

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council



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THREE WESTERN PACIFIC REGION PORTS AMONG THE TOP TEN U.S. PORTS IN COMMERCIAL FISHING VALUE

HONOLULU, HAWAII -- American Samoa, Guam and Hawaii were among the top ten U.S. ports in terms of the value of all commercial fish landed in 1996, according to the Western Pacific Fishery Council's evaluation of the latest statistics released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Pago Pago, American Samoa, was the top port by far with a value of \$212.5 million for all fish landed. Pago Pago was also the top port in value in 1995. Second place went to Dutch Harbor, Alaska, with \$118.7 million. Guam came in a strong fourth place with \$94.6 million, and Hawaii was sixth with \$64.3 million. Although NOAA does not include American Samoa, Guam or the Northern Mariana Islands in its rankings of U.S. ports, the Western Pacific Fishery Council annually reports the commercial value of fish landings at its ports to NOAA. A number of other U.S. ports are also excluded from the NOAA report in order to avoid disclosure of proprietary information.

The Western Pacific Region's other major port, the Northern Mariana Islands, had a 1996 value of \$18.6 million, placing it 48th on the list of top 60 U.S. ports.

This clearly demonstrates the value of the fisheries of the Western Pacific Region in national terms, but more importantly, it reaffirms the fact that our conservative management philosophy of protecting the resource first has not detracted from our region's performance or productivity," said James Cook, chairman of the Western Pacific Fishery Council. He said the Council will continue to work with industry, government, the scientific community, environmentalists, and representatives of indigenous groups in its decision-making process. "The success of our fisheries speak for themselves. I see no reason to fix something that is working well."

The primary species targeted by commercial fishing vessels in the central and western Pacific include tunas, swordfish, marlin, mahimahi, bottomfish, lobster, and coastal pelagics, mainly *opelu* (mackerel scad) and *akule* (bigeye scad).

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils authorized by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. Its primary mission is the conservation and management of fisheries in all waters of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around U.S.-flag

islands in the central and western Pacific Ocean. The EEZ, in general, stretches from three to 200 nautical miles offshore around American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, the Northern Mariana Islands, and a number of smaller islands and atolls.

Note: The totals for Hawaii include the value of landings at all Hawaii ports. Honolulu alone had a value of \$50.1 million in 1996, which would place it No. 8 among all U.S. port