From: Bowman, Randal
To: Brooke, Samantha
Cc: Jeff Rupert
Subject: Re: Question on Rose Atoll
Date: Tuesday, August 15, 2017 7:48:35 AM

Thank you - very helpful

On Tue, Aug 15, 2017 at 7:58 AM, Brooke, Samantha <samantha_brooke@fws.gov> wrote:

> Good morning Randy -
>
> I hope you don't mind if I provide a bit more context on the answer to your question.
>
> As you know, fishing is not prohibited at Rose Atoll. Traditional and recreational fishing are allowed within Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, with a fishing permit, in the area from the Refuge boundary to the extent of the Monument area (12 - 50 nautical miles). To date, no permits have been requested.
>
> Commercial fishing is prohibited in the Monument. However, prior to the designation of the Monument in 2009, almost all commercial fishing vessels were prohibited from the same area under a Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council ("Council") 2002 rule establishing a "Large Vessel Prohibited Area" (LVPA). Within the LVPA, only vessels under 50 feet could fish. This was supposed to give the small, local fleet an advantage and prevent gear conflicts. Today, the small fleet (called "alia" fishing vessels) has declined to just 1 boat. The Council attempted to reduce the LVPA areas in 2015, but the action was ruled against by the Court. No one has reported a fishing bank or other area of interest to longline fishers within the Monument boundaries, so there really were no change to prior commercial fishing patterns from Monument designation.
>
> On to your question - Rose Atoll is approximately 130 nautical miles from Tutuila, where most of the population of American Samoa resides. There are only a few vessels, other than commercial longliners, that are capable of reaching Rose Atoll from Tutuila.
>
> Rose Atoll is closer to the Manu'a island group within American Samoa, roughly 70 nautical miles away. The people of Manu'a have a stronger cultural connection to the Atoll, as documented in a 2012 report from the Samoan Studies Institute. Here is a summary of their findings (from Rose Atoll NWR CCP):
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> *"Samoan islanders visited Rose Atoll to fish and collect birds (including feathers for cultural adornments and handicrafts, the most prized of which came from the red and white-tailed tropicbirds), turtles, faisua* [giant clam]*, and other resources (Amerson et al. 1982). Terns were especially used to direct fishermen to schools of fish. It was customary for the strongest males of Manu'a to go out with the tautai (master fishermen) to fish for sharks and skipjack tuna. However, the 2012 Samoan Studies Institute report notes that of the fishermen who had been interviewed (all in their 60s), none had been to Rose Atoll until the 2011 trip* [a cultural outreach trip sponsored by NOAA after Monument designation] *and that it had been their father's generation who had first-hand experience fishing at the atoll. The report also noted that a village men's group described that fishing trips to Rose Atoll were only conducted when season fish were not abundant in immediate waters and reefs (SSI 2012)."*
>
> In summary, Rose Atoll has never been a primary fishing area for American Samoa, and the cultural/recreational fishing that did occur was preserved and permitted under the Proclamation.
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> I hope this information is useful, and I am happy to answer questions as needed.
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> Thank you!
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> On Fri, Aug 11, 2017 at 4:45 PM, Bowman, Randal <randal_bowman@ios.doi.gov> wrote:
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> > Could you have someone check on this for me - I have a recollection of hearing from someone in the Service at the time Rose Atoll was first considered for monument status that it was too far from the main Samoan islands for recreational or small-boat commercial fishermen to go there with any frequency, even though the waters were then open to all

fishing.

Is this correct? and related, how far is Rose from the main islands, either in miles or by time it takes to get there?

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