

Report of the Joint Meeting of the Bottomfish Plan Team/Hawaii Bottomfish Advisory Panel/Bottomfish Advisory Review Board

9-10 October 1996

Executive Centre Hotel

Honolulu, HI

A joint meeting of the Bottomfish Plan Team (BPT), the Hawaii Bottomfish Advisory Panel, and the Bottomfish Advisory Review Board met at the Executive Centre Hotel in Honolulu on 9-10 October 1996. (Please refer to the attached list for members present.) Rapporteurs were selected and provided notes on respective agenda items to facilitate completion of this report.

Annual Report Format revisions:

Robert Schroeder (Council Staff) introduced the concern to make the annual report more "user-friendly." The group found the current format to be fine for scientific review which is what was originally intended for the annual report.

The following recommendations were agreed upon to revise the annual report format:

1. Introduction: Add summary graphs or tables for each area showing total landings, CPUE, total revenues, and price information for all species combined (each parameter should include percent change from the previous year and the relationship of the current year's data to the long-term average (e.g., means and standard deviations). Explanatory narratives should accompany the graphs or tables; improve the executive summary, including time trends and layman-friendly graphics.
2. Add a page of definitions or a glossary to the Introduction.
3. Add summary information which shows current year total landings of each species, by area, plus a total column and total row.
4. Add a table of contents to the front of each area module.
5. In the island area modules, reorder the elements of the figure/table/text pages so the order is

Figure, Interpretation, Source, Calculation, then Table of data.

Progress with Annual Report Recommendations:

Guam:

Regarding the "yellow light situation with Guam's bottomfish CPUE, it was acknowledged that the data analysis needs to address this condition would be completed in next year's annual report. Data from "party boats" needed to be separated from those obtained from "recreational/subsistence" vessels. WPacFIN is assisting with computer systems development for this. The group concurred that:

1. this recommendation should continue to be a priority concern;
2. this is a major project that needs immediate attention, funding and commitment by Guam;
3. the nearshore fisheries status is probably already in a "red-light" situation and should be emphasized;
4. a field for recording area information should be added to the form;

Other revised recommendations for Guam were:

1. Request that the Central WPacFIN program allocate resources to develop a new data processing system for DAWR's boat-based survey data, and train DAWR staff on its use.
2. DAWR should allocate resources to input and process the unprocessed 1991-present data, and update and convert the historical 1979-1990 data using the new system.

American Samoa:

The WPacFIN program recently setup dBase computer programs to analyze the data collected through the Bottomfish Assessment Project. WPacFIN assistance in modifying and improving this system is expected to continue. This will provide baseline data (e.g., maturity) for a more realistic estimate of SPR for the local bottomfish complex. This long-term Project entails fishing all around the islands for an extended period. Long-term funding is needed to ensure project success. A new biologist and other DMWR staff will provide support.

CNMI:

A representative from CNMI was not present at the meeting. The WPacFIN coordinator said that CNMI does not plan to hire new biologists, so the recommended data analysis is not feasible at this time. IFA funding might be available for this project next year. CNMI plans to fund deployment of new FADS, a technical assistant to the Director, build boat ramps and buy a boat. DRW has access to data from the northern islands bottomfish fishery, which can be used for SPR calculation for its shallow-water species complex. Some DJ funding may also be available. Regarding the recommendation to establish baseline parameters from the RAIOMA project data, the group felt that funding should be secured to accomplish this task instead of relying on NMFS.

Hawaii:

Most of the recommendations concerning Hawaii's bottomfish fishery are in progress. HDAR recognizes the importance of computerizing the dealer reporting system and WPacFIN is currently assisting in the design/implementation of data feedback to fishermen.

Progress on some recommendations is being hindered by funding constraints:

1. Funds for expanding monitoring of the Honolulu auction have not been identified, even though there is great value in size-frequency data improvement and inclusion of data from bottomfish that are not sold;
2. The suggested observer programs for NWHI is unlikely to be in place this year.

DLNR's Draft Management Plan for MHI Onaga and Ehu:

Walter Ikehara (HDAR) gave a summary of DLNR's status on its MHI Bottomfish Management Plan. HDAR is working closely with the State Attorney General's office to draft Administrative Rules to help conserve and equitably allocate these important bottomfish fisheries. The purpose, definitions, species, restricted activities and areas, control date, vessel identification, penalties, and severability of the draft Bottomfish Management Administrative Rule were discussed. Mr. Ikehara stressed the issue of first getting the concept of "closed areas" to be publicly accepted before the actual boundaries of closed areas are delineated, this step will increase HDAR's flexibility in establishing the boundaries. After the final draft Rule is tentatively approved, it will go to a series of public hearings statewide, then require approval of the BLNR, then require

the Governor's signature before it becomes a rule. A draft map of possible proposed closed MHI areas to bottomfish fishing in the HDAR plan was viewed by the group; The need for establishing Marine Recreational ("Fishing") Licenses was discussed since currently there is no definition of "non-commercial" bottomfish license. HDAR must get "authorization" from State Legislature to issue recreational marine fishing licenses, and bills have been drafted for this purpose to be submitted to the 1997 Legislature. It was noted that after 1 July 1997 all funds generated by Commercial Marine Licenses (CMS) will go into a special "fisheries" fund, rather than the State's general fund (an estimated \$200,000 per year).

It was suggested that consecutive BLNR meetings should be held on all MHI to discuss boundaries for closed areas around each island, rather than just on Oahu.

Regarding enforcement of the proposed Rule, Civil Penalties would be better to implement than Criminal Penalties, since they would more easily allow confiscation of gear, equipment and other items used in the illegal taking of bottomfish. Brooks Takanaka stressed the problem of "part-time/recreational" fishermen that buy CML and unfairly compete with full-time professional fishermen. There was discussion that Limited Entry may be needed in the MHI because area closures may only work if total fishing effort remains static, an unlikely proposition. David Hamm suggested that MHI bottomfish fishermen should be required to get a special "Bottomfish CML"; this idea was supported by several others present; additionally, the need for significantly increasing CML fees was also discussed.

Draft Federal Amendment for MHI Onaga and Ehu:

Bob Moffitt gave an overview of an amendment to close certain federal waters of the MHI to onaga and ehu. He stressed that this amendment should be implemented only as a "last resort", and strongly supports the State's management plan process for the long-term conservation and equitable allocation of these important resources. A summary of the percent of MHI participation, effort, and catch from Middle Bank and Penguin Banks was distributed (see document) and members were asked to send their comments.

NWHI Mau Zone (Limited Entry?):

Reggie Kokubun (HDAR) reported on point accumulation tables permit holders for the Mau Zone (calendar years 1989-95) and for the MHI (fiscal years 1989-95) with the idea that the existing Hoomalu point system (or something similar) could be used to establish original participants in a Mau limited entry program. Details of how the points were calculated, results, tables and comments were described (see document).

Mark Mitsuyasu (Council Staff) summarized information from Sam Pooley on NWHI Bottomfish Limited Entry Options (see document). Options and issues for each of the zones were discussed. Alvin Katekaru (NFMS) explained the sequence of events in establishing a moratorium for Mau Zone permits. The moratorium is expected to take effect in early 1997.

Dave Kalthoff reported on the recent meeting of the Bottomfish Task Force, which he chairs. Formal recommendations have yet to be finalized for Council consideration regarding possible management strategies for the Mau Zone bottomfish fishery, as it is still in the first phase of a two-phase process. The first phase is to develop a fair system to determine who will initially receive a permit. The second phase involves deciding what to do with the permit system once the number of permits is reduced to the number

considered desirable by the Council. Discussions thus far have focused on: 1) determining who will be allowed to fish in the Mau Zone; 2) pushing for non-transferable permits to help reduce the number of boats fishing in this zone; 3) enforcing a use-it-or-lose-it provision for all permits issued; 4) using a 5-trip, 500 lb/trip criteria in order to renew permits; and 5) utilizing a 1991 control date. For Hawaii FY94, only eight Mau Zone vessels met the 5-trip/500 pound per trip criteria and for the first half of FY95 four had already qualified (data for the second half was not available).

Alvin Katekaru indicated that the total number of permits issued for the Mau zone is about 80, but only about 20 have been activity recently. Use of the 1991 control date as one factor in limited entry qualification was discussed. Bruce Johnson questioned whether it was biology or economic factors that really controlled the state of the fishery in the Mau zone. In his opinion, the fishery in this zone is overcapitalized and not really overfished. NMFS noted that stocks are generally healthy, but that a yellow-light condition exists in the Mau zone with the current CPUE below 50% of the original CPUE.

NWHI Hoomalu Zone (New Entry?):

Alvin Katekaru explained that a total of 14 limited entry permits have been issued for Hoomalu Zone fishermen, but six were lost through sale or nonrenewal. There is a possibility that three current permits will not be renewed next year. Following some discussion, the group made the following recommendations:

1. A minimum of seven Hoomalu Zone permits should be made available for 1997. This will likely open the zone up to new participation requiring implementation of the point system.
2. NMFS should assign/accept points based on bottomfish catch reports submitted to HDAR in a timely manner. No points should be given for reports submitted more than one year late (i.e., after 10 October 1997).
3. Secondary documents such as auction receipts, personal fishing logs, affidavits, etc. will not be accepted for the purpose of establishing points. (Fish catch reports [C-3] are required by law.)
4. Verification and the definition of captain for the purpose of the permit could be determined by insurance records or an affidavit by the owner.
5. The minimum 25% vessel ownership could be verified by certificate of ownership, insurance, or corporation records.
6. The cut off date for receipt of applications for new Hoomalu Zone permits should be 90 days after announcement.
7. Only BMUS as defined in the FMP and identified as such in the catch reports will qualify for meeting poundage criteria.