

Chuuk



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Overview

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is comprised of 4 states ([Yap](#), [Chuuk](#), [Pohnpei](#), and [Kosrae](#)) and includes 607 islands spread over 1 million mi² of the western Pacific Ocean. Its coral reefs, estimated at 14,517 km² are home to nearly 1000 species of fish and over 350 hard species of coral. The majority of people living on these small islands depend on natural resources for their food, livelihoods, and traditions. These resources are threatened by pressure from rapid population growth, over-harvest, habitat destruction, changing cultural practices, invasive species and climate change.

FSM has committed to achieving the goals of the Micronesia Challenge (MC), an ambitious initiative by the jurisdictions of Micronesia to effectively conserve at least 30% of their near shore marine resources and 20% of their terrestrial resources by 2020. To begin to address this

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challenge a team comprised of representatives from the FSM government, the Micronesia Conservation Trust, and TNC, has been working with State government and local conservation NGOs to raise awareness and build support for protected areas.

Chuuk is the most populous state in FSM and is contains one of the largest lagoon systems in the world. Chuuk Lagoon is home to a number of marine habitats and high levels of biodiversity. The region is heavily dependent on the health and persistence natural resources as 60% of the population relies on subsistence methods for their livelihoods. Economic development and population growth threaten these livelihoods as more people turn to the Chuuk Lagoon for food and income, resulting in an overexploited coral reef fishery.

As of 2017, only 1% of Chuuk's reefs fall within managed areas. In this analysis, all forms of spatial fisheries management, including traditional temporary fisheries closures, are included and collectively referred to as managed areas, to account for the fact that permanent no-take zones are rare in Chuuk. In order for this jurisdiction to approach the goals of the Micronesia Challenge, additional protected areas need to be designated. The Micronesia Challenge presented an opportunity to design a brand-new Protected Area Network (PAN) through a coordinated effort using best available science.

To assist Chuuk in addressing these issues, outreach and analysis were conducted to guide the design and siting of new MPAs that would not only meet conservation targets, but would also meet socioeconomic objectives such as food security, health, cultural preservation, and sustainable incomes. This analysis built upon previous work to identify areas of biological significance in FSM (2002), a Rapid Ecological Assessment to assess existing MPAs and identify potential new sites (2005), and a gap analysis using information gathered in workshops (2009).

In 2017, a workshop was convened that aimed to integrate PAN planning and statewide fisheries management effort. Specifically, this workshop was intended as a first step towards identifying candidate reefs in Chuuk for management efforts that would meet biodiversity, conservation, and community objectives.

Following this workshop, a gap analysis was conducted to determine how well species or habitat types are represented within management areas, and whether existing protections are adequate to protect species or habitats, given their ecological requirements.

That gap analysis demonstrated that the managed areas proposed by workshop participants increased the total percentage of reef area under management from