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Office of the Governor
Utulei, American Samoa
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Commander Casanova Leads Tour for Acting Governor Talauega Aboard NOAA Ship Rainier

[PICTORIAL]: On August 11, 2023, Commanding Officer Hector Casanova led a formal ship tour aboard the NOAA Ship Rainier for the Honorable Talauega E. V. Ale, Acting Governor of American Samoa, together with his family, staff members of the Governor's Office, and Summer Youth Employment Program participants currently interning at the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources. The guests were granted an exclusive opportunity to explore various sections of the ship that had been in the territory for five months studying American Samoa's ocean floor.

A similar tour was conducted earlier this year in March 2023 for Secretary of Samoan Affairs Paramount Chief Mauga T. Asuega, Manu'a District Governor Paramount Chief Misaalefua Hudson, Swains Island Representative Su'a Alexander E. Jennings; Leasina District Representative Ape Mike Asifoa, and Manu'a District #2 Representative Tiaoalii Fauagiga Sai.

The tour began with a brief demonstration from the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) team led by Dr. Hannah Barkley, a NOAA research scientist in Honolulu, Hawaii. This team has conducted the RICHARD (Rainier Integrates Charting, Hydrography, And Reef Demographics) mission since March and they have two more legs until anchoring out in September.

The NOAA PIFSC team discussed various methodologies employed from assessing fish populations and species to measuring the AS region's ocean climate change. The DMWR students volunteered to assist the PIFSC team with their demonstration. Notably, one of the presenters has personal ties with families residing in American Samoa.

Dr. Barkley shared a fun fact that American Samoa ocean water has a higher pH level, essentially having lower acidity. Which is why AS reefs are very diverse and are doing pretty well; considering American Samoa as one of the regions to have the healthiest reefs.

Acting Governor Talauega conveyed his gratitude, expressing appreciation to the team for their efforts in organizing and providing the opportunity to gain insights into the various resources involved in their studies and research. "The work you are undertaking is valuable and directly beneficial for the people of American Samoa." Furthermore, he emphasized the availability of an academic program focused on marine biology that aims to cater specifically to students interested in this field or those aspiring to join NOAA PIFSC in the future.

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UNIT WEIGHT: 250 LBS.
PRIMARY TRC
JFD COWAN
MANUAL LIFTING ONLY

DAMAGE CONTROL
LOCKER NO. 3

Maison
K LINE
GO-07