

PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Agency Report to the Monument Management Board

13 January 2017-14 April 2017

Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office (PIFWO)

Presented by: Mary Abrams, Dan Polhemus

Date: 14 April 2017

Agency Accomplishments & Recent Activities

Monument Management Plan:

Threatened and Endangered Species:

Strategy TES-6, Activities TES-6.1 and 6.2:

Endangered passerine census and development of appropriate techniques for capture and translocation

PIFWO staff involved with Threatened and Endangered species did not visit the Monument during the past quarter, but are planning for the 2017 field season.

Anticipated activities include:

- 1) Partnering with USFWS Refuges to gain access to Laysan in order to monitor the new Millerbird population in August or September.
- 2) Partnering with the Intertidal Biota Survey Project (aka the "opihi project") to access Nihoa to complete annual passerine surveys and invasive plant control. This trip is tentatively planned for early September.

The 2016 Nihoa report is almost completed and the final version is expected by May 31, 2017. For copies of any publications related to this work to date, contact Sheldon Plentovich [sheldon_plentovich@fws.gov].

Other agency activities:

Midway Seawall Repair – Coral Mitigation

A programmatic permit application is in progress with the Army Corps for repairs along the entire southern seawall at Midway Atoll NWR. Repair work for various sections will occur as funds become available. Two priority repair areas have been identified for work in 2017 before seabird nesting season starts. Both of these areas are priorities for the FAA because they protect the seawall adjacent to Henderson Airfield.



Figure 1. Estimated seawall repair area at Sand Island to be covered under the programmatic U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Permit. Area A includes areas adjacent to Henderson Airfield and the Runway Safety Area. Area A maintenance responsibility belongs to the FAA. Area B is the remaining portion of the existing seawall, responsibility for which belongs to Midway NWR. The total length of both areas combined is 5,720 linear ft.

Staff from the PIFWO Aquatic Ecosystem Conservation (AEC) team and USFWS Refuges will travel to Midway from 6-13 June 2017 to transplant coral colonies in these two initial repair areas to approved sites listed in the draft coral mitigation plan. The sites were chosen using NOAA’s Atlas of Shallow Water Benthic Habitats of the NWHI, and are within a reasonable distance of shore to facilitate continued monitoring activities.



Figure 2. Potential coral transplantation locations for future seawall repairs.

Biologists will use standard methods of removal (hand and chisel) to detach all possible coral colonies for transport to the designated recipient sites. Colonies will be moved immediately in buckets of seawater on the same day they are detached, so no interim holding tanks on land will be used. Corals will be re-attached to hard substrate or boulders using epoxy. If the corals are small or encrusting, but already attached to small rocks or debris, then the corals will be kept attached and moved intact with whatever it is they are attached to. All translocated colonies will be tagged, measured, and photographed, and their GPS locations recorded for future reference.

Four days after the transplantation, biologists will go out and repeat the photo-documentation and inspection in order to document any mortality associated with transplantation stress. Any corals found to be “loose” will re-attached using epoxy.

