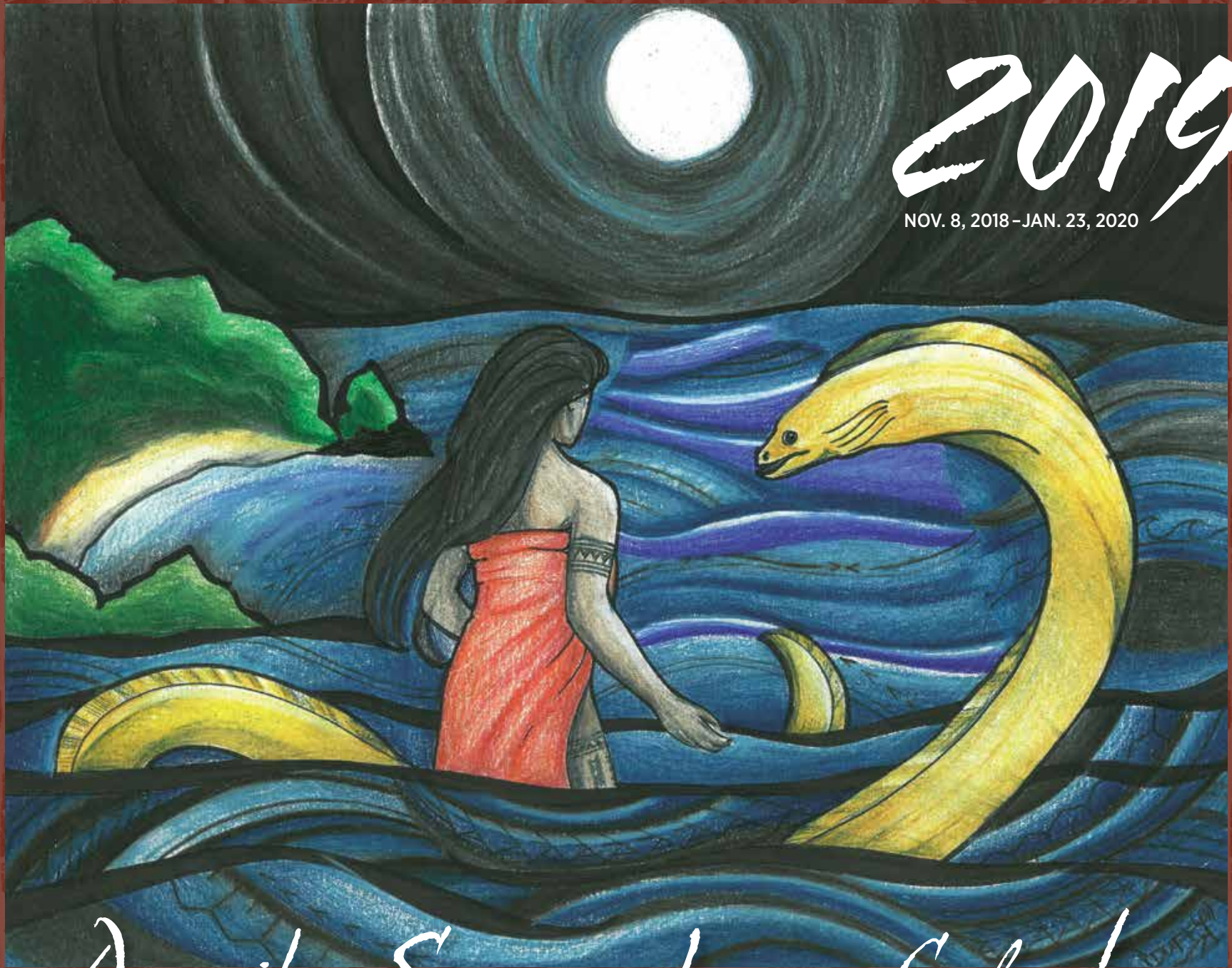


2019

NOV. 8, 2018 - JAN. 23, 2020



Amerika Samoa Lunar Calendar

About This Calendar



Youth making fish, banana and breadfruit in the umu. PHOTO COURTESY OF LOTE AIUMU.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council has produced traditional lunar calendars for American Samoa since 2007. The initial productions were based on information from books written about Samoa by scholars such as Brother Henry, Kramer, Turner and Stair, as well as information collected by Talking Chief Teleiai Ausage. A more elaborate interview with Rev. Elder Oka Fauolo helped complete the names of the moon phases and months. After the 2009 calendar, the Council convened a workshop with the American Samoa Community College's Samoan Studies Institute (SSI), American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources and the Office of Samoa Affairs, involving participants from other local agencies, fishermen, elders and the general public as

well as the Apia Fisheries Division. In 2010, the Council contracted SSI's Okenaisa Fauolo, Teleiai Ausage and Apisaloma Toleloa to conduct research throughout Tutuila as well as Upolu and Manono in Samoa. In 2012, the Council contracted Q-Mark Research to conduct a focus group on the American Samoa fishing community's viewpoints about the calendars to inform future productions.

The 2019 Amerika Samoa Lunar Calendar recognizes the traditional fishing methods employed by the indigenous people of American Samoa.

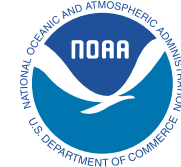
The calendar provides traditional fishing information for a different species each month, highlighting methods, gears, seasons and cultural significance. The calendar reflects continued work with the American Samoa community to create a calendar that recognizes the importance of island cultures and traditional fishing practices in managing fishery resources and to foster opportunities for their participation, which is one of the Council's seven Guiding Principles.

Special acknowledgments to Brian Thompson for the Samoan language editing and to the National Park Service (NPS) and others who are noted in this calendar for their photo contributions. Sources of information found in the calendar include *Historic*

Fishing Methods in American Samoa by David Herdrich, MA, and Karen Armstrong, PhD, 2008 (American Samoa Historic Preservation Office); *The Samoa Islands: Material Culture* by Augustin Krämer, 1995; and *Samoan Proverbs on Fishing* (<http://scanman9.tripod.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/alagaupu2.htm>).

The moon phases in this calendar are for Pago Pago harbor as calculated by the HM Nautical Almanac (astro.ukho.gov.uk/websurf). The tide charts with moon rise and set times were provided by OceanFun Publishing, NZ.

The front cover is by American Samoa artist Duffy Hudson. It portrays the legend of Sina, a Samoan girl who was the most beautiful woman in all of the islands, and Tuna, a common freshwater eel of the South Pacific islands that inhabits many island streams. Young larval *tuna* spend their early life adrift in the sea and return to freshwater when adults. According to stories widespread across the Pacific, the King of Fiji, the *Tui Fiti*, heard about the beauty of Sina and decided to go there to win her for his wife. Using all his powers of Fijian magic *Tui Fiti* turned himself into a young *tuna* and swam with the ocean currents to Samoa. To read the full version of this well-known legend, visit the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov/npsa/learn/historyculture/sinatuna.htm.

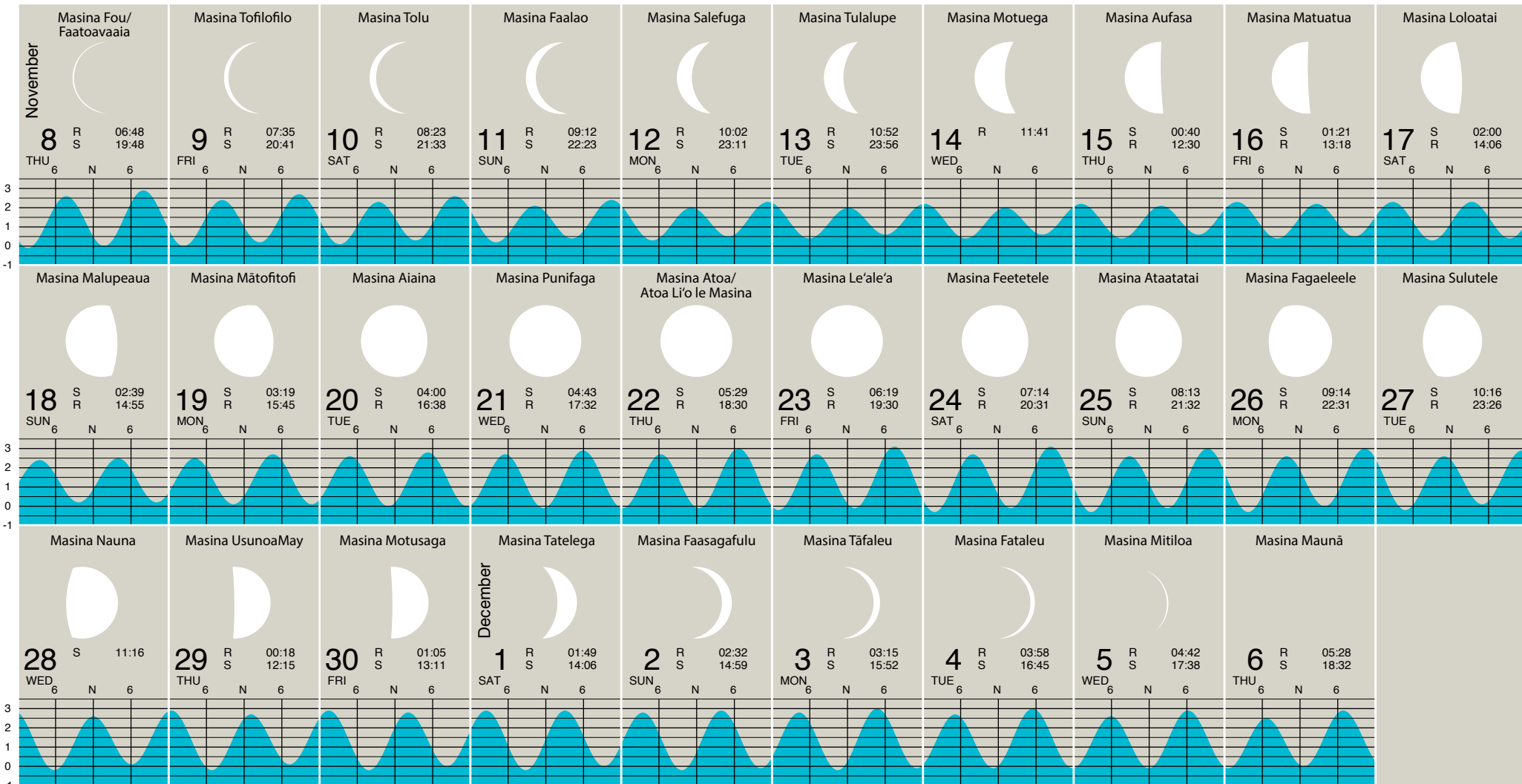


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Taumatamua

Novema 8 - Tesema 6, 2018

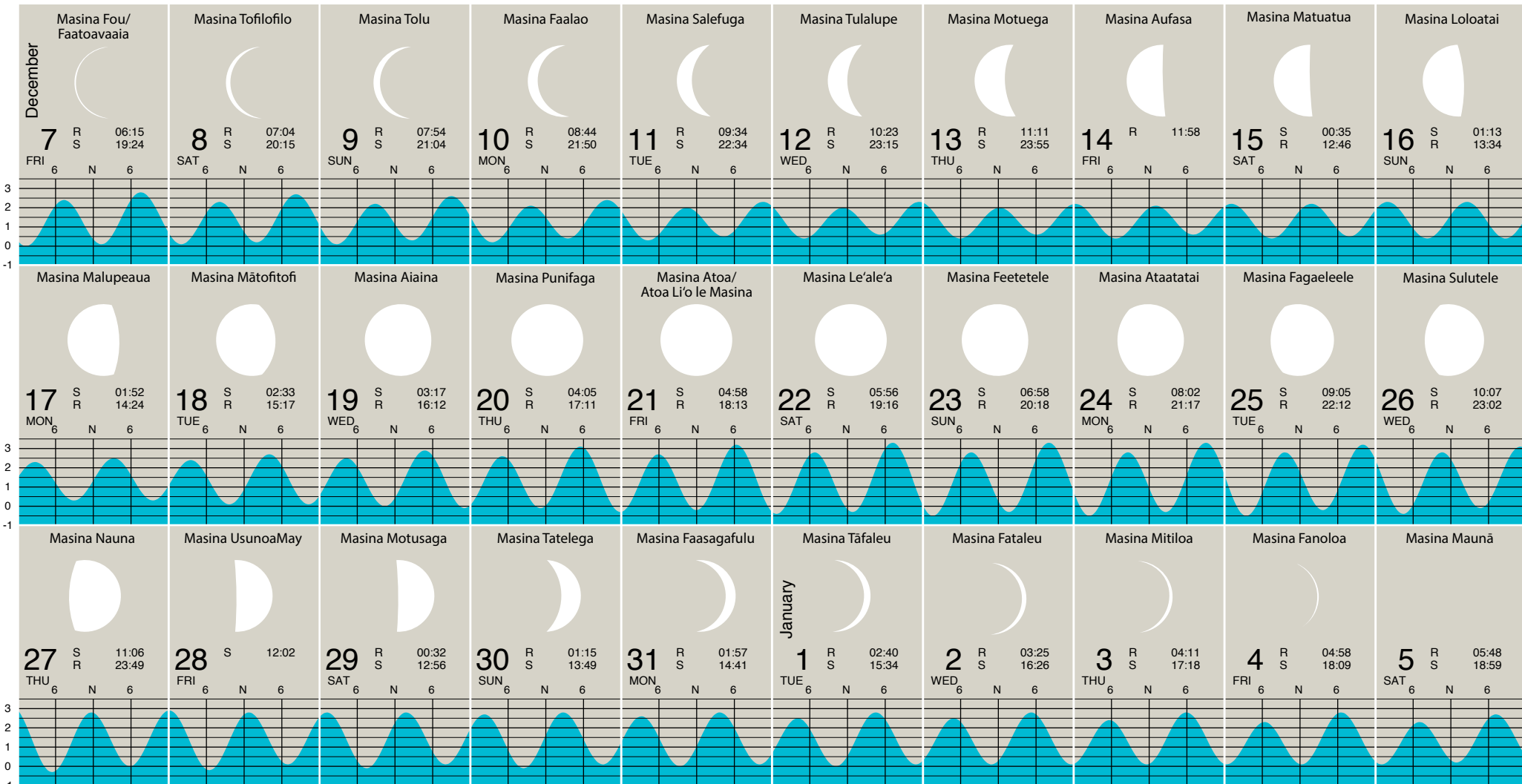




Historically, ***i'a sina*** (goatfish) runs in American Samoa occur between the start of *palolo* season in October through the appearance of large schools of *lō* (rabbitfish) in April. Large catches of *i'a sina* are shared among residents of the village and used in cultural ceremonies as gifts. NPS PHOTO

Toetaumafa

Tesema 7, 2018–lanuari 5, 2019



One way *i'a sina* are caught is by herding them with *lau* (coconut fronds) from the reef to shallower waters where groups of villagers collect them with *alagamea* (hand nets).

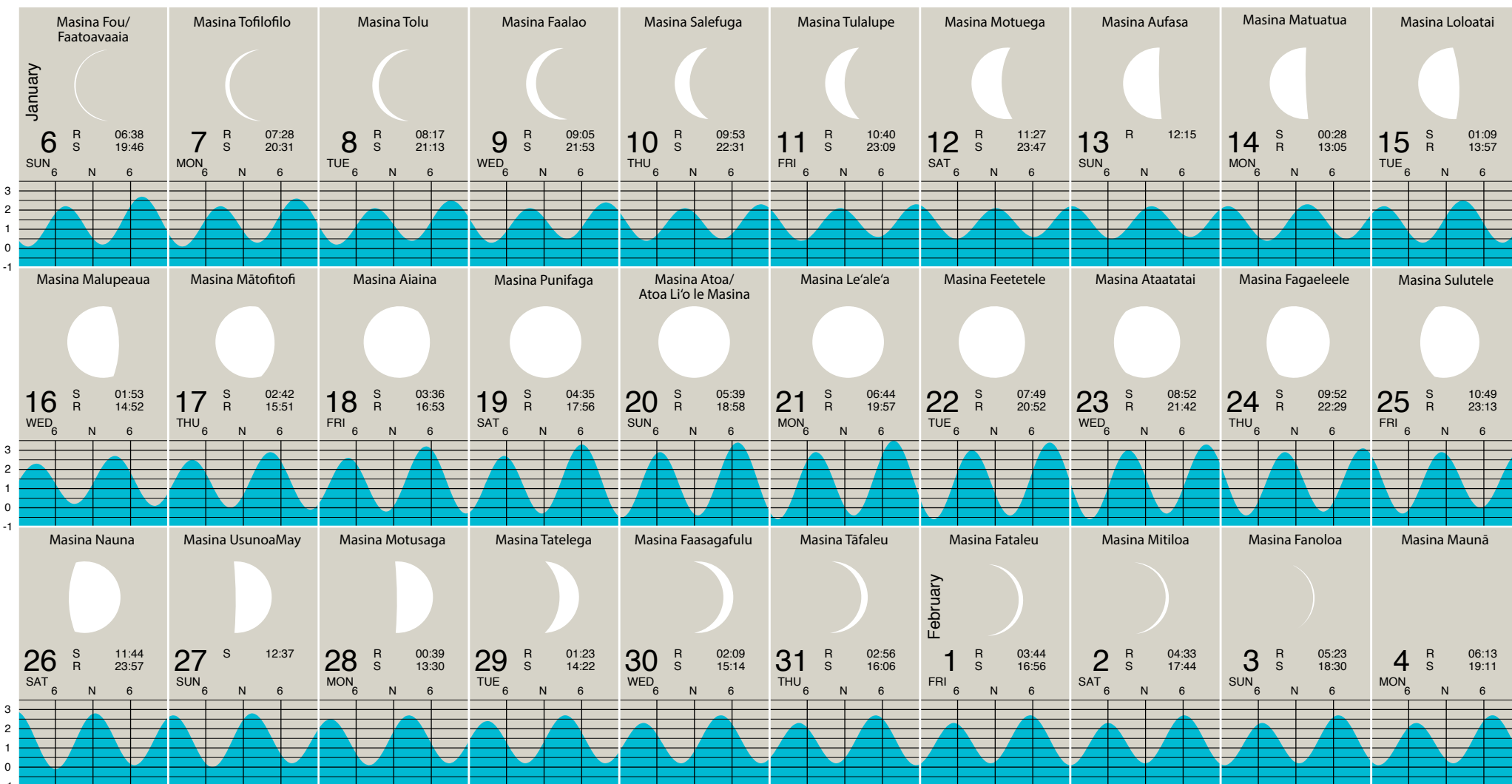
PHOTO COURTESY OF ALISI GAOA.



Another way *i'a sina* are caught is by trapping them in 'enu (special funnel-shaped traps) handwoven from 'ie'ie, which are strands of rope made from *a'fa* (coconut husk fibers). More than 100 feet of braided fibers are needed to build the 'enu. The *a'fa* is prepared by soaking coconut husks in a sand pit for two weeks and then pounding them to separate the fibers. NPS PHOTO

Toeutuvā

Januari 6 – Februari 4, 2019



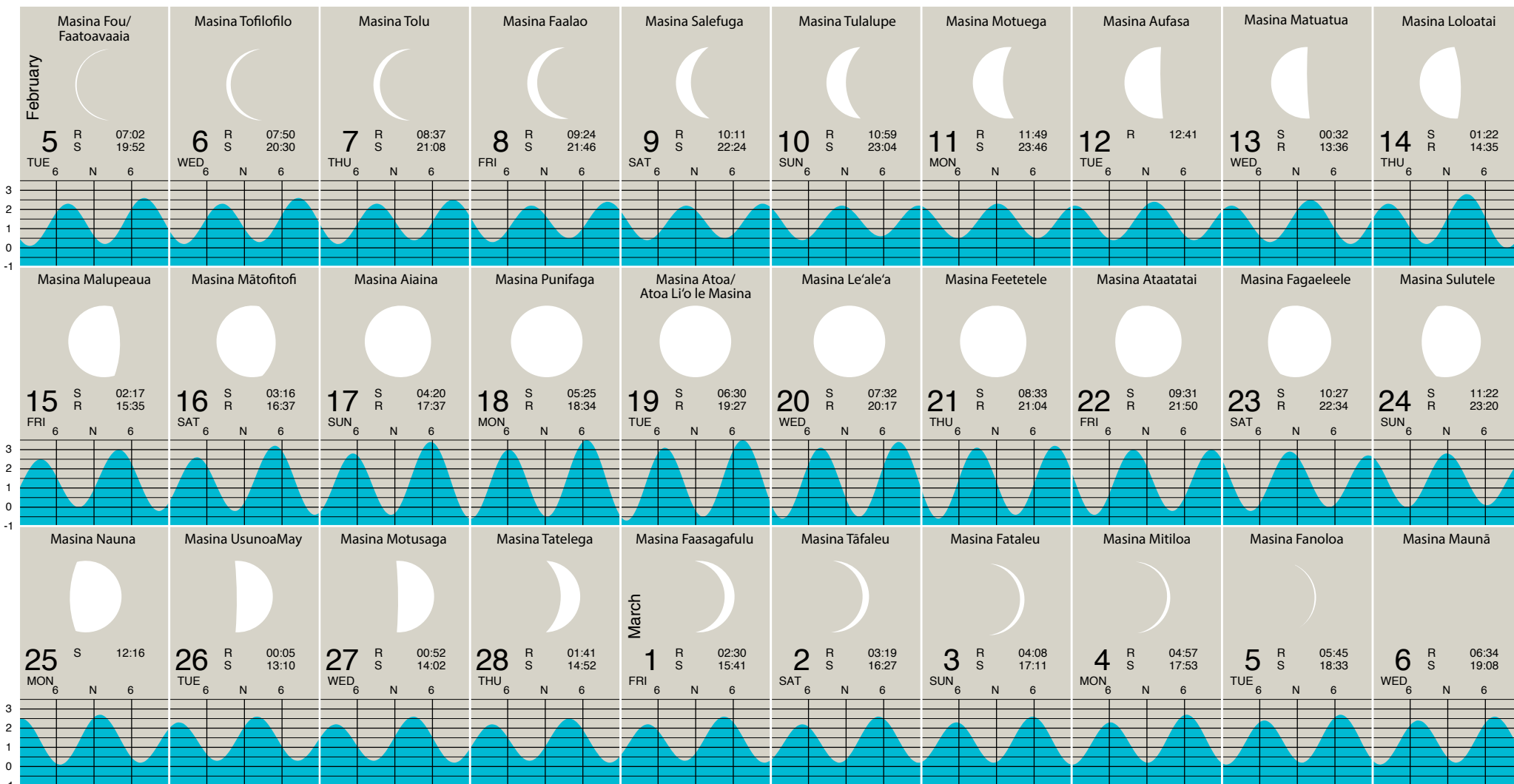
Traditional custom requires completion of the 'enu before the fish start running or it cannot be used that year. To catch the fish, the trap is buried half way in shallow water along a sandy shoreline. The traps are baited with *uga* (hermit crabs) that have been pounded and mixed with sand. NPS PHOTO



Asiasi (yellowfin tuna) is a local favorite at the restaurants in American Samoa. It is used as a modern substitute in traditional Samoan dishes such as *oka* (raw fish in coconut milk), which historically used smaller reef fish. Small recreational and *alia* fishermen and larger longline vessels provide *asiasi* to local markets. Local fishermen—from both large and small boat fisheries—commonly provide *asiasi* for *fa'alavelave* (family, church or community events such as weddings or funerals).

Fa'afu

Februari 5 - Mati 6, 2019



Asiasi (yellowfin tuna)



NPS PHOTO

Fe'e (*Octopus cyanea*) has significant cultural value and is considered sacred and taboo. The month of May was sacred because of the *fe'e*, and certain coastal villages decreed a *sā* (forbidden activity) on fishing during that time. *Taife'e* (octopus season) in American Samoa takes place mainly in March and April.

Fe'e are caught by many methods. One method involves woven traps called 'enu *fe'e*, which are designed to mimic the crevices normally occupied by the octopus. Collecting octopus by hand or with spear is a practice known as *ta'igafe'e*. *Figota* (reef gleaning) is a *fe'e* harvesting form done exclusively by females. The village women use a short and long stick with an *ola* (woven basket) to collect *fe'e* and other reef organisms for food.



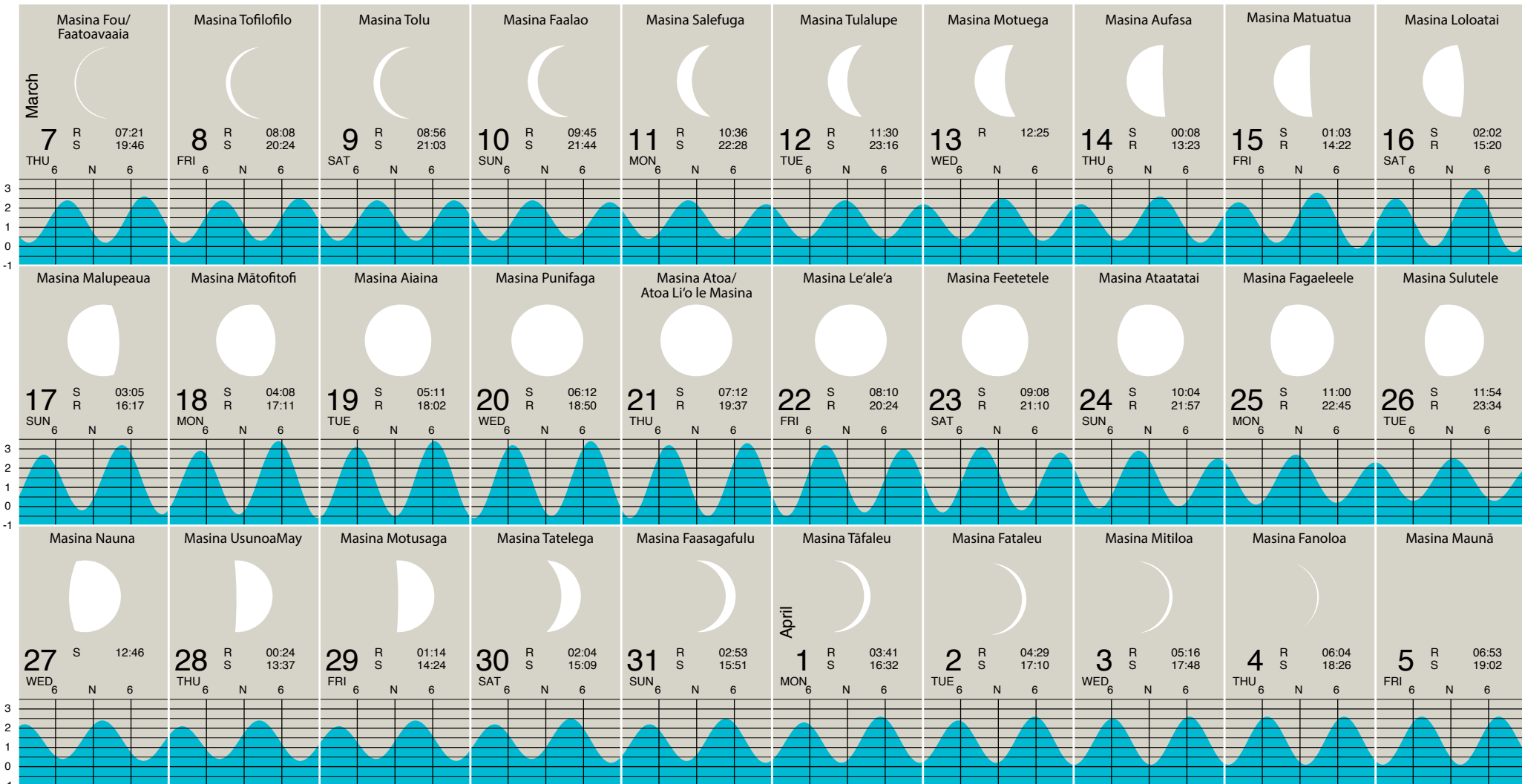
A traditional method of catching *fe'e* uses *mataife'e* (cowrie shell lures) that resemble the *isumu* (rat). The lures are lowered by line into holes and crevices on the reef and shaken to attract the octopus. NPS PHOTO



Fai'i fe'e—octopus and coconut cream cooked in a coconut shell in the umu (traditional hot rock oven)—is a favorite local delicacy. NPS PHOTO

Fānoga

Mati 7 – Aperila 5, 2019



The reason the **mataife'e** resembles the **isumu (rat)** is explained in one of the legends of Samoa. While taking a canoe trip, an owl, a snail and a rat started to sink. The owl escaped by flying, the snail sank with the canoe to the bottom of the ocean, and the rat tried to swim to shore but had a long way to go. He saw an octopus and called for help. The octopus agreed and swam to shore with the rat on his head. When they

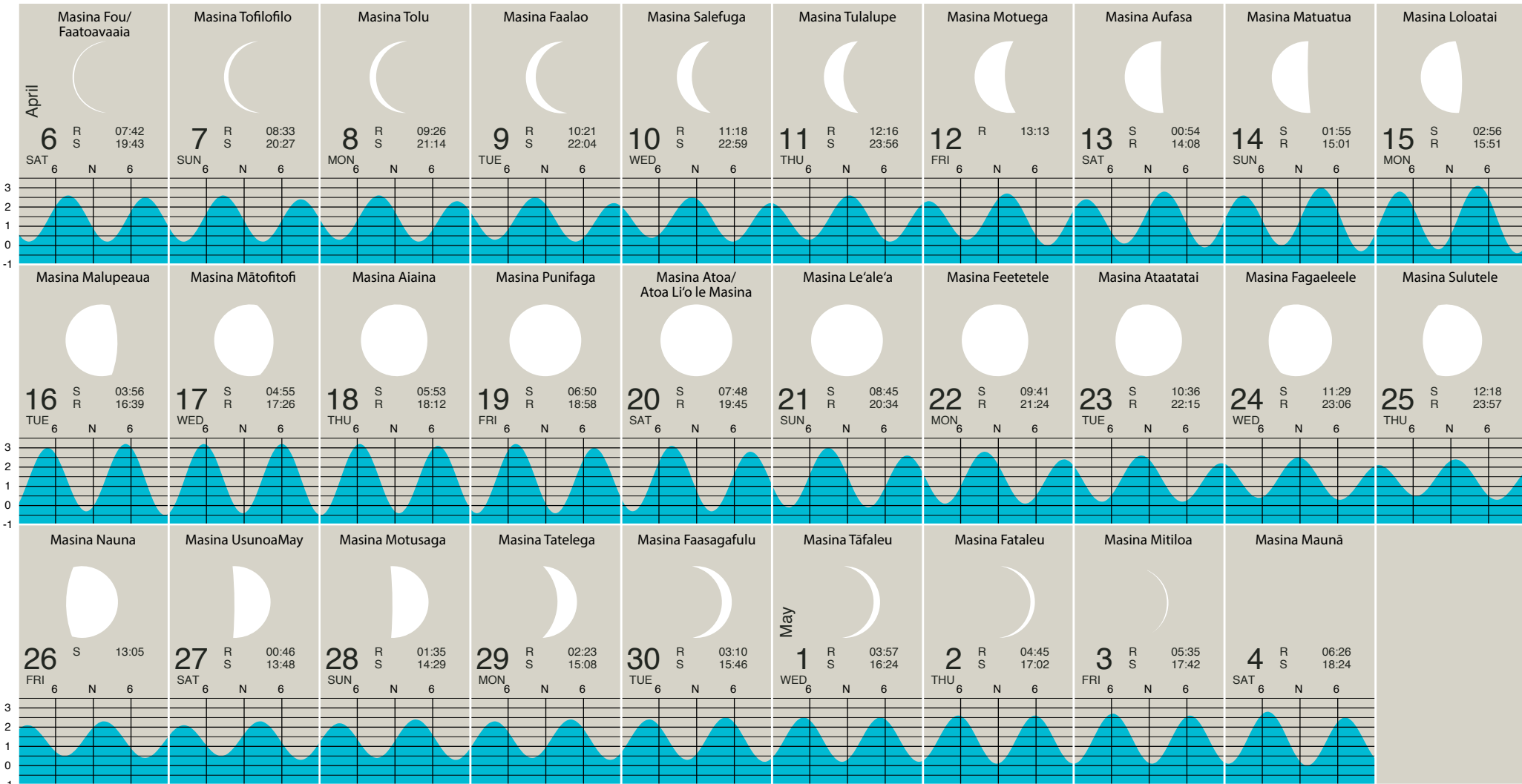
got to shore, the rat jumped off and thanked the octopus for saving his life and said that he left a little present on the octopus's head. When the octopus realized that there was a rat dropping on his head, he became extremely angry and told the rat, "If I ever see you again, I'll kill you." To this day, the octopus is mad about this and is still looking for the rat.



Rabbitfish are called by different names, such as ***loloa***, ***'ofe'ofe*** and ***malava***. The name used when referring to large schools of juvenile rabbitfish is ***lō***. While the rabbitfish are caught year-round, they are most prevalent in the late spring. In certain villages, the month of April is given the Samoan name *Lō* as this is when rabbitfish are plentiful around American Samoa. NPS PHOTO

Aununu

Aperila 6 - Me 4, 2019



Fishing for ʻĪō is a team effort by members of the village. Coconut fronds are braided into long sections to herd the schools of ʻĪō into the shallow areas where they are scooped up using *alagamea* (hand nets). A successful catch is shared with everyone in the village and neighboring villages. Like *atule* and *ʻanae*, ʻĪō is also an important bait fish to catch larger fish utilizing *ʻupega* (handwoven nets).

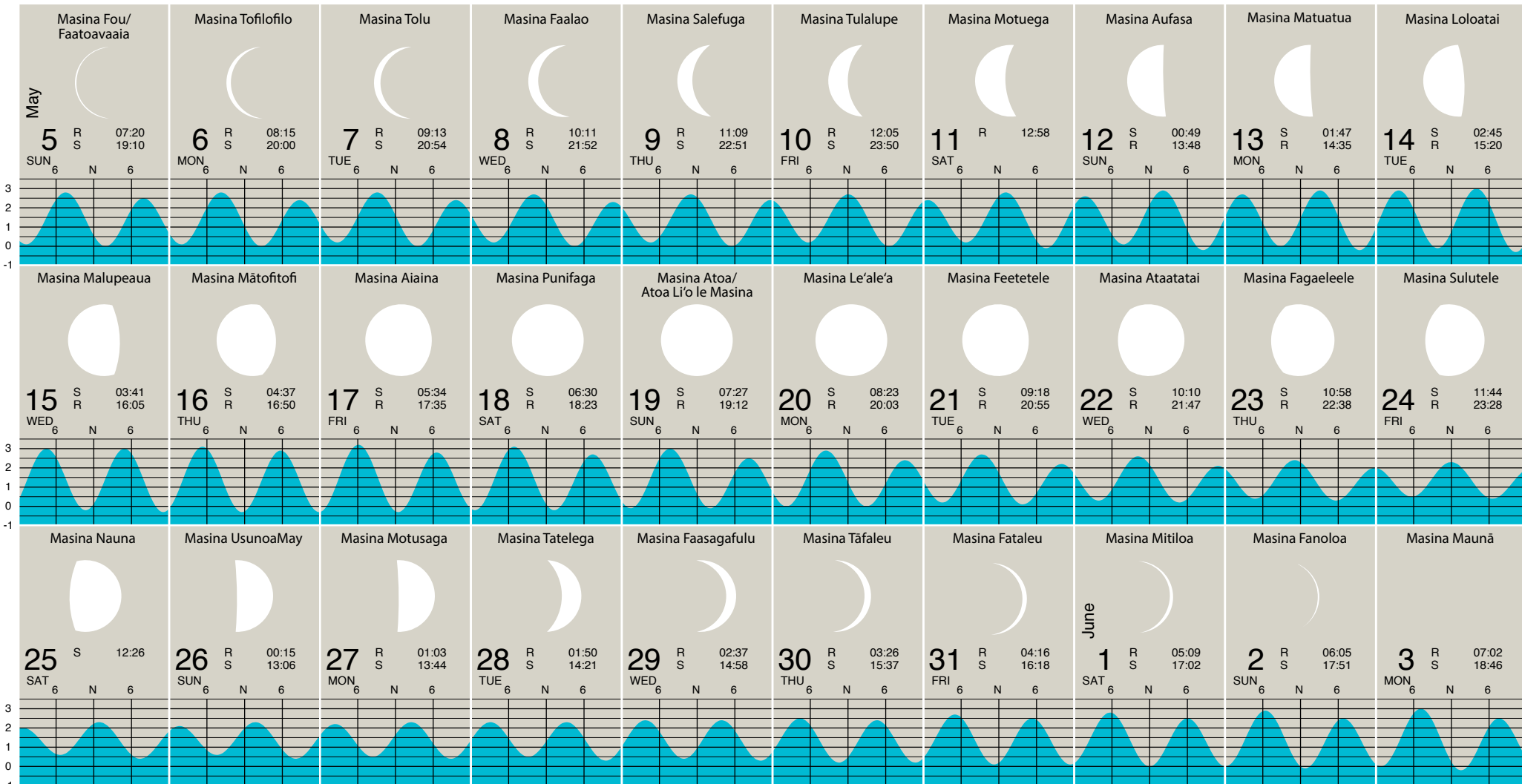


A catch of atule and jacks.

Schools of **atule** (bigeye scad) were very common in the past, especially in the months of April, May and October. Small members of the species (less than 4 inches) are called *nato*. The larger, grown fish are known as *taupapa*. The fishing method of *lau atule* was traditionally practiced by large groups of villagers who used braided coconut fronds to chase the schools of *atule* into shallow waters where they were scooped up in hand nets. In recent years, *lau atule* has been replaced by using a canoe and long netting to chase the fish into shallower water; this method takes less people to accomplish. Individual fishermen still catch *atule* in *kili* (throw nets). NPS PHOTOS

Oloāmanu

Me 5 – Iuni 3, 2019



The village of Fagasa on the north shore of Tutuila is famous for its *atule* fishing and its expertise in the *lau atule*. According to legend, the Polynesian navigator Liava'a sailed to Tutuila in search of the pure waters of Fagasa Village. His boat accidentally departed while his daughter Sina was still ashore collecting fresh water. When Liava'a realized this, he became enraged and threw his entire crew into the sea with orders for them to return to Fagasa, find Sina and protect her forever. To expedite their return to Fagasa, the men

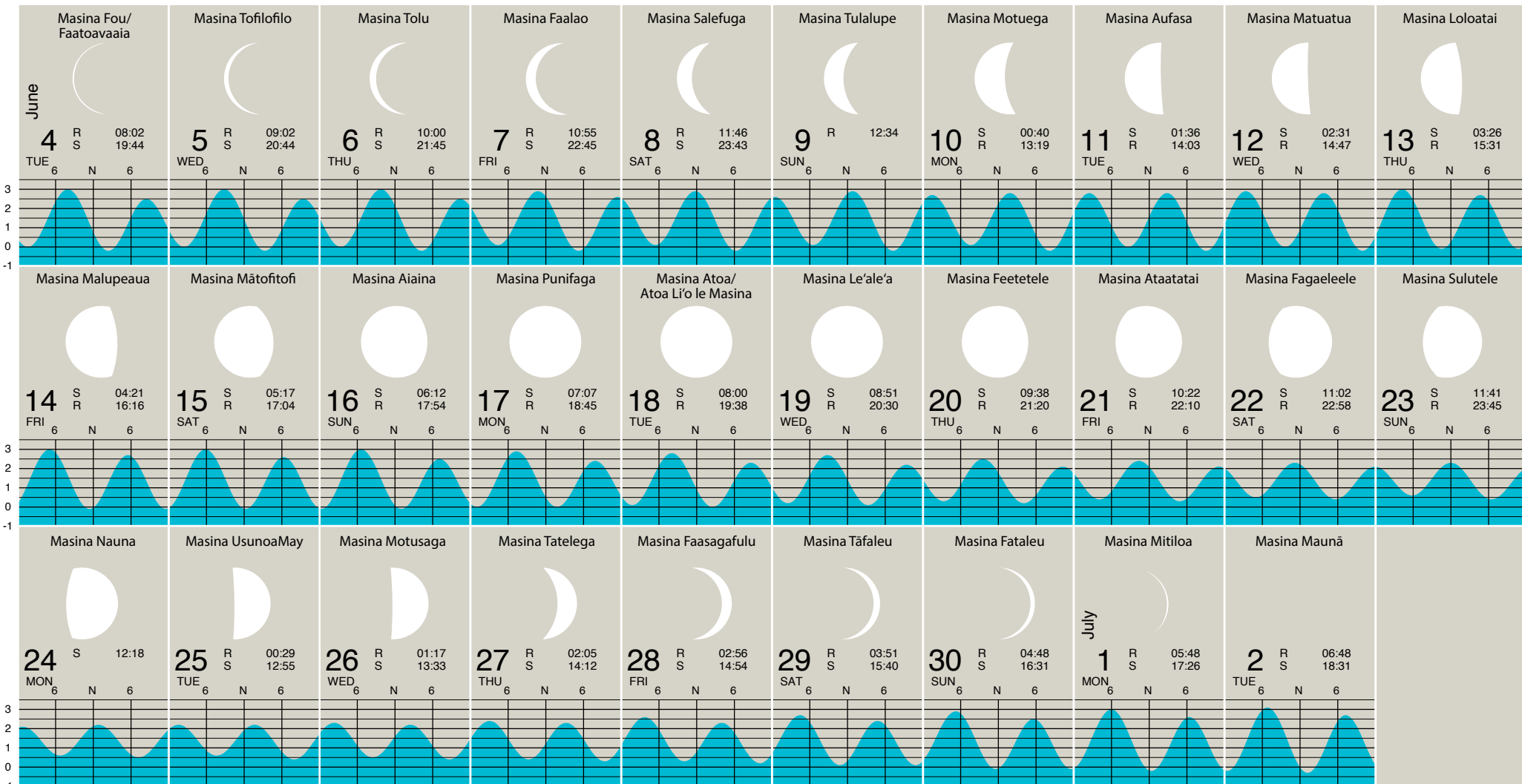
were transformed into dolphins. They herded a school of *atule* to shore to ensure that all who cared for Sina were well fed. Special stones protected by High Chief Lili'o, who is responsible for all events related to the *atule* harvest, memorialize the story of Liava'a and Sina to this day. When *atule* arrive in Fagasa, an *ava* ceremony is held in appreciation for this bounty. The stones are cleaned, and, when the time is right, the villagers carry coconut fronds into the water to herd the fish into the shallows where they are collected in *'enu* baskets, which are emptied into the *ola* (woven basket).



Traditionally, Samoans caught **masimasi** (dolphin fish) on a special type of hook called *pa tagi*, which was used to catch various other large, open ocean species as well. *Masimasi* are abundant in the waters around American Samoa between the months of June and October. PHOTO COURTESY OF MAC AVEINA.

Lotuaga

luni 4 – Iulai 2, 2019



The Samoan proverb “*E a sipa le lama, ‘ae fano malolo*” (The torch is tilted over while the flying fish die) refers to fishing for *masimasi* by baiting the hook with flying fish, which are caught with small fish-hooks. While the fisher is waiting for a bite, his boat must move slowly. The sail is, therefore, somewhat lowered until it hangs in an inclined position (*sipa*). This proverb refers to a person who has come to harm through another’s fault. PHOTO COURTESY OF NATE SAGAPOLUTELE

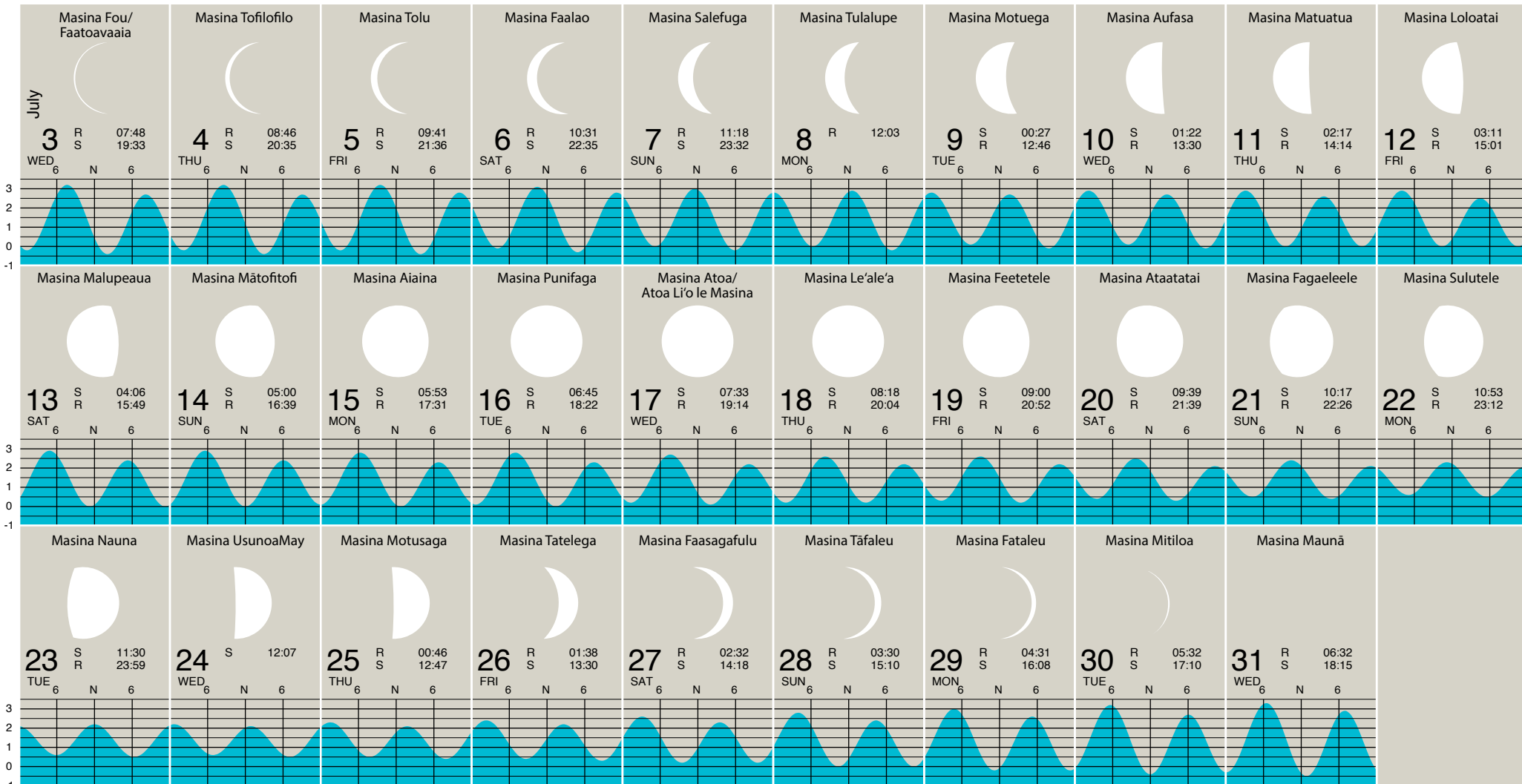


Parrotfish play a role in protecting the coral reefs of American Samoa by eating algae that compete with corals.

Samoan names for parrotfish are associated with their size. Generally, they are called **fuga** when less than 10 inches, **laea** when 10 to 15 inches, **ulumato** when 15 to 20 inches and **galo** when over 20 inches. *Fuga* and *laea* are important food fish for American Samoa communities and a favorite at local markets. American Samoa spear fishermen seek these coral grazers as they cannot be caught by hook. NPS PHOTOS

Tu'iefu

Iulai 3-31, 2019



Parrotfish are caught by methods practiced traditionally by women of the villages. In the *tutui* or *tuinga* method, women working in pairs use sticks to drive *fuga* and *laea* from rocks and coral into shallower water to be collected in baskets. Two other methods practiced by women of American Samoa are *sasa'e*, using bare hands to collect fish into baskets, and *safunua*, where a group of women form a semi-circle and move in formation to chase reef fish close to the shore where they are scooped up in *alagamea* (hand nets).



A favorite parrotfish dish of American Samoa is prepared by cooking *laea* wrapped in banana leaf in the *umu* (traditional hot rock oven).

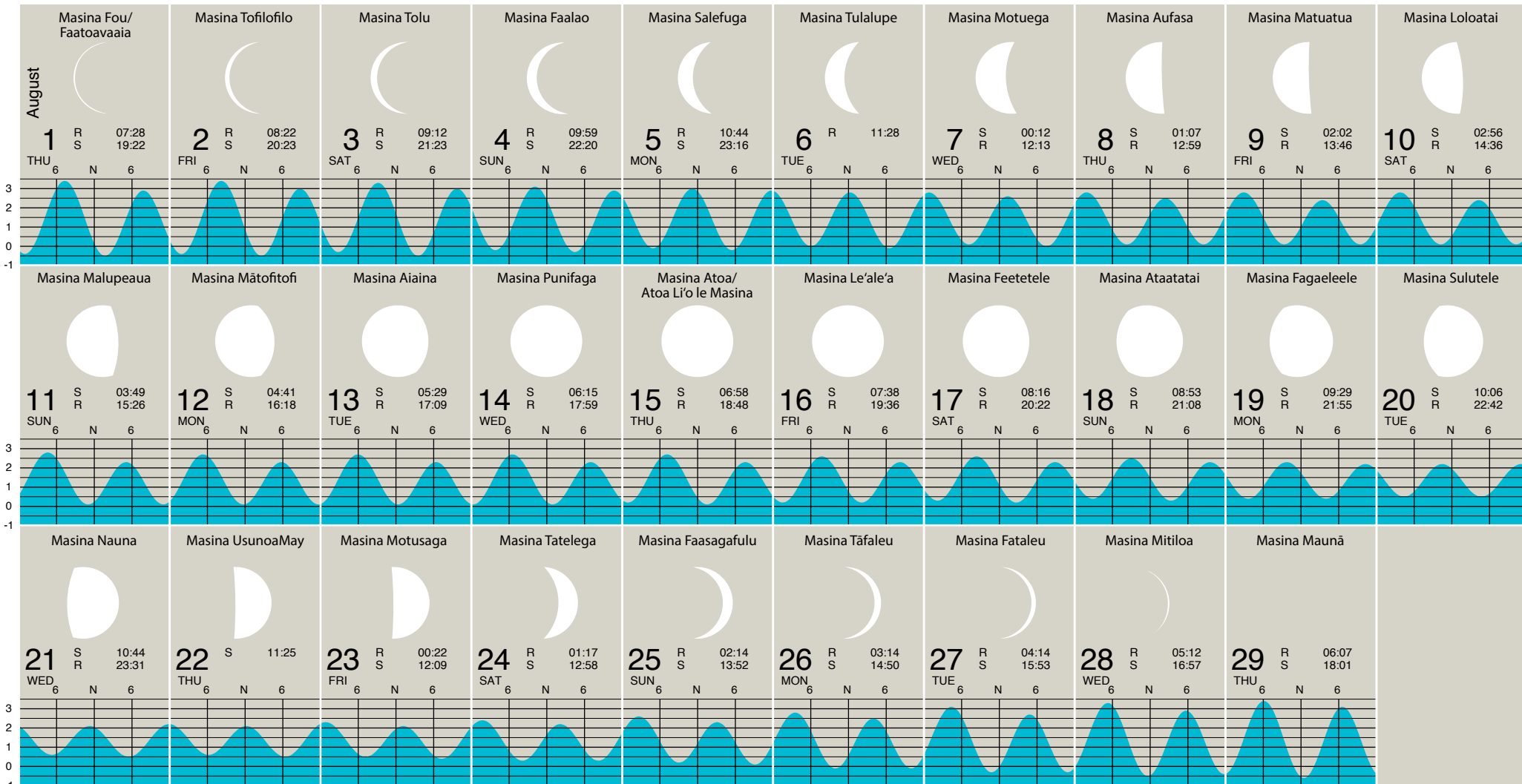


Hatcheries were initiated to provide *faisua* for local markets and help protect the species.

American Samoa has two native species of **faisua** (giant clam): *Tridacna maxima* and *T. squamosa*. In recent years the local government has introduced *T. gigas* and *T. derasa* and re-introduced *Hippopus hippopus* to reefs around the territory. *Faisua* is a popular food in American Samoa, and efforts have been made to raise them through mariculture. NPS CLAM PHOTO

Muli-fā

Aukuso 1–Aukuso 29, 2019



According to Samoan legend, the *faisua* is responsible for the Samoan art of *tatau* (tattoo). Two sisters traveled from Fiji with a basket of *tatau* equipment and the knowledge of tattooing. They chanted a song with the lyrics that only women shall receive tattoos and not men. However, they were mesmerized by a giant *faisua* and dove into the ocean to catch it. They were hypnotized or confused by the ordeal, and after that the song changed to men shall receive *tatau* and not women. NPS PHOTO

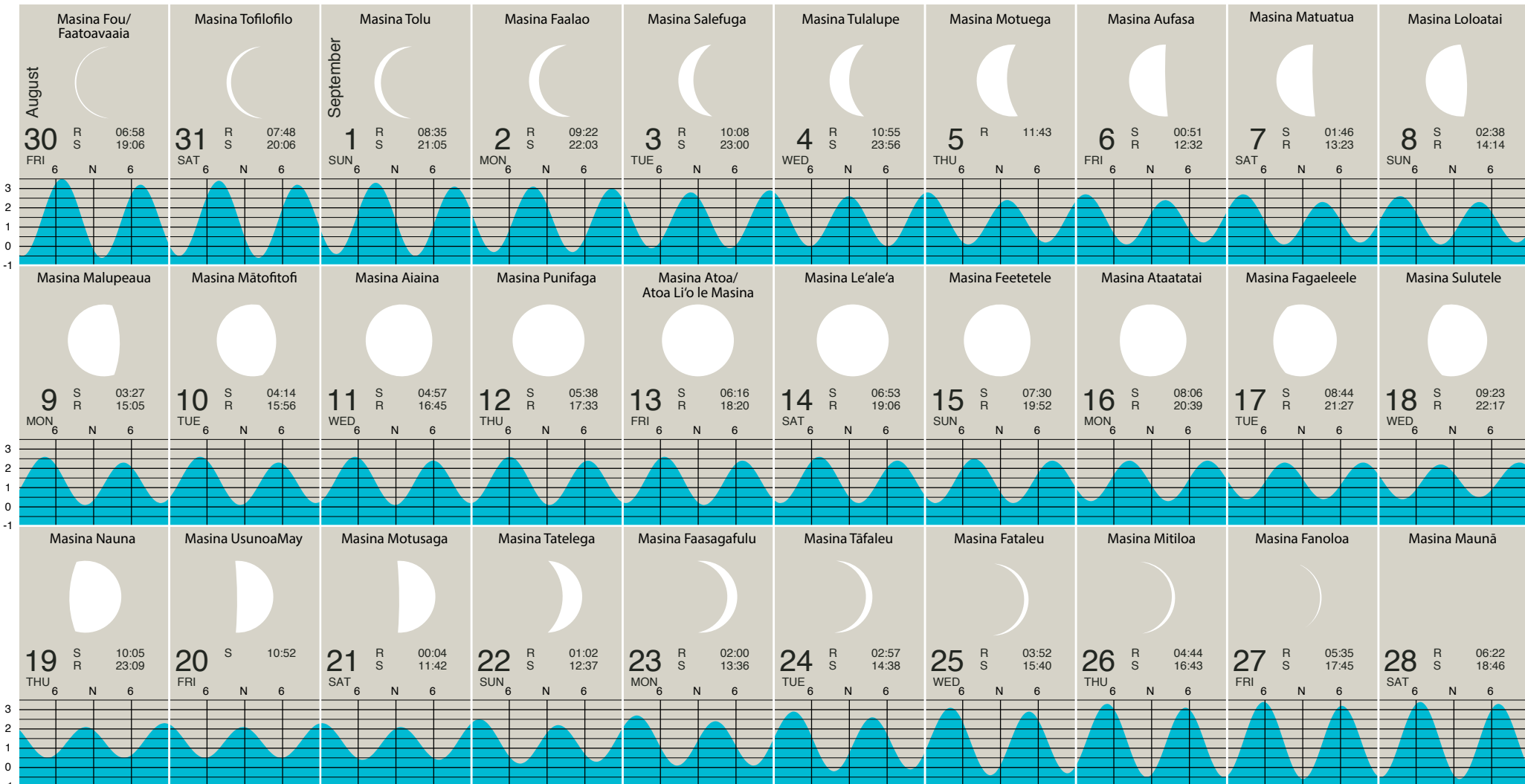
Larger *faisua* found in deeper water beyond the reef's edge were traditionally harvested by men of the village who would dive on the reef at the break of dawn. A stick was wedged into the mouth of the *faisua*, and then the clam was dislodged from the reef rocks. The *faisua* was also one of the reef species harvested by women engaged in *figota* (reef gleaning).



Atu (skipjack tuna) and **apakoa** (albacore tuna) are the two most important fish to the economy of American Samoa. They account for the bulk of the fish delivered to the local StarKist cannery, the territory's largest private sector employer. *Apakoa* was not traditionally targeted by Samoan fishermen as it is generally caught in depths of 100 to 400 feet. Yet it is vitally important in modern Samoan society and makes up approximately 70 percent of the tuna landed by the local longline fishery. PHOTOS COURTESY OF NATE ILAOA (INSET) AND MAC AVEINA

Pālolomua

Aukuso 30–Setema 28, 2019



Traditionally, *tautai* were the stewards of the oceans around American Samoa and charged by the high chiefs with fishing for pelagic fish, such as *atu*. Successful catches were shared among the villagers as directed by the village chiefs or councils. Status of titles among families dictated who received the prime portions. The head was reserved for high and talking chiefs. Failure to properly adhere to the protocol of catch distribution to chiefs could result in severe punishment, including exile and confiscation of crops and possessions.

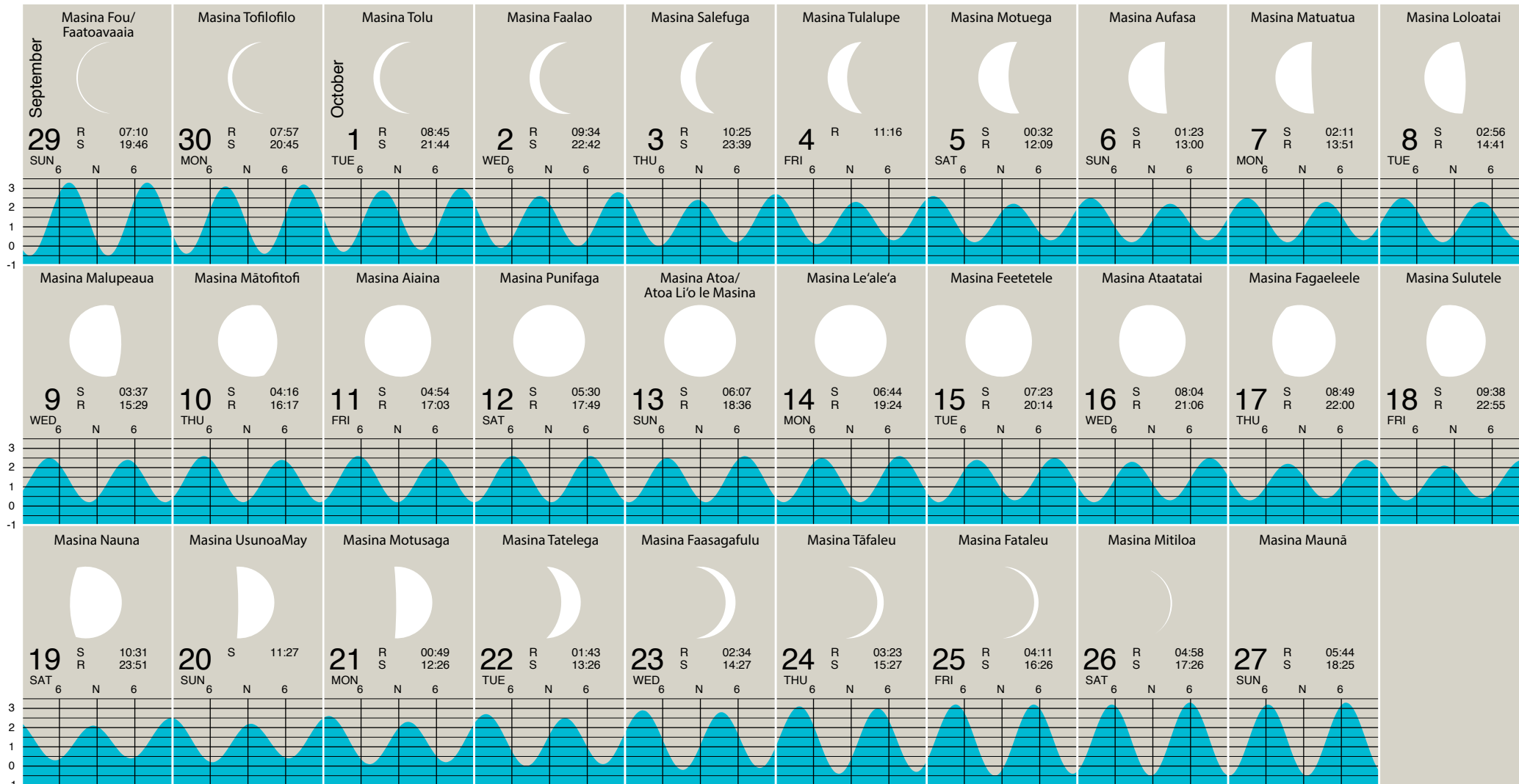
Pa'atu is a special type of fish hook for *atu* made from shell (usually turtle). The lure was a unique two-piece composite that included a shell such as cowrie connected to the turtle shell hook. A special, all wood hook for skipjack fishing was made the inhabitants of Ta'u Island. American Samoa villagers built special boat to fish for *atu*. Ofu, Manu'a, was one village where construction of such vessels took place.



Palolo (*Palola viridis*) spawn during three days of the third quarter moon (i.e., one week after the full moon) in the months of October and November each year. They appear at different times on different islands. Some villagers believe that successful *palolo* spawns are connected to plants. They believe a good *palolo* catch depends on how many *moso'oi* (flowers of the cananga tree) bloom in the months of October and November. Others say the closing of the *pālulu* (morning glory) can influence the success of a *palolo* spawn. MAIN PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX WEBB, INSET PHOTO BY NPS

Pālolo muli

Setema 29–Oketopa 27, 2019



Traditionally, villagers prepared for the *palolo* harvest by utilizing *moso'oi*. It was believed that good luck was brought to fishermen who adorned leis of *moso'oi* and wore nice clothing and to those who prepared for *palolo* fishing by bathing with *moso'oi* and other fragrant blossoms. Special festivities were organized for the night before the *palolo* catch. The chief of the village that had jurisdiction over the reef channel would send fishermen out to search for the first signs of *palolo*. When they

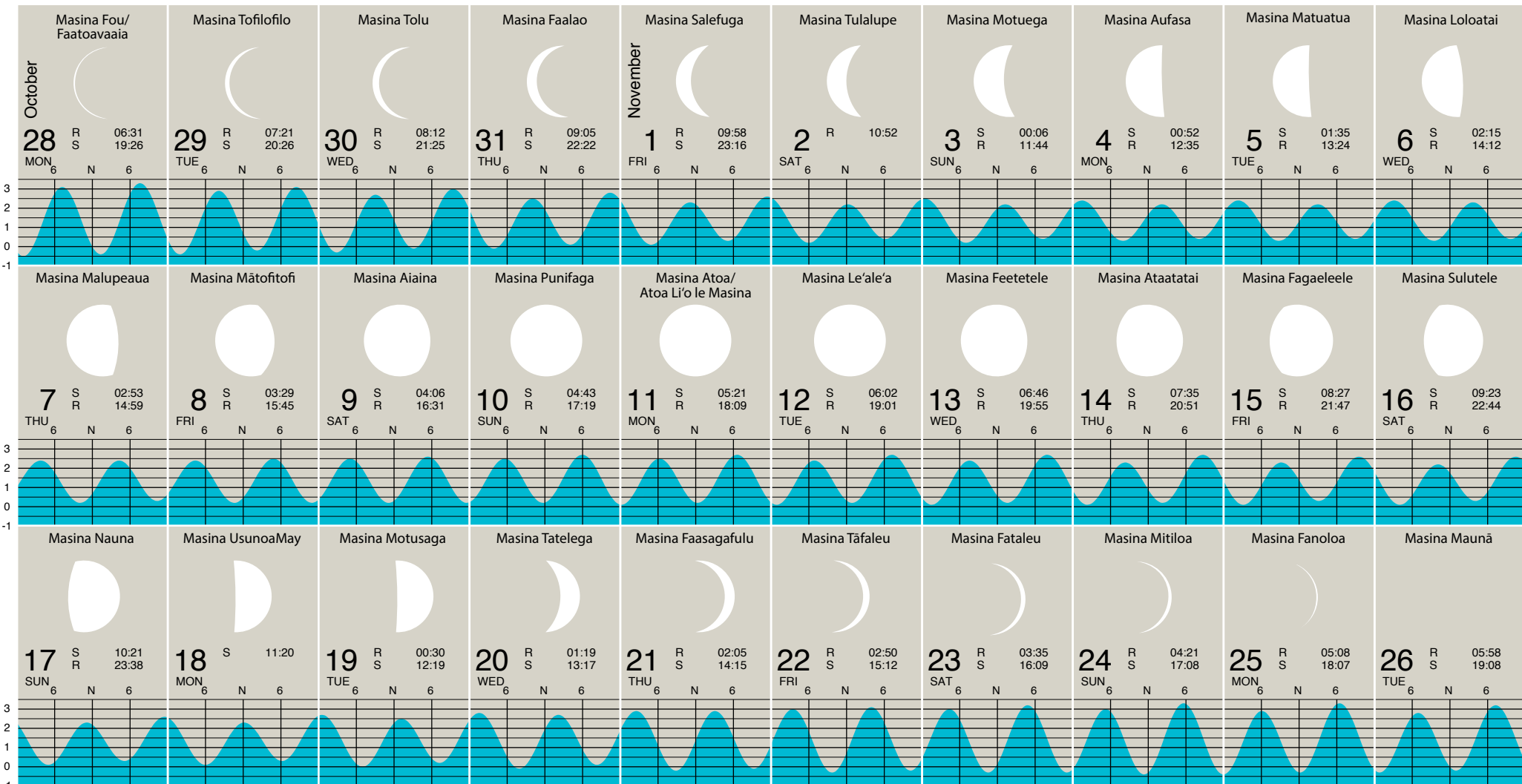
reported success, preparations were begun at the chief's house—feasts and 'ava were prepared by the *taupou* (village virgin). Everyone came to the chief's house for feasting and amusements until the time arrived for all to go catch the *palolo*. Abundant harvests were shared with the entire village, a practice known as *valelei*, which is a way to keep good relations among the residents of a village.



The shark is traditionally used in ceremonial events and divided in a specific way—usually with the shark's head given to the *aumaga* (untitled males of the village). NPS PHOTO

Taumatamua

Oketopa 28 – Novema 26, 2019



In American Samoa, *lepaga* (shark fishing) was done by various methods. One traditional harvest method called *sele* involved the use of odorous bait (such as fish chum and pig innards) and a long noose to snare the shark once it surfaced alongside a fishing vessel. A traditional bait float

NPS PHOTO

was used for this method of shark fishing. These wooden floats were lightweight and used with nets and lures.

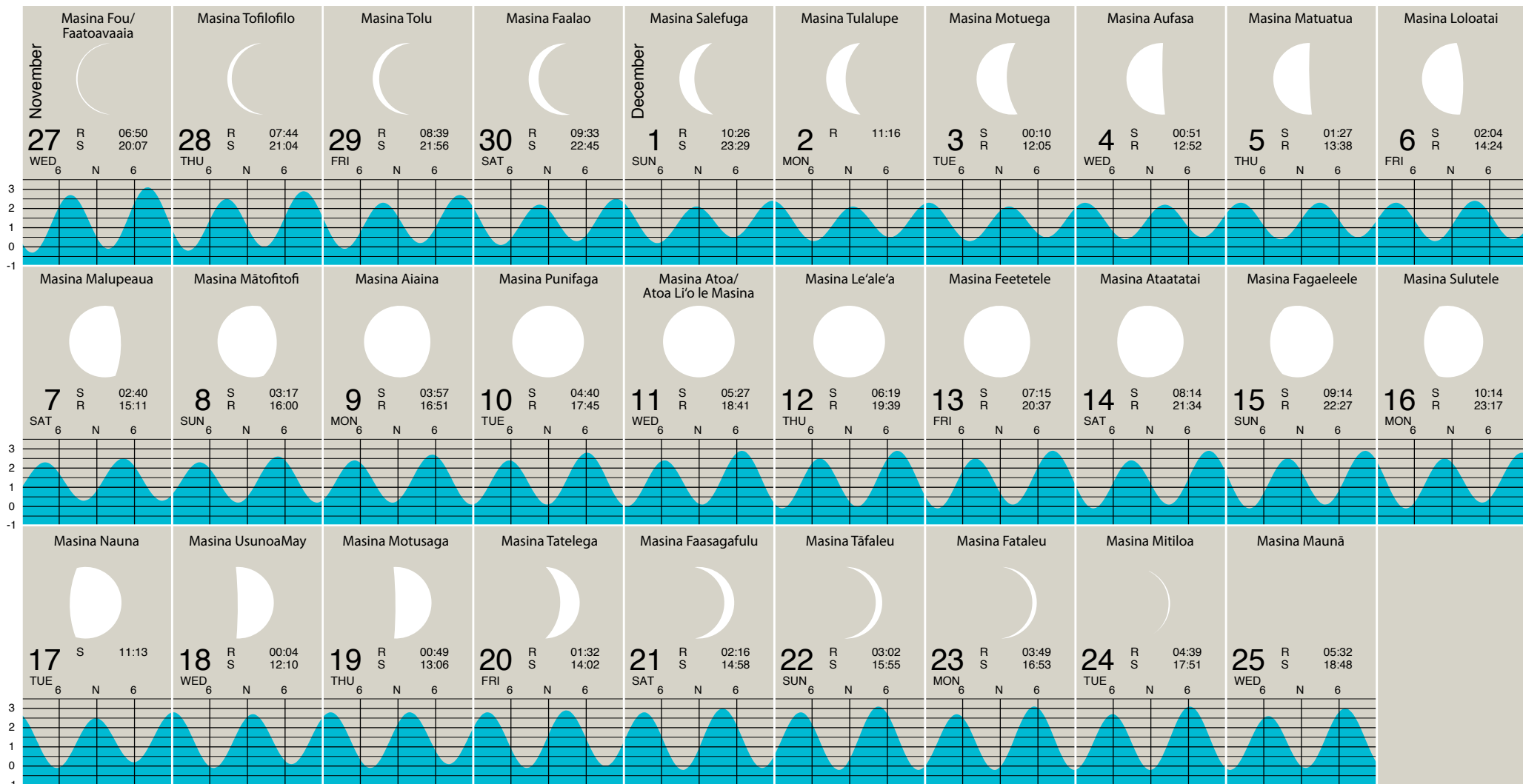
A second method of shark fishing used a 50- by 20-foot net called *'upega malie*. Special floats from *'ulu* (breadfruit) trees and *ma'a* (stones) served as sinkers. The nets were baited with fish to attract sharks.



'Anae (family Mugilidae) are commonly fished in the coastal waters around the islands of American Samoa. **'Anae** is also important as a bait to catch larger pelagic fish such as *atu*. In American Samoa the season for **'anae gutu mūmū** (red-lipped mullet) runs from October through December. The **afomatua** (grey mullet) are considered a sacred fish. They are commonly presented as ceremonial exchanges with such items as *s'āpo* (tapa cloth) and *fala* (fine mats) as reciprocal gifts. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN SAMOA COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT (LAND GRANT PROGRAM)

Toetaumafa

Novema 27 – Tesema 25, 2019



The western village of **Amanave** is famous for its traditional harvest of the *'anae gutu mūmū*. The harvest method involves a collaborative effort by the people of the village called *seu 'anae*. A group of men use *tolo matu* (large braided nets) to round up schools of *'anae gutu mūmū* and direct them into the channel, where a larger group of villagers awaits to scoop up the fish with *alagamea* (hand nets). About 60 families undertake this large group effort at one time.

The *afomatua* was historically a favorite of Samoan chiefs because of their tendency to jump out of the water when chased. Because they were often caught in mid-air with *alagamea* (hand nets), the chiefs likened this to *seuga lupe* (pigeon hunting), a pastime reserved exclusively for chiefly individuals.



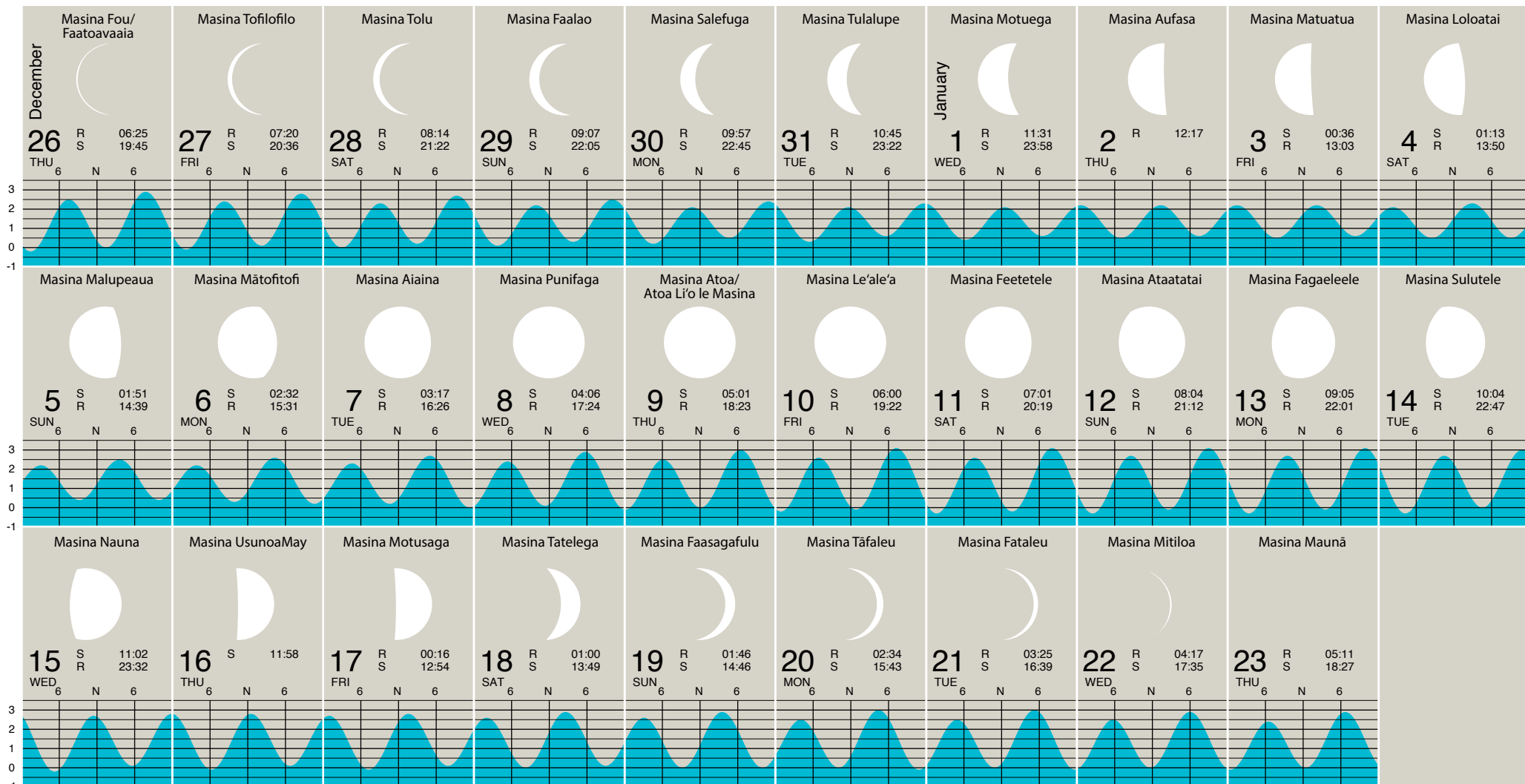


A sea turtle feeding in the shallows around Tutuila Island. As juveniles, *laumei* feed on crustaceans, grasses and algae, before adopting a herbivorous diet as adults.

Sea turtles are commonly referred to as ***laumei*** in Samoan but have also been called ***i'a sã*** (sacred fish). A Samoan myth claims that sea turtles have the power to guide lost fishermen back to land and safety. The turtle shell was an important material in the making of fish hooks used to catch large pelagic fish like *atu* (skipjack tuna) and *masimasi* (dolphinfish). NPS PHOTOS

Utuvāmua

Tesema 26, 2019–Ianuari 23, 2020



One of American Samoa's most famous legends tells of a mother and daughter who, during a time of great famine, leaped from the cliff side and were transformed into a turtle and shark. They swam to the village of Vaitogi where they were treated to food and clothing by High Chief Letuli. To repay his kindness, they protect the waters of Vaitogi to this day.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LOTE AIUMU



While the sea turtle is now protected under the Endangered Species Act and interaction with the animals is restricted, the people of Samoa have historically implemented their own form of conservation for *i'a sã*. Historically, the turtle was the exclusive property of the *Tui Manu'a* (the highest chief of the Manu'a Islands) and off limits to everyone else. NPS PHOTO

About the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council was established by Congress in 1976 to manage fisheries in the offshore waters surrounding Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Hawai'i and the US Pacific remote island areas. The fisheries in federal waters surrounding American Samoa are managed under the American Samoa Archipelago and Pacific Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plans. Traditional knowledge and wide community involvement are integral parts of the ecosystem-based approach to fishery management.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NATHAN ILAOA.

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