

Summary Report from 3rd Bottomfish Task Force Meeting

24 September 1996

Executive Centre Hotel

Honolulu, Hawaii

The third meeting of the Bottomfish Task Force (BTF) was held at the Executive Centre Hotel in Honolulu on 24 September 1996. The meeting agenda and list of participants are attached.

Background

Dave Kalthoff provided background on the previous Task Force meeting (see report of 7/23/96) which emphasized extending the moratorium from one year to two years. This extension was needed to allow sufficient time for the number of Hoomalu zone participants to be finalized and to ensure a fair and equitable management program for the Mau zone. Kalthoff also raised the issue of expanding the Mau zone to include the French Frigate Shoals area.

Mark Mitsuyasu reported that the Council, during its 90th meeting, accepted the Task Force recommendations from the 2nd meeting (7/23/96) regarding the moratorium (see Bottomfish Standing Committee report of 8/7/96).

Questions were raised about the effective date of the moratorium and qualifying date. Alvin Katekaru clarified that points for the Hoomalu zone would not accumulate after 1996 as determined by the Council. The Mau zone moratorium will go through proposed rule making and, if approved, may take effect as early as 1 January 1997. It was noted that a "window" for the issuance of Mau zone permits will exist until that date.

Reports

Reginald Kokubun presented a tabulation of data regarding point accumulation for new entry into the NWHI bottomfish fishery Hoomalu zone. The summarized data represented Mau Zone permit holders fishing in both the Mau zone and Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) and for non-NWHI fishermen fishing only in the MHI. The summarized data covered seven years, 1989-1995, and indicated seven Mau zone permit holders and seven MHI vessels with four or more points under the current NWHI management system. It was noted, the "top 14" point holders were from a pool of 600-800 State Commercial Marine license holders for the seven year period. Mr. Kokubun also noted that the reporting captain was not necessarily the permit holder, and calendar year data was used for Mau zone permit holders while State fiscal year data was used for MHI fishermen.

Sam Pooley presented his report on limited entry options (see report of 9/13/96), indicating that this document was created with the intention of taking the work done by Marcia Hamilton and Dr. Ralph Townsend the next step. He emphasized the importance of trying to separate the "limited entry options" from the "additional issues" (i.e., owner definition, vessel upgrades, etc.) at this stage, knowing that subsequent plan development must incorporate the additional issues. Discussion of the report carried into the next agenda item.

Discussion

Discussion of Pooley's Limited Entry Scenarios centered on issues of simplicity and equity. Concern also focussed on the need to reduce fleet size, without favoring either smaller or larger vessels, and the applicability or nonapplicability of the Hoomalu Zone qualifying criteria to a Mau Zone Limited entry regime. The consensus was that for now the language and provisions of the proposed Mau Zone Limited Entry Program should follow those of the Hoomalu Zone Limited Entry Program in order to facilitate enforcement and monitoring and to facilitate boundary changes or consolidation of the two zones in the future. Once the moratorium on new Mau Zone permits are in place, the Task Force could develop eligibility criteria in the FMP Amendment to reduce the fleet to an optimum size.

The Task Force felt that the overall development and implementation of the Mau zone management plan should be approached in two phases. The first phase would be to establish criteria to determine who receives an initial permit under the proposed Mau zone limited entry program. The Task Force indicated that, to be fair and equitable, the initial number of permittees may be greater than the preferred number of participants in the fishery based on biological and economic criteria. Therefore, the initial program should require non-transferable permits with an additional mechanism, preferably use it or lose it, to reduce fleet size. Once the optimal number of participants is reached, the second phase would consider restricted permit transferability to allow for new entrants. The Task Force reached general agreement on the following points:

1. That the current definition of vessel "owner" (permit holder) used in the Hoomalu Zone fishery be initially applied to the Mau Zone fishery.
2. That permits be initially non-transferrable in order to downsize the fishery to the optimum number of vessels.
3. That a "use it or lose it" clause be applied to Mau zone permits with the same exemptions (i.e., medical, loss of vessel, etc.) that apply in the Hoomalu Zone. That economic reasons will not be considered as grounds for an exemption.
4. That in order to keep a Mau Zone permit, the permit holder must make at least 5 trips per year landing at least 500 lbs of BMUS per trip.
5. That the December, 1991 Control Date be used in conjunction with other eligibility criteria in determining permit issuance.
6. That consideration be given to what type of documentation could be used by fishermen to qualify for permits and that preference be given to properly submitted C-3 reported landings. Also that un-submitted catch reports and affidavits not be considered as landing documentation.
7. That the Main Hawaiian Island Points system remain the same.
8. That the draft language include the following:
 - A. Those fishermen who have had a Mau Zone Permit and made at least one bottomfish landing prior to or on 17 December, 1991 and who have made at least one bottomfish (BMUS) landing from the Mau Zone from 1992-1996 will be eligible for permits.
 - B. Fishermen who obtained Mau Zone permits after the December 1991 control date and who have had at least one bottomfish (BMUS) landing from the Mau Zone since then and up to the effective date of the moratorium will be eligible for permits.

- C. For these potential permittees who have met the two criteria above, an additional qualifying criteria will be based on historic participation in the fishery as measured by at least 5 trips landing per year and at least 500 lb of bottomfish (BMUS) per trip.
- 9. That Council staff request that DAR provide a list or number of fishermen who may qualify under the new proposed eligibility criteria of 5 trips per year landing at least 500 lbs BMUS per trip for 1995 and 1994.
- 10. That the Council continue to consider the inclusion of French Frigate Shoals in the Mau Zone as an option.

Other Business

Mark Mitsuyasu presented a preliminary one year time line for the development of a Mau zone plan amendment. He asked the Task Force if a two year time line should be developed for the Mau zone management program considering the likelihood of a the acceptance of the two year moratorium request. He also raised the question as to when a cost-benefit and socio-economic analysis should be performed. Alvin Katekaru recommended that these issues be considered once the alternatives are formulated. At this stage the Task Force should focus on formulating Mau zone management alternatives for the Council.

The Task Force set the date of its next meeting as January 14, 1996, unless there is a need to meet earlier.