



**WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL**

**Pelagics
Action Memorandum**

104th Council Meeting
Maui Prince Hotel
Makena, Hawaii
15 June 2000
Draft

Regarding Pelagic Fisheries the Council acted to:

1. Recommend the development of a regulatory adjustment under the framework process of the Pelagics FMP to implement a 50 nautical mile closure around the islands of American Samoa to vessels larger than 50 ft LOA targeting pelagic MUS. Vessels having a permit and a documented landing of a pelagic MUS prior to the November 1997 control date would be able to fish within the 50 nm area closure. A new control date of July 15th 2000 will also be established for a potential limited entry program for longline fishing vessels in the American Samoa EEZ.

Status: Letter dated 14th July 2000 sent to SWR Administrator requesting implementation of the July 15th control date.

2. Concur with recommendations generated by the Pelagics Advisory Panel meeting in April 2000, which were as follows:
 - a Recommend that Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources improve the collection of Hawaii's offshore recreational fisheries catch and effort data.

Status: Letter dated May 4th 2000 sent to DLNR Chairman advising of recommendation which originated with Pelagics AP

- b. Recommend a synthesis of economic studies on recreational fisheries in Hawaii be drafted with the goal to identify appropriate economic multipliers, and to ensure that this analysis include a thorough review of similar studies undertaken in Texas, Florida, California, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Panama, and their management.

Status: Letter dated May 4th 2000 sent to NMFS Honolulu Laboratory advising of

recommendation which originated with Pelagics AP. Reply received from NMFS Honolulu Laboratory dated May 12th 2000 advising that Sam Pooley would generate the synthesis.

- c. Recommend an investigation of the ecological and fisheries impacts and legal issues concerning untethered FADs in the Central-West Pacific.

Status: *Letter dated May 4th 2000 sent to Dept of State asking DOS to address the legal aspects of untethered FADs. Detailed e-mail responses received from Tony Lewis (SPC) on 4th & 5th June concerning email of 2nd June 2000 posing questions from Council Chair, 1. EU country activities 2. Use of FADs and how it effects catch and bycatch 3. Problems associated with lost FADs 4. Amount of bigeye being taken by purse seiners in the Western Pacific today versus 10 years ago.*

- d. Recommend that Council staff continue to improve the various information and communication services on its website.

Status: *Website improvements ongoing.*

3. Recognize the value of observer programs and to support the NMFS PIAO efforts to secure additional funding to restore the coverage in the Hawaii longline fishery at least to the previous 3-5% level or if possible to expand beyond this minimum level of coverage.

Status: *Additional funding obtained through emergency appropriation in aid of the Hawaii longline fishery*

4. Continue efforts to obtain funding to investigate the increased utilization of blue sharks.
5. Maintain that the boundary above which longline-albatross mitigation measures be used remain at 25 deg N, and not as recommended in the USFWS BO at 23 deg N.

Status: *Proposed rule for the longline-seabird interactions published in the Federal register on July 5th 2000 . Letter from NMFS PIAO dated July 17 2000 sent to USFWS re: Section 7 consultation, and inconsistencies therein.*

6. Request NMFS to quantify what effect the turtle area closure to the Hawaii longliners has had on reducing turtle mortality rates by the longline fishery.

Status: *Documentation of putative effects of various turtle time/area closures generated by Jeff Polovina Don Kobayashi and NMFS Honolulu Laboratory 24 March 2000 in preparation for 3-way consultation of scientists nominated by plaintiffs, plaintiff-intervener, and defendants during April 2000. RIR dated August 18th completed by PIAO.*

7. Request an analysis by NMFS or other appropriate agency of trends in mahimahi and ono landings and catch rates, and other incidental catches (i.e. opah, pomfret, rainbow-runner

etc), throughout the western Pacific region, including data from EEZ and distant water fisheries

Status: RFP for analysis of non-target species CPUE in the Hawaii longline fishery submitted for FY 2000, but was deferred until FY 2001 following implementation of a digital oceanographic database, another PFRP project funded in FY 2000.

8. Explore the possibility of using VMS information to monitor logbook compliance as longline fishing is expanding in terms of ports of landings. This information is vitally important for fishery monitoring and assessment purposes, and at a minimum, VMS data on noon positions be provided.

Status: Council policy states that VMS data is used only for monitoring compliance and not research.

9. Request that all of the annual report modules should attempt to address bycatch reporting requirements of the SFA.

Status: Plan teams convened in 2000 addressed bycatch issues in terms of what can realistically be reported and summarized in annual report modules.

10. Express satisfaction with the progress that has been made to date on the stock assessment of blue shark in the North Pacific Ocean and encourage further development of this work. The Council notes that the stock assessment takes a very conservative approach, counting all sharks taken in longline and drift gillnet fisheries as fishing mortality.

Status: Blue shark stock assessment ongoing. Work being done by NMFS-HL in collaboration with Japanese scientists. Document is not for public release until the Japanese are made co-authors. This should occur by late October.

11. Concur with the SSC that issues such as the post hooking survival of blue sharks, marlins and turtles are of more immediate concern than research on shark species other than the blue shark. The Council notes the conservative quota of one non-blue shark per trip and does not anticipate any immediate problems with these species resulting from Council managed fishing.

Status: Amendment 9 to the Pelagics FMP submitted to SWR Administrator on June 8th 2000, acknowledgment of receipt received from SWR Administrator on June 30th 2000.

12. Reiterate the Council's seabird mitigation strategy which gave fishermen an opportunity to experiment with different measures and elect which they favored most. The Council noted comments by SSC members that both economic and social science literature show that mandated approaches are not always effective, approved the approach being taken by the Council which allowed the fishermen to be part of the decision making process.

Status: Proposed rule for the longline-seabird interactions published in the Federal register on July 5th 2000 . Letter from NMFS PIAO dated July 17 2000 sent to USFWS re: Section 7 consultation, and inconsistencies therein. The USFWS biological opinion should be available to the public by the end of October.

13. Express satisfaction with the successful outcome of the follow-up workshop on Blackfoot Albatross in May 2000 and concurred with the workshop recommendation to form a permanent steering committee to guide and monitor USFWS albatross population biology studies in the Hawaiian Archipelago.

Status: Council will participate on steering committee.

14. Recommend that on turtle/longline interactions and subsequent litigation, that:
 1. the US should pursue international cooperation on turtle population recovery in an appropriate international forum;
 2. NMFS should mount with the cooperation of industry a tagging program to tag all turtles brought aboard or alongside longline vessels;
 3. NMFS should continue the observer program on the Hawaii-based longline vessels at an enhanced coverage rate;
 4. NMFS should complete an inventory of the sources of mortality at all stages and locations in the lives of turtles;
 5. NMFS should increase emphasis on the need to document the population dynamics of turtle populations and to promote the wider use of the TURTSIM model;
 6. fishing be allowed within the longline closed area under controlled conditions, including 100% observer coverage for the purpose of acquiring data to monitor conditions in the closed area and for scientific management purposes.

Status: Resolution drafted at 106th Council Meeting on July 13th 2000, arguing that positive influences on turtle populations will only result through international action comparable to the FAO IPOAs for sharks and seabirds.

15. Accept Recreational Fisheries Data Task Force recommendations that the Council should;
 1. conduct a rapid assessment mail and phone survey to estimate the total pelagic catch for Hawaii.
 2. organize with the Task Force an education outreach program to encourage voluntary reporting of recreational fishery data.

3. explore the potential of the Div. of Boating & Ocean Recreation and the US Coast Guard data bases for assisting in generating recreational catch data.
4. encourage the Task Force to continue representing the interests of recreational fishermen in Hawaii.

Status: *TF members met with Maury Osborn and Mark Holliday of the NMFS OFST Div. of Economics and Statistics, on June 28th 2000m at RecFish 2000 and began process of bringing MRFS back to Hawaii. Working-group convened on July 20th 2000 with TF members, to follow on from June 28th meeting to continue momentum towards implementation of MRFS in January 2001. E-mails from M. Osborn re: MRFS received 5,6 & 7 2000 in response. PD to generate matrix of current fishery sampling programs in Hawaii during late July-early August*