

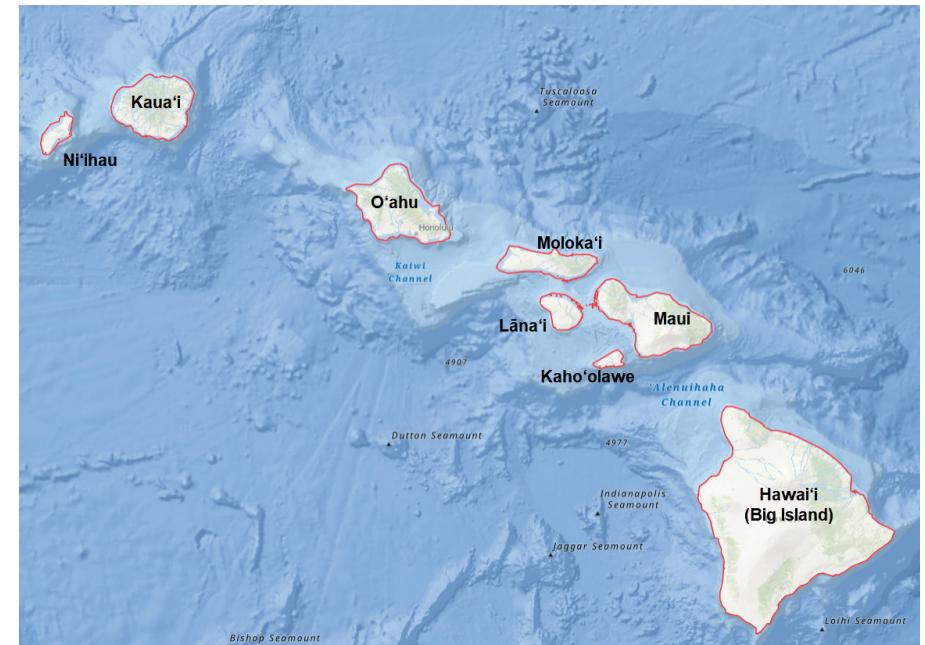
# Agency Priorities for Mapping Shallow Coral Reef Ecosystems in the Main Hawaiian Islands

## Overview

NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) has identified a need for priority locations based on emerging management requirements in shallow coral reef areas surrounding the Main Hawaiian Islands. The priorities provided by participating agencies will inform research and monitoring activities, address current and future management needs, and maximize opportunities to leverage and complement existing regional efforts. To meet this need, NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) developed a systematic, quantitative approach and online GIS application to gather seafloor mapping priorities from researchers and coral reef managers.

## What We Are Doing

In FY22, NCCOS will build a web-based digital inventory of relevant shallow water (up to 40 m) mapping datasets and conduct a data needs assessment for shallow water areas surrounding the islands of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaho'olawe, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Ni'ihiwai. During the summer of 2022, NCCOS will work with local agencies to gather their inputs and priorities. The analysis will be conducted once all inputs are received, and results will be shared with participants. The final results of this project will be summarized and shared online and in a final report.



*Mapping prioritization area for the Main Hawaiian Islands. This project focuses on mapping needs in shallow coral reefs (0–40 meters depth, denoted by the red line).*



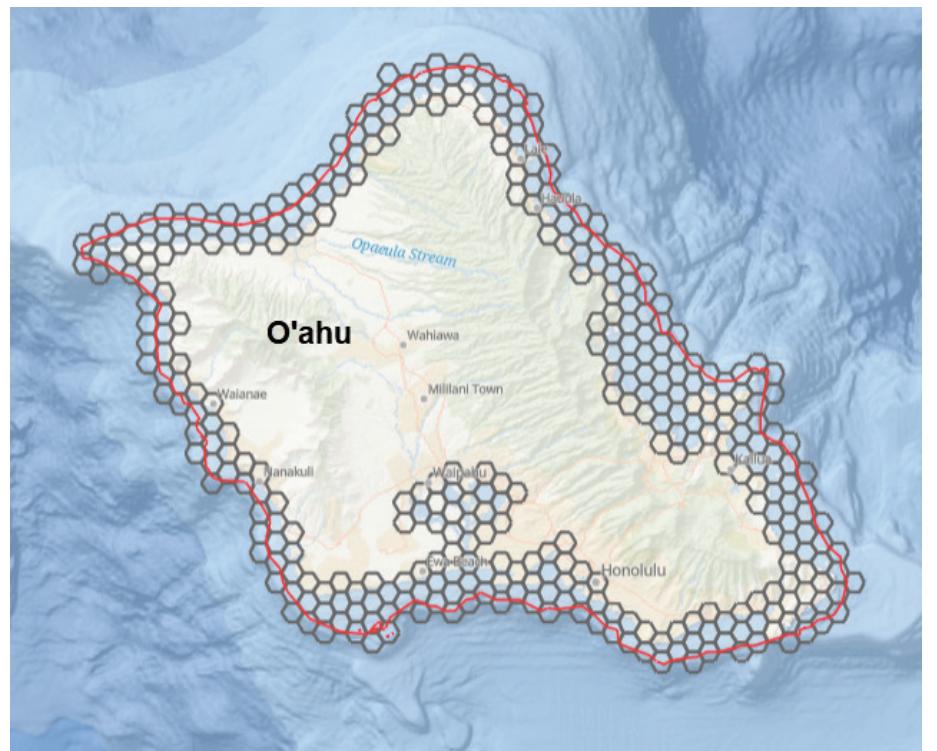
## How We Will Do It

To identify priority areas within each jurisdiction, a spatial framework and participatory [online tool](#) will be used to solicit input from select local participants. Input will be combined to identify areas of high priority for collecting contemporary, high quality benthic mapping data (i.e., acoustic surveys, underwater photos). Ultimately, this will provide CRCP and local agencies with a detailed framework of mapping needs for coral reef management in order to protect, conserve, and restore the nation's coral resources. Using similar methods, this effort has been completed in Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) (see links to results below), with additional agency priorities to be collected in Guam and the Central Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and American Samoa within the next year.

## Project Results and Links

- [Project Page and Online Hub](#)
- [NCCOS Project Page](#)
- Results: Agency Priorities in Puerto Rico and USVI ([Report](#)) ([Dashboard](#))
- Results: Agency Priorities in Florida ([Report](#)) ([Dashboard](#))

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*Example of the spatial framework used to identify benthic mapping priorities off the coast of O'ahu. The red line denotes the 40m depth contour used as the depth limit for this project. Each grid cell is 1 km per side, or an area of 2.6 km<sup>2</sup>.*

