

Appendix A: Samoa MFAT MSR Approval





GOVERNMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Note No: 17/23

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America in Apia and has the honour to refer to the latter's Note Verbale 44/16 requesting port courtesies and authorization for Jeremy Potter to conduct marine scientific research in areas requiring the consent of Samoa, during the period of February 5-April 21 2017 from the NOAA research from the research vessel, *Okeanos Explorer*, under the project name CAPSTONE 2017 Mapping Kingman, Palmyra Jarvis.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has further the honor to advise the latter that diplomatic clearance has been granted to *Okeanos Explorer* to conduct marine scientific research for the dates requested (March 1-7 2017 and March 29-April 4 2017)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade advises further that diplomatic clearance is granted provided the following conditions are met:

1. A summary of all the data resulting from the research is to be made available to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade within 6 months of the completion date of the research.
2. Any specimens, whether dead or alive that will be taken out from Samoa's Exclusive Economic Zone during the research are the properties of Samoa and governed under the Intellectual Property Rights Law, therefore appropriate approval must be sought from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

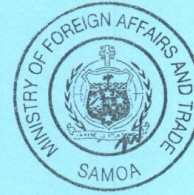


3. At the completion of the research and before departing from Samoa, the team leader must discuss with or communicate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade appropriate aspects of the research and explain preliminary findings.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America in Apia the assurances of its highest consideration.

23rd of January 2017

Embassy of the United States of America
APIA



Appendix B: Samoa MNRE Letter of Support





Government of Samoa

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Matāgaluega o Puna'oa Faalenatura ma le Siosiomaga

Level 3, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi
Building (TATTE), Sogi, P.O Private Bag,
Apia, SAMOA.
Website: <http://www.mnre.gov.ws/>

Telephone: (+685) 67200
Fax: (+685) 23176
Email: info@mnre.gov.ws

Please address all correspondence to the Chief
Executive Officer, Private Bag, Apia, Samoa.

Faamolemole faatuatusi uma mai fesootaiga
ma i le Ofisa Sili.

10 January 2017

Craig Russell
Program Manager
Okeanos Explorer Explorations
NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research

Dear Mr. Craig Russell,

**APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ONBOARD THE NOAA SHIP *OKEANOS*
EXPLORER IN THE WATERS OF SAMOA**

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated on 16th December 2016, regarding the above subject matter. I am also in receipt of your Bioprospecting Application for research permit dated on the same date.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) is fully supportive of this research of seafloor mapping operations to ensure it will provide reliable and useful information primarily in areas where high resolution seafloor bathymetry data currently does not exist and in addition, priority areas of interest to Samoa. This will provide baseline data and invaluable scientific data for Samoa oceanographers, marine researchers and managers in order to make informed decisions with regards to the sustainable use and management of our marine resources.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) must be signed between MNRE and NOAA and any other relevant party to the research, to ensure effective collaboration and working relationship in relation to conducting the research and outline conditions and agreeable responsibilities; in any requirements specified in the MOA. There will be fee(s) applied as part of the requirements of our process.

That said, the Ministry is fully supportive of this scientific exploration in the waters of Samoa.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Tauti Fuatino Leota (Assistant Chief Executive Officer of the Division of Environment and Conservation) on e-mail: fuatino.leota@mnre.gov.ws or Ms. Maria Satoa on email: maria.satoa@mnre.gov.ws or telephone (685) 67200 for further information.

Sincerely,

Suluimalo Amataga Penaia
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Cc: Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Dr. Alan P. Leonardi



**Ocean Exploration
and Research**

Director, Office of Ocean Exploration and Research

NOAA

United States Department of Commerce





Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
Division of Environment & Conservation

**CONSENT APPLICATION
FOR COLLECTION OF SAMOA'S
BIOLOGICAL AND NON-BIOLOGICAL
RESOURCES**

For Official Use Only:		
Date Application was received:		
date	month	year
21	12	2016
Full Payments made: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Receipt No. _____		
MNRE official stamp:		

Samoa as a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has a complete sovereign right over its biological and non biological resources

1. APPLICANT: (Please type in all required information)

<p>Name: Craig Russell</p> <p>Nationality: United States of America</p> <p>Passport number: </p> <p>Phone Number: 206-526-4803</p> <p>Fax Number: none</p>	<p>Institution: US NOAA, Office of Ocean Exploration and Research</p> <p>Country of domicile: United States</p> <p>Current Address: 7600 Sand Point Way NE Seattle, WA 98115, US</p> <p>Samoan address: Port of Apia, Samoa</p> <p>Permanent Address: 7600 Sand Point Way NE Seattle, WA 98115 United States of America</p> <p>E-Mail Address: craig.russell@noaa.gov</p>
--	---

2. PURPOSE OF COLLECTION

2.1 What is the purpose of the collection? (Please provide supporting evidence)

Oceanographic data (depth, backscatter, ocean currents) data will be collected using acoustic devices including multibeam sonar, single beam sonar, sub-bottom profiler and Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP)

2.2 How will the information be collected (e.g. by reference books, note taking,



All the acoustic data will be digitally collected.

2.3 What tests/laboratory analysis will be carried out on the material to be collected and what is the purpose of each test?

No tests or laboratory analysis will be carried out onboard. These data sets will be freely made available through a national archive and will aid in developing better bathymetric maps of the world oceans.

3. DETAILS OF WHAT IS TO BE COLLECTED

3.1 List and name the materials to be collected

No physical materials will be collected

3.2 List any other material to be collected (soil symbionts, etc.):

Not applicable

4. COLLECTION: Not applicable

4.1 Persons to be involved in the collection

Name	Address	Qualifications
CAPT Mark Wetzler, NOAA	NOAA Ship <i>Okeanos Explorer</i> 1897 Ranger Loop, Ford Island Bldg. 184 Honolulu, HI 96818	Commanding Officer NOAA Ship <i>Okeanos Explorer</i>
Brian Kennedy	1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20905	Expedition coordinator
Kelley Elliott	1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20905	Expedition coordinator
Elizabeth Lobecker	1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20905	Expedition coordinator
Derek Sowers	1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20905	Expedition coordinator
Michael White	1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20905	Expedition coordinator
TBD Science Team	TBD	TBD
TBD Remotely Operated Vehicle Engineering Team	TBD	TBD
TBD Data Management Team	TBD	TBD
TBD Video Team	TBD	TBD
TBD Mapping Team	TBD	TBD
Ship's Officers and Crew	TBD	TBD

*TBD: To be decided

4.2 Proposed area(s) and dates of collection (if known)

The acoustic data will be collected while transiting through Samoan waters. Expedition dates extend from January 18 through April 21, 2017. Expedition dates and approximate locations of the track lines are summarized in the following tables.



Expedition Dates (subject to changes customary of research expeditions):

Expedition	Date	Activities
EX1701	18 Jan 2017	Depart Honolulu, Hawaii, USA
	10 Feb 2017	Arrive Pago Pago, American Samoa
EX1702	16 Feb 2017	Depart Pago Pago, American Samoa
	02 March 2017	Arrive Apia, Samoa
EX1703	17 March 2017	Depart Apia, Samoa
	29 March 2017	Arrive Apia, Samoa
EX1704	04 April 2017	Depart Apia
	21 April 2017	Arrive Pago Pago, American Samoa

Transits:

Transit through Samoan waters		
	Approximate Latitude (+N,-S)	Approximate Longitude (+E,-W)
EX1701 - Enter Samoan waters	-12.551	-170.892
EX1701 - Depart Samoan waters	-13.453	-170.819
EX1702 - Enter Samoan waters	-14.076	-171.056
EX1703 - Depart Samoan waters	-12.418	-171.391
EX1703 - Enter Samoan waters	-12.132	-171.971
EX1704 - Depart Samoan waters	-13.941	-170.985

Focused Mapping Areas:

Upolu (North Mapping area bounding box)	
Latitude	Longitude
-13.612	-171.489
-13.645	-171.451
-13.630	-171.252



-13.730	-171.208
-13.956	-171.313
-13.903	-171.376
-13.883	-171.508
-13.770	-171.560

Upolu (South Mapping area bounding box)	
Latitude	Longitude
-13.977	-171.957
-14.090	-171.380
-13.968	-171.296
-14.057	-171.217
-14.232	-171.148
-14.236	171.306
-14.146	-171.965

4.3 Specify expected number or quantity of material to be collected (if known)

No physical material will be collected.

4.4 Describe how collection will be physically performed

No physical collection will be performed.

4.5 List the in-country entities likely to benefit from the activity and in what way.

It is in the best interest of all stakeholders to fully understand the extent of living marine resources that exist in the largely unexplored deep sea. The information and data generated by this project will enable baseline characterization of deepwater areas within Samoa, and the data collected will inform resource managers including the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The acquisition of high-resolution seafloor mapping data is an essential precursor to making significant biological, geological, archaeological and oceanographic discoveries. These data are both expensive and difficult to acquire - all collection costs are funded by the US Government and its domestic partners.



In addition, the vessel port calls at the port of Apia provide education and outreach opportunities. Ship tours are planned to introduce local students, teachers and officials to deep-sea exploration technologies, and share the findings of cruise activities. These are all opportunities to bring attention to the deep-water habitats and resources in Samoa.

4.6 To what degree will reliance be made on traditional knowledge?

No traditional knowledge will be used or relied on for planned activities.

4.7 Please specify whether specimens collected are listed in Appendix I, II or III of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Not applicable (No specimen will be collected)

5. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

5.1 Describe the potential impacts of the activity. Include:

This is a research project of limited size or magnitude with only short-term effects on the environment and for which any cumulative effects are negligible. As expected with ocean research with limited time or presence in the marine environment, project operations do not have the potential to result in any lasting changes to the environment.

5.2 Describe the nature of any expected research and development plans

The goal of NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* operations is to provide a foundation of publicly accessible data and information products to enable follow-on exploration, research and management activities. The data and information we collect is made publicly accessible as soon as possible after the cruise to enable interested students, scientists and managers to access and use the data. Anyone can use the data once available through the National Centers for Environmental Information.

A standard suite of data and information products are generated for each cruise. Standard data and products include: a cruise plan, multibeam and XBT raw and processed data (including seafloor bathymetry and backscatter, and water column backscatter data), EK60 raw data, ADCP raw data, Knudsen 3260 sub-bottom profiler raw data, mapping data report, and the cruise report.

These data and products are made publicly accessible to ANYONE through the [National Centers for Environmental Information](#) and NOAA OER's [Digital Atlas](#) within 30-90 days of cruise completion. Once these data are publicly available, we will notify key management groups and scientists interested in the data, including MNRE. Furthermore, our team develops and presents expedition summaries and key findings in various venues including but not limited to: our oceanexplorer.noaa.gov website, an annual Oceanography Supplement publication and major ocean science conferences.

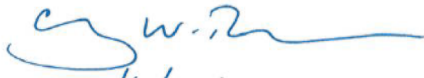


6. FUNDING

6.1 How is the collection supported and by whom?

NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* is a public vessel of the United States of America. Funding for *Okeanos Explorer* originates from the federal budget of the United States of America, specifically the Department of Commerce and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. NOAA has agreed to provide the ship, multibeam and other sonar systems, and their own technicians required for this cruise.

Signature of Applicant:



Date: 12/16/2016

Application Approved by:



**Chief Executive Officer
MNRE**



Appendix C: American Samoa DMWR Permit



SCIENTIFIC PERMITS SERIES NO: 2017/001

January 19, 2017

This Constitutes the Department's official action on:

SCIENTIFIC COLLECTION PERMITS APPLICATION SERIES NO: 001

NAME OF APPLICANT: KELLY P. ELLIOTT

ADDRESS OF APPLICANT: 1315 East-West Hwy
SSMC3 RM 10262, Silver Spring MD 20910

TITLE OF PROPOSED STUDY: 2017 CAPSTONE American Samoa Expedition

ACTION:

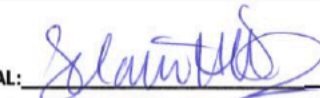
APPROVED
 DISAPPROVED

IF APPROVED, EFFECTIVE DURATION OF PERMIT: February 1 to April 30, 2017

IF APPROVED, SPECIFY CONDITIONS: Regular update of activities and copies of relevant request to the Department of Marine & Wildlife Resources.

REASONS FOR DISAPPROVAL: N/A

NAME OF SIGNATURE OF PERMITTING OFFICIAL:



Selaina Tuimavave Vaitautolu
Acting Director
Dept. Marine & Wildlife Resources



DEPARTMENT OF MARINE AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES
AMERICAN SAMOA GOVERNMENT
P.O. BOX 3730
Pago Pago, AS 96799 U.S.A.

SCIENTIFIC STUDY & COLLECTION PERMIT APPLICATION

This application must be completed prior to all scientific studies requiring the observation, collection, handling, &/or manipulation of live or dead entities of both marine and wildlife species whether in part or in whole.

NAME OF APPLICANT: Kelley P. Elliott

ADDRESS: 1315 East-West Hwy, SSMC3 RM 10262, Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA

EMAIL ADDRESS: Kelley.Elliott@noaa.gov

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION: U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Institution, Office of Ocean Exploration and Research

INSTITUTIONAL ADDRESS: 1315 East-West HWY, SSMC3 10th Floor, Silver Spring MD 20910

TITLE OF STUDY: 2017 CAPSTONE American Samoa Expedition

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* is the nation's first and only federal vessel with a mandate to systematically explore our mostly unknown ocean for the purpose of discovery and the advancement of knowledge. The 2017 CAPSTONE American Samoa Expedition is a part of a major multi-year foundational science effort focused on deepwater areas of U.S. marine protected areas (MPAs) in the central and western Pacific. The overarching goal of the multi-year CAPSTONE project is to extend and improve the understanding of the distribution and diversity of deepwater habitats within MPAs, and collect data and information to support priority monument and sanctuary science and management needs.

The fundamental driver of the multi-leg American Samoa Expedition is to better understand unknown and poorly known areas of our ocean which include diverse living marine resources, and unique geologic phenomena. Data and information from the cruises will build on previous work, and provide a foundation of baseline data to improve management and spur further exploration and research. NOAA priorities for the work include a combination of science, education, outreach, and open data objectives that will support management decisions at multiple levels.

- Acquire data to support priority Monument and Sanctuary science and management needs;
- Explore the diversity of benthic habitats and features (e.g. seamounts, hydrothermal vents, deep-sea coral habitats, bottom fish habitats);
- Identify and map vulnerable marine habitats – particularly high-density deep-sea coral and sponge communities;



- Investigate the geologic history of Pacific seamounts, including potential relevance to plate tectonics and subduction zone biology and geology; and
- Engage a broad spectrum of the scientific community and public in telepresence-based exploration; and
- Provide a foundation of publicly accessible data and information products to spur further exploration, research, and management activities.

Operations will use the ship's deep water mapping systems, NOAA's 6000m remotely operated vehicles (ROV), Conductivity Temperature Depth (CTD) rosette, underway CTD, and a high-bandwidth satellite connection for real-time ship to shore communications. Like previous expeditions in the Gulf of Mexico, western Atlantic, Hawai'i and Indonesia, NOAA will work with the scientific community and public to characterize unknown and poorly-known areas through telepresence-based exploration. Data and information from the Expedition will be made publicly available to provide a foundation of publicly-accessible baseline information to improve management and spur further exploration and research.

We propose to conduct activities within the American Samoa Exclusive Economic Zone, including within the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa and within territorial waters to explore and improve understanding of the distribution and diversity of deep water habitats. The activity would occur during five cruises from February 1 to April 30, 2017. Operations will be focused in 250 meters and deeper. No activities would occur on land.

DESCRIPTION OF SPECIMEN(S) TO BE COLLECTED, IF ANY:

During ROV operations, only very selective specimens that have the potential to contribute significant scientific discoveries will be collected. On average only 4-6 total biological and geological specimens will be collected per dive. Biologic samples will focus on potential new species or new records for the region, and the dominant morphotype animal (such as a coral or sponge) in a habitat. When possible, only a sub-sample will be taken of biologic specimens (e.g., only a piece or branch of corals and sponges will be collected, not the entire organism). Selective rock specimens, that have the potential to contribute significant scientific discoveries, as outlined in the expedition goals, will also be targeted. These are expected to include rocks from seamounts and manganese-coated rocks. When possible, rock samples will be selected in a way to minimize disturbance to the surrounding environment and to minimize the take of attached organisms. All samples will be preserved onboard and made freely and publicly accessible to the science community through National Repositories.

Water samples may also be collected using our CTD rosette instrument. The CTD instrument package is used to obtain conductivity, temperature, depth and other oceanographic data (dissolved oxygen, light scattering, oxygen reduction potential). At least one, and potentially several, CTD casts are planned for this cruise. CTD casts would be conducted at selected sites including locations where ROV dives are conducted to allow for an improved understanding of the environmental conditions by measuring the physical or chemical properties of the water column overlying or hosting a particular habitat. No water samples have been requested at this time, however if they are requested and collected they would likely be frozen for later analysis. The results from any analysis would be made publicly available.



DESCRIBE COLLECTION METHODS TO BE USED:

ROV Operations: biological and geological specimens

The purpose of conducting ROV operations is to conduct interdisciplinary site characterization at priority targets in American Samoa. Interdisciplinary site characterization would be achieved by visually surveying priority targets while simultaneously acquiring environmental data with in situ sensors mounted on the ROVs (conductivity, temperature and depth; dissolved oxygen; light scattering; and oxygen reduction potential). ROV targets include seamounts, hydrothermal vents, deep-sea coral and sponge communities and bottom fish habitats. The combined dives will enable scientists and managers to have a better understanding of the diversity and distribution of deep water habitats in American Samoa including the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument and National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, and should contribute to enhanced protection of these resources.

The *Okeanos Explorer* is equipped with a dedicated, fully integrated, two-body ROV system. ROV operations are conducted primarily during daylight hours while the vessel is stopped and holding station using dynamic positioning. ROV operations will typically take place within several meters of the seafloor, and are conducted in a way to minimize seafloor disturbances. On occasion, the ROV is set down on the seafloor in order to acquire very close imagery of habitats or features of interest or to collect samples. The ROV also has a temperature probe that may be shallowly inserted into the seafloor sediment to measure the depth or temperature of features of interest.

During these dives, limited sampling operations are planned with the ROV to collect very selective specimens that have the potential to contribute significant scientific discoveries. These specimens would be collected using the ROV's manipulator arms or scoop. Biological specimen collections will focus on potential new species or new records for the region, and the dominant morphotype animal (such as a coral or sponge) in a habitat. When possible, only a sub-sample will be taken of biological specimens (e.g., only a piece or branch of corals and sponges will be collected, not the entire organism). Selective rock specimens, that have the potential to contribute significant scientific discoveries, as outlined in the expedition goals, will also be targeted. These are expected to include rocks from seamounts and manganese-coated rocks. When possible, rock samples will be selected in a way to minimize disturbance to the surrounding environment and to minimize the take of attached organisms. On average only 4-6 total biological and geological specimens will be collected per dive.

CTD Rosette: water samples and sensor data

Water samples may also be collected using our CTD rosette instrument. The CTD instrument package is used to obtain conductivity, temperature, depth and other oceanographic data (dissolved oxygen, light scattering, oxygen reduction potential). The instrument is attached to an open cylindrical steel frame approximately 1.15 m in diameter and 1.4 m high with a 24-position rosette carousel containing 24 2.5 L Niskin bottles for collecting water samples. The system would be lowered to a maximum depth of 6800 m by an embedded scientific winch and wire while the vessel would be stopped and hold station using dynamic positioning. The average time to conduct a CTD casts varies from one to several hours depending on water depth (the CTD is

lowered through the water column at 60m/min). CTD casts would be conducted at selected sites including locations where ROV dives are conducted to allow for an improved understanding of the environmental conditions by measuring the physical or chemical properties of the water column overlying or hosting a particular habitat. No water samples have been requested at this time, however if they are collected they would likely be frozen for later analysis. The results from any analysis would be made publicly available.

Mapping Operations: acoustic data

The ship will conduct sonar mapping operations at all times during non-ROV or non-CTD rosette operations throughout the cruise. NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* has a suite of scientific sonars, each with a unique exploration application. All of these systems are routinely used by the ocean science community and have provided invaluable scientific data for oceanographers, marine researchers and managers. Each sonar's acoustic signal is designed to be narrowly focused to provide precise information about a specific, narrowly defined area of the seafloor or water column beneath the ship. The sonars include a Kongsberg EM302 30 kHz multibeam system; 18 kHz, 38 kHz, 70 kHz, 120 kHz, 200 kHz and 333 kHz Kongsberg EK60 split-beam fisheries sonars (the 333 kHz and 38 kHz will not be operational since we don't currently have the hardware general purpose transceiver to run it, but is included just in case); a Knudsen 3.5 kHz chirp sub-bottom profiler sonar; and 300 kHz and 38 kHz Teledyne Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers (ADCPs). The multibeam maps broad swaths for seafloor bathymetry/backscatter and water column feature detection (e.g. gaseous seeps), the split-beam sonars gather calibrated target strength measurements of biologic and gaseous targets in the water column, the sub-bottom profiler provides data useful for interpreting sub-seafloor geology, and the ADCPs provide information about current velocity and direction at various depths through a water column profile. Additionally, expendable bathythermographs (XBTs) and the ship's UnderwayCTD (UCTD) will be deployed at regular intervals in association with multibeam data collection. All of these systems are routinely used by this exploration vessel.

DURATION OF STUDY OR COLLECTION PERIOD:

The activity would occur during five cruises from February 1 to April 30, 2017. The requested dates cover a conservative estimate of the timing that NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* will arrive in American Samoa and can commence work in the region, through a few days after the last cruise departs and is likely to conduct work in American Samoa. During the cruises, 15 deployments of the ROV are planned in American Samoan waters, resulting in 120 hours total dive time (~8 hours for each dive). The Expedition cruise legs, dates and focus areas are below:

EX-17-01 (January 18 – February 10, 2017): 24-day mapping cruise from Honolulu, HI to Pago Pago, American Samoa with focused mapping work in: Kingman/Palmyra and Jarvis units of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument (PRIMNM); the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA) part of Kiribati; Tokelau and Swains Island Unit of the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NMSAS).

EX-17-02 (February 16 – March 2, 2017. Pago Pago, American Samoa - Apia, Samoa): 14-day cruise with daytime remotely operated vehicle (ROV) dives and overnight CTD rosette and mapping operations focused on American Samoan waters.



EX-17-03 (March 7 - 29, 2017. Apia, Samoa - Apia, Samoa): A 23-day cruise with daytime remotely operated vehicle dives and overnight CTD rosette and mapping operations focused on PIPA and the Howland/Baker Unit of the PRIMNM. One dive is planned in the Swains Island unit of the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa at either the start or end of the cruise.

EX-17-04 (April 4 – April 21, 2017. Apia, Samoa - Pago Pago, American Samoa): An 18-day mapping cruise focused on American Samoa including unmapped or poorly mapped areas of the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument and National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa deeper than ~250m.

EX-17-05 (April 27 – May 19, 2017. Pago Pago, AS to Honolulu, HI): A 23-day cruise with daytime remotely operated vehicle (ROV) dives and overnight CTD rosette and mapping operations focused on the Cook Islands and the Jarvis and Kingman/Palmyra Units of the PRIMNM. One dive is planned in or just outside of the Aunu'u Unit of the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa at the start of the cruise.

SPECIFIC LOCATION(S) OF STUDY &/or COLLECTING/SAMPLING AREA(S):

Mapping, ROV and CTD rosette operations will focus in depths generally between 250 and 6,500 meters, with some mapping planned. CTD rosette operations have been requested in waters south of Tutuila and at Vailulu'u seamount. No activities would occur on land.



Figure 1: Overview map showing the general locations of ROV dives in American Samoa. The red dots are the draft locations of ROV dive sites, and where samples would be collected. The yellow boxes are priority areas for focused mapping surveys. Focused overnight mapping operations will be planned during the cruise based on available time. The light blue polygons are the boundaries of the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument and National Marine Sanctuary of

American Samoa. The green labelled dots are the port locations of Pago Pago, American Samoa and Apia, Samoa. The white line is the publicly available Exclusive Economic Zone of American Samoa and Samoa.

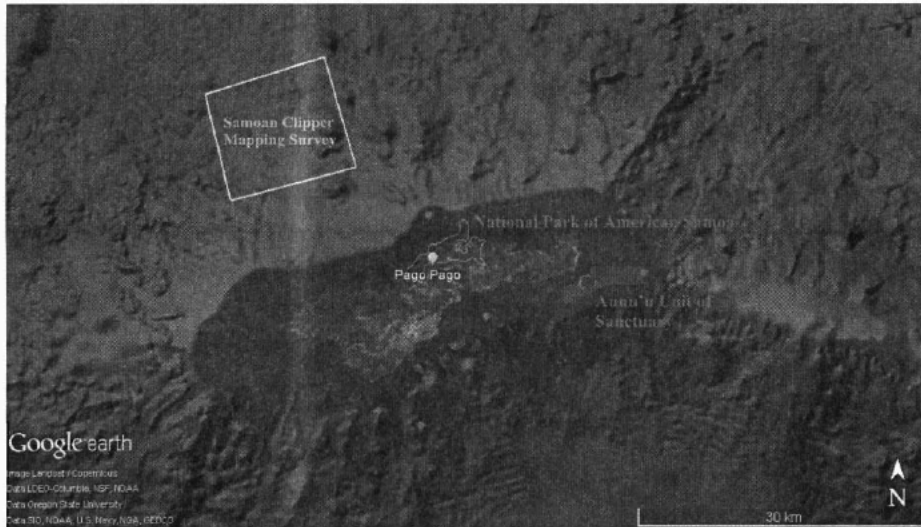


Figure 2. Close-up of draft ROV dive sites (red dots) and a priority mapping survey (yellow polygon) near Tutuila Island. The green polygon is the boundaries of the National Park of American Samoa (which extends to 100m offshore), and the light blue polygon is the Aunu'u unit of the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa. The requested sonar mapping survey is to support efforts to find a lost plane and maritime archaeology procedures will be employed during the survey to protect location information.

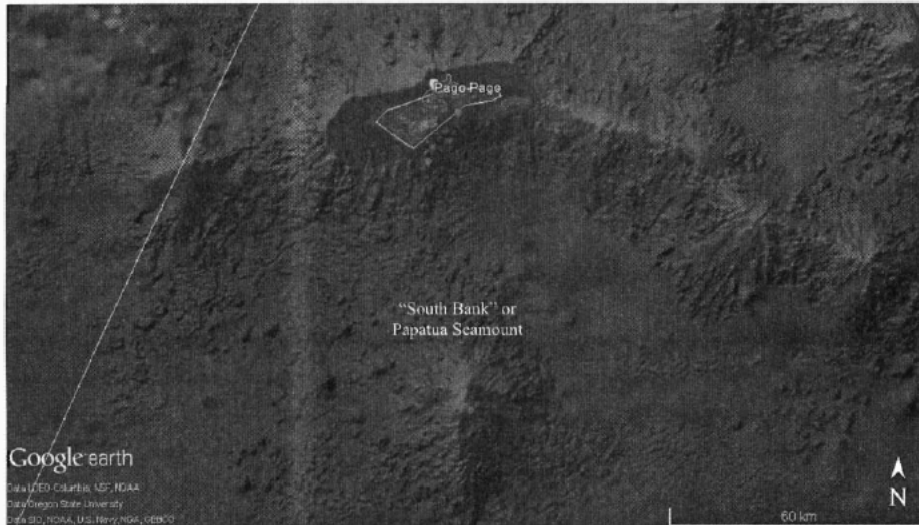


Figure 3. Close up of Tutuila Island and Papatua or “South Bank” seamount. The red dots are the locations of draft ROV dive sites.

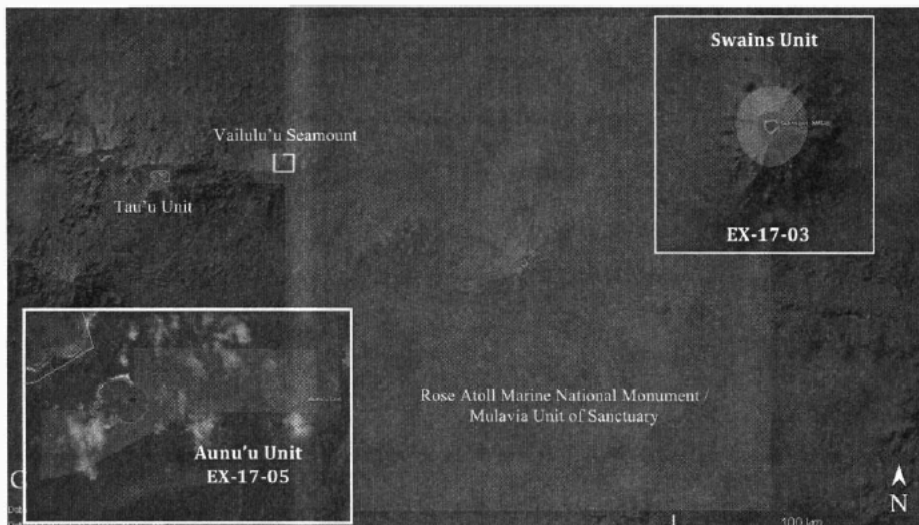


Figure 4. Close up of draft ROV dive sites (red dots) and a priority mapping survey (yellow box) within the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa and Rose Atoll Marine National Monument (the light blue boxes).

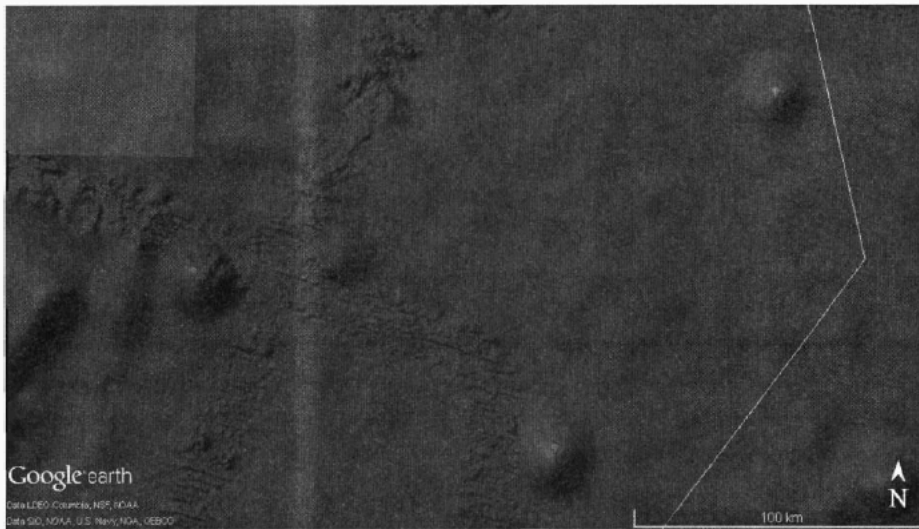


Figure 5. Close up of draft ROV dive sites (red dots) on unnamed seamounts close to the eastern edge of the American Samoa EEZ (white line). The light blue polygon is the southeast corner of Rose Atoll Marine National Monument. Mapping operations will need to be conducted overtop of the seamounts the night/morning prior to the dive to finalize the dive track.



Figure 6. Overview map showing areas where seafloor mapping activities are planned – especially during EX-17-02 and EX-17-04 cruises. The orange polygons are mapping survey

areas requested by the science and management community. Mapping operations will focus on areas 250 meters and deeper.

IF HANDLING &/OR MANIPULATION OF LIVE ANIMALS, DESCRIBE PROTOCOL(S):

ROV Operations:

Once a sample is brought onboard, it will be photographed, documented, and information entered into a sample database. Rocks will be dried and photographed. Aliquots of coral and sponge specimens will be preserved for taxonomic analysis (ethanol), genetic analysis (CHAOS or other buffer), and in some cases, histological examination (10% buffered formalin). All other animals will be preserved in either formalin or ethanol, depending on which preservative is more desirable for the particular taxa.

An additional small tissue sample will be taken of all biological specimens when doing so will not be overly destructive to the specimen. This tissue sample will be preserved onboard for later genomic DNA and RNA extraction at the Ocean Genome Legacy Center (OGL) in Northeastern University.

All samples will remain on the ship until it returns to Honolulu, HI in summer 2017. The samples will then be taken to OER Science Advisor, Dr. Chris Kelley's lab at the University of Hawaii at Manoa for temporary storage. There they will be prepared and transferred to a repository (with preliminary identification provided along with photographs and a deed of gift).

IF SAMPLES COLLECTED WILL BE SUBJECTED TO FURTHER PROCESSING (e.g., genetic analysis or other biochemical analysis, museum prep), DESCRIBE HOW AND WHERE:

All biological and geological samples will be provided to a public repository to be described and made publicly accessible to the scientific research community. Scientists can then request access to the samples to conduct additional analysis, however this is outside the scope of our project.

FINAL DISPOSITION OF SAMPLES OR ANIMALS:

Selected coral and sponge specimens will be split, with one piece going to Bishop Museum in Hawaii, and the other to the Smithsonian to ensure access to as many researchers as possible. If it is determined that splitting will be too destructive to a particular specimen, it will be provided to the Smithsonian Institution intact in order to provide public access to as many researchers as possible. Crustaceans and any other organisms found on the corals and sponges will be provided to the Smithsonian. All other animals will be provided to the Smithsonian.

Tissue samples will be provided to the Ocean Genome Legacy Center (OGL) at Northeastern University. The results of genomic analysis are made publicly available through OGLs website.

All geological samples will be sent to the Oregon State University's Marine Geology Repository to be made publicly accessible. OSU will receive the samples, curate them, describe them from a



petrology point of view (e.g. mineral content, texture, alteration, rock name), microphotograph them and prepare them for future redistribution.

No water samples have been requested at this time, however if they are collected they would likely be frozen for later analysis. The results from any analysis would be made publicly available through the NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information.

JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUEST TO COLLECT, SAMPLE, HANDLE, &/OR MANIPULATE ANIMALS OF PARTS THEREOF:

The acquisition of high-resolution seafloor mapping data is an essential precursor to making significant biological, geological, archaeological and oceanographic discoveries. The *Okeanos Explorer* cruises will collect seafloor mapping data in areas previously unmapped with sonar or modern sonar, and to supplement previous work. These maps form the basis for selecting ROV dive targets.

ROV dives take the next major step in baseline habitat characterization by using the ROV system to visually investigate unknown and little known deep water habitats within American Samoa identified as priority scientists and managers. CTD casts may be conducted to collect additional information about the physical and chemical properties of the water column, including at sites of interest identified from mapping and ROV investigation.

These dives will be the next step in a baseline habitat characterization, and directly contribute to a better understanding of the deep water habitats, ecosystems and geology of American Samoa. The dives will enable scientists and managers to have a better understanding of the diversity and distribution of deepwater habitats. It is this understanding that enables effective management decisions, and provides continuous support for the monuments, sanctuaries and their protection of these resources. The collective understanding established from the multi-year CAPSTONE expeditions will increase understanding of deep-sea biogeographic patterns across the Central and Western Pacific.

PROJECTED STARTING DATE OF STUDY:

The starting date of the first cruise is January 18th, however the ship will not arrive in American Samoan waters until early February. I have listed project dates of February 1 (the start date) to April 30, 2017. The requested dates cover a conservative estimate of the timing that NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* will arrive in American Samoa and can commence work in the region, through a few days after the last cruise departs and is likely to conduct work in American Samoa. The Expedition cruise legs, dates and focus areas are detailed in the "Duration of Study or Collection Period" section above.

NAME OF LOCAL COLLABORATOR(S) &/OR LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION,

Local managers have identified many of the priority sites for acoustic mapping and remotely operated vehicle dives in American Samoan waters. The names and affiliations of key partners are included below:

Genevieve (Gene) Brighthouse*



National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, Superintendent

**We have met with the entire Sanctuary team and will be collaborating with them closely, especially on outreach activities.*

Fatima Sauafea-Le'au
NOAA Fisheries - PIRO
Habitat Conservation Division
American Samoa Field Office

Brian Peck
Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, Superintendent
Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, Manager
US Fish and Wildlife Service

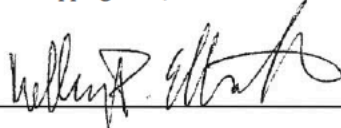
Dr. Tim Clark
Marine Ecologist
National Park of American Samoa

We also met with representatives from other American Samoa agencies in November 2016 to share our draft project plans and request additional input and feedback. This included Dr. Ruth Matagi-Tofiga, Director of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources. Other agencies and officials included the Office of Samoan Affairs, the American Samoa Governor's Coral Reef Advisory Group, American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency, and the American Samoa Power Authority.

OTHER COLLABORATING SCIENTISTS:

Dr. Chris Kelley, CAPSTONE Science Advisory, University of Hawaii at Manoa
Dr. Santiago Herrera, Biology Science Team Lead, Lehigh University
Dr. Matthew Jackson, Geology Science Team Lead, University of California Santa Barbara
Elizabeth Lobecker, Physical Scientist/Mapping Lead, NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _____



DATE: Jan. 3, 2017.



MAIL or RETURN THIS FORM TO THE ADDRESS ON THE TOP OF THE FRONT PAGE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

APPLICATION SERIES No. _____
DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED: _____
RECEIVED BY: _____
APPLICATION FEE Receipt No. & Amount: _____

REVIEWER'S COMMENTS:

This is an important research initiative to explore and understand the deep-water habitats of American Samoa. These are habitats that are generally out of reach but the technologies borned by this expedition will map and sample environments and living things in the deep.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve



NAME AND SIGNATURE OF REVIEWER: Dr. Domingo Ochavillo

DATE: 9 January 2017



Appendix D: NMSAS Permit



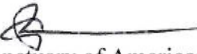


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa
P.O. Box 4318
Pago Pago, AS 96799

January 19, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE RECORD

FROM: Gene Brighthouse 
National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa

SUBJECT: Decision Memo for Permit # NMSAS-2017-001

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) has decided to issue permit number NMSAS-2017-001 to Kelley Elliott for the project entitled: 2017 American Samoa Expedition. This memorandum documents the rationale for this decision and compliance with all required consultations generated by this action.

BACKGROUND

Project Summary:

NOAA Ship Okeanos Explorer is the nation's first and only federal vessel with a mandate to systematically explore our mostly unknown ocean for the purpose of discovery and the advancement of knowledge. Operating under a partnership with NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration and Research and the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, the 2017 CAPSTONE American Samoa Expedition is a part of a major multi-year foundational science effort focused on deepwater areas of U.S. marine protected areas (MPAs) in the central and western Pacific. The overarching goal of the CAPSTONE project is to extend and improve the understanding of the distribution and diversity of deepwater habitats within MPAs, and collect data and information to support priority monument and sanctuary science and management needs.

Data and information from the Expeditions will provide a foundation of publicly-accessible baseline information to improve management and spur further exploration and research. Like previous expeditions in the Gulf of Mexico, western Atlantic, Hawai'i and Indonesia, NOAA will work with the scientific community and public to characterize unknown and poorly-known areas through telepresence-based exploration. Operations will use the ship's deep water mapping systems, NOAA's 6000m remotely operated vehicles (ROV), underway CTD, CTD rosette, and a high-bandwidth satellite connection for real-time ship to shore communications.

We propose to conduct activities in and around the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa to explore and improve understanding of the distribution and diversity of deep water habitats. The activity would occur during five cruises from February 1 to April 30, 2017. Operations will be focused in 250 m and deeper. No activities would occur on land.



Direct impacts:

A standard suite of operations are conducted on Okeanos Explorer and have been determined to not have the potential to result in any lasting changes to the environment. As defined in Sections 5.05 and 6.03.c.3 (a) of NAO 216-6, this is a research project of limited size or magnitude or with only short-term effects on the environment and for which any cumulative effects are negligible. Full details of the potential short-term impacts are described in the attached Categorical Exclusion.

Indirect impacts:

No indirect impacts on sanctuary resources will result from this activity.

Cumulative impacts:

A standard suite of operations are conducted on Okeanos Explorer and have been determined to not have the potential to result in any lasting changes to the environment. As defined in Sections 5.05 and 6.03.c.3 (a) of NAO 216-6, this is a research project of limited size or magnitude or with only short-term effects on the environment and for which any cumulative effects are negligible. Full details of the potential short-term impacts are described in the attached Categorical Exclusion.

Site-specific impacts and review criteria:

Activity shall be conducted with adequate safeguards for the environment. Environment shall be returned to, or will regenerate to, the condition which existed before the activity occurred.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

Categorical Exclusion:

After reviewing NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-6, including the criteria used to determine significance, the NMSP has concluded that the issuance of this permit would not have a significant effect, individually or cumulatively, on the human environment. Further, we have determined that the proposed action is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement in accordance with Section 6.03c.3(a) Research Program of NAO 216-6, specifically:

The proposed research activity is of limited size and magnitude and, based on analysis of past projects in the permitted activity area, has been found to have negligible cumulative effects. I certify that this action is not likely to result in significant impacts as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27 and is not an exception to this CE category as defined by section 5.05c of NAO 216-6.

Based on this, the NMSP has concluded that an environmental assessment is not warranted for the issuance of this permit.

MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT / ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT

Section 305(b) (2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires any federal action agency to complete an Essential Fish Habitat consultation for any action authorized by the agency that may adversely affect EFH. The issuance of this permit will



adversely impact designated EFH within National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa. Therefore, consultation with NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office was conducted on November 30, 2016. Recommendations to minimize or mitigate for impacts to EFH have been taken into consideration and incorporated into the final action.

MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTION ACT

The issuance of this permit is not likely to result in the take of any marine mammal protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Therefore, a separate permit to take a marine mammal is not required.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT

The NMSP has determined that the proposed activity is not reasonably likely to affect any land or water use or natural resource of the coastal zone of American Samoa. In addition, national marine sanctuary permits and authorizations are not listed under the American Samoa Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) as activities that generally require a consistency determination. Furthermore, American Samoa CMP has not contacted the NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management with a request to review this permit. Therefore, a federal consistency determination is not required for this action.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The NMSP has determined that the proposed activity is not likely to adversely affect ESA-listed marine species. Consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service Pacific Islands Regional Office as required by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act was conducted on January 14, 2016. Recommendations generated through consultation have been taken into consideration and incorporated into the final action.

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consider the impact of their actions on historic properties. The NMSP has determined that the proposed activity is not likely to affect any historic properties. No consultations with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, State Historic Preservation Officer, or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer were conducted.

OTHER CONSULTATIONS

No other consultations were required or considered for this action.





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa
 P.O. Box 4318
 Pago Pago, AS 96799

January 19, 2017

Ms. Kelley Elliott
 NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research (OER)
 1315 East-West Hwy
 SSMC3 Room 10262
 Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Elliott:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) has approved the issuance of permit number NMSAS-2017-001 to conduct activities within National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (sanctuary) for research purposes. Activities are to be conducted in accordance with the permit application and all supporting materials submitted to the sanctuary, and the terms and conditions of permit number NMSAS-2017-001 (enclosed).

This permit is not valid until signed and returned to the ONMS. Retain one signed copy and carry it with you while conducting the permitted activities. Additional copies must be signed and returned, by either mail or email, to the following individuals within 30 days of issuance and before commencing any activity authorized by this permit:

Gene Brighthouse Superintendent National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa P.O. Box 4318 Pago Pago, AS 96799 Gene.Brighthouse@noaa.gov	National Permit Coordinator NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries 1305 East-West Highway (N/ORM6) SSMC4, 11 th Floor Silver Spring, MD 20910 nmspermits@noaa.gov
---	--

Your permit contains specific terms, conditions and reporting requirements. Review them closely and fully comply with them while undertaking permitted activities.

If you have any questions, please contact Gene Brighthouse at 011-684-633-6500. Thank you for your continued cooperation with the ONMS.

Sincerely,


 Gene Brighthouse
 Superintendent

Enclosure





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa
P.O. Box 4318
Pago Pago, AS 96799

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY of AMERICAN SAMOA RESEARCH PERMIT

Permittee: Ms. Kelley Elliott
NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research (OER)
1315 East-West Hwy
SSMC3 Room 10262
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Permit Number: NMSAS-2017-001
Effective Date: February 1, 2017
Expiration Date: April 30, 2017

Project Title: 2017 American Samoa Expedition

This permit is issued for activities in accordance with the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA), 16 USC §1431 *et seq.*, and regulations thereunder (15 CFR Part 922). All activities must be conducted in accordance with those regulations and law. No activity prohibited in 15 CFR Part 922 is allowed except as specified in the activity description below.

Subject to the terms and conditions of this permit, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) hereby authorizes the permittee listed above to conduct research activities within National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NMSAS or sanctuary). All activities are to be conducted in accordance with this permit and the permit application received January 03, 2017. The permit application is incorporated into this permit and made a part hereof; provided, however, that if there are any conflicts between the permit application and the terms and conditions of this permit, the terms and conditions of this permit shall be controlling.

Permitted Activity Description:

The following activities are authorized by this permit:

Permitted research activities utilizing methods as described in the research application include: Damaging, destroying or possessing any invertebrate, coral, bottom formation or marine plant; Alteration of seabed; collection of bottom-dwelling species throughout the sanctuary.

Specimens to be collected are very unlikely to already reside in a repository as the dives and collections are discovery-based. Only very selective specimens that have the potential to contribute significant scientific discoveries will be collected during ROV operations. Biologic samples will focus on potential new species or new records for the region, and the dominant morphotype animal (such as a coral or sponge) in a habitat. Selective rock specimens, that have the potential to contribute significant scientific discoveries, as outlined in the expedition goals, will also be targeted. These are expected to include rocks from seamounts and manganese-coated rocks.



When possible, only a sub-sample will be taken of biologic specimens (e.g., only a piece or branch of corals and sponges will be collected, not the entire organism). When possible, rock samples will be selected in a way to minimize disturbance to the surrounding environment and to minimize the take of attached organisms. All samples will be preserved onboard and made freely and publicly accessible to the science community through National Repositories.

No further violation of sanctuary regulations is allowed.

Permitted Activity Location:

The permitted activity is allowed only in the following location(s):

Throughout the sanctuary.

Special Terms and Conditions:

The permittee may not anchor within the Sanctuary boundaries.

The permittee may not permanently mark any of the reefs.

The permittee shall submit an annual report of all activities conducted under this permit to the NMSAS Permit Coordinator no later than one year from completion of field activities. The report should include a synopsis of research results to date, as well as information regarding daily activities such as location (latitude and longitude) and depth of surveys, discovery or disturbance of historical artifacts, or equipment lost. Appropriate photographs that may be used by NOAA are appreciated, and will be credited to the photographer.

Any scientific publications and/or reports resulting from activities conducted under the authority of this permit must include the notation that the activity was conducted under permit number NMSAS-2017-001. Additionally, the permittee and his/her respective institution(s) are required to acknowledge during any media coverage (press releases, video/photo, or other means) that the research activities occurred within the NMSAS and under permit.

NOAA reserves the right to place an observer aboard the ship engaged in operations conducted under this permit. The NOAA observer(s) may document the permittee's activities for the purpose of determining whether the permitted activities are conducted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this permit and the applicable statute and regulations. The NOAA observer(s) may also provide limited advice and technical assistance, if requested by the permittee. The NOAA observer(s) will not be present for the purpose of safety of permittees, nor for the purpose of approval of activities not specifically authorized by this permit.



General Terms and Conditions:

1. Within 30 (thirty) days of the date of issuance, the permittee must sign and date this permit for it to be considered valid. Once signed, the permittee must send copies, via mail or email, to the following individuals:

Gene Brighthouse Superintendent National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa P.O. Box 4318 Pago Pago, AS 96799 Gene.Brighthouse@noaa.gov	National Permit Coordinator NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries 1305 East-West Highway (N/ORM6) SSMC4, 11 th Floor Silver Spring, MD 20910 nmspermits@noaa.gov
---	--

2. It is a violation of this permit to conduct any activity authorized by this permit prior to the ONMS having received a copy signed by the permittee.
3. This permit may only be amended by the ONMS. The permittee may not change or amend any part of this permit at any time. The terms of the permit must be accepted in full, without revision; otherwise, the permittee must return the permit to the sanctuary office unsigned with a written explanation for its rejection. Amendments to this permit must be requested in the same manner the original request was made.
4. All persons participating in the permitted activity must be under the supervision of the permittee, and the permittee is responsible for any violation of this permit, the NMSA, and sanctuary regulations for activities conducted under, or in junction with, this permit. The permittee must assure that all persons performing activities under this permit are fully aware of the conditions herein.
5. This permit is non-transferable and must be carried by the permittee at all times while engaging in any activity authorized by this permit.
6. This permit may be suspended, revoked, or modified for violation of the terms and conditions of this permit, the regulations at 15 CFR Part 922, the NMSA, or for other good cause. Such action will be communicated in writing to the applicant or permittee, and will set forth the reason(s) for the action taken.
7. This permit may be suspended, revoked or modified if requirements from previous ONMS permits or authorizations issued to the permittee are not fulfilled by their due date.
8. Permit applications for any future activities in the sanctuary or any other sanctuary in the system by the permittee might not be considered until all requirements from this permit are fulfilled.
9. This permit does not authorize the conduct of any activity prohibited by 15 CFR § 922, other than those specifically described in the "Permitted Activity Description" section of this permit. If the permittee or any person acting under the permittee's supervision



conducts, or causes to be conducted, any activity in the sanctuary not in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in this permit, or who otherwise violates such terms and conditions, the permittee may be subject to civil penalties, forfeiture, costs, and all other remedies under the NMSA and its implementing regulations at 15 CFR Part 922.

10. Any publications and/or reports resulting from activities conducted under the authority of this permit must include the notation that the activity was conducted under National Marine Sanctuary Permit NMSAS-2017-001 and be sent to the ONMS officials listed in general condition number 1.
11. This permit does not relieve the permittee of responsibility to comply with all other federal, state and local laws and regulations, and this permit is not valid until all other necessary permits, authorizations, and approvals are obtained. Particularly, this permit does not allow disturbance of marine mammals or seabirds protected under provisions of the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, or Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Authorization for incidental or direct harassment of species protected by these acts must be secured from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or NOAA Fisheries, depending upon the species affected.
12. The permittee shall indemnify and hold harmless the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, NOAA, the Department of Commerce and the United States for and against any claims arising from the conduct of any permitted activities.
13. Any question of interpretation of any term or condition of this permit will be resolved by NOAA.

Your signature below, as permittee, indicates that you accept and agree to comply with all terms and conditions of this permit. This permit becomes valid when you, the permittee, countersign and date below. Please note that the expiration date on this permit is already set and will not be extended by a delay in your signing.



Ms. Kelley Elliott
NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research (OER)

Date

1-26-17



Gene Brighthouse
Superintendent
National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa

Date

1-19-17

0 document(s) attached.



Appendix E: Categorical Exclusion



Categorical Exclusion (CE) Determination Worksheet

Project Title: EX-17-03. Howland/Baker PRIMNM and PIPA (ROV/Mapping)

Date Review Completed: February 22, 2017

Completed by: Craig Russell, NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research

Signature:



Step 1. CE applicability

1. What is the proposed federal action?

The proposed action is to collect baseline mapping data using the NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer's* sonar systems and to conduct baseline characterizations of unexplored areas using NOAA's two-body remotely operated vehicle (ROV) and CTD rosette system on the NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*.

The expedition will commence on March 7th, 2017 in Apia, Samoa (13°51.03' S, 171°45.08'W) and conclude on March 29, 2017 in Apia, Samoa (13°51.03' S, 171°45.08'W) to conduct operations in the vicinity of Howland/Baker, Pacific Remote Island Marine National Monument (PRIMNM), National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NMSAS) and Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA). See Project Instructions EX-17-03 for more details.

2. Which class of CE in Appendix E of the NAO 216-6A Companion Manual is applicable to this action and why?

The topical scope of this action is consistent with CE number E4 in Appendix E of the Companion Manual to NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-6A:

Activities that remotely survey or observe living resources in the field using non-invasive techniques, which have little to no potential to adversely affect the environment or interfere with organisms or habitat.

Step 2. Extraordinary Circumstances Consideration

3. Would the action result in adverse effects on human health or safety that are not negligible?

No. The NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* will be operating in remote deep sea areas of the

Pacific Ocean. Expedition EX-17-03, an expedition of the NOAA CAPSTONE campaign, will focus operations in PIPA and the Howland Baker unit of PRIMNM with some operations in Tokelau and Samoa. (see **Table 1 of EX-17-03 Project Instructions: Bounding coordinates of the EX-17-03 operating area**) and does not involve any procedures or outcomes known to result in impacts on human health and safety more than would be negligible.

4. Would the action result in adverse effects on an area with unique environmental characteristics that are not negligible?

This survey/expedition overlaps with the following areas with unique environmental characteristics: the Pacific Remote Island Marine National Monument (PRIMNM), the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NMSAS), the territorial waters of American Samoa, and the Pacific Island Protection Area (PIPA). However, the survey effects will be negligible or less than negligible, based on determinations made by management authorities affiliated with these areas. The expedition is being planned and conducted in partnership with NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) Marine National Monument Program (MNMP) to ensure no more than negligible effects on these Pacific Island areas with unique environmental characteristics. Though NOAA research is exempted from standard permit requirements to work in the PRIMNM, OER made requests and received approvals to conduct operations in the abovementioned protected areas.

5. Would the action result in adverse effects on species or habitats protected by the ESA, MMPA, MSA, NMSA, or MBTA that are not negligible?

OER has taken measures to ensure that any effects on species or habitats protected by the ESA, MMPA, MSA or NMSA meet the definition of “negligible.” In January 2016, a request from OER was submitted to the NMFS PIRO Protected Resources Division to initiate consultation under Section 7 of the ESA. Accompanying this request was a biological assessment that described the planned operations proposed for 2016-2017 expeditions in the Pacific and identified all ESA-listed species, including corals, in the vicinity of the operations. On February 7, 2016, OER received a letter that concurred with our determination that these 2016-2017 operations are not likely to adversely affect ESA-listed species. The ESA Section 7 concurrence letter is provided as Appendix X in the Project Instructions document for EX-17-03.

Given the offshore focus area of our work, it is highly improbable that we will encounter marine mammals protected under the MMPA or sea birds protected under the MBTA. If we did encounter any marine mammals or seabirds, our effect would be negligible because of the best management practices to which we adhere to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

OER also initiated a request for a Magnuson-Stevens Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation for this same series of cruises and subsequently received a determination that the proposed cruises will not reduce the quality and/or quantity of EFH, provided there is adherence to the OER proposed procedures and the NMFS guidance conveyed via email from NMFS PIRO's Richard Hall, dated November 30, 2016.

See the response to question #4 regarding measures taken to ensure that any effects meet the definition of "negligible" with respect to the NMSA.

6. Would the action result in the potential to generate, use, store, transport, or dispose of hazardous or toxic substances, in a manner that may have a significant effect on the environment?

No. The cruise operations will be in compliance with FEC 07 Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste Management Requirements for Visiting Scientific Parties (or superseding OMAO procedures) to ensure generation, use, storage, transport, and disposal of such substances will not result in significant impacts.

7. Would the action result in adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, National Historic Landmarks designated by the Secretary of the Interior, or National Monuments designated through the Antiquities Act of 1906; Federally recognized Tribal and Native Alaskan lands, cultural or natural resources, or religious or cultural sites that cannot be resolved through applicable regulatory processes?

During EX-17-03, we will not visit sites that fall under any of these categories.

8. Would the action result in a disproportionately high and adverse effect on the health or the environment of minority or low-income communities, compared to the impacts on other communities (EO 12898)?

No, the NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* will be operating in remote deep sea areas of the Pacific Ocean (see table 1, EX 17-03 Cruise Plan Instructions). There are no communities within or near the geographic scope of the cruise, and the cruise does not involve actions known or likely to result in adverse impacts on human health.

9. Would the action contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of the species?

No. During EX-17-03 the ship will not make landfall in areas other than commercial ports. The ship and OER mission team will comply with all applicable local and federal regulations regarding the prevention or spread of invasive species. At the completion of every ROV dive or CTD cast, the ROVs will be thoroughly rinsed with fresh water and completely dried to prevent spreading organisms from one site to another. Also the Engineering Department aboard the NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* attends yearly Ballast Management Training in accordance with NOAA Form 57-07-13 NPDES VGP Annual Inspection and Report to prevent the introduction of invasive species.

10. Would the action result in a potential violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment?

The proposed action **will not** result in any violations of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment. The survey coordinators obtained (or are in the process of obtaining) authorizations and/or consultations pursuant to applicable laws. See responses to questions #4, 5, and 6 for details.

11. Would the action result in highly controversial environmental effects?

No. The exploration activities will be localized and of short duration in any particular area at any given time. Given this project's scope and breadth, no notable or lasting changes or highly controversial effects to the environment will result.

12. Does the action have the potential to establish a precedent for future action or an action that represents a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?

No. While each cruise contributes to the overarching goal of exploring, mapping, and sampling the ocean, every cruise is independently useful and not connected to subsequent cruises.

13. Would the action result in environmental effects that are uncertain, unique, or unknown?

No. The techniques and equipment used are standard for this type of field activity.

14. Does the action have the potential for significant cumulative impacts when the proposed action is combined with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions, even though the impacts of the proposed action may not be significant by themselves?

By definition, actions that a federal agency classifies as a categorical exclusion have no potential, individually or cumulatively, to significantly affect the environment. This cruise is consistent



January 2017

with a class of CE established by NOAA, and there are no extraordinary circumstances for this action that may otherwise result in potentially significant impacts.



Appendix F: ESA Section 7 LOC





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Pacific Islands Regional Office
1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg 176
Honolulu, Hawaii 96818
(808) 725-5000 • Fax: (808) 725-5215

Mr. John McDonough
Deputy Director
NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research

Dear Mr. McDonough:

This letter responds to your January 14, 2016 Request for Consultation by the Office of Exploration and Research (OER) regarding efforts aboard the NOAA vessel *Okeanos Explorer* with the proposed action consisting of activities to explore and improve understanding of the distribution and diversity of deep water habitats in the Pacific, and in particular in the Marine National Monuments. You have requested our concurrence under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended (16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.), with your determination that the proposed action may affect but is not likely to adversely affect green, hawksbill, leatherback, olive ridley, and north Pacific loggerhead sea turtles; Main Hawaiian Islands false killer whale distinct population segment, humpback whales, blue whales, fin whales, sei whales, sperm whales, north Pacific right whales, the Indo-West Pacific and Central Pacific distinct population segment of the scalloped hammerhead shark, Hawaiian monk seals; and the coral species *Acropora globiceps*, *A. jacquelineae*, *A. retusa*, *A. speciosa*, *Euphyllia paradivisa*, *Isopora crateriformis*, and *Seriatopora aculeata*.

Proposed Action/Action Area: The proposed activity is more fully described in your request for consultation and the associated biological evaluation (CAPSTONE 2016). The proposed action (*Okeanos Explorer* cruises) includes the use of various ship and submersible-deployed electronic systems to collect data on the distribution and diversity of deep water habitats in the Marine National Monuments. The activity would occur during two years with up to 20 research cruises scheduled between February 2016 and December 2017. The expedition teams (26 crew and up to 20 rotating scientists and/or technicians on each cruise leg) would be authorized to conduct mapping and Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) surveys using the *Okeanos Explorer*'s multibeam, split beam, subbottom profiler and acoustic Doppler current profiler (ADCP) sonar systems, utilizing the ship's conductivity-temperature-depth (CTD) sampling rosette for various water measurements and deploying an ROV. No activities are scheduled to occur on land.

The suite of sonars aboard the vessel includes a Kongsberg EM302 30 kHz multibeam system, which collect bathymetry and backscatter data; several Simrad EK 60 split-beam sonars that



range from 18 to 333 kHz which are designed to gather measurements of biological and gaseous targets in the water column; and a Knudsen 3.5 kHz chirp sub-bottom profiler. The 300 kHz and 38 kHz ADCPs provide information about current velocity and direction at various depths. Sonar mapping activities will be conducted throughout the proposed action area and during transits to and from sites where operations will be conducted in an effort to fill in gaps in data knowledge and to build on data already collected. The maps generated from these activities will improve understanding of the geology and important biological habitats in the project area.

Conductivity, temperature and depth data will be collected by both an Underway CTD and a CTD rosette instrument. The CTD rosette, which is deployed while the ship is stopped and holding dynamic position, is lowered by a winch and wire to a maximum depth of 6800 m to collect water samples through 24 2.5 L niskin bottles. The CTD rosette will be deployed at select sites where ROV operations are conducted to allow for an improved understanding of the environmental conditions at that particular site. The deployment and retrieval of the CTD rosette takes up to several hours (depending on depth), while the Underway CTD can be deployed while the ship is moving, saving hours of time and fuel. The instrument is mounted on the stern railing and outfitted with a re-useable probe that is deployed and retrieved through the use of motorized spool. The Underway CTD will be used to collect water column profiles to a maximum depth of 700 m.

ROV operations will be designed to provide interdisciplinary site characterization at priority targets in and around monuments, sanctuaries and protected areas, through visual observation of priority targets while acquiring environmental data with onboard sensors. Sampling will be focused on corals and sponges, but will target specimens believed to be new species or new records for an area. No ESA-listed corals would be sampled. As many as 200 deployments of the ROV may occur during the 2016 – 17 field season resulting in 1600 hours of total dive time. The dives will better enable scientists and managers to understand the diversity and distribution of deep water habitats.

The action area covered by the accompanying biological evaluation encompasses the marine environments of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM); Oahu and the big island of Hawai'i; the area south and west of Molokai, Lana'i, and Kaho'olawe, the Geologists Seamounts located about 100 nm south of Honolulu; the Musicians Seamounts located about 150 nm NNE of Nihoa Island; all of the Pacific Remote Island Areas composing the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument (PRIMNM); the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) and the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument (MTMNM); the vicinity of American Samoa and the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NMSAS); the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument (RAMNM); and the vessel transit areas between Honolulu, Hawai'i, Guam, Saipan, Kwajalein, Pago Pago where ESA-listed marine species or their habitats may be impacted by the proposed activities.

Species That May Be Affected: OER determined that the proposed action may affect but is not likely to adversely affect green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill sea turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), North Pacific distinct population segment of loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*),

olive ridley sea turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), leatherback sea turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*), Main Hawaiian Islands false killer whale distinct population segment (*Pseudorca crassidens*), humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*), fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*), blue whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*), sei whales (*Balaenoptera borealis*), north pacific right whales (*Eubalaena japonica*), the Indo-West Pacific and Central Pacific distinct population segments of the scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*), Hawaiian monk seals (*Neomonachus schauinslandi*), Hawaiian monk seal critical habitat and the coral species *Acropora globiceps*, *A. jacquelineae*, *A. retusa*, *A. speciosa*, *Euphyllia paradivisa*, *Isopora crateriformis*, and *Seriatopora aculeata*. Detailed information about the biology, habitat, and conservation status of sea turtles can be found in their recovery plans and other sources at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/>. The same can be found for Hawaiian monk seals and cetaceans at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/mammals/>; and more information on listed corals can be found at http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/PRD/prd_coral.html.

Critical Habitat: The proposed action would take place within designated monk seal critical habitat. Critical habitat was designated under the ESA for the Hawaiian monk seal on April 30, 1986 and revised on May 26, 1988 (53 FR 18988) and again on August 21, 2015 (80 FR 50926). Designated critical habitat includes all beach areas, lagoon waters, and ocean waters out to a depth of 200 m around Kure Atoll; Midway Islands (except Sand Island), Pearl and Hermes Reef, Lisianski Island, Laysan Island, Gardner Pinnacles, French Frigate Shoals, Necker Island, Maro Reef, and Nihoa Island, and includes the seafloor and all subsurface waters and habitat within 10 meters of the seafloor. Around the Main Hawaiian Islands, critical habitat extends in designated areas from the beach out to the 200 meter depth contour, and includes the seafloor and subsurface waters within 10 meters of the seafloor.

Analysis of Effects: In order to determine that a proposed action is not likely to adversely affect listed species, NMFS must find that the effects of the proposed action are expected to be insignificant, discountable, or beneficial as defined in the joint USFWS-NMFS Endangered Species Consultation Handbook: (1) insignificant effects relate to the size of the impact and should never reach the scale where take occurs; (2) discountable effects are those that are extremely unlikely to occur; and (3) beneficial effects are positive effects without any adverse effects (USFWS & NMFS 1998). This standard, as well as consideration of the probable duration, frequency, and severity of potential interactions, was applied during the analysis of effects of the proposed action on ESA-listed marine species, as is described in detail in the OER consultation request. The OER determined that the risk of collisions with vessels and the risk of entanglement would be discountable; and that the risk from exposure to elevated noise level, disturbance from human activity, as well as exposure to wastes and discharges would result in insignificant effects on ESA-listed sea turtles, marine mammals, sharks and corals; and that the potential effects of the proposed action to designated or proposed critical habitat would also be insignificant.

Considering the information and assessments presented in the OER consultation request, and in the best scientific information available about the biology and expected behaviors of the ESA-listed marine species considered in this consultation; NMFS agrees that: 1) the list of ESA-listed species and critical habitats potentially exposed to the effects of the action is correct, 2) the suite

of identified stressors is comprehensive, and 3) the assessment of exposure risk and significance of exposure to those stressors is accurate. Therefore, NMFS agrees that:

- the risk of collisions with vessels for marine mammals, turtles, sharks and the listed coral species in the action area is discountable;
- the risk of entanglement with marine mammals, sea turtles and sharks is discountable; and,
- ESA-listed species in the action area are unlikely to respond to anticipated elevated noise levels, disturbance from human activity, and exposure to wastes and discharges. Further, if any response were to occur, it would be temporary in nature and never reach the scale where it would affect the individual's health, and as such, have insignificant effects.

Conclusion: NMFS concurs with your determination that conducting the proposed Okeanos Explorer cruises are not likely to adversely affect ESA-listed marine species. This concludes your consultation responsibilities under the ESA for species under NMFS's jurisdiction. However, this consultation focused solely on compliance with the ESA. Additional compliance review that may be required of NMFS for this action (such as assessing impacts on Essential Fish Habitat) would be completed by NMFS Habitat Conservation Division in separate communication, if applicable.

ESA Consultation must be reinitiated if: 1) a take occurs; 2) new information reveals effects of the action that may affect listed species or designated critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered; 3) the identified action is subsequently modified in a manner causing effects to listed species or designated critical habitat not previously considered; or 4) a new species is listed or critical habitat designated that may be affected by the identified action.

If you have further questions please contact Richard Hall on my staff at (808) 725-5018. Thank you for working with NMFS to protect our nation's living marine resources.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Tosatto
Regional Administrator



cc: Justin Rivera, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
Aaron Nadig, ESA Section 7 Program, USFWS, Honolulu

NMFS File No.: PIR-2016-9774
PIRO Reference No.: I-PI-16-1347-AG

Literature Cited

Campaign to Address Pacific Monument Science, Technology and ocean Needs (CAPSTONE) 2016. Request for Informal Consultation. Letter from John McDonough to Ann Garrett dated January 14, 2016 and attachments.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service. 1998. Endangered Species Consultation Handbook. Procedures for Conducting Consultation and Conference Activities Under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.
http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/laws/esa_section7_handbook.pdf



Appendix G: EFH Consultation





EFH Consultation Response for CAPSTONE cruises

Richard Hall - NOAA Federal <richard.hall@noaa.gov>

Wed, Nov 30, 2016 at 4:21 PM

To: Kelley Elliott - NOAA Affiliate <kelley.elliott@noaa.gov>

Cc: Ian Lundgren - NOAA Affiliate <ian.lundgren@noaa.gov>, Samantha Brooke <samantha.brooke@noaa.gov>, Kasey Cantwell - NOAA Affiliate <kasey.cantwell@noaa.gov>

Kelley,

On November 14, 2016, the Office of Exploration and Research (OER), through personal communication, initiated a request for an Essential Fish Habitat consultation for a series of cruises by the NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*. The cruises would run from early-December 2016 through late-September 2017, and include the waters around the Main Hawaiian Islands, the Musician Seamounts (north of Hawaii), the American Samoa Archipelago, Johnston, Howland, Baker, Jarvis, Kingman and Palmyra Atolls of the Pacific Remote Islands, and portions of the Cook Islands. The operational minimum depth during the cruises would be 250 m, with the majority of the cruise activities would be in water depths over 500 m.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1855 et seq.) requires review of federally permitted projects for potential impacts to EFH (§305(b)). Pursuant to this authority, I have reviewed and provided comments as necessary for the Habitat Conservation Division of NOAA's Pacific Islands Regional Office.

The proposed cruises are the final legs of the larger 2-year Campaign to Address Pacific Monuments Science, Technology and Ocean Needs (CAPSTONE Project), which is designed to improve the understanding of the distribution and diversity of deepwater habitats within the Pacific monuments and protected areas.

The primary activities to be conducted during this series of cruises would be: remotely operated vehicle (ROV) dives to conduct engineering trials and sonar calibration and testing during two shakedown cruises scheduled for the waters of the Main Hawaiian Islands (no biological or geological samples would be collected); and mapping and ROV dives in the waters of American Samoa, West Samoa, the Pacific Remote Islands, the Musician Seamounts, and portions of the Cook Islands. Five cruises would be dedicated mapping cruise, resulting in 92 days of constant mapping, while six cruises would be combined ROV and mapping cruises which would result in approximately 96 ROV dives and 110 days of overnight mapping. Other activities to be performed during the cruises would include: deployment and recovery of a conductivity-temperature-depth (CTD) sampling rosette and underway CTDs, and possible deployment of Argo floats to acquire ocean chemistry data. During ROV dives various biological and geological samples would be collected.

In order to avoid/minimize impacts to EFH, the OER and the *Okeanos Explorer* have proposed to institute the following procedures:

- The vessel would employ the use of dynamic positioning during ROV dives (no anchoring);
- ROVs would be operated in a manner to avoid seafloor disturbance, and setting the ROV on the seafloor will be held to a minimum. For those situations when the ROV does make contact with the seafloor, visual observations will confirm that the area is sand, mud, or hard-bottom;
- Sample collections would be limited (typically 4 - 6 total rocks and primary biological specimens per dive) that represent new species, new records, or the dominant morphotype animal in a community. Clonal biological specimens (corals, sponges) would be subsampled; and
- Instruments deployed to collect water samples and current data (except for expendable instruments) would not be allowed to contact the seafloor;

In addition to the management practices proposed by OER and the *Okeanos Explorer*, NMFS provides the following guidance to further avoid/minimize impacts to EFH from the proposed cruise activities and vessel operations:

1. Except in an emergency, the vessel should not anchor while at sea;
2. The vessel should adhere to MARPOL discharge regulations at all times during the proposed cruises;
3. The ROV should be thoroughly rinsed between dives, allowed to dry, and checked for the presence of biological



organisms to prevent the spread of invasive or non-endemic species from one location to another.

4. The use detergents and other pollutants which may be washed into the marine environment should be avoided or held to a minimum;

Based on my review of the documents provided, and through our personal communications, NOAA Fisheries has determined that the proposed cruises of the NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer* would not adversely affect EFH provided adherence to OER proposed procedures and the NMFS guidance made above. Thank you for the opportunity to review the plans for the upcoming field season of the *Okeanos Explorer*, and to provide our comments. This completes your obligation to consult with our office with regards to EFH for this series of actions. If you have any questions or comments feel free to contact me at your convenience.

--

Richard Hall
Fishery Policy Analyst
Pacific Islands Regional Office
NOAA Inouye Regional Center
1845 Wasp Blvd., Building 176
Honolulu, HI 96818
[808-725-5018](tel:808-725-5018)



Appendix H: NASA Maritime Aerosols Network Survey of Opportunity

Survey or Project Name

Maritime Aerosol Network

Lead POC or Principle Investigator (PI & Affiliation)

POC: Dr. Alexander Smirnov

Supporting Team Members Ashore

Supporting Team Members Aboard (if required)

Activities Description(s)(Include goals, objectives and tasks)

The Maritime Aerosol Network (MAN) component of AERONET provides ship-borne aerosol optical depth measurements from the Microtops II sun photometers. These data provide an alternative to observations from islands as well as establish validation points for satellite and aerosol transport models. Since 2004, these instruments have been deployed periodically on ships of opportunity and research vessels to monitor aerosol properties over the World Oceans.



Appendix I: Data Management Plan



