



Management Objectives for the Proposed NWHI National Marine Sanctuary

January 25, 2005

In 2000, President Clinton issued Executive Order (EO) 13178 establishing the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve (Reserve). President Clinton subsequently revised portions of EO 13178 and completed establishment of the Reserve in EO 13196. The Reserve is managed by the National Marine Sanctuary Program which is within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Pursuant to the EOs and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1433, 1434), NOAA is initiating the process to designate the Reserve as a National Marine Sanctuary. The National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) delegates the development and recommendation of fishing regulations in sanctuaries to Regional Fishery Management Councils. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is now considering a range of alternatives for these fishing regulations.

The general objective of the Council is to develop appropriate fishery management measures (and associated regulations) for the proposed NWHI National Marine Sanctuary. Under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), these measures must be consistent with the 1) the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, 2) the National Marine Sanctuary Program's Goal and Objectives for fisheries in the proposed Northwestern Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary, 3) the Council's Goal and Objectives for fisheries in the proposed Northwestern Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary, 4) the MSA's National Standards, and 5) the specific objectives of each Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for NWHI fisheries. These are enumerated below.

1. National Marine Sanctuary Act Purposes and Policies

The NMSA details the following overall purposes and policies for the establishment of the National Marine Sanctuary System as:

(1) to identify and designate as national marine sanctuaries areas of the marine environment which are of special national significance and to manage these areas as the National Marine Sanctuary System;

(2) to provide authority for comprehensive and coordinated conservation and management of these marine areas, and activities affecting them, in a manner which complements existing regulatory authorities;

(3) to maintain the natural biological communities in the national marine sanctuaries, and to

protect, and, where appropriate, restore and enhance natural habitats, populations, and ecological processes;

(4) to enhance public awareness, understanding, appreciation, and wise and sustainable use of the marine environment, and the natural, historical, cultural, and archeological resources of the National Marine Sanctuary System;

(5) to support, promote, and coordinate scientific research on, and long-term monitoring of, the resources of these marine areas;

(6) to facilitate to the extent compatible with the primary objective of resource protection, all public and private uses of the resources of these marine areas not prohibited pursuant to other authorities;

(7) to develop and implement coordinated plans for the protection and management of these areas with appropriate Federal agencies, State and local governments, Native American tribes and organizations, international organizations, and other public and private interests concerned with the continuing health and resilience of these marine areas;

(8) to create models of, and incentives for, ways to conserve and manage these areas, including the application of innovative management techniques; and

(9) to cooperate with global programs encouraging conservation of marine resources.

2. National Marine Sanctuary Proposed Sanctuary Goal and Objectives for Fisheries

The National Marine Sanctuary Program has adopted the following Goal and Objectives for fisheries in the NWHI National Marine Sanctuary:

Goal: Maintain ecosystem integrity by limiting and controlling fishing activities using an ecosystem-based management approach. Maximize ecosystem protection while minimizing adverse socioeconomic impacts. Limit fishing activities to areas that minimize or prevent interactions with corals, seabirds, endangered Hawaiian monk seals, and other protected wildlife, or that do not threaten the natural character or biological integrity of any ecosystem of the region.

Objectives: As appropriate to maintain the natural character or biological integrity of any ecosystem of the region:

7a. Prohibit non-subsistence crustacean fishing.

7b. Prohibit commercial precious coral fishing.

7c. Prohibit harvest of all coral species, live rock, all aquaria species and live fish trade species, and algae, sponges, and other invertebrates.

7d. Allow recreational fishing for pelagic species except within sensitive habitats.

7e. Allow bottomfishing to continue except within sensitive habitats.

7f. Allow commercial pelagic fishing using handline, pole and line and trolling gear except within sensitive habitats.

7g. Prohibit subsistence use within the sanctuary except for Native Hawaiian subsistence use

7h. Allow sustenance fishing for pelagic and bottomfish species using pole and line, trolling and handline methods within the Sanctuary except within sensitive habitats.

7i. Allow spearfishing without the use of SCUBA for pelagic species except within sensitive habitats.

7j. All fishing not specifically allowed shall be prohibited.

7k. When there is uncertainty in available information regarding the potential impacts of any fishing activity, err on the side of resource protection.

3. Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council Proposed NWHI Sanctuary Goal and Objectives for Fisheries

The Council has adopted the following Goal and Objectives for fisheries in the NWHI National Marine Sanctuary:

Goal: Maintain ecosystem integrity by applying ecosystem-based management and research principles to fishing activities. Sustain ecosystem protection while minimizing adverse socioeconomic impacts

Objectives:

7a. Protect ecosystem integrity by applying a precautionary approach and continuing research on crustaceans and precious corals fisheries to determine if, and how, harvests can be allowed without damaging the integrity of the NWHI ecosystem.

7b. Protect the substrate of the NWHI ecosystem through prohibitions on the collection of reef building corals and live rock.

7c. Protect ecologically valuable areas from damage resulting from fishing activities, consistent with available biological and ecological information.

7d. Protect Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, seabirds and other protected wildlife by controlling fishing activities in areas where interactions are known to occur.

7e. Maintain ecosystem integrity by controlling the harvests of pelagic, bottomfish, and coral reef associated species consistent with available biological and ecological information.

7f. Maintain ecosystem integrity while minimizing adverse socioeconomic and cultural impacts.

7g. Employ principles of equity and fairness when allocating fishing rights.

7h. Protect Native Hawaiian cultural rights by promoting access for non-commercial fishing uses by Native Hawaiians to the extent possible without damaging the integrity of the NWHI ecosystem.

7i. Promote increased understanding of the NWHI ecosystem through comprehensive and coordinated research.

7j. Apply ecosystem-based principles through coordinated management with NWHI management and research partners.

4. Magunson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act National Standards

The MSA National Standards are as follows:

National Standard 1 -- Conservation and management measures shall prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery for the United States fishing industry.

National Standard 2 -- Conservation and management measures shall be based upon the best scientific information available.

National Standard 3 -- To the extent practicable, an individual stock of fish shall be managed as a unit throughout its range, and interrelated stocks of fish shall be managed as a unit or in close coordination.

National Standard 4 -- Conservation and management measures shall not discriminate between residents of different States. If it becomes necessary to allocate or assign fishing privileges among various United States fishermen, such allocation shall be (A) fair and equitable to all such fishermen; (B) reasonably calculated to promote conservation; and (C) carried out in such manner that no particular individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of

such privileges.

National Standard 5 -- Conservation and management measures shall, where practicable, consider efficiency in the utilization of fishery resources; except that no such measure shall have economic allocation as its sole purpose.

National Standard 6 -- Conservation and management measures shall take into account and allow for variations among, and contingencies in, fisheries, fishery resources and catches.

National Standard 7 -- Conservation and management measures shall, where practicable, minimize costs and avoid unnecessary duplication.

National Standard 8 -- Conservation and management measures shall, consistent with the conservation requirements of this Act (including the prevention of overfishing and rebuilding of overfished stocks), take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities in order to (A) provide for the sustained participation of such communities, and (B) to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities.

National Standard 9 -- Conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, (A) minimize bycatch and (B) to the extent bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch.

National Standard 10 -- Conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, promote the safety of human life at sea.

5. Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish Fishery Management Plan Objectives

The objectives of the Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish FMP are as follows:

Objective 1. Protect against overfishing and maintain long-term productivity of bottomfish stocks

Objective 2. Improve the database for future decisions through data reporting requirements and cooperative Federal/State/Territory programs.

Objective 3. Provide for consistency in Federal/State/Territory bottomfish management to ensure effective management across the range of fisheries

Objective 4. Protect bottomfish stock and habitat from environmentally destructive fishing activities and enhance habitat if possible.

Objective 5. Maintain existing opportunities for rewarding experiences by small-scale commercial, recreational, and subsistence fishermen, including native Pacific islanders.

Objective 6. Maintain consistent availability of high quality products to consumers.

Objective 7. Maintain a balance between harvest capacity and harvestable fishery stocks to prevent over-capitalization.

Objective 8. Avoid taking protected species and minimize possible adverse modifications to their habitat

Objective 9. Restore depleted groundfish stocks and to provide the opportunity to US fishermen to develop new domestic fisheries for groundfish which will displace foreign fishing.

Objective 10. Monitor stock recovery of depleted stocks in the FCZ [EEZ] so that any international plan action for managing the common resource can be guided by experimental results.

6. Crustaceans Fishery Management Plan Objectives

The objectives of the Crustaceans FMP are as follows:

Objective 1. To ensure the long term productivity of the stock and prevent overfishing;

Objective 2. To promote the efficient contribution of the spiny lobster resource to the national economy ;

Objective 3. To collect and analyze biological and economic information about the lobster fishery and improve the basis for conservation and management in the future;

Objective 4. To prevent unfavorable impacts of the fishery on Hawaiian monk seals and other endangered and threatened species.

7. Precious Corals Fishery Management Plan Objectives

The objectives of the Precious Corals FMP are as follows:

Objective 1. Allow a fishery for precious coral in the EEZ in the western Pacific but limit the fishery so as to achieve the Optimum Yield on a continuing basis;

Objective 2. Prevent overfishing and wastage of resources;

Objective 3. Encourage the use of selective harvesting methods;

Objective 4. Minimize the harvest of colonies of coral which are immature;

Objective 5. Minimize the harvest of colonies of coral which have not reached their full potential

for growth; and

Objective 6. Encourage the acquisition and analysis of new information concerning the distribution, abundance and ecology of precious corals.

7. Coral Reef Ecosystems Fishery Management Plan Objectives

The objectives of the Coral Reef Ecosystems FMP are as follows:

Objective 1. To foster sustainable use of multi-species resources in an ecologically and culturally sensitive manner, through the use of the precautionary approach and ecosystem-based resource management.

Objective 2. To provide a flexible and responsive management system for coral reef resources that can rapidly adapt to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups or by area.

Objective 3. To establish integrated resource data collection and permitting systems, establish a research and monitoring program to collect fishery and other ecological information, and to collect scientific data necessary to make informed management decisions about coral reef ecosystems in the EEZ.

Objective 4. To minimize adverse human impacts on coral reef resources by establishing new—and improving existing—marine protected areas, managing fishing pressure, controlling wasteful harvest practices, reducing other anthropogenic stressors directly affecting coral reef resources, and allowing the recovery of naturally-balanced reef systems. This objective includes the conservation and protection of essential fish habitats.

Objective 5. To improve public and government awareness and understanding of coral reef ecosystems and their vulnerability and resource potential in order to reduce adverse human impacts and foster support for management.

Objective 6. To collaborate with other agencies and organizations concerned with the conservation of coral reefs, in order to share in decision-making and to obtain and share data and resources needed to effectively monitor this vast and complex ecosystem.

Objective 7. To encourage and promote improved surveillance and enforcement to support the plan's management measures.

Objective 8. To provide for sustainable participation by fishing communities in coral reef fisheries and, to the extent practicable, minimize the adverse economic impacts on such communities.

8. Pelagics Fishery Management Plan Objectives

The objectives of the Pelagics FMP are as follows:

Objective 1. To manage fisheries for management unit species in the Western Pacific Region to achieve optimum yield (OY);

Objective 2. To promote, within the limits of managing at OY, domestic harvest of the management unit species in the Western Pacific EEZ and domestic fishery values associated with these species, for example, by enhancing the opportunities for:

- a. satisfying recreational fishing experiences,*
- b. continuation of traditional fishing practices for non-market personal consumption and cultural benefits,*
- c. domestic commercial fishermen, including charter boat operations, to engage in profitable fishing operations,*

Objective 3. To diminish conflicts in the EEZ, particularly in areas of concentrated domestic fishing,

Objective 4. To improve the statistical base for conducting better stock assessments and fishery evaluations thus supporting fishery management and resource conservation in the EEZ and throughout the range of the management unit species,

Objective 5. To promote the formation of a regional or international arrangement for assessing and conserving the management unit species and tunas throughout their range,

Objective 6. To preclude waste of management unit species associated with longline, purse seine, pole-and-line or other fishing operations; and

Objective 7. To promote within the limits of managing OY, domestic marketing of the management unit species in American Samoa Guam, NMI and Hawaii.