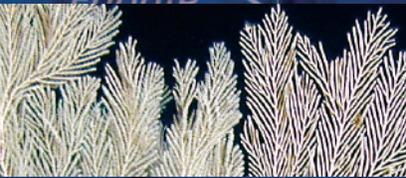
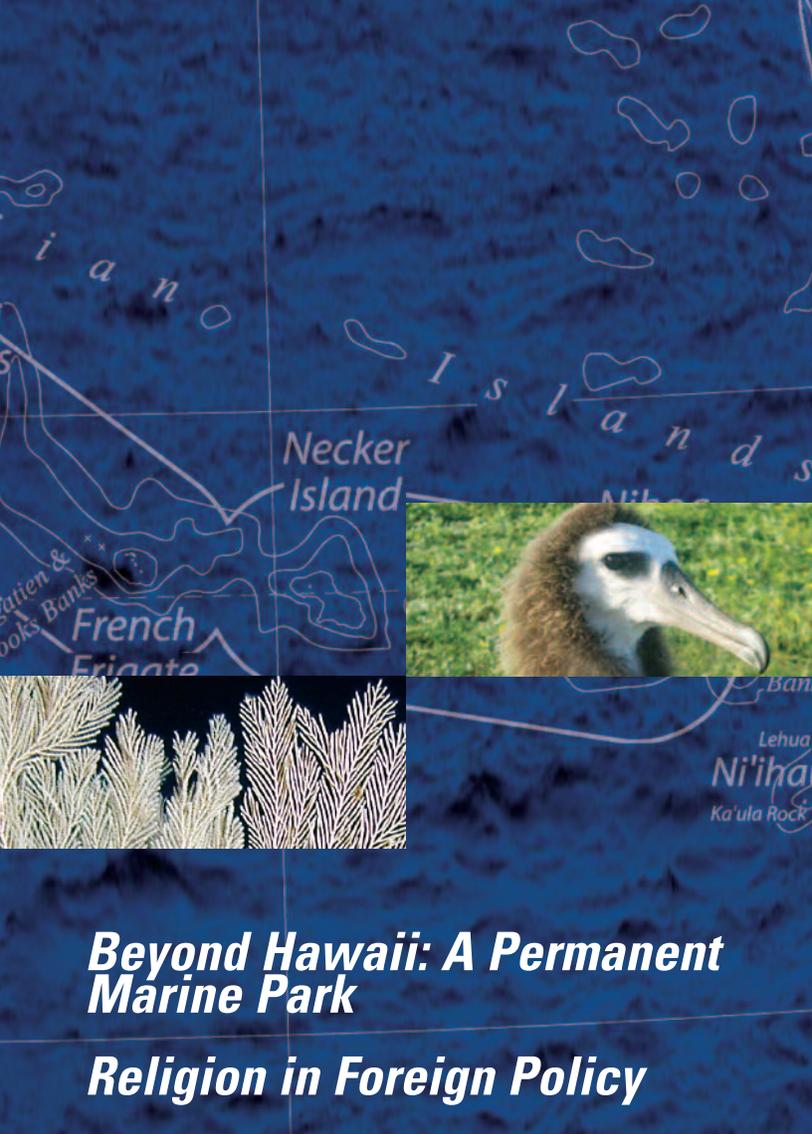
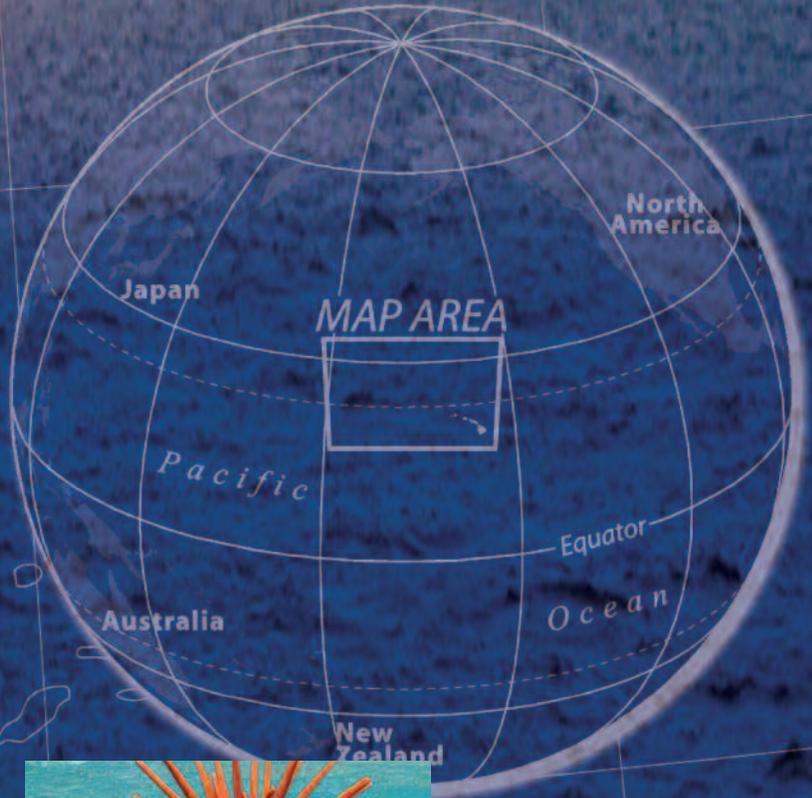


# Trust

The Pew Charitable Trusts

VOLUME 9 / NUMBER 3 / FALL 2006



***Beyond Hawaii: A Permanent Marine Park***

***Religion in Foreign Policy***

***Ready for the Next Pandemic?***

# FARAWAY, *NATURAL* AND *BEAUT*

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



FOR MORE THAN A THOUSAND MILES NORTHWEST OF HAWAII, ALL YOU CAN



*AND* IT'LL *THAT*  
*IFUL-* *STAY* *WAY*

*By Colin Woodard*



**A** thousand miles northwest of the freeways and high-rises of Honolulu, there is another Hawaii, a sprawling chain of uninhabited islands, atolls and submerged reefs sheltering one of the most spectacular marine ecosystems in the world. Now, in a move supported by the Trusts, it has become the world's largest marine protected area.

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, which stretch for 1,200 miles across the north-central Pacific, are literally in the middle of nowhere, so

IN DO IS LOOK. AND THERE'S MORE THAN ENOUGH TO FILL THE EYE.

“When you add it all up, it’s a world-class ecological jewel. From both a national and global perspective, this really is a landmark conservation event.”

*Joshua S. Reichert, Managing Director, Policy Initiatives and the Environment Program, The Pew Charitable Trusts, quoted by the Associated Press*

“We’re doing justice to the ocean.”

*Jean-Michel Cousteau, Ocean Futures*

“This federal action complements our Administration’s recent designation of all state waters in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands as a fully protected state marine refuge. This seamless partnership between state and federal governments, environmental conservationists and Native Hawaiian organizations will preserve the 1,200-mile chain of atolls and reefs as a natural and cultural legacy.”

*Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle*



Hawaiian squirrelfish at French Frigate Shoals.

James Watt



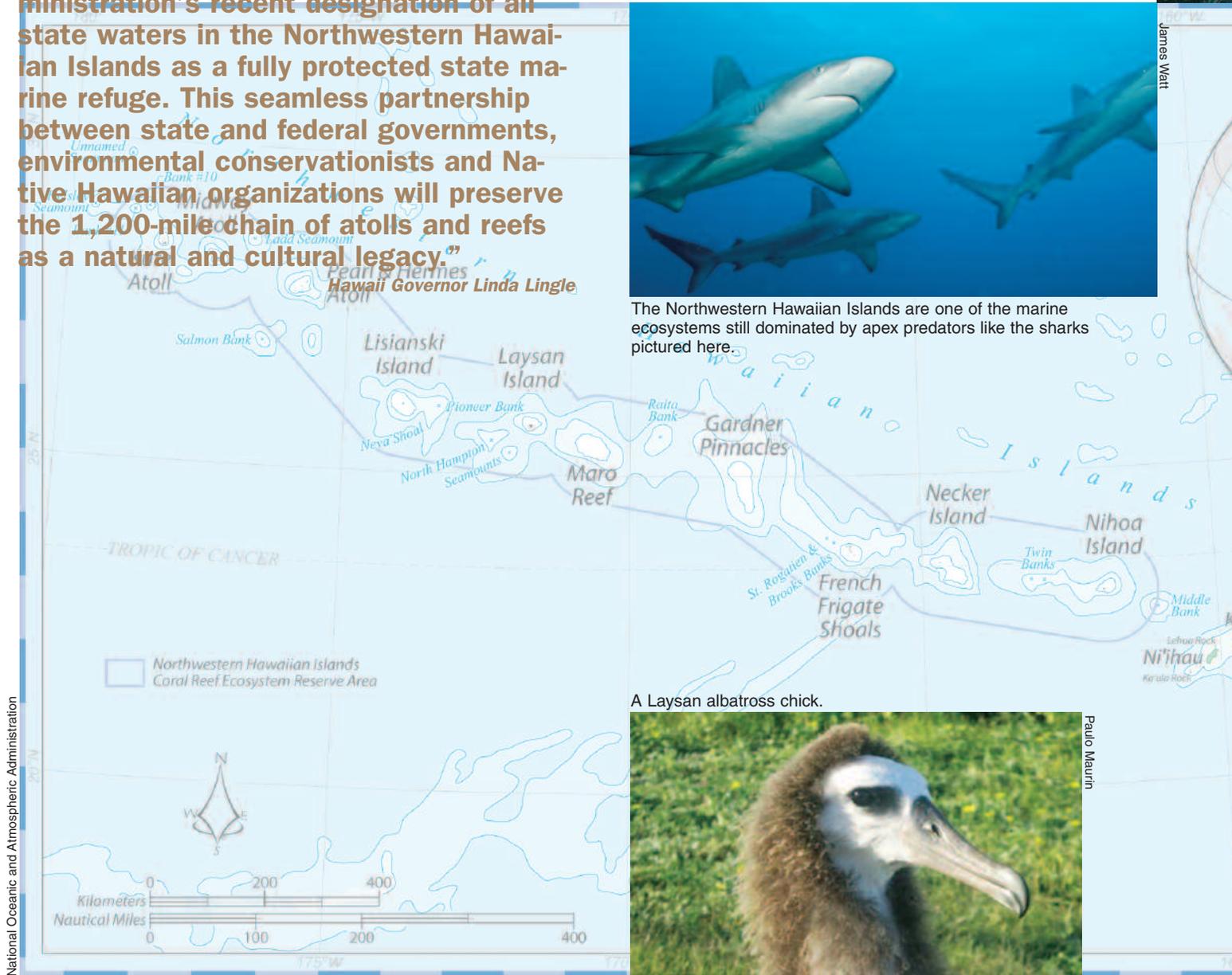
The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are one of the marine ecosystems still dominated by apex predators like the sharks pictured here.

James Watt



A Laysan albatross chick.

Paulo Maurin



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

A colony of gold corals.



Amy Bacon-Taylor



remote and unassuming that humans have largely left them alone. Apart from occasional visits by Native Hawaiians and long-distance fishermen, human activity has focused on Midway Atoll, which served as a waypoint for trans-Pacific cable lines, Pan American clippers and the U.S. Navy, which successfully deterred a Japanese invasion there in 1942.

The rest of the chain looks much as it always has, both above and below the water: a vast coral reef ecosystem supporting an astonishing array of marine life. Fourteen million seabirds, 70 percent of the United States' coral reefs and some 7,000 species make their home in the archipelago, including the endangered Hawaiian monk seal, short-tailed albatross and threatened Hawaiian green sea turtles. Sharks and other large predators have been decimated in much of the world, but here they're abundant, providing ecologists with insight into how the web of life functions in its natural state.

Now the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands will stay that way. In a surprise move this past June, President George W. Bush invoked the 1906 Antiquities Act to fully protect the chain and 50 miles of ocean in all directions. The new 140,000-square-mile Northwestern Hawaiian Islands



Spanish Dancer.

David Litschvager and Susan Middleton



Divided flatworm.

James Watt

National Marine Monument is larger than 100 Yosemite National Parks and slightly larger than Australia's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

"We will protect a precious natural resource," Bush said. "We will show our respect for the cultural and historical importance of this area, and we will create an important place for research and learning about how we can be good stewards of our oceans and our environment."

Much of the region has had some form of protection for nearly a century. President Theodore Roosevelt created the nation's second wildlife refuge here to stop hunters from exterminating the chain's birds in order to secure feathers for ladies' hats. (He had to dispatch Marines to Midway to enforce the order.)

Subsequent presidents expanded protection from birds to include other wildlife and extended the protected area to include Midway and large portions of the surrounding sea bottom. In 2000, President Bill Clinton signed an executive order directing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to begin the process of turning the region into a national marine sanctuary to protect the ecosystem as a whole.

From there, the process became bogged down as NOAA personnel

“While we and others in the conservation community have not always agreed with President Bush’s environmental policies, we believe it is important to acknowledge a significant policy achievement when it occurs. . . . Just as we have protected spectacular areas on land from destructive activity, we know it is equally important to do so for the sea. The president’s announcement is an important step in what we hope will be greater efforts to safeguard the ocean, while also addressing broader problems of overfishing, pollution and habitat destruction.”

*Joshua Reichert and  
Theodore Roosevelt IV, op-ed  
in The New York Times*

“This is just amazing. This is an important first step in protecting some of the world’s healthiest reefs for future generations.”

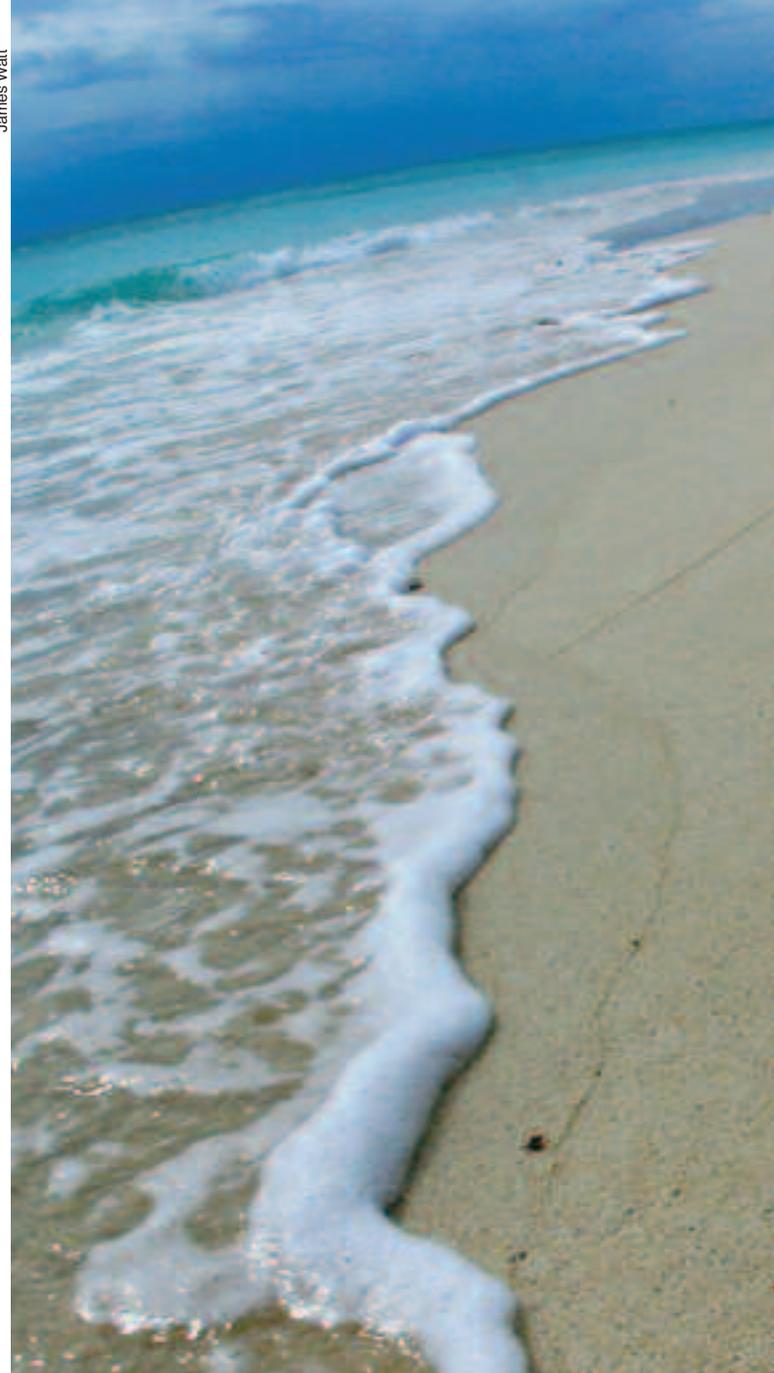
*Ellen Athas, ecosystems-protection director, Ocean Conservancy*

“They could break me (financially) if they could kick me out, but if they could compensate me and the others, I’d be in favor of leaving the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands alone.”

*Bill Wakefield, Northwestern  
Hawaiian Islands fisherman*

“Our duty is to use the land and seas wisely, or sometimes not use them at all.”

*President George W. Bush*



Lisianski beach shows signs of visitors.

## 103 YEARS OF PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

### Theodore Roosevelt

**1903:** In response to U.S. Navy reports of the killing of massive numbers of seabirds at Midway Islands and complaints about Japanese squatters and poachers, he places the atoll under control of the Navy. He also sends 21 U.S. Marines to stop the slaughter of seabirds for feathers and eggs and to secure Midway as a U.S. possession.

**1909:** By an executive order, he creates the Hawaiian Islands Bird Reservation around islands from Nihoa Island to Kure Atoll, to further protect these islands and their resources.

### Franklin D. Roosevelt

**1940:** His presidential proclamation changes the name of the Hawaiian Islands Reservation to the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge and broadens refuge purposes to protect all wildlife.

### Lyndon B. Johnson

**1967:** Under his administration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designates French Frigate Shoals, Gardner Pinnacles, Laysan Island, Lisianski Island, Necker Island, Nihoa Island, and Pearl and Hermes Reef and surrounding submerged lands within the Hawaiian Island National Wildlife Refuge as Research Natural Areas.

### Ronald Reagan

**1988:** He signs legislation designating Midway Islands as a National Wildlife Refuge to protect and manage their biological and historic resources.



Midway Atoll.



Rock-boring urchin.

Dr. Larry Basch

responsible for fisheries management sparred with those who design and operate marine sanctuaries. "It had been six years, and they still couldn't resolve their differences," says Jay W. Nelson, director of the Trusts' Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Project, which was advancing a ban on commercial fishing within the proposed sanctuary. "The White House was frustrated with the stalemate, and people in Hawaii had started pointing out that it didn't take this long to fight World War II."

The sticking point was whether or not to allow commercial fishing within the sanctuary. Fishing proponents, including the industry-dominated Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council—Wespac—argued that existing fisheries were too small to cause any damage. Only eight boats had permits to fish in the archipelago, hooking grouper, jacks, snappers and other bottom fish.

Opponents were skeptical, noting that fishing has caused considerable damage in the past. Overfishing in the 1980s and 1990s caused a crash of the area's lobster populations, which may explain why large numbers of lobster-eating monk seals starved to death over the same period. An October 2005 study by the Marine Conservation Biology Institute and the Ocean



James Watt

The Hawaiian monk seal is one of the most endangered marine mammals in the U.S.

Conservancy showed that the bottom-fishing fleet, despite its modest size, had overfished the waters around the islands nearest to Hawaii in six of the 16 years between 1988 and 2003.

"We argued that it's valuable for scientists to have a place without fishing so they can see what a natural system looks like and be able to compare it with the impacts elsewhere on the planet," says Nelson. "If any places are to be left untrammelled in the world, this should be one of them."

Elliott A. Norse, Ph.D., president of the biology institute and a Pew fellow in marine conservation, says it was vital that the sanctuary's big fish not be fished. "In just 50 years, we've eliminated 90 percent of the large predators in the oceans: big sharks, whales, groupers," he says. "In the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, you can still see an ecosystem functioning with its dominant predators still in the system. That's something we desperately need to study and understand so that five, 50 or 500 years from now, we can still live on this planet."

The commercial fishing ban had strong support in Hawaii, most significantly from Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle, who in September 2005 decided

#### Bill Clinton

**1996:** He transfers full jurisdiction of Midway Atoll and surrounding reefs from the Navy to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**2000 and 2001:** He directs the development of a plan to protect the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands coral reef ecosystem and calls for public participation in the design of additional protection measures for the refuge. As a result of public comments and negotiations between the president and Congress, the 2000 amendments to the National Marine Sanctuaries Act authorize creation of a NWHI reserve. Subsequent executive orders create the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve.

#### George W. Bush

**2002:** His administration prepares interim management measures designed to protect the Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration holds a series of public meetings to define an appropriate level of protection for the proposed NWHI sanctuary and disapproves rules allowing harvest of precious corals as inconsistent with the fishing restrictions established by the executive orders.

**2004:** NOAA releases draft goals and objectives for the proposed NWHI sanctuary and identifies the purpose of the proposed sanctuary as the "long-term protection of the marine ecosystems in their natural character."

**2006:** By the authority of the 100-year-old National Antiquities Act, the president proclaims the NWHI area a National Monument.



James Watt

Masked booby.

**“It’s as important as the establishment of Yellowstone.”**

*Fred Krupp, Environmental Defense*

**“It is time to give thanks that something so right to do was done right.”**

*Ed Case, U.S. representative, Hawaii*

**“Americans are united in the belief that we must preserve our natural heritage and safeguard the environment. This belief has affirmed our laws, and today we reaffirm that commitment once again.”**

*President George W. Bush*

**“Our job is to protect [the Islands monument], learn from it and look to it as a source of inspiration for stewardship of the marine resources on which we all depend for food, for transportation, for recreation, for science and for education. We must use and enjoy these wisely, too.”**

*James Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality*

**“Believing that our tag-and-release sport fishing program contributed invaluable scientific information, I supported continued sport fishing. However, overwhelming public support for a complete marine sanctuary and my personal knowledge of that extraordinarily unique marine ecosystem eventually led me to endorse a complete closure of all NWHI fisheries.”**

*Rick Gaffney, president, Hawaii Fishing and Boating Association, and member, Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council*

The David Liittschwager and Susan Middleton photographs in this story are from their 2005 book *Archipelago: Portraits of Life in the World’s Most Remote Island Sanctuary*, published by the National Geographic Society. On this spread, they include the top photograph and the bottom two on this page and the top left of the next page.



Debris from afar: A Laysan albatross chick (right) on Kure Atoll, whose stomach was filled with cigarette lighters, shotgun shells, broken clothespins and hundreds of plastic bits. It would have been fed by a parent, who sought the chick’s proper food in mid-ocean gyres—where the fish are, but where the trash gets trapped as well. The chick, which naturally vomits indigestible organic parts, stored the debris and probably starved to death.

Butch Tilley



Blue Dragon Nudibranch.



Laysan albatross chick.



Lobe corals grow in huge colonies in the NWHI, but not so elsewhere in the world.



James Watt

to ban all commercial activities in the state-controlled waters of the archipelago: three miles from each island except Midway, a federal territory.

Keiko Bonk, campaign director of the Honolulu-based Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Network, says: "Since statehood, in 1959, people in Hawaii have been working hard to get real management plans for our land and ocean. We had some big successes in the early years, followed by a lot of setbacks in recent decades. This looks like the beginning of a new era of progress. Many people, including Governor Lingle and commercial fishermen, rallied around the sanctuary as something we could do proactively, something monumental in scale."

Although the Bush Administration had already invested five years in planning for protection of the area—partly driven by overwhelming grassroots support from a broad spectrum of the public in Hawaii—the White House was reportedly growing increasingly frustrated. The stalemate at NOAA forced it to postpone announcing the creation of the new sanctuary from Earth Day (April 22) to World Oceans Day (June 8) to Ocean Week (ending June 10). "They were facing the possibility that this might drag on beyond the end of the president's term in office," says Nelson.

One turning point came on the night of April 5, 2006, when a group



James Watt

Red-footed boobies.

of ocean conservationists were invited to the White House for dinner and a viewing of a film about the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands by Jean-Michel Cousteau, son of the late ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau. "I assumed that the president, who is a busy person, would just do a 'drive-by' photo-op so we could say we saw him," recalls Norse, who attended the dinner. "But that wasn't what happened."

To Norse's surprise, Bush watched the entire 65-minute movie and then sat down to dinner next to Cousteau and ocean explorer Sylvia Earle. "They talked through the whole dinner, and the president was so interested that he stayed for fifteen minutes even after Mrs. Bush got up and wanted to leave," he recalls. At one point Bush exclaimed, "I wish we could just designate the thing."

On June 15, Bush did just that, using his powers under the Antiquities Act to make the islands a National Monument, administered by the Department of Interior, thereby circumventing the stalemate at NOAA, which is under the Department of Commerce. His order phases out all commercial fishing over five years.

"The beauty of [creating] the monument is that it settled the debate over what extractive uses would be allowed in the sanctuary by basically saying



James Watt

Red pencil urchin.

“This at both a substantive level and symbolically will help to encourage, hopefully, more efforts that are similar in nature. And there certainly are a lot of other places in the world that merit this level of protection, and hopefully they’ll get it in the years to come.”

*Joshua Reichert, the Trusts, on Marketplace, Minnesota Public Radio*

“This administration and future ones should follow up with similar actions to protect other ecologically sensitive marine systems. America began protecting its land-based national parks and monuments a century ago, but the country has lagged in shielding its underwater treasures. Mr. Bush’s action offers an exciting example of assertive action to put essential areas beyond further human destruction.”

*Editorial, The Washington Post*

“In some ways, Mr. Bush’s decision was supremely easy—the end of commercial fishing will affect only eight fishermen. But even so, the mind reels a little at what Mr. Bush has done. The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are a vast place few Americans have ever visited or ever will. But they are being protected anyway—not for divers, fishermen or cruise ships, but for their own sake, for science and forever. Mr. Bush made exemplary use of presidential power yesterday. We hope he does more of it.”

*Editorial, The New York Times*

Table corals (*Acropora*): common in parts of the new National Monument but absent in the main Hawaiian Islands. The fish at Rapture Reef are pennantfish, pyramid and milletseed butterflyfish.



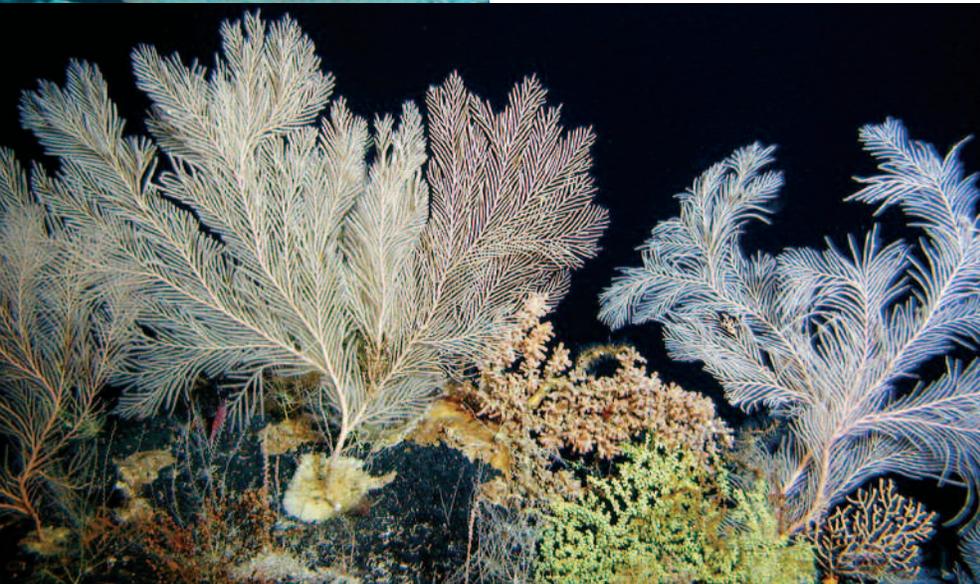


James Watt

that there weren't going to be any," says William Chandler, vice president of the biology institute. "If the Sanctuary Act process had continued at NOAA, there would have been a prolonged battle over keeping the fishery."

There are only two exceptions to the fishing ban. The first allows Native Hawaiians to catch fish for subsistence and ritual purposes during visits to the island chain, a measure with near-universal support. "Caring for the land and ocean is a fundamental belief within Hawaiian culture, so the creation of the monument goes to the core values of our culture," says William Aila Jr., a Native Hawaiian fisherman. "Allowing for cultural access makes it clear that Hawaiians have a role in the protection of the Northwestern Islands and the preservation of the Hawaiian cultural connection to the land and sea."

The second exception—allowing visitors to fish, most of whom will be scientists and officials—is opposed by the Trusts. "They've closed the region to recreational and commercial fishing, but they've effectively created a sport fishery for bureaucrats and scientists," says Nelson, who is working to get that exception removed on fairness grounds.



Amy Baco-Taylor

A diverse group of deep-sea corals, octocorals and zoanthids.

David Liittschwager and Susan Middleton



Portulaca.

The Trusts is also supporting the phase-out of commercial fishing by offering to buy out the eight fishermen who hold permits to fish the area. Because of the distance from the main islands of Hawaii—and fierce competition from Asian imports—fishing the islands is not particularly profitable, Nelson says, making fishermen open to the prospect of a buy-out at fair market value. "We want to buy all of them out, not just some of them," he says. At press time, negotiations were expected to continue into the late fall.

Meanwhile, Aila says he's pleased that commercial fishing will stop on the outer islands, sooner or later. "There's a fear that we may not be successful at caring for the marine resources of the main Hawaiian Islands," he says. "Now there's the hope that the Northwestern Islands could provide a source of stock replacement, becoming part of our insurance policy against disaster." **T**

**For more on the Trusts' oceans work, go to [www.pewtrusts.org](http://www.pewtrusts.org) and click on "Protecting ocean life" under Advancing Policy Solutions.**

*Colin Woodard is an award-winning journalist and the author of *Ocean's End: Travels Through Endangered Seas* and *The Lobster Coast: Rebels, Rusticators, and the Struggle for a Forgotten Frontier*. He lives in Portland, Maine, and has a Web site at [colinwoodard.com](http://colinwoodard.com).*