



‘Āina Momona (Place of Abundance)



The natural and cultural abundance of Papahānaumokuākea are inseparably linked

- One of the world's last apex predator-dominated coral reef ecosystems, abounding in sharks and jacks, a feature characteristic of reefs prior to significant human exploitation.
- A spectacular example of evolution in isolation, with a very high degree of terrestrial endemism occurring and the highest known degree of endemism for any marine ecosystem.
- An unparalleled example of the later stages of volcanic island subsidence and atoll formation.
- Vital habitat for pupping, nesting, and foraging for critically endangered Hawaiian monk seals, Laysan ducks, and threatened Hawaiian green turtles.
- Nesting and foraging area for over 14 million seabirds – making Papahānaumokuākea the world's largest tropical seabird rookery.
- Home to the highest concentration of ritual sites in Hawai'i, bearing remarkable testimony to the shared historical origins of all Polynesian societies.
- A sacred region, in predominant Native Hawaiian cosmology and tradition, where life originates and where ancestors return after death.
- Training grounds for traditional and contemporary Hawaiian wayfinders (non-instrument navigators).



World Heritage Inscription

A designation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Heritage sites safeguard for humanity the most universal and significant aspects of our global natural and cultural heritage. Papahānaumokuākea joins New Zealand's Tongariro National Park, East Africa's Serengeti, Australia's Great Barrier Reef, and the Egyptian Pyramids as one of the world's gems. Papahānaumokuākea is Hawai'i's second World Heritage Site, joining Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, inscribed in 1987.

Significance

Papahānaumokuākea was chosen as the first United States nomination to World Heritage in more than 15 years and inscription of this sacred region has given the Nation its first mixed, natural-cultural site. Globally, Papahānaumokuākea is the first site ever inscribed as a 'cultural seascape,' and at the time of inscription, was one of only 45 marine sites, and one of only 27 mixed, natural-cultural sites in the world.

On July 30, 2010, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was inscribed as a mixed World Heritage Site for its outstanding natural and cultural attributes. The region's complex array of marine and terrestrial ecosystems encompass nearly 140,000 mi² (362,000 km²) of remote-ocean and include the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Papahānaumokuākea is both one of the largest Marine Protected Areas and World Heritage sites on Earth.

Papahānaumokuākea: Where Nature and Culture are One

The string of small islands, atolls and reefs are the last or only habitat for some of the world's most endangered species, and the region holds status as a sacred place in the history, culture, and cosmology of Native Hawaiian people.



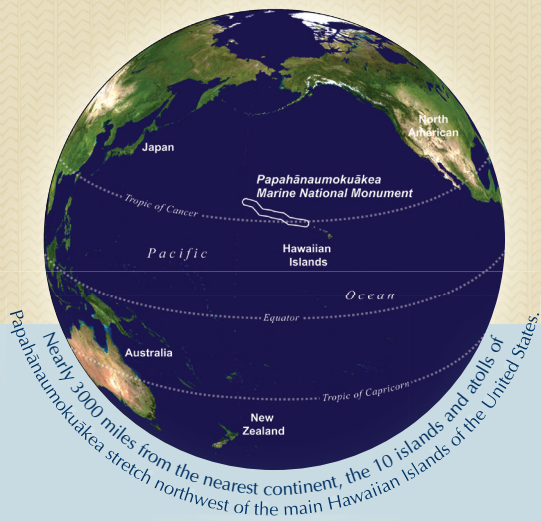
Papahānaumokuākea

World Heritage Site

Global Contributions

World Heritage sites are nominated under specific criteria and are seen as the best examples of natural or cultural heritage in the world. The following are some of the attributes, for which Papahānaumokuākea was inscribed:

Culture: A sacred place in the history and cosmology of Native Hawaiian people, Nihoa and Mokumanamana especially, are considered exceptional for their numerous and intact ritual sites (*heiau* - shrines) and their connection to living cultural traditions. Papahānaumokuākea is also an essential training ground for contemporary Hawaiian wayfinders (non-instrument navigators).



Geology: The scale, distribution and linear nature of Papahānaumokuākea's geologic processes are unrivaled. As the major portion of the world's longest, oldest and most remote volcanic chain Papahānaumokuākea has helped to shape our understanding of plate tectonics and hotspots and the region is home to the world's northern-most true atoll — Kure.

Habitats: The deepest reaches of Papahānaumokuākea are 15,092 feet (4,600m) below sea level, with the highest being 902 feet (275m) above and include: abyssal depths, seamounts and submerged banks, two high eroded islands, pinnacles, atolls, coral reefs, shallow lagoons, shoals, dunes, dry grasslands and shrublands, and a hypersaline lake.

Endemism: The size of the Hawaiian Archipelago, as well as its isolation and the distance between islands and atolls has led to very high rates of marine and terrestrial endemism – species that are found nowhere else in the world. Within Papahānaumokuākea, 60 percent of shallow-water fish species, an amazing 90 percent of deep-water fishes and at least 40 percent of the corals are endemic.



Management and Protection

The World Heritage Committee recognized that Papahānaumokuākea's management structure was unique among large-scale MPAs in that all forms of use, including non-extractive use, are regulated and highly restricted across the site's 1200 nautical mile expanse (2,222 km). And as one of the largest MPAs in the world, Papahānaumokuākea represents a significant portion of all fully protected seas worldwide.


PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA
Marine National Monument



For more information on World Heritage in the United States, please visit the National Park Service website at:

<http://www.nps.gov/oia/>