

Expansion of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument

Preserving & Perpetuating Pacific History and Culture

Photo Credit: USFWS

The Pacific Remote Islands (PRI) hold a rich history stretching from ancient Polynesian voyaging, to whalers and traders in the 19th and early 20th centuries, to the colonization and research efforts of Hui Panalā'au, to the Pacific theater of WWII, to the living cultural practices that persist in the present day.

Polynesian Voyaging

Native Pacific Islanders have a storied history of oceanic voyaging reaching back to ancient times. In order to navigate wide expanses of open ocean, these seafarers had a deep and nuanced understanding of ocean currents, winds, skies, and wildlife. They utilized marine corridors to reach remote islands throughout the Pacific, including those of PRI. As stopping points for resources, temporary shelter, and cultural practice, the islands of PRI have a deep legacy of voyaging and the potential to perpetuate its practice into the future.



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Hui Panalā'au: Service and Sacrifice

From 1935 to 1942, 130 young men from Kamehameha School were sent to Howland, Baker, and Jarvis Islands to colonize them for the U.S. These Native Hawaiian men meticulously documented the environmental conditions of the islands and their waters, recorded weather patterns, and surveyed seabirds, laying the foundation for future discoveries. With limited medical access and exposed to bombings during WWII, three members of Hui Panalā'au lost their lives as a result of their service.



Photo Credit: Image courtesy of George Kahanu, Sr.; credit: Center for Oral History, Social Science Institute, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum

Final Resting Places

PRI and its surrounding waters hold the final resting places of shipwrecks and other abandoned historic sites ranging from the whaling era in the 19th century to WWII. Expanding protection of PRI would allow for further exploration and potential discovery of wrecks, WWII-era ordnance, and other artifacts of historic and cultural value.

For Future Generations

Teaching and practicing traditional voyaging requires seascapes like those of PRI - low-lying islands within intact oceanic ecosystems. Protecting PRI not only honors and preserves the history of its lands, waters, and the people who crossed them, but allows for continued exploration, discovery, and perpetuation of culture.

To contact the Protect PRI Coalition: protectPRI@gmail.com



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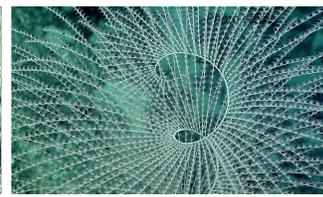


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