



Australia-Oceania :: Johnston Atoll (territory of the US)

Introduction :: Johnston Atoll

Background:

Both the US and the Kingdom of Hawaii annexed Johnston Atoll in 1858, but it was the US that mined the guano deposits until the late 1880s. Johnston Island and Sand Island were designated wildlife refuges in 1926. The US Navy took over the atoll in 1934, and subsequently the US Air Force assumed control in 1948. The site was used for high-altitude nuclear tests in the 1950s and 1960s, and until late in 2000 the atoll was maintained as a storage and disposal site for chemical weapons. Cleanup and closure of the weapons facility ended in May 2005.

Geography :: Johnston Atoll

Location:

Oceania, atoll in the North Pacific Ocean 717 nm (1328 km) southwest of Honolulu, Hawaii, about one-third of the way from Hawaii to the Marshall Islands

Geographic coordinates:

16 45 N, 169 31 W

Map references:

Oceania

Area:

total: 2.63 sq km

land: 2.63 sq km

water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative:

about 4.7 times the size of The Mall in Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

34 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

tropical, but generally dry; consistent northeast trade winds with little seasonal temperature variation

Terrain:

mostly flat

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

highest point: Summit Peak 5 m

Natural resources:

guano deposits (worked until depletion about 1890), terrestrial and aquatic wildlife

Land use:

arable land: 0%

permanent crops: 0%

other: 100% (2011)

Irrigated land:

0 sq km (2011)

Natural hazards:

NA

Environment - current issues:

no natural fresh water resources

Geography - note:

strategic location in the North Pacific Ocean; Johnston Island and Sand Island are natural islands, which have been expanded by coral dredging; North Island (Akau) and East Island (Hikina) are manmade islands formed from coral dredging; the egg-shaped reef is 34 km in circumference; closed to the public; a former US nuclear weapons test site; site of now-closed Johnston Atoll Chemical Agent Disposal System (JACADS); most facilities dismantled and cleanup complete in 2004; some low-growing vegetation

People and Society :: Johnston Atoll

Population:

315 uninhabited

note: in previous years, there was an average of 1,100 US military and civilian contractor personnel present; as of September 2001, population had decreased significantly when US Army Chemical Activity Pacific (USACAP) departed; as of May 2005 all US government personnel had left the island (July 2010 est.)

Government :: Johnston Atoll

Country name:

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: Johnston Atoll

Dependency status:

unincorporated territory of the US; administered from Honolulu, HI, by Pacific Air Forces, Hickam Air Force Base, and 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 :: Johnston Atoll

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 1

2,438 to 3,047 m: 1 (2013)

Ports and terminals:

Johnston Island

Military :: Johnston Atoll

Military - note:

defense is the responsibility of the US

Transnational Issues :: Johnston Atoll

Disputes - international:

none