



Papahānaumokuākea

Marine National Monument

World Heritage Nomination



In January 2009, the United States nominated Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument for consideration as a World Heritage site - a designation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Papahānaumokuākea, along with Mount Vernon, mark the country's first nominations to the World Heritage Convention in over 15 years.



Photo: James Watt

About the World Heritage List

World Heritage sites are globally significant to all people of the world. Currently 878 sites from 144 countries are listed by UNESCO. These places are representative of the most universal and significant aspects of natural and cultural heritage for future generations. If designated, Papahānaumokuākea would join sites such as East Africa's Serengeti, the Egyptian pyramids, Latin America's Baroque cathedrals, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, and the Galapagos Islands on the World Heritage list.

Nomination of Papahānaumokuākea

Papahānaumokuākea was nominated as a "mixed" site, for both its natural and cultural significance to the world. Papahānaumokuākea is the first site nominated with cultural connections to the sea and would add to the small number of World Heritage sites in the Pacific. It would be the first marine site for the United States.



Photo: Andy Collins

Papahānaumokuākea's nomination is based on its exceptional geological and ecological processes, the last or only habitat for some of the world's most endangered species, and its status as a sacred place in the history, culture, and cosmology of Native Hawaiian people.

Looking Forward

Papahānaumokuākea will now undergo a review by the advisory bodies of UNESCO World Heritage Center - the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for its natural resource heritage and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for its cultural resource heritage. Based on these reviews and recommendations, the World Heritage Committee will then make a determination on Papahānaumokuākea's proposed listing in 2010.

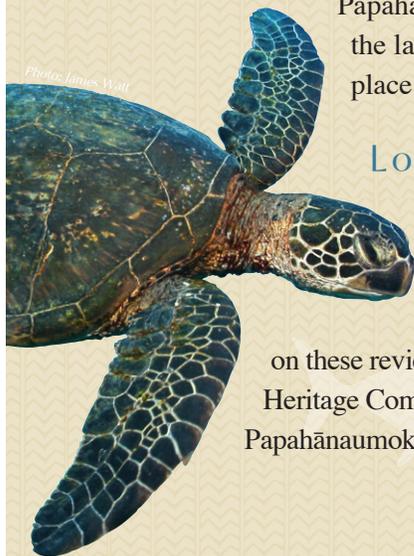


Photo: James Watt



To learn more about Papahānaumokuākea as a potential World Heritage site, visit the Monument's website at

www.papahanaumokuakea.gov



Aina Momona

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument



Native Hawaiian practitioners consider Papahānaumokuākea to be one of Hawai'i's last-remaining 'āina momona (places of abundance)



Photo: Randy Kosaki, NOAA

➤ 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, where a high degree of marine and terrestrial endemism occurs.

➤ Vital habitat for foraging, pupping and nesting for critically endangered Hawaiian monk seals, Laysan ducks, and threatened Hawaiian green turtles.

➤ Over 14 million seabirds nest in the islands and forage in the waters of Papahānaumokuākea, making it the world's largest tropical seabird rookery.

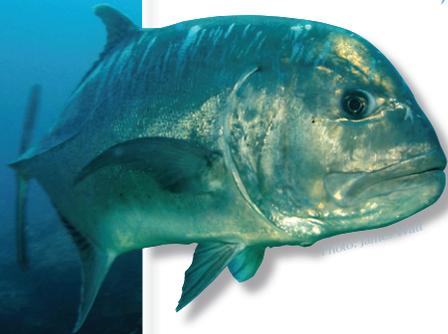


Photo: James Watt



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➤ An unparalleled example of the later stages of volcanic island and atoll formation.

➤ In indigenous cosmology and tradition, Papahānaumokuākea encompasses the sacred region where all life originates and to which Native Hawaiian ancestors return after death.

➤ Training grounds for traditional and contemporary Hawaiian wayfinders (non-instrument navigators).

➤ Highest concentrations of ritual sites in Hawai'i, bearing remarkable testimony to the shared historical origins of all Polynesian societies.



Photo: James Watt



Photo: Na'alehu Anthony