



Pacific Islands Geographic Strategic Plan 2024–2027



NOAA
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Acronyms

AI: artificial intelligence

CEFI: Climate, Ecosystem, and Fisheries Initiative

CNMI: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

EBFM: Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management

EEJ: Equity and Environmental Justice

EEZ: Exclusive Economic Zone

EFH: Essential Fish Habitat

ESA: Endangered Species Act

IT: information technology

IUU: Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (fishing)

MRIP: Marine Recreational Information Program

MSA: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

NOAA Fisheries: NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service

NOAA: National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration

RFMO: Regional Fishery Management Organization

Cover: A giant grouper (*Epinephelus lanceolatus*) hangs out under a school of black jacks (*Caranx lugubris*).

Credit: NOAA Fisheries. Large schools of bigeyed jacks (*Caranx sexfasciatus*) found throughout the Pacific Islands Region. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

Joint Letter from Pacific Islands Region Leadership

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We are proud to present the NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Geographic Plan for 2024–2027, which will guide and focus our actions around regional marine fisheries, ecosystems, and communities. This plan represents the commitment between the Pacific Islands Regional Office and the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center to work together with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council and other partners in support of [NOAA Fisheries](#), [NOAA](#), and the [Department of Commerce](#) national strategic goals and vision to help build a climate-ready nation and foster equitable blue economies.

The first Pacific Islands Geographic Plan, developed in 2019, served as a cohesive force between the Science Center and the Regional Office to help navigate the challenges of the past 5 years. During this time, we have worked together to create, build upon, and advance our shared priorities, resulting in an extensive list of accomplishments. What we are most proud and tremendously appreciative of is our staff for their resilience, flexibility, and commitment to our mission and always upholding our reputation of excellence.

We now move into our second geographic plan with a broader understanding and keener awareness of the interconnectedness of many of our strategic priorities. In the development of this plan, we conducted early outreach to many of our vital partners and discussed ways to better advance our shared goals. This plan highlights that our shared priorities involving climate change, ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM), and equity and environmental justice (EEJ) are inextricably tied together and we must weave together our collective resources and knowledge to holistically address these important issues.

In this plan, we strive to expand our science capabilities and community engagement efforts to better understand our changing regional ecosystems and local perspectives, respectively, allowing for more robust management decisions. We will continue conversations with our key partners in implementing this plan, as accomplishing our shared priorities is only possible when we work together.

This plan serves as a call to action to our employees and affiliates on the work we will undertake, the resources we will allocate, and how we will work with and live up to our commitment to the communities we serve. As you work toward these important goals, remember that you are part of a cohesive, resourceful team who will support you to achieve those goals. Our staff's well-being is our top priority and we will continue to prioritize initiatives that help to maintain a sustainable workload and healthy work-life balance.

We look forward to implementing this new strategic plan.



Charles L. Littnan
Director
Pacific Islands Fisheries
Science Center



Sarah J. Malloy
Deputy Regional Administrator

Science, Service, and Stewardship



Small boat deployment while on mission to survey coral health in the Mariana Archipelago. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

Vision

The potential of our ocean ecosystems is realized—using innovation and an understanding of a changing world—for the benefit of the nation.

Mission

NOAA Fisheries is responsible for the stewardship of the nation's living marine resources and their habitat. We provide vital services for the nation: sustainable and productive fisheries, safe sources of seafood, the recovery and conservation of protected resources, and healthy ecosystems—all backed by sound science and an ecosystem-based approach to management.

Organization

The [Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center](#) provides scientific advice and data to effectively manage the living marine resources of the Pacific Islands region and surrounding high seas. The Science Center works closely with the Pacific Islands Regional Office to provide independent, objective science. It conducts multidisciplinary research, monitoring, and analysis of integrated environmental and living resource systems in coastal and offshore waters; coordinates its programs for fish life history studies, stock assessments, and fisheries monitoring, data management, and interactions; and provides the scientific foundation for the conservation of cetaceans (whales and dolphins), Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, and other protected species in the Pacific Islands.

The [Pacific Islands Regional Office](#) works with the Science Center to integrate cutting-edge science into policy and management decision-making. The Regional Office maintains healthy fish stocks important for commercial and non-commercial fisheries; protects marine mammals and recovers endangered and threatened species; protects, restores, and promotes stewardship of marine and coastal habitat; and works with other government agencies to negotiate and implement the provisions of international fisheries agreements in the Pacific Ocean.

The Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and the Pacific Islands Regional Office are headquartered in Honolulu, Hawai'i, with field offices and personnel located in Maui, Kaua'i, American Sāmoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and a Service Center at Pier 38, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Overview: Pacific Region

Local Landscape, Opportunities, and Challenges

Consisting of the Hawaiian Archipelago in the north, American Sāmoa and U.S. Pacific Remote Island Areas in the south, and the Marianas Archipelago in the west, the Pacific Islands region encompasses the largest geographical area within NOAA Fisheries' jurisdiction. The U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) within the region encompasses more than 1.7 million square nautical miles of ocean, roughly equal to the EEZ around the rest of the United States including Alaska. The region is home to diverse cultures across the Pacific, many protected species including the endemic Hawaiian monk seal, and numerous fisheries that support local and national economies. NOAA Fisheries advances U.S. interests in domestic and international waters, with a focus on managing fisheries, living marine resources, and their habitats in the waters surrounding Hawai'i, American Sāmoa, Guam, CNMI, and the Pacific Remote Island Areas, and on the high seas.

The region faces critical and unique pressure from climate change. Sea level rise is reducing available habitat for island-associated species and altering the range of key fishery resources such as tuna species. In addition, the region's location among many other Pacific Islands and coastal nations means that Pacific Islands region pelagic fisheries face competition for limited fishery resources on the high seas.



Grey reef shark herding barracudas at Jarvis Island reef in the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

These challenges come with tremendous opportunity for NOAA Fisheries to reimagine and invest in solutions that uphold values of equity and environmental justice and ensure protection and sustainable management of our trust resources. For example, given the growing interest in enhancing the U.S. presence in the Pacific Islands, we are actively seeking opportunities to support Pacific Island nations' efforts to mitigate climate change impacts and ensure food security through healthy fishery resources. We are working within Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fisheries and minimize bycatch, which will support more sustainable management of fisheries and protected resources across the board. And we are evaluating management strategies to promptly respond to novel climate change-induced ecosystem transformations.

As a result of managing resources over such a vast area and the location of our staff and partners throughout the Pacific,

coordination is challenging and increasingly expensive. We are looking for new ways to increase efficiency in meeting our mission and to enable greater connectivity across our staff and partners. To be culturally respectful, we must thoughtfully engage our communities and jurisdictional partners with in-person, relationship-building efforts. We seek to improve coordination internally and with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council; federal, state, and territorial management agencies; RFMOs; local industry and organizations; academia; and island communities. We are linking habitat management to improved fisheries management and protected species recovery. We are investing in new data governance and technology systems to improve efficiency and reproducibility, and maintain scientific integrity. Importantly, we are prioritizing the needs of our people, including the well-being of staff, and engaging with the communities we serve and our partners to ensure their priorities are uplifted and centered in our work.

Top Geographic Priorities

NOAA Fisheries has sustained world-class fisheries, productive ecosystems, and resilient seafood communities. Among our highest priorities in the region are to support growth of the Blue Economy and realize the potential of America's oceans and coasts. We strive to:

- Shift research portfolios toward investigating the potential impacts of climate change on fish stocks, protected species, Pacific Island fishing communities, and the ecosystems that support them.
- Be a regional leader in fisheries management, protected species conservation and recovery, and habitat conservation; ensure our management activities address uncertainty, flex under changing environmental conditions, and achieve ecosystem objectives.
- Modernize data systems and enhance information technology (IT) capabilities to ensure monitoring, research, assessment, management, and recovery activities meet future needs and are reproducible, accessible, and unified through data governance.
- Prioritize EEJ in decision-making by enhancing our engagement and collaboration with stakeholders, developing a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve, and mitigating impacts of natural resource management actions on disadvantaged communities.
- Support Pacific Island fishing communities and the seafood sector by administering grant programs, prioritizing research to fill gaps for Council- and RFMO-managed fish stocks, and encouraging enhanced enforcement capacity in the region to combat IUU fishing.
- Innovate survey, monitoring, and assessment methods to enhance efficacy of existing programs and extend observational mission activities across the U.S. Pacific Islands with a focus on uncrewed systems, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, and genetics techniques.



Lazing away on the Tern Island dock in Lalo (*French Frigate Shoals*) is a Hawaiian monk seal (*Neomonachus schauinslandi*) and their red-footed booby friends. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

Strategic Goal 1

Adaptively manage fisheries for sustainability and economic competitiveness

NOAA Fisheries responsibly manages our commercial and non-commercial fisheries and amplifies their economic value through effective management under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) with the Council and international fisheries with RMFOs. For example, the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center undertakes studies to improve understanding of target pelagic fish stocks, which informs the development of cost-effective conservation and management measures by the Council and RFMOs, which are then implemented by the Pacific Islands Regional Office.

Regionally, we are collaborating to develop innovative management systems and policies, such as EBFM, that take into account both fishing and non-fishing effects on marine resources; are adaptive to environmental changes; and can be implemented within timescales appropriate to maintain economically viable and sustainable fisheries into the future.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of domestic stocks for which annual catch does not exceed the annual catch limit
- Number of adequate assessments for fish stocks
- Ratio of rulemaking actions in which statutory timelines were met compared to total
- Number of management measures implementing international agreements
- Number of fishery management actions that include climate, EEJ, and ecosystem considerations
- Number of surveys (for all platforms) meeting threshold for observational requirements
- Capacity built in state and territorial jurisdictions to improve resource management



Towboard mission to survey coral health in the Mariana Archipelago. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

Key Strategies

Manage stocks for optimum yield and build climate and economic resilience in U.S. seafood and fishing sectors

- Work with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council to rebuild and manage western Pacific fish stocks in partnership with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, North Pacific Fisheries Commission, South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization; state, territorial and federal partners; fishing communities; and industry.
- Advance the adoption of climate-informed, ecosystem-based stock assessments for both domestic and internationally managed stocks.
- Prioritize stock assessments, data collection, and modeling for regionally important commercial and non-commercial fish stocks, and incorporate local and Indigenous Knowledge into stock assessments and other products informing management actions.
- Promote regional economic security and seafood competitiveness by enhancing local fisheries management, conducting research to evaluate socio-economic impacts, and administering community-focused grants.
- Engage with and expand opportunities for sustainable non-commercial and recreational sectors, and support subsistence fishing for Indigenous populations.
- Ensure regional climate and economic resilience in Western

Pacific fisheries with implementation of a regional offshore aquaculture program codified in Western Pacific Fishery Ecosystem Plans.

- Encourage adoption by RFMOs of cost-effective conservation and management measures for key fish stocks and effective implementation, including compliance accountability, by member nations.

Advance climate science and ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM) to increase the sustainability of marine fisheries

- Develop a framework to prioritize and integrate ecosystem factors into existing and new programs through regional working groups, and coordinate with external partners, foreign governments, and fishing industries to help implement and advance EBFM strategies including into Habitat Focus Area efforts.
- Develop a collaborative strategy with the Western Pacific Council and state and territorial partners to monitor and manage ecosystem component species.
- Identify observations, indicators, and data needed to track the status and trends of key ecosystem components (e.g., physical environmental conditions, biogeochemical properties, biological communities, climate, human activities, and human well-being) that collectively reflect the condition and trajectory of ecosystem productivity and of fisheries and fishing communities, and that support EBFM implementation.

- Develop and operationalize EBFM tools (e.g., Ecosystem Status Reports, Ensemble Random Forest Model, regional ocean circulation models, and Management Strategy Evaluations) needed by scientists and managers to understand the impacts of climate change on marine resources and inform adaptive management strategies.
- Use climate and ecosystem information to better understand changing ocean conditions, impacts of climate on shifting species distributions and population dynamics, and the consequences for the communities that these marine resources support as identified in the Pacific Islands Climate Science Strategy Regional Action Plan.
- Increase the capacity of decision-makers to use climate-related information in management advice by developing climate-informed risk assessments, stock assessments, management strategy evaluations, adaptation frameworks, and other tools.

Mitigate and adapt to climate-driven changes in fisheries habitat

- Support climate-related research, monitoring, and management objectives of relevant state and territorial natural resource management agencies through implementation of the National Coral Reef Monitoring Program and other programs.
- Refine essential fish habitat determinations for regional stocks and support assessments of habitats to identify areas that are important for fish reproduction, settlement, forage, and



Scientists often have to balance the scales and themselves while measuring ono (*Acanthocybium solandri*) on a moving NOAA ship. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

growth, and are vulnerable to climate and other stressors.

- Coordinate with partners to identify, implement, and monitor projects that can be used to increase habitat quantity and quality, mitigate climate impacts and/or restore coral reef ecosystems, enhance community resilience, and bolster projects funded through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act funds.

Diversify our data collection technologies and expand/modernize data products and services

- Apply artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning techniques to enhance efficiency of coral reef and fishery monitoring programs.
- Transition to electronic reporting and cloud-based technologies to create enterprise-level data management systems that provide timely,

accurate, and cost-effective data products to support stock assessment, economic and social impact assessment, and other fisheries management applications.

- Develop incentives for industry-based data collection and real-time data reporting and support cooperative research with industry, including through grants programs.
- In collaboration with the Western Pacific Council, continue to develop and begin to implement an electronic monitoring program for the Pacific Islands Region longline fisheries.
- Support NOAA Fisheries’ Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) certification of the State of Hawai‘i’s Marine Recreational Fishing Survey and develop a proposal for MRIP certification of territorial creel surveys.
- In support of the NOAA Fisheries Climate, Ecosystem, and Fisheries Initiative (CEFI) priorities, expand the observation of ocean physical, biogeochemical, and biological conditions, and the collection of social and economic information, to improve early warnings, longer-term

projections, and management advice for climate-informed decision-making.

- Use Inflation Reduction Act funds to accelerate advancement of data acquisition in support of these strategies.

Ensure equity and accessibility for Indigenous, and underserved communities

- Identify, implement, and monitor activities, research, and management measures that promote the participation of Indigenous and underserved communities—including the use of local and Indigenous Knowledge in fisheries that they have traditionally depended upon, but in which they may not have the capabilities to support continued and substantial participation.
- Ensure equitable participation in international fisheries by advancing a new tropical tuna conservation and management measure supporting American Sāmoa for adoption by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.
- Support inclusive nominations for RFMO Commissioner, Western Pacific Council member,

and other advisory committee nominations.

- Identify and address systemic barriers for communities to access benefits and services, such as Pacific Islands grant programs, and meaningfully participate in the management process, including through the National Environmental Policy Act process.

Counter illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity

- Seek the adoption and implementation of transparent and effective compliance monitoring processes in RFMOs in order to combat IUU fishing and reduce seafood fraud.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of RFMOs by supporting enforceable conservation and management measures consistent with U.S. policy objectives and increase assistance in building the capacity of other nations in the region to improve compliance and enhance the monitoring, control, and surveillance of marine fishing operations through technical assistance and collaboration. NOAA Fisheries will continue to prioritize our efforts within the RFMOs and with foreign countries, federal partners such as the U.S. Coast Guard, and non-governmental organizations to deter, detect, and prevent IUU fish and fish products from entering U.S. markets.
- Coordinate with NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and NOAA enforcement attorneys to enforce violations against U.S.-flagged fishing fleets in the Pacific.



Local fishing boats ready for an early morning start, in Nāwilwili Harbor, Kaua‘i. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

Strategic Goal 2

Safeguard protected species and propel their recovery

NOAA Fisheries conserves and recovers protected species and habitats and promotes sustainable fishing practices through effective management under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), MSA, Clean Water Act, and Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as well as spatial conservation efforts such as Marine National Monuments.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Percentage of recovery actions ongoing or completed
- Increased number and percentage of recovery activities developed with the meaningful engagement of affected communities
- Increased number of protected species with stable or increasing population levels
- Percentage of protected species with adequate population assessments
- Ratio of consultations, permits, and authorizations in which statutory timelines were met compared to total
- Number of complete Marine National Monument management plans
- Number of domestic stocks for which potential biological removal is not exceeded
- Number of surveys (for all platforms) meeting threshold for observational requirements

Key Strategies

Implement actions to recover listed endangered and threatened species

- Develop, implement, and update recovery plans for ESA-listed species, focusing on Species in the Spotlight and effective

habitat conservation and restoration.

- Improve regional and international collaboration and coordination for the recovery of protected species, including the implementation of recovery actions.

- Prioritize surveys to support stock assessments and data collection for regionally important protected species and incorporate local and Indigenous Knowledge and the best available science into stock assessments.
- Enhance partnerships and increase the capacity to respond to stressed, sick, injured, and stranded marine species—including during emergency interventions—and further develop mitigation techniques to recover protected species in the Pacific Islands region.
- Continue to develop and operationalize EBFM tools (e.g., Protected Species Ensemble Random Forest Model and management strategy evaluations) needed by scientists and managers to understand



Green Sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) gracing the Baker Island reef in the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.



Hawaiian Islands Cetacean and Ecosystem Assessment Survey (HICEAS) yields close up of the melon-headed whales off the coast of Kaua'i, Hawai'i. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

the impacts of anthropogenic activities, climate change, and management actions on marine resources and inform adaptive management strategies.

- Conduct Hawaiian monk seal and green sea turtle camps as appropriate to maintain survey and recovery activities for these species in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Model and predict the effects of climate change on protected species to improve conservation outcomes

- Coordinate with the Department of Defense and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management on research objectives, monitoring requirements, and mitigation strategies for defense and energy programmatic activities affecting protected species in Pacific Islands areas.
- Use climate models and ecosystem information to improve our understanding of the impacts of changing ocean conditions on the distributions of protected

resources, the availability of their prey, and how these conditions influence population growth and conservation efforts.

- In support of NOAA Fisheries CEFI priorities, increase the capacity of decision-makers to use climate-related information in management advice for protected species by developing climate-informed risk assessments, stock assessments, management strategy evaluations, adaptation frameworks, and other tools.

Expand the use of advanced and innovative technologies

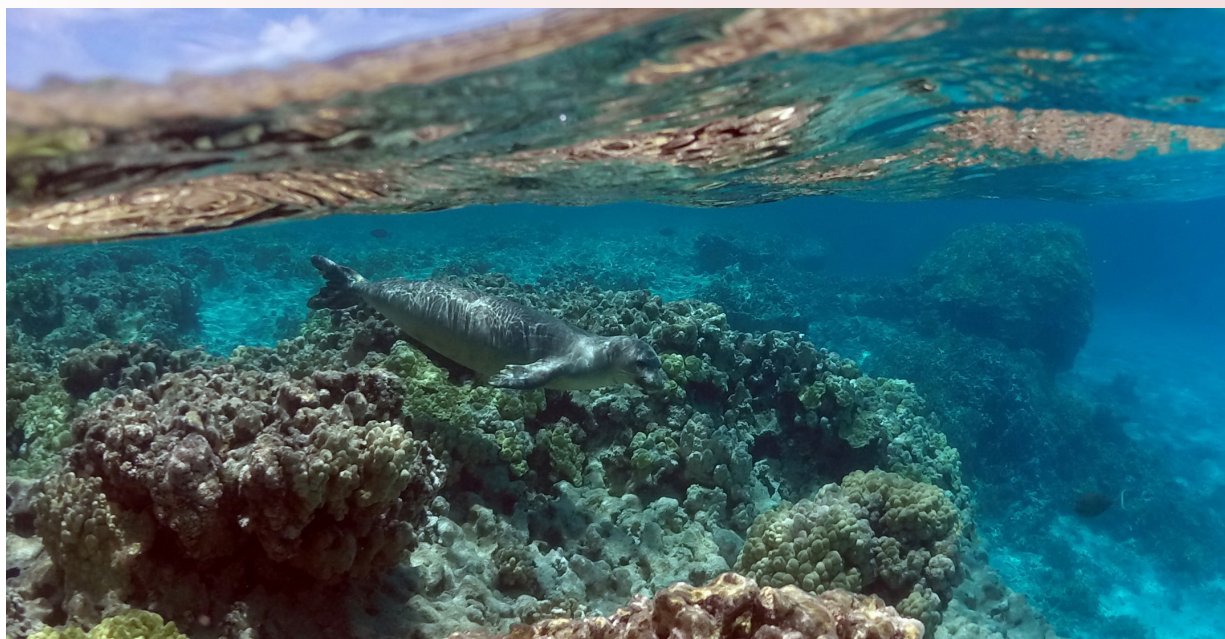
- Collaborate with industry and other partners to develop and use innovative technologies that prevent incidental hooking and entanglement of protected species in domestic fisheries and promote their adoption internationally.
- Identify and implement transition plans for technologies that augment protected species stock

survey and assessment capacity, including passive acoustics and uncrewed systems.

- Expand the use of remote sensing (e.g., satellites and drones), AI and machine learning, crowdsourcing, and citizen science to improve overall data collection on protected species including identification, interactions, and determination of post-release conditions.
- Use Inflation Reduction Act funds to accelerate advancement of data acquisition in support of these strategies.

Protect and restore important habitats necessary for the recovery of endangered marine species

- Appropriately designate critical habitat for green sea turtles and ESA-listed corals, and consider additional critical habitat designations to support recovery of endangered and threatened species in the region.
- Identify specific actions to support the recovery of threatened



Hawaiian monk seal (*Neomonachus schauislandi*) sighted in the shallow reef of the Hawaiian Archipelago. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

corals in the region through the development of a comprehensive coral recovery plan and implementation strategy.

- Meaningfully engage communities in seeking effective site-based, spatial scale, and large marine ecosystem-level approaches to institutionalize support for effective management of fisheries and protected resources and for habitat conservation.
- Coordinate with other federal, state, and territorial agencies and partners to leverage habitat protection and implement mitigation actions at sensitive sites including Lalo (French Frigate Shoals) in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

Protect marine species while supporting ocean-based economic growth

- Work with partners and stakeholders—including state and jurisdictional agencies, fishermen, and academic and environmental organizations—to understand and mitigate

fishery effects on protected species and on non-target, associated, and dependent species through development and implementation of measures to reduce impacts while maintaining social and economic benefits to fishing communities.

- Improve understanding of post-release survival rates and identify measures to reduce post-release mortality for protected species that interact with Pacific Islands fisheries.
- Coordinate with federal agencies through the consultation process and other opportunities to minimize impact on protected species from their activities and explore partnership opportunities to fulfill long-term monitoring requirements.
- Continue passive acoustic monitoring throughout the Pacific Islands to support ocean soundscape analysis.

Ensure proper care and management of Pacific Marine National Monuments

- Complete and implement Marianas Trench and Rose

Atoll management plans with co-managers and stakeholders in Marine National Monuments through an ecosystem-based framework.

- Improve coordination between NOAA Fisheries and management partners to identify and prioritize research and information needed to conserve NOAA trust resources within the Marine National Monuments.

Ensure equity and accessibility for tribal, Indigenous, and underserved communities

- Invest in cultural and linguistic capacity needed to meaningfully engage with partners and communities to enhance and encourage greater participation in research and decision-making around protected species at the regional and national levels.
- Identify opportunities for partnerships with state, territorial, and other partners that advance our shared priorities for improving outcomes for protected species.

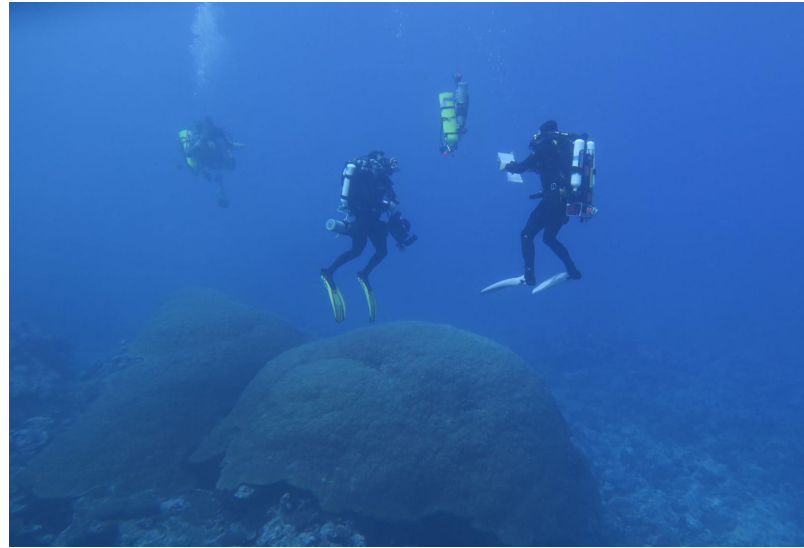
Strategic Goal 3

Diversify our workforce, promote equity and environmental justice, and improve our mission performance through organizational excellence

NOAA Fisheries works to achieve organizational excellence by providing excellent customer service and promoting worker wellness. We strive to create a workplace that is representative of the demographics of the areas we serve and are committed to upholding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles in the workplace. EEJ is a priority for our offices, with the recognition that the mission of NOAA Fisheries is only achieved through meaningful engagement and partnerships with key stakeholders and our local communities.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Key Indices scores
- Percentage of completed priority planned actions in regional EEJ and DEI plans
- Number of engagements with stakeholders, stakeholder communities, and key partners conducted through an EEJ lens
- Workforce more reflective of the diversity of the Pacific Islands
- Improvements in digital platform analytics and scores
- Physical office footprint adjusted to optimize resource allocation
- Number of business processes with improved process efficiencies



Divers hover above giant corals in the Valley of the Giants, American Sāmoa after surveying mesophotic reefs for the 2023 Rainier Integrates Charting, Hydrography, And Reef Demographics survey. Credit: NOAA Ocean Service.

Key Strategies

Promote total worker wellness

- Utilize existing regional employee groups (Pacific Islands Employee Association, Honolulu Area Laboratory Employees Association, Laulima, and Employee Councils) to create an environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect, feel valued and have a sense of belonging, are able to fully develop their potential, and contribute to a shared common mission.
- Maintain an adequately sized and structured workforce and leverage opportunities to collaborate across the Pacific Islands region to be responsive to regional needs.
- Encourage healthy work initiatives such as the annual Pacific Fitness and Wellness Challenge and actively participate on the NOAA Fisheries Wellness Council.
- Provide resources and training opportunities necessary to create an inclusive, safe, and

harassment-free workplace for all employees in the office, laboratories, on vessels, in the field, and in remote locations such as the Marine National Monument or remote beaches.

Improve workforce diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility

- Implement the Pacific Islands Regional Office and Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center DEI implementation

plans to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of the Pacific Islands at all levels and promotes diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

- Improve and invest in training, employee development and retention, recruitment, regional internship opportunities, and equitable hiring practices to promote opportunities to build a workforce representative of the communities and stakeholders we serve.

Develop workforce skills for the future

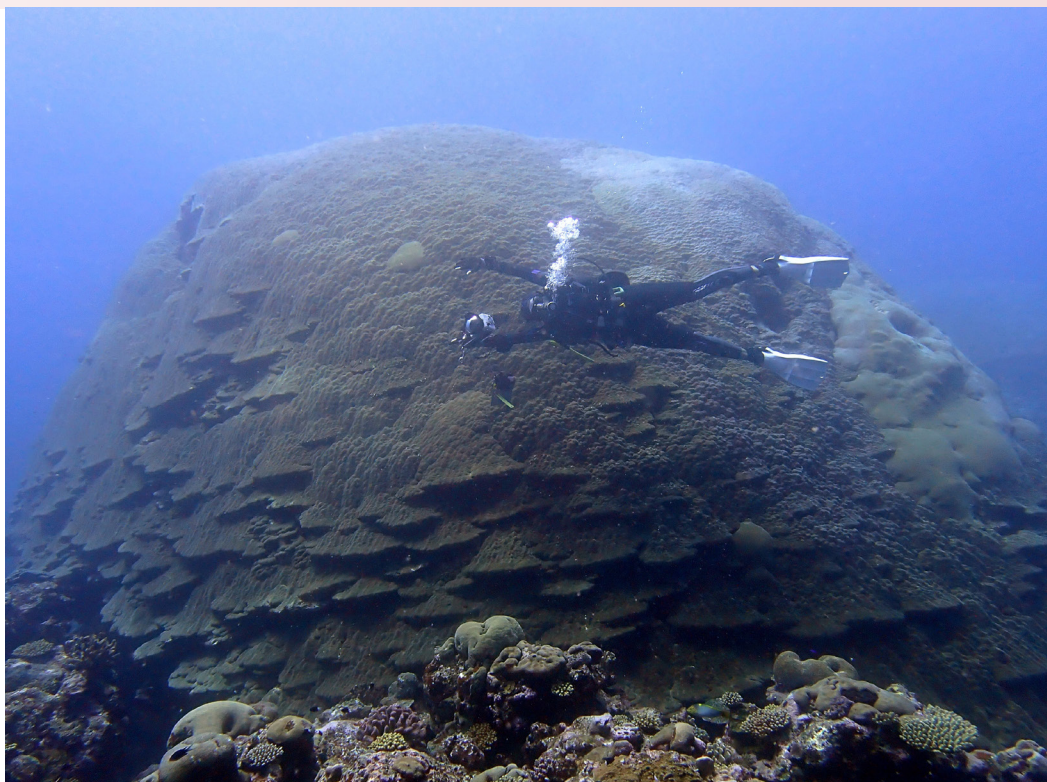
- Develop internal, cross-divisional assignments and special projects to allow staff to advance current skills or gain skills necessary to compete for promotional opportunities.
- Employ the training opportunities offered across the Department of Commerce, NOAA, and NOAA Fisheries to grow the current capabilities of our workforce.
- Promote opportunities for staff participation in mission-oriented training.

Embrace a new paradigm for the workplace

- Exercise workplace flexibilities to support retention of staff members.
- Evolve technological capabilities that support an effective and inclusive hybrid work environment.

Adaptively manage infrastructure

- Improve property stewardship, reduce risk, and reduce our space requirements by properly



Benthic surveys at Ta’ū, in American Samoa include a visit to Big Momma, a massive *Porites* colony that is one of the largest corals recorded in the world. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

excessing the accountable property backlog currently being stored.

- In conjunction with the Fisheries Information System, develop and adopt standard operating procedures for software and hardware lifecycle management and improve data stewardship and governance of fisheries data in the Pacific Islands region and other information technology resources.
- Analyze office footprint needs at the Inouye Regional Center and throughout the region, consider strategies to manage costs through partnerships within or outside of NOAA, and adjust footprints where appropriate.
- Develop a plan and begin transitioning to cloud technology for improving data processing and storage.

Optimize resources

- Develop and implement tools and systems to improve efficiency, tracking, and communication in operations, including for environmental compliance, acquisitions, travel, and government vehicle reservations.
- Collaboratively identify Pacific Islands priorities to inform the budgetary and annual allocation process.

Expand internal and stakeholder communications

- Foster an internal workplace culture that values, prioritizes, and embraces synchronized, collaborative, and strategic internal and external communication.
- Increase engagement and communication around priority issues with stakeholders, stakeholder communities, and key partners in Hawai’i, CNMI,

key partners in Hawai'i, CNMI, American Sāmoa, and Guam, including engagement with entities responsible for the well-being of Indigenous peoples in the region.

- Invest in resources to improve external and internal web presence, including improving websites and social media user experience and accessibility, as well as transitioning the Pacific Islands Regional Office intranet to a more user-friendly platform.

Implement an Equity and Environmental Justice (EEJ) Strategy

- Enhance programmatic capacity of jurisdictional agencies, regional universities, and other external partners to develop shared workplace competencies in natural resource management and government administration.
- Commit to upholding EEJ as a priority and provide the institutional support and encouragement needed to

integrate EEJ approaches and initiatives in every aspect of our work.

- Develop a community-informed regional EEJ Implementation Plan based on the National NOAA Fisheries EEJ Strategy to provide guidance for implementing EEJ throughout our region.

Implementing This Plan

Between 2024 and 2027, this plan will serve as primary guidance for planning, budgeting, and execution. Activity plans and milestones will be developed to focus execution of these strategies and to track progress; key performance indicators will provide evidence of success.



Above: Rare blue whale mom and calf pair sighted surfacing in the Hawai'i EEZ during the Hawaiian Islands Cetacean and Ecosystem Assessment Survey (HICEAS). Credit: NOAA Fisheries. Back Cover: Above and below, American Sāmoa has some of the most pristine areas within the Pacific Islands region from the tidepools into the sea. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.



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July 2024

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