Most of the domestic commercial fishing activities in federal waters surrounding the US Pacific islands are variations of fishing with hooks and lines (Tables 1 and 2). Longline fisheries established in Hawaii and American Samoa dominate the fishing industries in both locations. Domestic commercial fishing activity in each region also includes handlining for large snappers and groupers on the outer reef slope and trolling, handlining and longlining for pelagic fish. The now dormant trap fishery for spiny and slipper lobsters based in the remote Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) was the only lobster fishery of any significance in the US Pacific islands. Mention should also be made of precious coral harvests, which have taken place in the past in federal waters in Hawaii, but are currently restricted to state waters. Harvesting of precious corals in Hawaii is conducted with SCUBA gear in shallow waters and was conducted by submersibles in deeper water.

Bottomfishing is conducted in Hawaii and the three US territories but is only of major significance in Hawaii and represents a fraction of total landed value of all catches. Most bottomfish grounds in American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and the Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) are within the 0-3 nm zone and thus fall under State or Territorial jurisdiction. However, the NWHI represents a substantial area of bottom-fishing grounds within Council jurisdiction and there are significant bottomfish banks and seamounts in the MHI, such as Penguin Bank, that lie within or extend into federal waters. These four island groups also have a wide variety of small-scale inshore fisheries for reef fish, mostly within the 0-3 nm zone. The Council's newly developed Coral Reef Ecosystem Fishery Management Plan provides the Council with jurisdiction over any reef fishing conducted in federal waters.

**Table 1.**
Domestic commercial fisheries of the U.S. Pacific islands.

| Location | Pelagic | Bottomfish/Reef-fish | Crustaceans |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hawaii | Longlining for swordfish and tunas<br><br>Ika-shibi handlining for yellowfin<br><br>Palua-ahi handlining for yellowfin and big eye tunas<br><br>Trolling for tunas and other pelagics<br><br>Pole-and-line fishing for skipjack | Deep slope handline fishery for large snappers, jacks and grouper<br><br>Various fisheries for coral reef associated species | Trap fishery for spiny and slipper lobster |
| American Samoa | Longlining for tunas<br><br>Trolling for tunas and other pelagics | Bottomfish handline large snappers, jacks and grouper<br><br>Various fisheries for coral reef associated species | |
| Guam | Trolling for tunas and other pelagics | Shallow (100—500 ft) handline fishery for reef-dwelling snappers, groupers & jacks. Various fisheries for coral reef associated species<br><br>Deep-slope (500—700 ft) handline fishery for large snappers, jacks and grouper | |
| Northern Mariana Islands | Trolling for tunas and other pelagics | Deep slope handline fishery for large snappers, groupers<br><br>Various fisheries for coral reef associated species | |

Prior to 1999, commercial finfish fisheries in the EEZ waters of US Pacific islands landed about 32 million pounds of fish worth an estimated $56 million. At that time 89% of landings were from Hawaii-based fisheries, and most of this volume (97%) was from pelagic fisheries, principally from Hawaii-based longline fishing. After stringent management constraints were implemented in the Hawaii longline fishery, total fishery landings declined dramatically and amounted to just over 40 million pounds, worth about $68 million, in 2002. The contribution from Hawaii-based fisheries has declined to about 60% of the total, due to a ban on swordfish fishing and the expansion of the American Samoa longline fishery.

**Table 2.**

Landings in lbs of domestic commercial fisheries in the U.S. Pacific islands, 2002.

| Location | Hawaii | Am Samoa | Guam | CNMI | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pelagic Fish | 21,576,000 | 15,328,000 | 319,800 | 253,270 | 37,477,070 |
| Bottomfish | 615,000 | 37,350 | 13,920 | 46,980 | 713,250 |
| Reef-fish | 339,000 | 15,120 | 139,100 | 152,150 | 645,370 |
| Other Fish | 1,310,000 | 8,700 | 9,520 | 26,790 | 1,355,010 |
| **Total** | **23,840,000** | **15,389,170** | **482,340** | **479,190** | **40,190,700** |

**Table 3.**

Landings and value from distant water fishing nations in American Samoa and Guam, 2002.

| | Landings | | Value | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Port | x 1,000 lb | No. U.S. port | Million $ | No. U.S. port |
| Pago Pago, American Samoa canneries and transshipment | 423,324 | 2 | 251.7 | 1 |
| Agana, Guam transshipment, | 16,940 | 43 | 60 | 6 |

In Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, domestic tuna fisheries are limited, but landings, transshipment and processing of tuna catches from distant water fishing nation (DWFN) fleets in Guam are extremely important (Table 3). Tuna fishing in American Samoa was also limited until the late 1990s when domestic longline fishing expanded, growing by 2002 to rival Hawaii in terms of pounds of fish landed. American Samoa also has two canneries, which process tuna caught throughout the Pacific and provide the main source of private sector employment for American Samoa and a significant employment of labor from independent Samoa. Re-provisioning of fishing vessels also adds to the revenues generated by tuna processing in this territory. The same is true in Guam where large numbers of DWFN longliners are based and transship their catches. Guam and neighboring Saipan have also seen the increasing development of airfreighting foreign-caught fresh tuna for the sashimi market in Japan and increasingly to a growing tuna and swordfish market in Europe. The development of air transshipment hubs in Guam and Saipan has also had a positive effect on the development of tuna fisheries in the neighboring Micronesian states of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Marshall Islands, with both domestic and DWFN vessels home-porting in these islands. Pago Pago, American Samoa, and Agana, Guam, are ranked first and sixth, respectively, of all major US ports for value of commercial landings in 2002 (Table 3). Honolulu, Hawaii, was ranked 12th of US ports in 2002 for value of commercial landings, a decline from recent years due to recent restriction on the swordfish component of the Hawaii longline fleet.

### 4.1. Pelagic Fisheries

The Western Pacific Council was the first of the regional councils to develop a Pelagics Fishery Management Plan (FMP), promulgated in 1987, through which US pelagic fisheries under federal jurisdiction are regulated. The Pelagics FMP initially addressed the regulation of foreign fishing vessels in EEZ waters surrounding the US Pacific islands through fishing permits, area closures, the prohibition of drift gill net fishing except for experimental purposes, definition of pelagic management unit species, observer requirements and catch reporting. The plan also created a framework for the future management of pelagic fisheries within the EEZ waters of the US Pacific islands.

Domestic commercial pelagic fisheries in Hawaii and American Samoa are the most developed of commercial pelagic fisheries of the US Pacific islands (Table 2). Until the latter quarter of this century, much of the commercial pelagic catch was skipjack taken by Hawaii live bait pole-and-line vessels, which supplied a local cannery. This method of fishing has largely declined following the closure of the tuna cannery in 1984 although a small amount of skipjack is still landed for fresh consumption. The predominant pelagic fisheries in Hawaii are two handline fisheries (palu-ahi and ika-shibi), trolling and longline fishing. Of these methods, by far the most important in terms of volume and value is the longline fishery (Table 4). Less than 15 longline fishing vessels were active in the early 1980s in Hawaii, but this fishery targeting swordfish and tunas expanded to about 150 vessels by the early 1990s. Prior to a recent closure of the swordfish component of the Hawaii longline fishery, Hawaii-based longliners accounted for about two thirds of US swordfish production and 15 percent of all Pacific swordfish landings.