorded at Lalo.

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- 268 females & 140 males identified on Tern Island for basking; 59 females/32 males utilizing East Island for basking. Average of 40 turtles basking and 42 turtles nesting per day on Tern Island.
- Deployed 51 data loggers into turtle nests recording egg incubation temperatures.
- Turtle nest count will be available at end of field season (Richard Hall to provide this information to the RAC in a follow up)

Pacific Remote Islands Expansion Update (Gaffney)

- Pacific Remote Islands Expansion has been proposed. An active working group of citizens is working toward accomplishing this.
- Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument differs from PMNM in that it is separate island areas having unique cultural histories.

Ocean Exploration Trust Update (Wagner)

- E/V Nautilus conducted research in the Monument April 7-28, 2022. Goals: 1) collect data in unexplored areas (serves the interest of the scientific community), 2) support science and management needs of the Monument, 3) map areas that have not been mapped, 4) provide a foundation of publicly accessible data.
 - Over 70 participating scientists worldwide in species identification, mapping and to provide education and outreach.
 - Collected multibeam data, with >28,000 km squared mapped (~20,000 km squared in PMNM).
 - Conducted 11 ROV dives from 700-3,500 meters deep (8 ROV dives in PMNM)
 - Highlight: “Yellow Brick Road”: a natural phenomenon that received lots of media attention.
 - Microbial studies (led by Dr. Beth Orcutt) & Geologic Studies (led by Dr. Amy Gartman).
 - Education and Outreach Highlights
 - 3 teachers, 3 student interns, 5 university students, 115 ship-to-shore interactions, 124 media stories, >3.6 million views. New educational resources provided in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i and American Sign Language.
 - Cultural connections: Hawaiian expedition name developed by PMNM CWG, Hawaiian culture liaison, science communications fellow, PMNM staff participation, ship-to-shore interactions conducted in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i.
- 2022 Season continues.
 - PMNM expeditions will continue with mapping in PMNM in August 2022 (hope to return with ROV for follow-up surveys in 2022).
- Estimates of coral population density will be done in the future.

Public Comment

- Tammy Harp
 - Concerned about the current definition of subsistence.
 - Observed a lack of home consumption mentioned in the documentation from WPRFMC.

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- Subsistence fishing should be stated as “non-commercial sustenance in the actions of trade or bartered through traditional and customary practices or home consumption.”
- Curious about the concerns John Armor proposed to initially proposed fishing regulations.
- Response provided by Chair Ailā: Consumption for Native Hawaiian fishing practices must occur within the monument, which is a floor to be aware of.
- Response from Don Shug: The stipulation of sustenance fishing only pertains to the original monument boundary, not the expanded area.

June 2022 RAC Action Items:

- **PES subcommittee to review WPRFMC proposed fishing regulations and provide comments, to be addressed at the August 2022 RAC meeting.**
 - Schedule two or more PES subcommittee meetings prior to the August RAC meeting.
 - RAC members are encouraged to participate in these subcommittee meetings.
 - ONMS team to provide to RAC a list of existing fishing regulations, and a list of concerns from John Armor, by July 8, 2022.
 - To be used as reference by the RAC and PES subcommittee.
 - Both original boundary and expanded area.
 - Focus first on the fishing regulations and then hold additional meetings to focus on the non-fishing regulations and provide two different letters to ONMS, one on each topic. Fishing regulations letter to be the focus of the August meeting, non-fishing regulations to be the focus of the November RAC meeting
- **Reschedule next RAC meeting to August 31, 2022**
 - Agenda item: Discuss PES subcommittee findings, and provide final recommendations for WPRFMC to consider regarding fishing regulations.
- **Reschedule following RAC Meeting to November 30, 2022**
 - Agenda item: Address and provide final recommendations for ONMS to consider regarding non-fishing regulations.
 - Agenda item: Address the desired VMS regulations to be implemented through sanctuary designation (VMS not currently required for expanded boundary).
- **Deadlines:**
 - Provide comments to Joshua DeMello (WPRFMC) regarding fishing regulations by September 6 or 7, 2022. Reminder that the letter comes to ONMS first and is then sent to the fishery council.
 - PES subcommittee to provide non-fishing regulation recommendations to RAC by November 23, 2022.

Next RAC Meeting Dates:

- Representative Newman proposed to reschedule the next RAC meetings to August 31 and late November (date TBD) so that the RAC can provide comments in a timely way to the fishery council and sanctuary staff. Representative Gaffney seconded the motion. The decision was unanimously adopted.

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- The following dates work for a majority of council members:
August 31, 2022 (virtual)
November 30, 2022
- It is still logistically challenging for ONMS to support in-person meetings. However, ONMS hopes to be able to host an in-person meeting in November.

Closing Remarks (Ailā, Jr.)

Chair Ailā thanked the RAC for their time, passion, and steadfast commitment to caring for PMNM.