



## *NOAA In Your Territory*

# **American Samoa**

---

***NOAA*** is an agency that enriches life through science. Our reach goes from the surface of the sun to the depths of the ocean floor as we work to keep citizens informed of the changing environment around them. From daily weather forecasts, severe storm warnings, and climate monitoring to fisheries management, coastal restoration and supporting marine commerce, NOAA's products and services support economic vitality and affect more than one-third of America's gross domestic product. NOAA's dedicated scientists use cutting-edge research and high-tech instrumentation to provide citizens, planners, emergency managers and other decision makers with reliable information they need when they need it.

The following is a summary of NOAA facilities, staff, programs, or activities based in, or focused on, your state or territory: Starting with highlights, then by [congressional districts and cities or towns](#), and then [territory-wide programs](#).

---

### **Highlights of NOAA in American Samoa**

[National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa & Tauese P.E. Sunia Ocean Center](#) Pago Pago

[NMFS Office of Law Enforcement Field Office](#) Pago Pago

[Weather Service Office](#) Pago Pago

[Samoa Observatory](#) Tutuila Island

## **Utulei**

### **National Ocean Service (NOS) - [National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa](#)**

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, formerly Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary, celebrates the natural and cultural resources of American Samoa in the cradle of Polynesia's oldest culture. The national marine sanctuary protects extensive coral reefs, deep water reefs, hydrothermal vent communities, rare marine archeological resources, and important fishing grounds. The national marine sanctuary is the only true tropical reef within the National Marine Sanctuary System and the only sanctuary site south of the equator. It is co-managed by the American Samoa Government where together programs such as education, outreach, research, science, monitoring, ocean services training, community livelihoods, partnerships and resource protection are implemented.

Originally designated by congress as Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary in 1986, NOAA designated an additional five protected areas within the sanctuary in 2012 and changed the name of the sanctuary to National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa. NOAA incorporated these additional areas in order to increase capacity for research opportunities, including those that can improve understanding of ecosystem threats and ways to limit impacts of such threats, and to fulfill the presidential mandate to incorporate the marine areas of Rose Atoll Marine National Monument into the sanctuary.

The Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center opened in August 2012 and has welcomed more than 42,000 visitors to date. The state-of-the-art facility features educational exhibits and interactive learning tools to promote ocean awareness and encourage good marine stewardship. It is the only NOAA office that has a visitor center in American Samoa.

## **Pago Pago**

### **National Ocean Service - [Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center](#)**

The Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center is a visitor center for the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, featuring exciting exhibits for all ages. The Ocean Center is a learning, training and discovery center that celebrates the importance of cultural and natural ocean resources in American Samoa. The exhibits address the value of coral reefs, understanding the ocean ecosystems, how our culture ties into the management of coral reefs, as well as the natural and anthropogenic threats to our reefs. Free Admission (private and walk in tours).

### **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) - [Office of Law Enforcement Field Office](#)**

NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement is the only U.S. conservation enforcement agency that is exclusively dedicated to Federal fisheries and marine resource enforcement. Its mission is to protect global marine resources by enforcing domestic laws, international treaties, and regulations dedicated to protecting wildlife, and their natural habitat. Our special agents and enforcement officers ensure compliance with these laws and take enforcement actions if there are violations. In addition, the Cooperative Enforcement Program gives OLE the ability to leverage its resources with the assistance of 27 coastal states and U.S. territorial marine conservation law enforcement agencies in supporting its Federal enforcement mission. Effective fisheries law enforcement is critical to creating a level playing field for U.S. fishermen and enabling sustainable fisheries to support all the communities throughout the Pacific Islands. The American Samoa field office, located in Pago Pago, is part of the Office of Law Enforcement's Pacific Islands Division which is headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii.

### **National Ocean Service (NOS) - [National Water Level Observation Network](#)**

The National Ocean Service (NOS) operates one long-term continuously operating tide station in American Samoa, which provides data and information on tidal datum and relative mean sea level trends, and is capable of producing real-time data for storm surge and tsunami warning. This station is located in Pago Pago and provides critical tsunami detection functionality for tsunami warning in the Pacific Basin. The station is associated with a set of tidal benchmarks installed in

the ground that is used to reference the height of the water levels and helps connect the water level to land. Station data feeds into many CO-OPS products that are used to support safe navigation, mitigate coastal hazards, and protect communities. Such products include:

- Coastal Inundation Dashboard - view water levels in real-time and during storms
- High Tide Flooding Outlooks
- Sea level trends and maps
- Real-time current measurements
- Hydrodynamic models
- Tidal and water level datums

**National Weather Service (NWS) - [Weather Service Office](#)**

The area of responsibility of NWS Pago Pago Weather Service Office (WSO) is the Territory of American Samoa and adjacent territorial waters. The WSO conducts surface and upper air observing programs and provides a full suite of watch, warning, advisory, and forecast products for the general public and marine communities. WSO Pago Pago is also responsible for coordination of its meteorological products with the Meteorological Service in the Independent State of Samoa.

**[Tutuila Island](#)**

**Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) - [American Samoa Atmospheric Baseline Observatory](#)**

Established in 1974, the American Samoa Atmospheric Baseline Observatory is one of four observatories operated by the NOAA Global Monitoring Laboratory (GML) and is located on the northeastern tip of Tutuila Island, on a ridge overlooking the South Pacific Ocean. The observatories are part of a global network that acquire long-term records of atmospheric gases, surface radiation, and meteorological parameters to study the causes and consequences of global and regional changes. Air samples are collected weekly in specially designed flasks that are then delivered to GML in Boulder for analysis. This program allows us to track trends in the trace gases associated with climate change and those most responsible for anthropogenic depletion of the ozone layer. The American Samoa Observatory also measures total column ozone above the observatory with ground-based spectrometers and flies balloon sondes to record vertical profiles of ozone and meteorological measurements. These long-term measurements help determine the effectiveness of efforts to protect and restore the ozone layer, which shields the surface from the sun's ultraviolet radiation. Excess ultraviolet radiation is responsible for increased incidence of human skin cancer, crop damage, and damage to other biogenic substances. Furthermore, these measurements also help us to fulfill our Congressionally mandated responsibility to track the recovery of the ozone layer.

**NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps (NOAA Corps) - [American Samoa/Antarctic Station Chief](#)**

The NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps stations an officer at the Samoa Observatory as Station Chief in support of the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Global Monitoring Laboratory. This officer oversees the daily management of administrative tasks, operational equipment calibration, rough data analysis, preparation of monthly reports, parts inventory and resupply, facility maintenance and upkeep, and public relations interactions. They are also the shore-side contact for the NOAA Ships visiting the island during field-season port calls. This position rotates each year as the incumbent prepares to take over as Station Chief at the South Pole Observatory.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) – [National Coastal Resilience Fund](#)**

The National Coastal Resilience Fund is a partnership effort between NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to restore, increase, and strengthen natural infrastructure to protect coastal communities, while also enhancing habitat for fish and wildlife. In American Samoa, the NCRF awarded one project in FY20 and one project in FY22.

---

### ***Entire Territory***

#### **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) - [Pacific Islands Regional Office](#) and [Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center](#)**

NMFS is responsible for the management, conservation, and protection of living marine resources within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. The Pacific Islands Region includes the waters surrounding American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as well as the Pacific Remote Island Areas. It is the largest geographic area within NMFS jurisdiction, with a U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone of more than 1.7 million square nautical miles of ocean. Using the tools provided by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, NMFS monitors and assesses fish stocks, promotes sustainable fisheries, develops and ensures compliance with fisheries regulations, restores and protects habitats, and works to reduce wasteful fishing practices. Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act, NMFS regulates and conducts research supporting the recovery of protected marine species. NMFS also co-manages four marine national monuments in the Pacific Islands Region: Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Regional Office staff in the American Samoa field office coordinate essential fish habitat reviews/consultations, oversee local fisheries Coral Reef Conservation Program efforts, participate in a wide variety of community partnerships, and review local Army Corps of Engineer permit applications. Staff also monitors activities of the U.S. purse seine fleet under the South Pacific Tuna Treaty. The American Samoa observer program also operates out of this office and places observers on longline fishery boats to obtain data on interactions with all protected species, record fish that are kept and discarded, and process selected specimen for life history information. The Regional Office also fosters sustainable aquaculture in the region. The regional aquaculture coordinator assists federal and state agencies with permitting and other activities. They also support aquaculture outreach and education, and work with industry, academia, and other stakeholders on a variety of regional marine aquaculture topics. Science Center field office staff administer scientific research and monitoring programs that support the domestic and international conservation and management of living marine resources. Staff provide logistical and coordination support for all science center research in the area and outreach support to the American Samoa Biological Sampling Program and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument's science program.

#### **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) - [National Marine Mammal Stranding Network](#) and [John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program](#)**

The National Marine Mammal Stranding Network and its trained professionals respond to dead or live marine mammals in distress that are stranded, entangled, out of habitat or otherwise in peril. Our long-standing partnership with the Network provides valuable environmental intelligence, helping NOAA establish links among the health of marine mammals, coastal ecosystems, and coastal communities as well as develop effective conservation programs for marine mammal populations in the wild. There is one stranding network member in the territory.

NOAA Fisheries funds eligible members of the Stranding Network through the competitive John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program. In FY20, 43 competitive grants were awarded nationwide for a total of \$3.7 million. No grant applications were received from American Samoa in FY20.

#### **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) - [Deep-Sea Coral Research and Technology Program](#) -**

NOAA's Deep Sea Coral Research is administered by NOAA Fisheries' [Office of Habitat Conservation](#). Mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, it is the nation's only federal research program dedicated to increasing scientific understanding of deep-sea coral ecosystems. Deep-sea corals occur off of every coastal state in the country, and create important habitats for countless species, including many fish species. The Program collaborates

closely with partners, including other NOAA offices, to study the distribution, abundance, and diversity of deep sea corals and sponges. This work then informs critical management decisions in the waters of the United States and its territories. These decisions enhance the sustainability of deep-sea fisheries and other ocean uses, while conserving deep-sea coral and sponge habitats.

The Program works with partners to complete multi-year regional fieldwork initiatives, as well as smaller projects around the country, centered on integrating new and existing information on these vulnerable and biologically diverse habitats. The first research initiative took place from 2009 to 2011 in the U.S. South Atlantic region and provided valuable information to help decision-makers refine protected area boundaries. To date, the Program has completed one or more initiatives in each region of the United States.

**National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Ocean Service (NOS), and NOAA General Counsel - [Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program](#)**

NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) assesses and restores habitat, fisheries, protected species and recreational uses that have been harmed by oil spills, chemical releases, and ship groundings. Working with federal, state, and tribal entities, and responsible parties, we have recovered funding from responsible parties for restoration of critical habitats, fisheries, protected species and recreational uses nationwide. These projects promote recovery of the ecosystem and provide economic benefits from tourism, recreation, green jobs, coastal resiliency, property values and quality of life. American Samoa is a co-trustee with NOAA for assessment and restoration after pollution incidents in American Samoa. For more information about our work in American Samoa, visit: [DARRP in Your State](#) (and use the top menu to navigate to "Hawaii & American Samoa") and this [interactive map](#).

**National Ocean Service (NOS) – [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#)**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is helping coastal communities build the future they want to see. The legislation provides a historic investment in coastal protection and restoration that will increase community resilience to climate change and extreme weather events, and improve how we manage our ocean resources. Projects funded under this law protect and restore ecologically significant habitats, including conserving lands that play a critical role in helping communities become more resilient to natural hazards. American Samoa received funding for one project in FY22, as well as funds to build the territory's capacity to protect its coastal communities and resources.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - [U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System \(Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System\)](#)**

The U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System, or IOOS®, is a federally and regionally coordinated observing system with 17 interagency and 11 regional partners. The Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS) is one of 11 regional associations of IOOS. The System addresses regional and national needs for coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes data and information. This includes gathering and disseminating regional observations; data management; modeling and analysis; education and outreach; and research and development. IOOS regional partners provide coordination with regional stakeholders while contributing data and other outputs to the national system. The Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS) empowers ocean users and stakeholders throughout the Pacific Islands, by providing accurate and reliable coastal and ocean information, tools, and services that are easy to access and use. Fishermen, commercial operators, surfers, resource managers, scientists, and many others rely on PacIOOS' real-time, model, and archival coastal and ocean information to make well-informed decisions and to enhance our understanding of the Pacific Ocean. The PacIOOS wave buoy off Aunu'u, for example, provides real-time information on wave height, direction and period, and sea surface temperature.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - OR&R [Pacific Islands Environmental Response Management Application](#) and [Response Tools for Oil and Chemical Spills](#)**

Assessing important spatial information and designing successful restoration projects rely upon interpreting and mapping geographic information, including the location, duration, and impacts from oil spills, other hazardous materials, or debris released into the environment. Pacific Islands Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA®) is an online mapping tool that integrates both static and real-time data, such as ship locations, weather, and ocean currents, providing an easy-to-use common operating picture for environmental responders and decision makers. Pacific Islands ERMA covers the Hawaiian Islands and outlying territories. ERMA staff continued to work closely with Federal and State agencies for drills, hurricane response, and incidents. Maintained habitat data for sensitive species. Ensured data was kept up-to-date and data collection methods were kept consistent. In addition to ERMA, the Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R) offers a suite of [tools](#) to support emergency responders dealing with oil and chemical spills. From Environmental Sensitivity Index (ESI) maps and data which provide concise summaries of coastal resources including biological resources and sensitive shorelines to GNOME, a trajectory and fate model that predicts the route and weathering of pollutants spilled on water, and so much more, these tools provide easy-access to critical data that support a wide range of needs for emergency responders, ultimately supporting our coastal communities.

#### **National Weather Service (NWS) - [Cooperative Observer Program Sites](#)**

The National Weather Service (NWS) Cooperative Observer Program (COOP) is truly the Nation's weather and climate observing network of, by and for the people. More than 10,000 volunteers take observations on farms, in urban and suburban areas, National Parks, seashores, and mountaintops. The data are representative of where people live, work and play. The COOP was formally created in 1890 under the NWS Organic Act to provide observational meteorological data, usually consisting of daily maximum and minimum temperatures, snowfall, and 24-hour precipitation totals, required to define the climate of the United States and to help measure long-term climate changes, and to provide observational meteorological data in near real-time to support forecast, warning and other public service programs of the NWS. The data are also used by other federal (including the Department of Homeland Security), state and local entities, as well as private companies (such as the energy and insurance industries). In some cases, the data are used to make billions of dollars' worth of decisions. There are 17 COOP sites on American Samoa.

#### **National Weather Service (NWS) - [NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards Transmitters](#)**

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest National Weather Service (NWS) forecast office. NWR broadcasts official NWS warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Working with the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Emergency Alert System, NWR is an "All Hazards" radio network, making it the single source for comprehensive weather and emergency information. In conjunction with federal, state, and local emergency managers and other public officials, NWR also broadcasts warning and post-event information for all types of hazards – including natural (such as earthquakes or avalanches), environmental (such as chemical releases or oil spills), and public safety (such as AMBER alerts or 911 Telephone outages). Known as the "Voice of NOAA's National Weather Service," NWR is provided as a public service by the NWS. NWR includes 1,100 transmitters covering all 50 states, adjacent coastal waters, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the U.S. Pacific Territories. There are two NWR transmitters in American Samoa.

#### **National Ocean Service (NOS) - [Marine Debris Projects and Partnerships in American Samoa](#)**

The NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) in the Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R) leads national and international efforts to reduce the impacts of marine debris. The program supports marine debris removal, prevention, and research projects in partnership with state and local agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, academia, and industry. The MDP Pacific Islands Regional Coordinator supports coordination efforts with regional stakeholders, provides support to grant-funded projects, tracks progress of projects, and conducts regional marine debris outreach to local audiences. The MDP is working with the National Park of American Samoa to develop and install an outreach and

educational exhibit on marine debris within the park. Building off a previous research project that conducted an ecological risk assessment for microplastics in seafood in American Samoa, the MDP is supporting the Arizona Board of Regents, on behalf of Arizona State University, to identify and implement culturally appropriate and sustainable alternatives to plastic clamshell and foam take-out food containers, plastic cups, and plastic carrier bags in at least eight local food establishments and convenience stores in American Samoa. The MDP is currently expanding its partnership and involvement in this territory, including the collaborative development of a marine debris emergency response guide.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) – [National Coastal Zone Management Program](#)**

Through a unique federal-state partnership, NOAA's Office for Coastal Management works with the American Samoa Department of Commerce to implement the National Coastal Zone Management Program in American Samoa. NOAA provides the state coastal management program with financial and technical assistance to further the goals of the Coastal Zone Management Act and ensure coastal waters and lands are used in a balanced way to support jobs, reduce use conflicts, and sustain natural resources. The office also provides a regionally focused staff member to serve as the liaison between NOAA and the American Samoa Coastal Program.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) – [Digital Coast](#)**

The Digital Coast is a focused information resource developed to meet the unique needs of coastal communities. Developed and maintained by NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, content comes from hundreds of organizations, including federal, state, and local agencies, plus private sector and non-profit contributors. The Digital Coast website provides not only site-specific coastal data, but also related tools, training, and information needed to make these data useful for coastal decision makers. The Digital Coast Act authorizes the Digital Coast as a standing national program and supports NOAA's efforts to increase access to authoritative data, tools, and training that enable coastal communities to plan for long-term resilience, manage water resources, and respond to emergencies.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - [Phytoplankton Monitoring Network](#)**

The Phytoplankton Monitoring Network (PMN) is a nationwide community-based volunteer program of citizen scientists monitoring for the presence of organisms that can lead to Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) formation. Volunteers serve as data collectors for marine and freshwater blooms at more than 200 coastal and inland sites in the U.S. and Caribbean. Monitoring is conducted year-round and volunteers are trained to measure salinity, air and water temperatures, and how to collect phytoplankton samples using a plankton net. Samples are then analyzed for any HAB organisms via microscopy. Data collected by PMN volunteers enhances the Nation's ability to respond to and manage the growing threat posed by HABs by collecting important data for species composition and distribution in coastal and freshwater environments and creating working relationships between volunteers and professional marine biotoxin researchers. Event monitoring can assist state and federal agencies to issue timely warnings about shellfish consumption and other public health concerns.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - [Coral Reef Conservation Program](#)**

NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program brings together multidisciplinary expertise from over 30 NOAA offices and partners to protect, conserve, and restore coral reef resources. The program focuses on three threats to coral reefs - climate change, unsustainable fishing practices, and land-based sources of pollution - as well as coral reef restoration. In response to identified threats and management priorities developed by coral reef managers in American Samoa, the program invests in efforts to maintain and improve the status of fish stocks, improve coastal watershed quality, plan and mitigate the effects of global climate change, and promote collaboration between environmental agencies. Examples of projects in the territory include tools and workshops for sustainable coral reef fisheries management planning, coral reef ecosystem assessments for watershed management planning, and documenting and mapping the exceptionally large and old colonies of coral. NOAA's Coral Management Liaison is located in Pago Pago.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) – [National Coral Reef Management Fellowship](#)**

The National Coral Reef Management Fellowship Program is a partnership between NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, the U.S. Department of Interior Office of Insular Affairs, Nova Southeastern University's Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography, and the U.S. Coral Reef All Islands Committee. The program recruits Coral Reef Management Fellows for the seven U.S. coral reef jurisdictions, including American Samoa. The Fellow for American Samoa is working with the Coral Reef Advisory Group and partners to conduct coral restoration trials in the village of Aua, raising community awareness and knowledge of coral restoration techniques and practices, building local technical capacity and ensuring ongoing success with coral restoration efforts. Additionally, the fellow will help bolster and implement the territorial coral restoration plan and support the work of general conservation activities and projects.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) – [Regional Geodetic Advisor](#)**

The Regional Geodetic Advisor is a National Ocean Service (NOS) employee that resides in a region and serves as a liaison between the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) and its public, academic and private sector constituents within their assigned region. NGS has a Regional Geodetic Advisor stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii serving the Pacific region including American Samoa. The Geodetic Advisor provides training, guidance and assistance to constituents managing geospatial activities that are tied to the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS), the framework and coordinate system for all positioning activities in the Nation. The Geodetic Advisor serves as a subject matter expert in geodesy and regional geodetic issues, collaborating internally across NOS and NOAA to ensure that all regional geospatial activities are properly referenced to the NSRS.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - Students for [Zero Waste Week](#)**

Students are inviting their local communities to "Go Green and Think Blue" by joining them in the annual *Students for Zero Waste Week campaign*. During this campaign led by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, students focus on reducing land-based waste in order to protect the health of local marine environments. These young leaders are raising awareness of how single-use plastic and other types of litter affect the health of local watersheds, national marine sanctuaries, and the ocean. In addition, some schools are looking at ways to reduce their energy use on campus with hopes of raising awareness of how the burning of fossil fuels also impacts the health of the ocean.

**National Ocean Service (NOS) - [Navigation Manager](#)**

NOAA's navigation managers work directly with pilots, port authorities, and recreational boating organizations in Pacific Islands. They help identify the navigational challenges facing marine transportation in DelawareMaryland and provide NOAA's resources and services that promote safe and efficient navigation. Navigation managers are on call to provide expertise and NOAA navigation response coordination in case of severe coastal weather events or other marine emergencies. The Office of Coast Survey has a navigation manager in Seattle, WA to support mariners and stakeholders in the Pacific Northwest and Pacific Islands region.

---

**NOAA In Your State is managed by [NOAA's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs](#) and maintained with information provided by NOAA's Line, Corporate, and Staff Offices. Questions about specific programs or offices should be directed to the NOAA Line, Corporate, or Staff Office listed.**

**More information for those offices may be found at [NOAA.gov](#).**

---