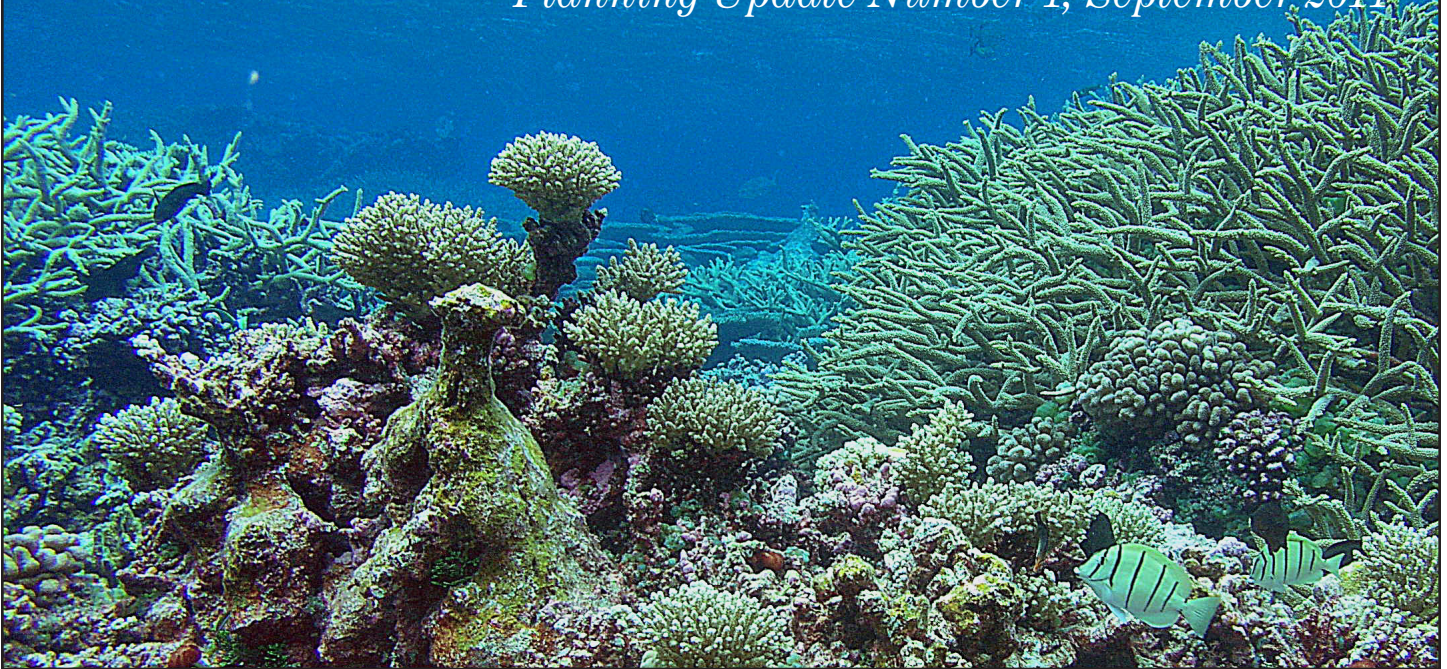


Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument

Planning Update Number 1, September 2011



Coral diversity at Tortugonias Reef, Palmyra Atoll NWR - Laura Beauregard/USFWS

Management Planning begins for Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument

Greetings! On January 6, 2009, President George W. Bush established the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. The Monument provides broad scale protections and incorporates 86,888 square miles within its boundaries, which extend 50 nautical miles from the mean low water lines of Howland, Baker, and Jarvis Islands; Johnston, Wake, and Palmyra Atolls; and Kingman Reef.

These lands, reefs, and waters represent some of the last frontiers and havens for wildlife in the world, and comprise the most widespread collection of coral reef, seabird, and shorebird protected areas on the planet under a single nation's jurisdiction.

The Secretary of the Interior, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), has responsibility for the management of the Monument in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA), who has primary responsibility for management with respect to fishery-related activities.

Working cooperatively, the Service and NOAA are seeking input from the public, interested agencies, and organizations regarding concerns, interests, and viewpoints about important monument management issues. This information will be helpful as we develop the Monument Management Plan

(MMP) that will integrate individual refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) and NOAA's monument management activities and regulations for fishery-related activities. Opportunities for public input will be announced throughout the planning process.

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The MMP Planning Process

NOAA and the Service are working to develop a Vision Statement and Goals for the Monument. These will be followed by developing management strategies common throughout the Monument. Fisheries-related management will be planned through the National Marine Fisheries Service process.

The Service is working to complete CCPs for all seven of the existing National Wildlife Refuges that will be integrated into the MMP. The MMP will be accompanied by an Environmental Assessment (EA) describing the alternatives considered and their environmental effects.

CCPs for Howland, Baker, and Jarvis Islands and their respective EAs are complete, although they may be revised if needed. Management alternatives for the Kingman Reef and Palmyra Atoll CCPs are currently in development and we encourage you to participate in the process during public comment periods. Johnston and Wake Atolls' CCPs are scheduled to be initiated in 2012.

Monument Overview

The Monument includes seven islands or atolls spread across a vast portion of the Pacific Ocean. At the core of each area of the monument is a dynamic and unique zone that is also protected through the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Johnston Atoll

Johnston is an ancient atoll. It is the northernmost of the Line Islands archipelago. Johnston supports at least 45 coral species,

including a thriving table coral community and a dozen species found only in the Hawaiian and northern Line Islands. Large populations of seabirds, sea turtles, whales, and reef sharks are found here.



Brown boobies - Lindsey Hayes/USFWS

Howland, Baker, and Jarvis Islands

All three of these refuges hug the equator and were formed as fringing reefs around small islands built by volcanoes some 65-120 million years ago. They support shrubs and grasses adapted to the arid climate at the Equator and host colonies of 15 different breeding seabird species, some with population sizes of international significance. At these three reefs, coral cover and species diversity is much higher than in Hawai'i or Florida. Beyond the shallow fringing reefs and terraces, the slopes of the extinct volcanoes drop off sharply to the deep floor of the equatorial Pacific Ocean. The Equatorial Countercurrent creates localized, nutrient-rich upwelling



*Anemone fish and bubble-tip anemone
Jim Maragos/USFWS*

in the shallows near the islands, a resulting in high fish biomasses. These remote and rarely visited reefs are characterized by a large proportion of top predators in the fish community. Up to 340 fish species inhabit these isolated reefs, and giant clams, sharks, and sea turtles are abundant.

Palmyra Atoll and Kingman Reef

Part of the Line Islands chain, Palmyra Atoll and Kingman Reef are also remnants of volcanoes from some 65-120 million years ago. Kingman is known to be the most undisturbed coral reef within the U.S., complete with a greater proportion of apex predators than at any other studied coral reef ecosystem in the world. Palmyra Atoll has one of the best remaining examples of *Pisonia grandis* rainforest found in the Pacific, and a large diversity of fish species (418 species). Many nationally and internationally threatened, endangered, and depleted species thrive at Palmyra and Kingman, including sea turtles, pearl oysters, giant clams, reef sharks, coconut crabs, fishes, and dolphins.



*Tridacna maxima clam
Jim Maragos/USFWS*

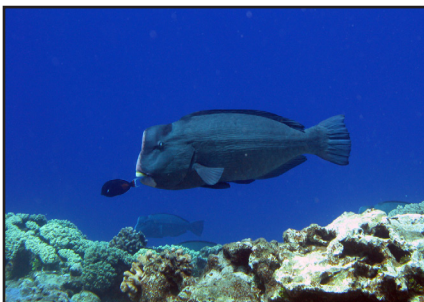
Large schools of rare melon-headed whales reside off both atolls, and a species of beaked whale was recently rediscovered. Palmyra supports breeding populations of 11 species of

seabirds, including one of the largest red-footed booby colonies in the world and the largest black noddy colony in the Central Pacific. Large numbers of the rare bristle-thighed curlew and several other wintering shorebird species depend on Palmyra for survival.

The Nature Conservancy also manages a preserve and small research camp at Palmyra Atoll for the Palmyra Atoll Research Consortium. Through this consortium of 10 institutions from the United States and New Zealand, scientists conduct crucial monitoring and research with global implications such as the changing global climate, marine and territory biodiversity, conservation, restoration and ecosystem dynamics.

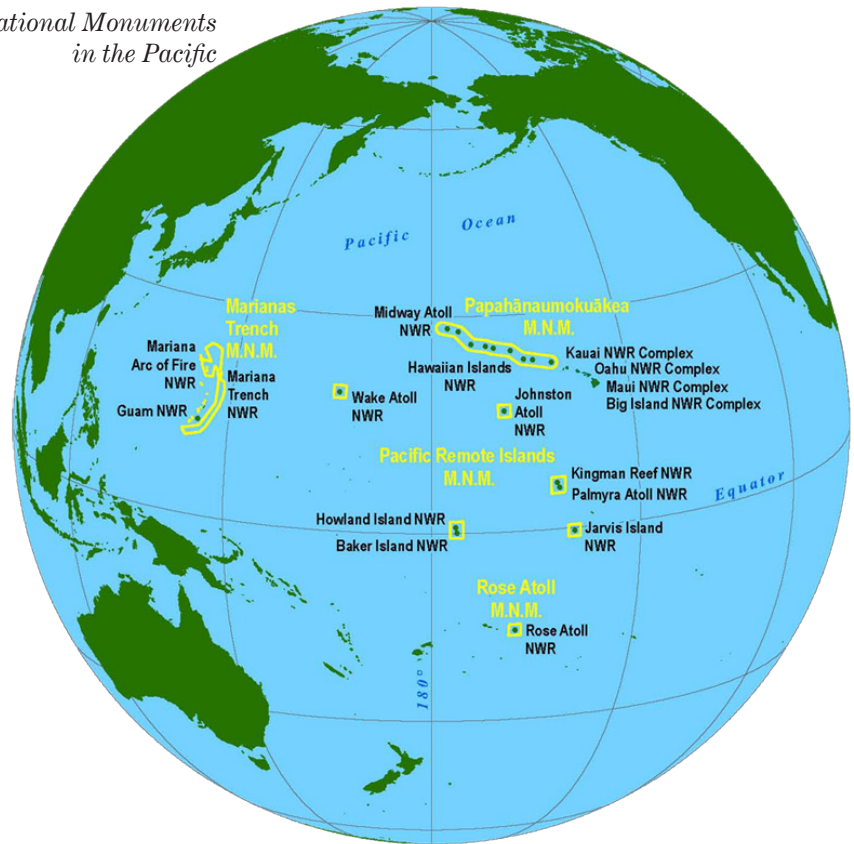
Wake Atoll

Wake is the northernmost atoll in the Marshall Islands geological ridge and perhaps the oldest living atoll in the world. In addition to being an active U.S. Air Force airfield, the atoll provides important seabird and migratory shorebird habitat, as well as vibrant coral reefs that support large populations of fishes in the refuge/monument waters. More than 300 fish species and 100 coral species thrive on shallow coral reefs, along with giant clams, marine turtles, and spinner dolphins.



Humphead wrasse / NOAA

Marine National Monuments in the Pacific



Preliminary Issues

We have identified the following preliminary issues that we may address in the Monument's Plan.

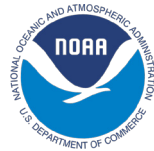
- Methods for protecting the physical, biological, and cultural resources for the long-term while providing high quality opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation.
- Impacts from past and current use of military sites.
- Wildlife and habitat management.
- Visitor services management.
- Historic and cultural resources protection.
- Facilities maintenance.
- Scientific exploration and research management.
- Develop an appropriate permitting regime for activities in the Monument, where necessary.

Planning Schedule

<u>Elements of the MMP Currently in Progress</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
Release of draft CCPs for Palmyra Atoll and Kingman Reef	Spring 2012
Public review and comment for Palmyra Atoll and Kingman Reef draft CCPs	Spring 2012
Final Palmyra Atoll & Kingman Reef CCPs	Fall 2012
Release of public review draft MMP Elements in Common	Winter 2013

Dates are tentative and subject to change as the planning process progresses. Updates and revisions for other MMP elements will be scheduled at a later date.

Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument
300 Ala Moana Blvd., Rm. 5-231
Honolulu, HI 96850



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Help us identify the scope of issues to be considered during the early planning phase by sending your comments to:

E-mail: FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov, include "Pacific Remote Islands" in the subject line of the message.

U.S. Mail: Laura Beauregard, Refuge Planner, Hawaiian and Pacific Islands NWRRC, 300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 5-231, Honolulu, HI 96850

Telephone: 808.792.9558

Visit our websites:

<http://www.fws.gov/pacificremoteislandsmarinemonument/>

http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/MNM/mnm_index.html



Red-footed booby and chick - USFWS