



# Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge

*Planning Update Number 2, May 2011*

*Reefcrest parrotfish at Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge / Jim Maragos, USFWS*

## Thank You for Participating!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is developing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). This plan will guide the management of the Refuge for the next 15 years. As part of this process, we have been seeking public input on management issues, concerns, and opportunities.

This planning update provides information on the status of the planning process and what we have heard from people so far. In November 2009, the USFWS mailed approximately 100 copies of Planning Update 1 to local conservation and interest groups; research organizations; local, Territory, and Federal government agencies; and others who have expressed an interest in the planning process. The planning update was also posted on the Refuge's website. In the first update we described the CCP process;

Refuge purposes; and preliminary issues to be considered in the CCP. We also announced our open house public meetings and requested public comments on Refuge management opportunities and issues to be analyzed in the CCP.

More than 60 people participated in our public meetings. Additionally, written comments were submitted describing concerns and providing suggestions for managing the Refuge. In this second update we summarized the comments we received, and compiled a list of primary management issues we will use to draft management alternatives, draft goals, and objectives. All comments will be considered as we continue to move forward. We thank everyone who participated in scoping, and invite you to continue sharing your ideas with us. Your participation remains critical to the success of this planning effort.

## Introducing Our New Rose Atoll Marine National Monument Manager

The USFWS is pleased to introduce Frank Pendleton, our first Rose Atoll Marine National Monument Manager! Frank is also the manager for Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, which is part of the monument. Early in 2011, Frank and his family will be making the long move from Vermont to American Samoa. He will be sharing office space with our sister agency, the National Park Service, and *(continued on page 3)*

### What's in this Issue

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## What Are Your Concerns for the Refuge?

We opened the CCP public scoping period on November 9, 2009. Three public open house meetings were held, one each on the islands of Ofu, Ta'u, and Tutuila on November 14, 16, and 19, respectively. At the meetings, then Pacific Reefs National Wildlife Refuge Complex (NWR) Project Leader Don Palawski explained the CCP process and the Refuge's purposes and current management. We conducted the meetings in Samoan and English, with the assistance of American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration staff.

We also answered questions from attendees and took written comments. Some comments were about broad or long-range issues, while others suggested very specific or detailed strategies that could be used to achieve biological or public use objectives. The following issues were identified and will be addressed in the CCP:

### *Vulnerability of the ecosystem.*

Rose Atoll is small and isolated, and lacks the resilience to replenish fish populations if fishing is allowed.



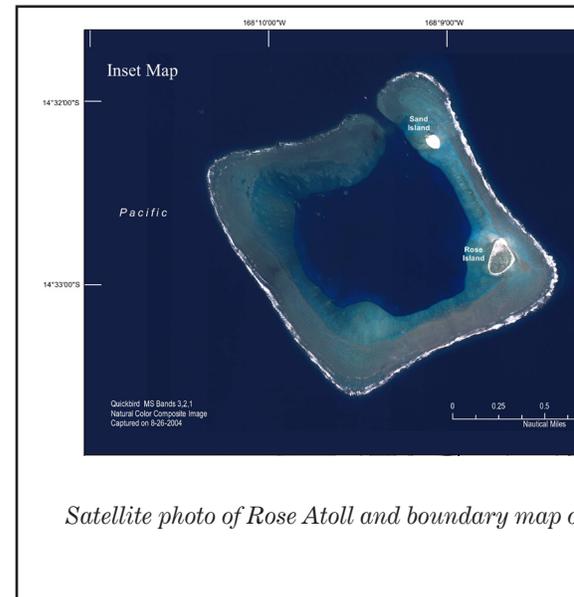
Brown noddies at Rose Atoll NWR/ Jim Maragos, USFWS

*Climate change.* Inventory and monitoring of climate change related variables and trends should be included in the CCP.

*Reducing threats and stressors.* How will threats to Refuge resources and stresses on the ecosystem be addressed? Some of the threats to consider include illegal foreign/domestic fishing; potential ship groundings; seabird bycatch; invasive species; altered and disrupted landscapes and habitats; and land and marine debris.

*Research.* The USFWS should encourage and support monitoring and research to document the condition of the ecosystems in the Refuge, track resource trends, and identify the connections between the island and its surrounding pelagic waters and seafloor.

*History and Culture.* The CCP should include information about the early history of Rose Atoll and its link to the Manu'a Islands and Samoan culture. Change the name of Rose Atoll back to the original Samoan name to protect the culture and heritage.



Satellite photo of Rose Atoll and boundary map of

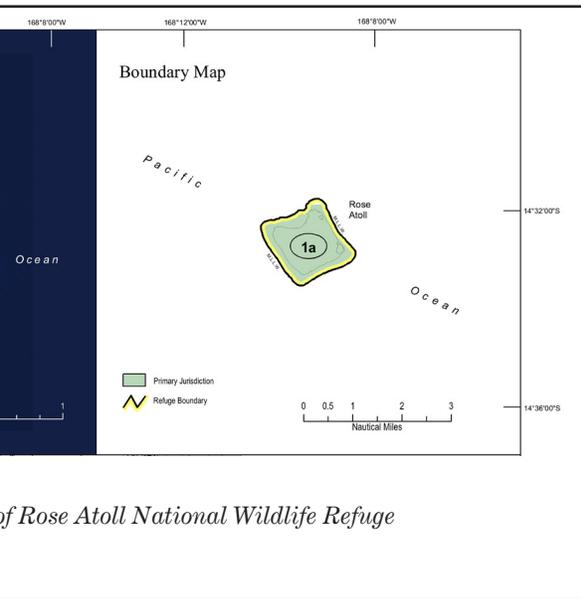
*Enforcement.* How will regulations be enforced and who will provide that enforcement? Opportunities for local Manu'a residents to provide enforcement should be considered.

*Environmental Education.* Include educational programs for Manu'a students in the CCP so that they will be qualified to become marine biologists and manage Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge someday.

*Outreach.* Educational materials and resources should be made available in American Samoa to enhance community awareness and understanding.

*Tourism.* Identify opportunities for tourism related to the Refuge.

All of these and other issues will be addressed in the Draft CCP/EA. Your comments will help us develop preliminary management alternatives, and draft goals, objectives, and



of Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge

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looks forward to working closely with our Monument partners as well as the people of American Samoa. Frank has been with USFWS for nine years, with the last five stationed near Burlington, Vermont. He has extensive experience in the USFWS Partners Program, working with agricultural landowners, Federal and State agencies, and nongovernmental organizations to restore instream, riparian, wetland, and upland wildlife habitats. Prior to that Frank served as the game warden for Nxai Pan National Park in Botswana, Africa, and he has conducted research on the effects of pesticides on bird populations in the Okavango Delta, and humpback whale surveys in the Mexican Pacific. In his new role, Frank will be guiding development of the

Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge CCP and working with our partners to ensure protection of the Refuge and Monument.

Frank earned his Bachelor of Science degree at Humboldt State University in California and his Masters of Science in Marine, Estuarine, and Environmental Sciences from the University of Maryland. He is bringing his wife and daughter with him to Tutuila.



Frank Pendleton

strategies to meet the Refuge’s biological and visitor services goals and objectives as the CCP process continues.

**Issues Outside the Scope of the CCP:** Several commenters expressed concerns regarding the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument’s (Monument) 50 nautical mile boundary and closure area, and traditional fishing and multi-agency conservation efforts within the Monument. However, this CCP effort focuses on the management of the Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge. See the map above, identifying the Refuge’s boundary. Therefore, issues specific to the Monument are outside the scope of this CCP according to current Pacific Reefs NWRC Project Leader Susan White. Because the Refuge is part of the Monument, we will review and consider all the comments we receive during this CCP planning process when we begin public scoping for the Monument’s management plan in the near future.

Planning Schedule	
<u>Planning Step:</u>	<u>Target Date:</u>
<b>Planning Update 3 (Alternatives)</b>	Fall 2011
<b>Draft CCP/EA</b>	Winter 2011/2012
<b>Public Review/Comment on Draft CCP/EA</b>	Winter 2011/2012
<b>NEPA Decision</b>	Summer 2012
<b>Planning Update 4 Issued</b>	Fall/Winter 2012
<b>Final CCP</b>	Fall/Winter 2012

**Schedule dates are tentative and subject to change as CCP planning progresses.**



Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge  
c/o National Park Service  
Pago Pago, AS 96799

*Address Correction Requested*

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## How to Contact Us

*For information or to be included on our mailing list contact:*

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**Please include "Rose Atoll CCP" in the subject.**

**Find Us On the Web:**  
**<http://www.fws.gov/roseatoll>**