



PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA  
Marine National Monument

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### Marine protected area managers gather to share accomplishments

(Honolulu, HI) – On February 8, more than 200 representatives of marine managed areas honored a decade of accomplishments made by managers and partners of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, one of the largest marine conservation areas in the world and the first and only natural and cultural UNESCO World Heritage Site in the United States.

The gathering was held in collaboration with Big Ocean, a network of the world's large-scale marine managed areas. Through the designation of Papahānaumokuākea, Hawai'i has played a significant role in ushering a new genre of marine conservation. When Papahānaumokuākea was first created, less than one percent of the ocean was protected. Today there are 16 large-scale (as defined by the IUCN Task Force) marine protected areas around the globe, totaling more than 3.4 million square miles (8.7 million km<sup>2</sup>) – an area the size of Brazil.

Big Ocean is convening managers, cultural practitioners, policy-makers, donors and scholars this week in Honolulu for a conference entitled "Think Tank on the Human Dimensions of Large-Scale Marine Protected Areas." Conference participants are exploring the social, cultural, political, institutional and economic considerations and priorities of LSMPAs in support of furthering best-practices for these vast sites.

Papahānaumokuākea is cooperatively managed by state and federal agencies with input from advisory and cultural groups and successfully integrates traditional and western science approaches to research and management. Papahānaumokuākea's vision and mission expressly value the importance of protecting both natural and cultural heritage as a management imperative – an approach to conservation that has earned the site international acclaim. Managers' efforts to engage and involve Native Hawaiian people, communities and perspectives have helped mainstream conservation beyond science, species and habitat.

Monday night's gathering also recognized kupuna (elders) who have since passed but not before lending their wisdom and helping translate their knowledge into management plans that now guide conservation and research efforts.

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation 8031 under the Antiquities Act on June 15, 2006. A year later, it was given its Hawaiian name, Papahānaumokuākea. The monument encompasses 139,797 square miles (362,073 km<sup>2</sup>) of the Pacific Ocean – an area larger than all the country's national parks combined.

*Papahānaumokuākea is cooperatively managed to ensure ecological integrity and achieve strong, long-term protection and perpetuation of Northwestern Hawaiian Island ecosystems, Native Hawaiian culture, and heritage resources for current and future generations. Three co-trustees – the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, and State of Hawai'i – joined by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, protect this special place. Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was inscribed as the first mixed (natural and cultural) UNESCO World Heritage Site in the United States in July 2010. For more information, please visit [www.papahanaumokuakea.gov](http://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov).*

