



CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife
Fisheries Research Section

AN OVERVIEW OF PREPOSITIONED VESSELS IN THE CNMI



Brief History

In 1996 a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between US Navy, CNMI Government & Commonwealth Ports Authority

In 2001 a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between US Navy, CNMI Government & Commonwealth Ports Authority

This MOU provides anchorage rights to the pre-positioned vessels till 2010, unless further extended by all parties.

Continued....

- A total of 11 anchorage locations were listed in the 2001 agreement, with a majority located on the western shallow reefs off Saipan.
- Additional anchorage sites were stated but not listed in 2001 the MOU.
- Stipulations within the 2001 MOU suggest that the agreement can be terminated by any of the parties at anytime.



View of Double Reef West of Saipan



Western Reef with PPV Sites

General Concern

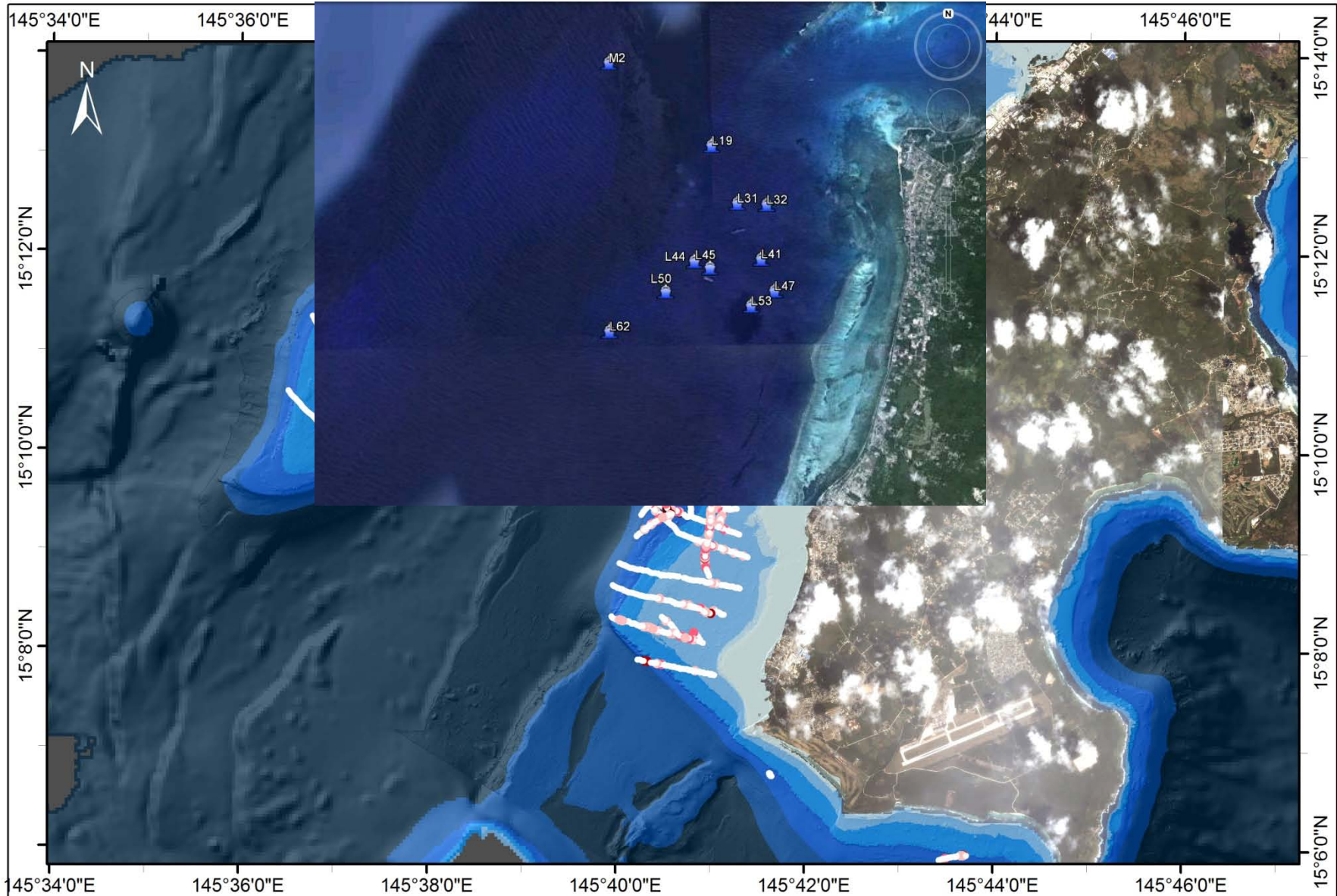
- ⦿ Anchoring of large vessels can be damaging to reefs if people are negligent. Heavy chain anchors that are laid on the sea floor cause the degradation of these anchor sites. The constant movement of the currents and wind force causes the anchored vessels to sway back and forth, which also causes the chain to move like a rolling pin. The results from this action are generally long lines of destroyed reefs. The sediments generated by the anchor chain can also be harmful to the coral reefs.

Efforts Made to Assess Reefs Near or Around Anchorages

- 1988, Surveys were conducted by NOAA in collaboration with local agencies on anchorage sites.
- Early 90's, Public Concerns
- 1995, House Resolution 9-97
- 2000, DFW Preliminary Assessment Underwater Assessment
- 2001, DFW Fish Catch Assessment
- 2003, NOAA Mapped and Video
- 2006, 131st WPRFMC Meeting

CORAL DAMAGE IMAGES FROM 2000 PRELIMINARY SURVEY

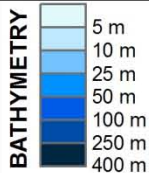




Saipan Optical Validation

TOAD camera sled video classification results, plotted on multibeam bathymetry.

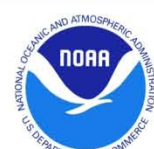
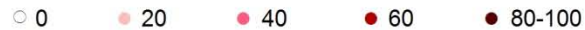
NOT FOR NAVIGATION



UTM Zone 55N, Ellipsoid: WGS84



PERCENT COVER OF SCLERACTINIAN CORAL



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Collect additional information from existing anchorage sites, to review changes in the anchorage and non-anchorage zones.
- Promote a permanent mooring system which would minimize further damage to the benthic environment, thereby allowing recovery of coral reef habitat.
- Continue to pursue avenues to mitigate damage to benthic resources.
- Revisit and Revise MOU with Navy.

References

- Governor Froilan C. Tenorio to Admiral David L. Brewer, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Letter, November 8, 1996.
- Moots K.A., Masga F., Sablan S., Interoffice Memorandum, Meeting Concerning Military Vessels and Prepositioned Ships in Saipan Harbor, Letter to DFW Director, October 17, 2000.
- Moots K.A., Report of Fisheries Biologist III, Sportfish Restoration Program Annual Progress Report, The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, October 1, 1999.
- Quinn N. J., Benthic Communities Around the M.V. Eric Gibson Anchor Chain, Office of Coastal Resource Management, Saipan, CNMI, August 10, 1995.
- Representatives Tenorio M. A., Attao V. T., Teregeyo A. S., Dela Cruz R. C., Peter M. T., and Babauta O.M., To request Coastal Resource Management, Fish and Wildlife to investigate the damage to the reef caused by the anchoring of the Rapid Deployment Prepositioned Vessels stationed in the Commonwealth, and to determine the need for permanent mooring facilities, Ninth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, House Resolution Number 9-97, H.D. 1, May 8, 1995.
- Minutes of the 131st Council Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, 14-16 March 2006, Meeting Minutes, pp 16.