The Oceania stock of humpback whales (Fig. 1) which seasonally use the waters of the Samoan Archipelago, are considered endangered on the IUCN Red List. Sperm whales also occur around Samoa and are considered vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

**Criterion B: Distribution and Abundance**

**Sub-criterion B1: Small and Resident Populations**

The spinner dolphins (Fig. 2) around Tutuila, Savaii and Upolu have been documented, through photo-ID, to be resident year-round and from year to year (Johnston et al., 2008; Ward, 2011). Similarly, rough-toothed dolphins around Tutuila have also been documented to be long-term residents (Johnston et al., 2008). The numbers of identified individuals range from approximately one hundred (rough-toothed) to several hundred (spinners).

**Criterion B: Distribution and Abundance**

**Sub-criterion B2: Aggregations**

The productive slope waters of the Samoan Archipelago provide foraging opportunities that allow the populations of (at least) spinner and rough-toothed dolphins to remain resident in the defined waters throughout the year and from year to year (Johnston et al., 2008; Ward, 2011). The shelf waters of Tutuila in particular, provide suitable habitat that attracts aggregations of breeding humpback whales during the Austral winter. Based on the frequency and span of within-season resightings, lack of clear directional travel and evidence for calving and nursing, it is apparent that American Samoa is a migratory aggregation area for some of Oceania’s humpback whales (Robbins and Mattila, 2006).
Criterion C: Key Life Cycle Activities
Sub-criterion C1: Reproductive Areas

Given the high level of residency of some species (e.g. spinner and rough-toothed dolphins), both within and between years, this habitat is very likely used for breeding by these species. In addition, very young (e.g. nursing) sperm whales, short-finned pilot whales and Cuvier’s beaked whales have been documented, suggesting that some aspects of breeding occur. Robbins and Mattila (2006) have observed all known breeding behaviors of humpback whales (e.g. singing, nursing, male-male competition) in the waters surrounding Tutuila. This, combined with the frequency and span of within-season re-sightings, lack of clear directional travel and evidence for calving in the area, indicate that the waters surrounding (at least) Tutuila are important for humpback whale reproduction.

Criterion D: Special Attributes
Sub-criterion D1: Distinctiveness

Genetic analyses of rough-toothed dolphins indicate that they are distinct from two other comparable island-associated populations found in the Marquesas and Hawaiian island groups (Albertson et al., 2016; Baker, 2015). Genetic analyses of spinner dolphins suggest weak differentiation between samples collected from the main islands of Samoa, but highly significant differences between the pooled Samoan samples and other island-associated populations in the Pacific. Genetic analyses for other species that are suspected to be resident, have not yet been conducted.

Criterion D: Special Attributes
Sub-criterion D2: Diversity

The IMMA is believed to provide essential and important habitat for at least the following species: spinner dolphin, rough-toothed dolphin, sperm whale, short-finned pilot whale, Cuvier’s beaked whale, Blainville’s beaked whale, *Kogia spp.* and humpback whales. It is also used, perhaps more sporadically, by common bottlenose dolphins, pantropical spotted dolphins, false killer and minke whales.
Supporting Information


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