

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
Superintendent Report to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem
Reserve Advisory Council
January – March 2009

Given by: `Aulani Wilhelm, NOAA

Date: 18 March 2009

Accomplishments & Recent Activities (alpha order)

Education

- **Telepresence (CBO-4.4)**—In January a new satellite dish was installed at Midway Atoll to provide a high-speed Internet connection and building infrastructure to allow for more telepresence in the Monument. When not in use for education, the technology will be used to enhance communications for personnel at Midway Atoll and will enable the development of future remote sensing and enforcement capabilities that were not previously an option without the high-speed connection. The satellite is owned by the Department of Homeland Security and the time we use on it is available to us free of charge when not in use for national security purposes—a value of approximately \$110K annually. Staff contact: Andy Collins (andy.collins@noaa.gov).
- **Navigating Change (OEL-1.1)**— Also in January, the Navigating Change Education Program hosted over 300 students during four field trips to promote outdoor site-based learning and stewardship along Maunalua Bay on O`ahu. (A presentation of the program will be given to the RAC on 3/18/09.) Staff contact: Matt Limtiaco (Matt.Limtiaco@noaa.gov).
- **Papahānaumokuākea `Ahahui Alaka`i (OEL-1.7)**—Participants selected for this 10-day experiential leadership program on O`ahu and Midway Atoll in June have been selected and are being notified. This workshop will bring together a broad range of interests and knowledge to ultimately inspire active stewardship of natural and cultural resources by participants within their home communities. Staff contact: Andy Collins (andy.collins@noaa.gov).

Enforcement

- **Enforcement Activities**—On February 27th, the U.S. Coast Guard boarded a vessel believed to be fishing illegally in Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. U.S. Coast Guardsmen aboard a buoy tender and a C-130 long-range aircraft from Honolulu documented and located the vessel suspected of having its long-line fishing gear in the water approximately three miles inside the monument and approximately 875 miles from Midway. The Coast Guard cutter Kukui dispatched a law enforcement team via small boat to board the vessel in order to examine the logs and interview crew members. The Coast Guard buoy tender's boarding team gathered evidence that was forwarded to NOAA's Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement. (Source: USCG News Release on March 2, 2009; Contact: Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael De Nyse at 808-535-3230.)
- **Ship Reporting System (MTA-1.1)**—The system has been developed and there are plans to implement it in the next month. The system is intended to log and report on vessels that enter the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area and Areas To Be Avoided

within the Monument and will help to determine the types and frequency of maritime traffic in the area. Staff contact: Andy Collins (andy.collins@noaa.gov).

- **Threat Assessment (EN-2.1)**— We are continuing to work towards a formal assessment and ranking of threats to the NWHI. This deals primarily with threats in an enforcement context, and thus does not include most environmental threats such as climate change, marine debris, etc., but rather focuses on human activities. Multiple sources of information are being accessed, including open-source (non-classified) data, interviews with stakeholders, and potentially classified enforcement and remote-sensing data. The Monument Enforcement Working Group (NOAA OLE, USFWS Enforcement, State DOCARE, USCG) is collaborating on this risk assessment, which should be completed by December of this year. Staff contact: Randy Kosaki (Randall.Kosaki@noaa.gov)

Information Management

- **Spatial Bibliography**— The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Spatial Bibliography will be released as a web tool this spring. The web tool will allow users to search for references to journal articles and gray literature by geographic location and keywords. This is the first step toward the development of a system for locating and exploring data for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Staff contact: Kaylene Keller (Kaylene.Keller@noaa.gov).

Native Hawaiian

- **Native Hawaiian Cultural Research Plan**—The planning process for the Native Hawaiian Cultural Research Plan will soon begin. The Monument will rely on mana‘o from the Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group on developing the process and identifying cultural research priorities for the NWHI. Staff contact: Hoku Johnson (Hoku.Johnson@noaa.gov)

Permits

- **Applications Received**—For the February 1st deadline, 36 permits were received of which 19 were renewal permits and 17 were new. (A short update on the permits will be provided to the RAC on 3/18/09.) Staff contact: Hoku Johnson (Hoku.Johnson@noaa.gov)

Policy & Planning

- **Management Plan**—The management plan was completed and released in December 2008. It is posted on the Monument website and CDs are available. Hard copies will be available in April. Staff contact: Keeley Belva (Keeley.Belva@noaa.gov)
- **World Heritage Nomination (AC-3.3)**—In January, Papahānaumokuākea, along with Mount Vernon, was nominated by the United States as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The application was technically accepted by the World Heritage Center last week. Over the next 18 months UNESCO’s review agencies—the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)—will review the application. Staff contact: Janna Shackeroff (Janna.Shackeroff@noaa.gov).
- **Evaluation Strategy (EV-1.1)**— As a first step in determining the degree to which management actions are achieving the vision, mission and goals of the Monument,

the development of an evaluation strategy has been initiated. An initial framework for the strategy will be developed by summer 2009, advised by faculty from the University of Hawaii and University of Washington. Once the framework is developed the process for how to complete the full strategy will be re-assessed. The goal is to complete the strategy by the end of the calendar year. Staff contact: Kaylene Keller (Kaylene.Keller@noaa.gov).

Research

- **NWHI Marine Biogeographic Assessment**— The long-awaited “A Marine Biogeographic Assessment of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands” initiated in 2003 will be released this spring. The document examines spatial and temporal distributions of organisms and their associated habitats within the NWHI. The document was developed by NOAA’s Center for Coastal Monitoring and Assessment Biogeographic Branch in cooperation with NOAA ONMS Monument staff. Staff contact: Kaylene Keller (Kaylene.Keller@noaa.gov).
- **ONMS Site Condition Report**—The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries has prepared this peer-reviewed report for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands designed to provide a summary of the status and trends of Monument marine resources, including water quality, living resources, and archaeological sites. Such reports have become standard across NOAA’s sanctuary system. The Monument’s report is being finalized and is expected to be released in April or May. The Monument’s report indicates that due to the remote location and the long history of protection of the natural resources of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are overall in a good state. The report also highlights the need to address potential impacts of key habitats, degrading conditions of some living resources (Hawaiian Monk seals, resident seabirds and migratory shorebirds), a general need to increase knowledge of regional biodiversity, and enhanced research and discovery of marine archaeological resources. Condition reports will be updated every five years.
- Staff contact: Randy Kosaki (Randall.Kosaki@noaa.gov).
- **Midway Atoll Historical Mapping**—In January, a multi-agency, land-based mapping survey project began at Midway Atoll to focus on documenting sites associated with the Battle of Midway and World War II era sites at Midway Atoll. Information gathered contributes to a GIS database that will be developed into a management tool and could eventually become a publicly accessible outreach tool. This project funded in part by the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program. Staff contact: Kelly Gleason (Kelly.Gleason@noaa.gov).
- **New Genera of Bamboo Coral (MCS-1.3)**—Scientists with the Hawaii Undersea Research Laboratory (HURL) announced this month that they identified seven new species of bamboo coral, six of which represent entirely new genera. Among the other findings were a five-foot tall yellow bamboo coral tree that had never been described before, new beds of living deepwater coral and sponges, and a giant sponge scientists dubbed the “cauldron sponge,” approximately three feet tall and three feet across. Staff contact: Randy Kosaki (Randall.Kosaki@noaa.gov).