

Information Bulletin

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes Plan to Repair and Replace Failing Seawall on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge

HONOLULU, Hawaii — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) propose to repair and replace damaged sections of seawall on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Battle of Midway National Memorial, within the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The proposed action will replace approximately 5,720 feet of seawall damaged by erosion on the southern end of Midway Atoll's Sand Island. The Service and FAA are seeking public comments on the draft environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed action. The 30-day public comment period is open from May 2nd to May 31st, 2018.

Originally built in 1957, the seawall protects the southern portion of Sand Island and Henderson Airfield's runway from erosion. The airfield is an emergency landing site for transpacific commercial flights.

"The airport is also strategically important for refuge operations and supports 90 percent of all the research that occurs in the Monument," said Bob Peyton, Midway Atoll NWR Refuge Manager. "Delaying the replacement of the seawall will result in additional deterioration thus creating entrapment issues for endangered Hawaiian monk seal, Hawaiian green sea turtle and a variety of other seabirds."

Under the proposed action, the Service and FAA will repair and replace sections of Midway Atoll's seawall over a 10-year period of time. The length of the proposed action allows the project leads the flexibility to repair sections of seawall that need work now and also parts of the seawall that will need repairs in the near future. To avoid impacts to breeding birds, construction and repairs would take place annually during mid-August and October when seabird populations are at their lowest.

All comments and information received by May 31st, 2018, will be considered. The draft EA is available for review at: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Midway_Atoll/ and <https://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/index.cfm>.

Public comments on the draft EA can be submitted:

- Via email: midwayEA_comments@fws.gov; or
- Via mail to: Attn: Midway Draft EA Comments, Pacific Islands Refuges and Monuments Office, 300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 5-231, Honolulu, HI, 96850.

All comments and materials we receive become part of the public record associated with this action. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personally identifiable information in your comments, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personally identifiable information—may be made publicly available at any time.

Midway Atoll is one of the most remote places in America. Culturally significant for Native Hawaiians, it has also been a place of strategic importance for communications, commercial airlines, and the military – and it has always been a home for wildlife. Midway Atoll is safeguarded and maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and Battle of Midway National Memorial.

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. Four co-trustees - the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, State of Hawai‘i and 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.

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