

ROSE ATOLL, AMERICAN SAMOA

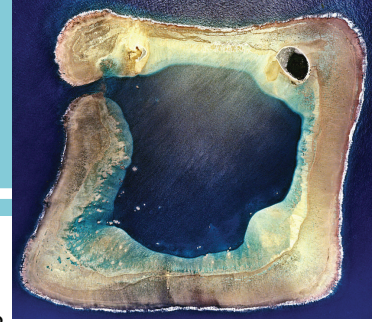


Photo: Hawaii Air Survey

KEY SPECIES

Birds

White-tailed tropicbirds
Red-tailed tropicbirds
Masked boobies
Brown boobies
Red-footed boobies
Great frigatebirds
Lesser frigatebirds
Gray-backed terns
Sooty terns
Brown noddies
Blue noddies
White terns
Long-tailed cuckoos

Reptiles

Green sea turtles
(threatened)
Hawksbill sea turtles
(endangered)

Invertebrates

Giant clams
(globally depleted)

Fish

Over 500 fish species
Gray reef sharks



Ostorhinchus leslie

Photo: J E Maragos



School of goatfish

Photo: J E Maragos

PROPOSAL

- Establish a National Monument with a boundary of 12 nautical miles around Rose Atoll
- Expand US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) management authority from 3 to 12 nautical miles offshore
- USFWS and American Samoa Government to co-manage the monument as a biological reserve
- Gov. Togiola Tulafono, American Samoa, supports presidential designation as stated in his letter of April 16, 2008 to President Bush

IMPORTANCE

- Smallest atoll in the world
- Largest concentration of nesting sea turtles, nesting sea birds, *Pisonia* trees, and giant clams in American Samoa
- Strong cultural value for the early history of Samoa and Nu'u O Manu

SITE DESCRIPTION

Rose Atoll is an uninhabited island that is part of the Territory of American Samoa. The atoll and surrounding waters out to 3 nautical miles are currently managed cooperatively by the American Samoan Government and the US Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Pacific Remote Islands Area Refuge Complex, and the refuge is closed to public use.

Rose Atoll is the easternmost Samoan island and the southernmost point of the United States. It is among the few islands in the Western Pacific that was never permanently inhabited and one of the very few that is now protected. Rose Atoll is home to a very diverse assemblage of terrestrial and marine species, many of which are threatened or endangered. Threatened *Pisonia* atoll forest trees are found here. Rose Atoll supports 97% of the seabird population of American Samoa, including 12 federally-protected migratory seabirds and 5 species of federally-protected shorebirds. Rose Atoll is the largest nesting ground in the Samoan Islands for threatened green sea turtles and is also an important nesting ground for the endangered hawksbill turtle. It also provides sanctuary for the giant clam, which is severely depleted throughout the Pacific.

THREATS

- Illegal poaching of clams, sharks and fish by local and foreign fishermen
- Potential shipwrecks, groundings, and oil spills from illegal fishing vessels in refuge waters
- Invasive algae, cyanobacteria, and coconut trees
- Potential for transiting vessels to ground due to poor charts