

# Maritime Heritage Program

## Welcome

The National Marine Sanctuaries Maritime Heritage Program is committed to preserving historical, cultural and archaeological resources within the sanctuary system. The Maritime Heritage Program represents a broad spectrum of Americans across the entire nation who are actively engaged in following and supporting the discovery and interpretation of our maritime heritage. NOAA's maritime heritage efforts support a nationwide program of discovery, long-term protection, management, interpretation, education, and community interests, through partnerships with federal and state agencies, academia, and private enterprise. The program is focused on maritime heritage resources within the national marine sanctuaries and across the entire nation.

The Pacific Islands include the most geographically isolated locations in the world. Nonetheless, these islands host a diverse marine environment. These aquatic settings range from rich coastal ecosystems of wetlands, shorelines and coral reefs, to the unexplored depths of the deep ocean trenches. As rich as the marine environment is in animal and plant species, the Pacific Islands retain a culture



Underwater archaeologists map a 19th century whaling shipwreck site  
Photo Credit: NOAA NMSP

## National Marine Sanctuary - Pacific Islands Region

### Maritime Heritage Program

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Whaling shipwreck site at Pearl and Hermes Atoll  
Photo Credit: NOAA NMSP

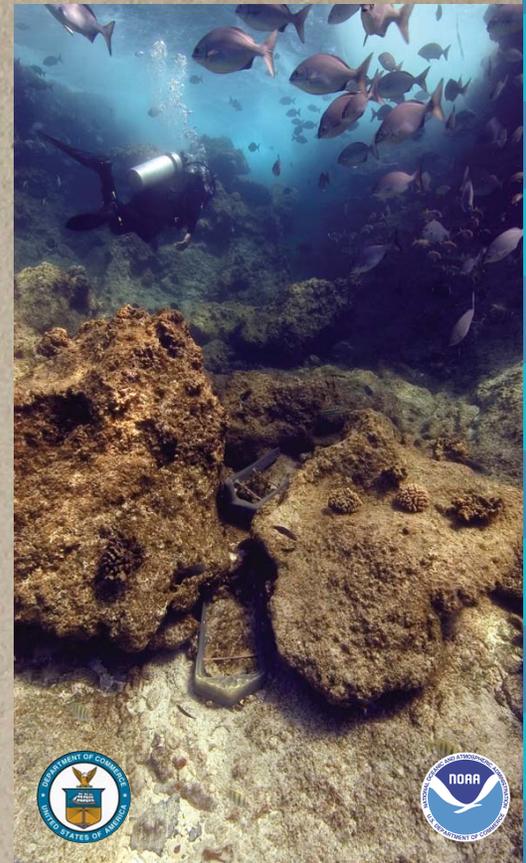
unique to themselves. Our island world revolves around the ocean—for pleasure, transportation and physical and spiritual sustenance, the ocean has shaped the way Pacific societies have evolved.

NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program's Pacific Islands Region seeks to provide a better understanding of our marine environment and increase appreciation of our unique maritime heritage. This brochure will highlight the activities of NOAA's Maritime Heritage Program in the Pacific Islands Region. The region includes the precious coral reef ecosystems in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and American Samoa, as well as the humpback whale breeding grounds in the main Hawaiian Islands.

Underwater archaeologist investigates the reef at Midway Atoll  
Cover Photo Credit: NOAA NMSP



# Maritime Heritage Program Pacific Islands Region



## What is a National Marine Sanctuary?

Our national marine sanctuaries embrace part of our collective riches as a nation. Within their protected waters, giant humpback whales breed and calve their young, coral colonies flourish, and shipwrecks tell stories of our maritime history. Sanctuary habitats include beautiful rocky reefs, lush kelp forests, whale migration



Humpback whale calf  
Photo Credit: Flip Nicklin, Minden Pictures, NOAA Fisheries #987

corridors, spectacular deep-sea canyons, and underwater archaeological sites. Our nation's sanctuaries can provide a safe habitat for species close to extinction, or protect historically significant shipwrecks. Ranging in size from less than one square mile to over 5,300 square miles, each sanctuary is a unique place needing special protections. Natural classrooms, cherished recreational spots, and valuable commercial industries—marine sanctuaries represent many things to many people.

To find out more about the sanctuaries and reserve in the Pacific Islands Region visit:

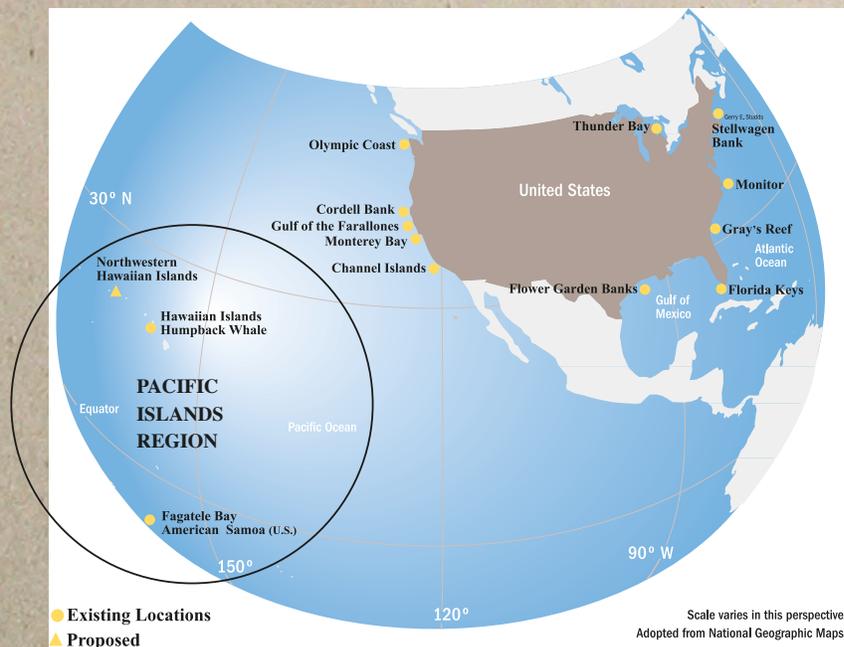
- <http://fagatelebay.noaa.gov>
- <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>
- <http://hawaiiireef.noaa.gov>

Hawaiian monk seals  
Photo Credit: Flip Nicklin, Minden Pictures



## The National Marine Sanctuary System

The National Marine Sanctuary Program serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas, encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington State to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, which is being considered for sanctuary status. The sanctuary program is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which manages sanctuaries by working cooperatively with the public to protect sanctuaries while maintaining compatible recreational and commercial activities. The program works to enhance public awareness of our marine resources and maritime heritage through scientific research, monitoring, exploration, educational programs and outreach. With the designation of the U.S. Monitor as the first national marine sanctuary in 1975, NOAA began a legacy of preserving our nation's maritime heritage.



## Introduction

With a history of approximately 1,500 years of continuous and intensive maritime activity, the Hawaiian Archipelago contains many historic shipwrecks and other types of submerged archaeological sites. The locations in this region witnessed a variety of Hawaiian and Pacific vessels and activities. These include traditional voyaging and fishing, aquaculture, copra traders, Japanese sampans, transpacific colliers, and the local wreckers or salvage companies from the main Hawaiian Islands, in addition to the naval activity that is a large part of Pacific Islands history. Documents indicate that there are over 80 U.S. Navy ships and submarines, hundreds of commercial sailing and steam vessels, and over 1,500 navy aircraft lost in these waters. Many of these vessel and aircraft losses are U.S. naval property and war graves associated with major historic events, or are sites older than 100 years and of potentially historic and archaeological interest.

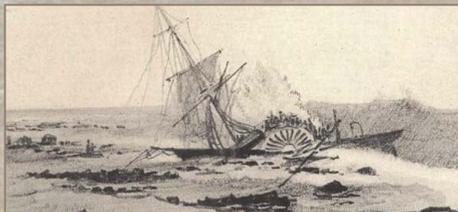


Underwater archaeologist and artifacts at the *Carrollton* shipwreck site, a sailing bark lost in 1906  
Photo Credit: NOAA NMSP

Until recently, many wrecksites in places like the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands remained uninvestigated because of their remote location and the challenges facing work in these islands. With the support of several partners, NOAA has been able to begin the important process of identifying, documenting and protecting these maritime heritage resources in the Pacific Islands Region. Questions about maritime history, technology, and the interface between the environment and these wrecksites can all be answered by careful study and interpretation of these submerged cultural sites. But the interpretation and documentation of these sites is just the beginning of what the National Marine Sanctuaries Maritime Heritage Program does. Proper management and protection of these sites allows for greater public understanding and appreciation, preserving heritage for generations to come.

Future efforts involving maritime heritage include developing partnerships with agencies, local governments, educational groups and private interests. The Maritime Heritage Program in the region is concerned with developing a thorough inventory of submerged sites in the Pacific Islands. The heritage inventory for Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary and American Samoa, collaborating in deep water side-scan sonar surveys and responding to threatened sites such as the PB4Y-1 naval aircraft submerged off Maui are just a few of the future projects for the Pacific Islands Region Maritime Heritage Program.

## Historic Shipwrecks in the Pacific



Survivor's drawing of U.S.S. *Saginaw* wrecked on the reef at Kure Atoll  
Photo Credit: Read, 1912

The U.S.S. *Saginaw* captures a critical period of American involvement in the Pacific. Commissioned in 1860, she was a historic vessel of the "old steam navy." On October 29, 1870, the U.S.S. *Saginaw* was checking Kure Atoll for castaways on her way home from Midway to San Francisco when, due to unexpected currents, she ran aground on the reef. The ship's crew established a camp ashore until they were rescued two months later after five volunteers had sailed the captain's 22-foot gig to find help in the main Hawaiian Islands. The gig was caught in heavy surf at Kaua'i, leaving a sole survivor, William Halford. The remaining sailors were rescued by the S.S. *Kilauea* 68 days after the shipwreck.



U.S.S. *Macaw* port side photo, Moore Drydock Company  
Photo Credit: Courtesy of National Archives

The U.S.S. *Macaw* ASR-11 was a submarine rescue vessel. These ships were known as the "guardians of the submarines," and typically served the Navy in a variety of roles. Not only were they highly specialized salvage, diving, and rescue ships, they also

accompanied submarines going to sea on trials, recovering practice torpedoes, and standing by for emergency rescue operations. *Macaw* received her commission on July 12, 1943. On her first salvage mission to assist the submarine *Flier*, which was run aground at Midway, *Macaw* herself became stranded on the east side of the channel on January 18, 1944. A subsequent storm trapped her on the reef, sending her into deeper water and forcing her salvage crew to abandon ship.

## Whaling in the Pacific

In the first half of the 19th century, whaling operations spread north into the Pacific basin in search of lucrative whaling grounds off South America, Australia, Japan and, finally, the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea. Soon after the *Balaena* and the *Equator* harpooned the first whale off the coast of Maui in 1819, Hawai'i won its place on whalers' charts. Several whaling shipwrecks have recently been discovered in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and are currently being documented. Whaling wreck sites at Kure and Pearl and Hermes Atoll add to our understanding of 19th century voyaging in the Pacific.



Underwater archaeologists investigating ship timbers beneath the sand  
Photo Credit: NOAA NMSP

## Aviation Sites

There are a great number of submerged aviation wreck sites in the Pacific Islands. Hawai'i played a major part in the training of young aviators for combat in the Pacific. The Hawaiian Islands have twice witnessed major battles resulting in losses, and subsequently submerged naval properties. Though most of the ships damaged and sunk during the attack on Pearl Harbor were later salvaged, several remain as "survivors" of Pearl Harbor. Although most of the Battle of Midway took place beyond the limits of state or federal waters, many aircraft from both navies were lost in the immediate vicinity of Midway Atoll.

In December 2004, NOAA was involved in an interagency project to survey the seafloor for submerged aviation wrecksites. Seaplanes and flying



Bow of the JRM-1 *Martin Mars* flying boat south of Pearl Harbor  
Photo Credit: NOAA/NMSP

boats played a critical role in Hawai'i and the Pacific. From within HURL's *Pisces IV* and *V*, research submersibles at a depth of about 1,400 feet, researchers recorded images of the crash sites, using digital video and still cameras. Preservation legislation supports the survey and inventory of these types of sites, and Navy ships and aircraft are specifically protected as military vessels.



Diver documents bow of U.S.S. *Macaw* at Midway Atoll  
Photo Credit: NOAA NMSP

## Partnerships

Partnerships are an important part of NOAA's maritime heritage efforts in the Pacific Islands Region of the National Marine Sanctuary Program. Often, separate agencies share the same state and federal mandates in the preservation of submerged cultural resources. Some of our partners include:

- NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration (OE)
- NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service Coral Reef Ecosystem Division (NMFS CRED)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Naval Historical Center (NHC)
- University of Hawai'i Undersea Research Lab (HURL)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Hawai'i State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD)
- American Samoa Historic Preservation Office (ASHPO)



HURL submersible at the bow of a 1930's PK-1 flying boat  
Photo Credit: NOAA/HURL