



Australia-Oceania :: Midway Islands
(territory of the US)

Introduction :: Midway Islands

Background:

The US took formal possession of the islands in 1867. The laying of the trans-Pacific cable, which passed through the islands, brought the first residents in 1903. Between 1935 and 1947, Midway was used as a refueling stop for trans-Pacific flights. The US naval victory over a Japanese fleet off Midway in 1942 was one of the turning points of World War II. The islands continued to serve as a naval station until closed in 1993. Today the islands are a US National Wildlife Refuge. From 1996 to 2001 the refuge was open to the public; it is now temporarily closed.

Geography :: Midway Islands

Location:

Oceania, atoll in the North Pacific Ocean, about one-third of the way from Honolulu to Tokyo

Geographic coordinates:

28 12 N, 177 22 W

Map references:

Oceania

Area:

total: 6.2 sq km

land: 6.2 sq km

water: 0 sq km

note: includes Eastern Island, Sand Island, and Spit Island

Area - comparative:

about nine times the size of The Mall in Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

15 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

subtropical; moderated by prevailing easterly winds

Terrain:

low, nearly level

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

highest point: unnamed location 13 m

Natural resources:

wildlife, terrestrial and aquatic

Land use:

arable land: 0%

permanent crops: 0%

other: 100% (2011)

Irrigated land:

0 sq km (2011)

Natural hazards:

NA

Environment - current issues:

NA

Geography - note:

a coral atoll managed as a national wildlife refuge and open to the public for wildlife-related recreation in the form of wildlife observation and photography, sport fishing, snorkeling, and scuba diving; in 2000 the lands and waters of the Midway National Wildlife Refuge were also designated as the Battle of Midway National Monument; Henderson Airfield on Sand Island continues to serve as an emergency landing field for military and civilian aircraft transiting the Pacific Ocean (2012)

People and Society :: Midway Islands

Population:

no indigenous inhabitants; approximately 40 people make up the staff of US Fish and Wildlife Service and their services contractor living at the atoll (July 2013 est.)

Government :: Midway Islands

Country name:

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: Midway Islands

Dependency status:

unincorporated territory of the US; formerly administered from Washington, DC, by the US Navy; on 31 October 1996, through a presidential executive order, the jurisdiction and control of the atoll was transferred to the Fish and Wildlife Service of the US Department of the Interior as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System

Legal system:

the laws of the US, where applicable, apply

Flag description:

the flag of the US is used

Transportation :: Midway Islands

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 2

1,524 to 2,437 m: 2 (2013)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 1

914 to 1,523 m: 1 (2013)

Ports and terminals:

Sand Island

Transportation - note:

Henderson Field on Sand Island serves as an emergency landing site for aircraft crossing the Pacific Ocean

Military :: Midway Islands

Military - note:

defense is the responsibility of the US

Transnational Issues :: Midway Islands

Disputes - international:

none