

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



NATION'S LARGEST MARINE SANCTUARY

As of October 2012, Fagatele Bay, the nation's smallest national marine sanctuary (0.25 sq. miles) became the nation's largest (13,581 sq. miles). A final rule that expanded the boundaries provides enhanced protections and management for the waters around Rose Atoll, Fagaluva/Fogama'a, waters around Swains Island, Aunu'u Island and Ta'u Island, home to some of the oldest and largest known corals in the world. Together with the existing Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary, these protected areas will now be known collectively as the "National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa."



NEW OCEAN CENTER OPENED

The Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center opened to the public in September 2012. It is the only ocean learning, discovery and training center for the Territory. Since opening, the center has welcomed over 3,900 visitors, the majority of which are students, as well as tourists visiting the island via cruise ships. The center contains state-of-the-art exhibits, such as "Science On a Sphere", and interactive learning tools that celebrate the importance of cultural and natural ocean resources, as well as the value of the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa.



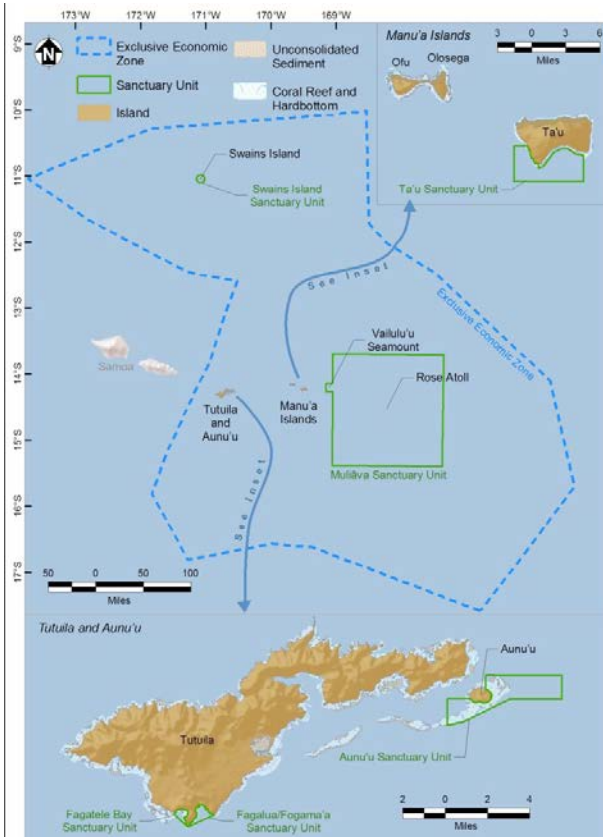
HYPERBARIC CHAMBER FOR DIVE SAFETY UNVEILED

The unveiling of the first hyperbaric monoplace chamber in May 2012 at the LBJ Hospital will greatly benefit the Territory, not just for dive decompression incidents, but for the treatment of non-healing wounds that are common among diabetic patients to avoid amputation of limbs. An estimated 40% of the Territory's population suffers from diabetes. This unit will help address disease-related suffering as well as spark new, dive interest from visitors who are keen to see our rich coral reef environments.



OSOS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DEBUTED

The American Samoa Department of Education (DOE) requested a second Ocean Swimming/Ocean Science (OSOS) program for the 2012-2013 school year. Based on recommendations from students, the OSOS team created a successful curriculum enabling students to become proficient swimmers and effective ocean stewards. The OSOS program started in August 2012, with an enrollment of 25 students. The National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa and the American Samoa Department of Commerce sponsor the program, in partnership with the DOE and the American Samoa Aquatic Agency.



LOOKING AHEAD

- A village engagement strategy is being developed to highlight maritime resources and *fa'a-Samoa* (Samoan way of life). The National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa will host traditional village displays (artisanal skills, crafts and culinary items) to celebrate each sanctuary unit called "The Festival of Sites."
- A promotional film, with footage from new sanctuary units (including an expedition to Swains Island) is under development. The purpose of the film is to capture the essence of American Samoa as a thriving natural resource with a focus on people, place and culture.
- A natural disaster/dive accident response drill will be simulated to test response, recovery and assessment methods of all emergency/fire/marine patrol responders to ensure we have the capacity on island to respond to tsunami, cyclone, ship grounding or dive accidents.

The National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa is the largest of the 13 sanctuaries in the National Marine Sanctuary System. While originally established the sanctuary in 1986 to protect and preserve the 0.25 square miles of coral reef ecosystem within Fagatele Bay, NOAA expanded the sanctuary in 2012 to include Fagalua/Fogama'a (the next bay east of Fagatele) on Tutuila Island, as well as areas at Aunu'u, Ta'u and Swains islands, and a marine protected area at Rose Atoll (which was named Muliava as known by the Manu'a residents) including nearby Vailulu'u Seamount.

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is committed to supporting lives and livelihoods across the nation and in sanctuary communities through socioeconomic research and monitoring to understand the economic and social drivers of sanctuary resources and improve management practices.

