

NATURAL HISTORY GUIDE TO AMERICAN SAMOA IS NPS MODEL

Natural History Guide to American Samoa is a collection of 39 short (1–3 pages) articles that provide a glimpse into the marine and wildlife resources in American Samoa’s tropical, oceanic environment. Eight biologists from the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, National Park of American Samoa, and Land Grant Program at the American Samoa Community College wrote the articles. They highlight general topics, such as local natural and cultural facts, biodiversity in the rainforests and coral reefs, seasons, and geology of the islands. Articles about the marine and terrestrial environments and their species comprise a majority of the guide. However, an index of some Samoan plant names, a bird checklist, and 12 articles about birds are also included.

The purpose in writing the guide was to make the results of natural resource studies available to local teachers, students, visitors, and others who might be curious about Samoa’s environment. An outcome of the guide may be that it could serve as a model for resource managers throughout the National Park Service. The guide promotes involvement of the local scientific community, provides scientifically sound information, and engages the public as partners in resource preservation through education—all strategic objectives of the Natural Resource Challenge.

Park managers have taken seriously the dissemination of the information. The National Park Service, in cooperation with local agencies, has distributed more than 4,000 printed copies of the guide to schools on the four populated islands in the territory. Also, they will distribute 2,000 copies of a recent Samoan translation. The guide is available at <http://www.nps.gov/npsa/book/index.htm> to be downloaded as PDF or viewed online. The editor, Peter Craig (marine ecologist with National Park of American Samoa), encourages the use of these articles for educational purposes and to modify them to reflect local conditions at other islands.

