

# Press Release

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**WESTERN  
PACIFIC  
REGIONAL  
FISHERY  
MANAGEMENT  
COUNCIL**

## **Federal Fishery Managers Agree on Hawaii 2011-12 Bottomfish Quota, Address Protected Species Issues**

**HONOLULU (17 June 2011)** The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, meeting today in Honolulu, agreed to set the quota for the 2011-2012 main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) season for seven prized species of deepwater bottomfish at 325,000 pounds. The quota is based on an annual catch limit (ACL) of 346,000 pounds decreased by 6 percent to ensure that the ACL is not exceeded. The 2006 reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires that all federally managed fisheries, except those meeting exemption criteria, be managed through ACLs by the end of 2011 so as to put an end to overfishing in the United States. The MHI bottomfish season opens on September 1 and covers opakapaka, onaga, hapuupu, ehu, kalekale, gindai and lehi.

Also today, the Council addressed a variety of protected species issues. It expressed concern about proposed actions by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to move Hawaiian monk seal pups from the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) to the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) and to designate significant parts of the MHI as critical habitat for this endangered species. The Council said the proposed translocation had the potential of increasing problematic monk seal-human interaction and the proposed MHI critical habitat designation would have negative impacts on fisheries. The Council also noted the negative impacts on fisheries that could occur from NMFS's proposed listing of the insular population of Hawaii false killer whales as endangered under the US Endangered Species Act. The Council questioned the credibility of using false killer whale data from Palmyra to estimate the historical size of the Hawaii population. NMFS is scheduled to release the final rule on this proposal in November. On the other hand, the Council supported the current draft assessment by the IUCN that the Hawaiian green sea turtle stock has increased to the point that it warrants removal from the organization's threatened marine species list.

Yesterday, the Council addressed federal fishery management issues for Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), noting that the frequent military training activities near Guam's southern banks and Farallon de Mendilla are having a profound impact on the fishing communities. The Council is working with the National Ocean Council to potentially implement a coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP) process with the military and other stakeholders to address existing impacts on local fishing communities from the

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## Federal Managers Agree on Hawaii Bottomfish Quota

military training, as well as future impacts from pending military buildup. Additionally, the Council recommended that the impact of immigrants from the Freely Associated States of Micronesia be studied and quantified and that the Government of Guam be assisted in pursuing funding from the Compact of Free Association agreement to address fishery management, enforcement and education and outreach issues. The Council also supported further research by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health on Guam fishermen's risk of drowning.

The Council will conclude its three-day meeting tomorrow and is scheduled to vote on ACLs for coral reef finfish and invertebrates for Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam and the CNMI. It may also make recommendations on conservation and management measures for bigeye tuna, which is experiencing overfishing Pacific-wide. The species is exempted from ACLs as it is managed internationally by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (in the Eastern Pacific). The WCPFC is scheduled to meet in December in Palau to consider new measures for the species, as current measures have not reached the goal of ending overfishing.

Recommendations by the Council are transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval or, in the case of internationally managed species, to the US Delegation to the WCPFC or IATTC. For more information and/or the meeting agenda, go to [www.wpcouncil.org/meetings](http://www.wpcouncil.org/meetings).

**Council Members:** Secretary of Commerce appointees nominated by Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa and CNMI governors: William Sword, recreational fisherman/civil engineer/manager (American Samoa); Stephen Haleck, business owner (hotel and gas station) (American Samoa; vice chair) ; Manuel Duenas, Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association (Guam; chair); Frederick Duerr, resort and hotel consultant (Hawaii); Julie Anne Leialoha, environmentalist (Hawaii); David Itano, researcher (Hawaii; vice chair); Sean Martin, Pacific Ocean Producers (Hawaii); and Benigno Sablan, cultural practitioner (CNMI; vice chair). Designated state officials: Arnold Palacios, CNMI Department of Land & Natural Resources; Marquita Taitague, Guam Department of Agriculture; William Aila, Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources; and Ray Tulafono, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources. Designated federal officials: Mike Tosatto, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office; Don Palawski, US Fish and Wildlife; RAdm Charles Ray, US Coast Guard 14th District; and Bill Gibbons-Fly, US Department of State.