

MEMORANDUM

DRAFT

To: Pelagics Advisory Panel Members

21 March 2000

From: Paul Dalzell

Subject AP Agenda items c:\doc\ad panel\2000\expmemo
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The Council is concerned that all sectors of the fishing industry provide input and comment on t

Review of recommendations arising from 1999 PAP

Recommendations arising from the last meeting and actions taken subsequently by the Council. AP members may wish to comment on these actions and on recommendations where no action was taken

Hawaii and American Samoa longline fishery reports

Information reports on the performance of the two longline fisheries under Council management. Issues involving both fisheries are included on the agenda. The Hawaii fishery has been relatively stable, but albacore catch rates, the mainstay of the fishery in American Samoa, have declined annually. A similar decline has been noted in neighboring Western Samoa, which has a fishery 10 times the size of the American Samoa fishery. AP members may wish to comment on options for the American Samoa fishery in the face of continuing declines in albacore catch rates.

Economic and Social Aspects of Charter Fishing Patronage in Hawaii

A summary of a recent NMFS/JIMAR project. The results should be of interest to the recreational fishery sector.

Economic studies of Hawaii recreational fisheries

The Pelagic Fisheries Research Program has conducted a number of studies focused on recreational fisheries in Hawaii, either directly or as part of larger investigations into the fishing industry in Hawaii. Sam Pooley from the NMFS Honolulu Laboratory will review these studies for the AP and indicate what outstanding recreational fishery studies remain to be conducted in Hawaii and elsewhere in the Region. AP members may wish to comment on the results of these studies from their own experiences and perspectives

Electronic logbook reporting

Sam Pooley will talk about issues surrounding electronic log book reporting by some vessels in the Hawaii Longline fishery and the NWHI lobster fishery. Instead of the conventional paper logbooks, catch records can be submitted in an approved electronic data file format to NMFS. Some discussion took place at the last Council meeting on fishermen's concerns about at sea USCG inspection when using this form of data recording. This will be an opportunity for AP members to learn and ask questions about this alternative form of federal catch reporting.

Hawaii longline fishery issues

Seabird mitigation/Biological opinion National Plan of Action-seabirds

An update will be given on the recent Council action concerning mitigation of seabird-longline fishery interactions for the Hawaii-based longline fishery. This includes mandatory attendance of an annual protected species workshop for vessel owners and skippers, release of seabirds taken alive in a manner to ensure their long-term survival and the use of 2 out of 6 measures to mitigate interactions above the 25 deg N line of latitude. A related initiative is the National Plan of Action on Seabirds being developed to manage seabird interactions in all US fisheries. AP members may wish to comment on the measures taken for the Hawaii fishery and on related issues such as monitoring compliance in the fishery and the introduction of new measures.

Turtle area closure

In late 1999, a group of wildlife and conservation Non Government Organizations (NGOs) were successful in persuading a federal judge to implement a temporary closure of a large area of ocean to the north of Hawaii to Hawaii-based longliners. The area closure was to provide a measure of protection for Leatherback turtles while the National Marine Fisheries Service completes an Environmental Impact Statement, which it obliged to conduct under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The judge also charged NMFS with developing the most effective time/area closures to provide protection for turtles. Those AP members who are involved in the longline fishery may wish to comment on how this area closure has affected the fishery.

Sharks

Shark catches in the Hawaii longline fishery

Shark fishery management in Hawaii

National Plan of Action-Sharks

The Council has recently developed some major management initiatives for sharks fishing in Hawaii. It has developed an FMP amendment which has banned the finning of all sharks other than blue sharks by the Hawaii-based longline fishery, and limited the take of non-blues to one fish of a given species per trip. The Council will also implement a quota of 50,000 blue sharks for the longline fishery, based on the average of 1996-1998 blue shark catch. This means a reduction of 15-20% of the 1998-1999 level of catch and retention for finning. AP members may wish to comment on the Council action, and also on the problems associated with utilization of blue sharks should more stringent regulations be applied to finning in the future. The AP may wish to consider the formation of a working group to fully review the issue of blue shark utilization. A related initiative is the National Plan of Action on Sharks being developed to manage shark catches in all US fisheries.

Pelagic Shark workshop- Monterey

Shark workshop 2000- Honolulu

Summaries and highlights of two recent meetings on shark biology and management will be given to the AP.

Area closure for large pelagic fishing vessels around the islands of American Samoa

This is a long running management initiative begun by the Council in 1997, and as yet not implemented. AP members will recall that the Council initially developed a framework measure that implemented a 100 nm closed area around American Samoa from which all vessels > 50ft in length targeting pelagic management unit species would be excluded. Discussions between NMFS and Council members from American Samoa at the 97th Council Meeting in 1998 resulted in a modified version of the closed area, with a 50 nm closure around the main archipelago (Tutuila, Manu'a, Rose Atoll) and a 30 nm closure around Swain Atoll. NMFS ultimately did not approve this measure stating that the administrative record did not support a closure, but advising that a stronger argument for a closure might be developed based on National Standard 8 in the Magnuson (Fishing Communities). A framework measure document was subsequently prepared in 2000 in preparation for the 102nd meeting, arguing for the 50/30 closure, but also strongly supportive of the original 100 nm closure. The American Samoa Council Members stated that fishermen in American Samoa were strongly in favor of the 100 nm closure and the decision was made to revise the framework measure document for the 103rd CM. AP members may

wish to discuss the likelihood of this measure being accepted by NMFS in its present form or if a uniform 100 nm closure is chosen as the preferred alternative.

National Plan of Action-Fishing Capacity

Marcia Hamilton of the Pacific Islands Area Office will discuss the NPOA-fishing capacity. AP members may wish to comment on the targets and time line for the NPOA for reducing fishing capacity of US fleets.

Data amendment

Another framework measure under the Pelagics FMP will implement permit and federal logbook reporting for the non-longline pelagic fisheries in the Pacific Remote Island territories. AP members may have some final comments on this measure before it goes to NMFS for implementation

Marine Debris

The Council is one of a multi-agency panel that is organizing an international symposium on marine debris to be convened in Hawaii in the August of 2000. Hawaii continues to be a sink rather than a source of marine debris, but may contribute to part of the problem through the disposal at sea of light sticks from longline fishing. Light sticks are one of the main plastic items consumed by albatrosses on the NWHI. AP members associated with the longline fishery may wish to comment on issues associated with saving light sticks for disposal on land as required under MARPOL. AP members may also wish to discuss the introduction of battery operated light sticks which will not only relieve the disposal problem, but also have a beneficial influence on sink rates and bird takes.

Report of the Recreational Fisheries Data Task Force

Since late 1999, the Council has organized a Recreational Fisheries Data Task Force which has organized several meetings to look at the issue of improving recreational data reporting in Hawaii. The Task Force Chairman will report on the outcome of these meetings and the recommendations that were given to the 102nd Council Meeting

Changing the recreational/commercial fisheries paradigm

The Task Force held a working group meeting to consider strategies to improve recreational reporting, beginning initially with outreach visits to fishing clubs in the state to convince members that data reporting was in their interest, and then expanding to recreational fishermen in the state as a whole through technological innovations such as automated telephone databases and web-sites . Part of the solution to improving data reporting may also require a shift in the current

definition of commercial fishing, i.e. sale of one fish = commercial fisherman allied to current recreational vessel registration . AP members will likely want to discuss these proposals and their respective merits

Blue marlin research

MSY

Electronic tagging

Live releases in longline fishery

Updates will be given on the current stock status of blue marlin as determined by a recent study by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). Modeling using catch and standardized fishing effort data from 1955 to 1997 suggests that the present level of blue marlin catches are sustainable and fishing beyond MSY is not occurring. A summary of the recent symposium on marking fishes with electronic tags will be given, including studies on blue marlin. It hoped by the time of the meeting to have some information on the percent of marlins reported by NMFS observers which were not retained by longline vessels and were alive at the time of release.

International

Multi-lateral High Level Conference 6

Kiribati-Spain fishing agreement

Updates on Multi-lateral High Level Conference process will be given, the 6th meeting will follow the week after AP. Meeting 5 saw more representation of small scale fishermen, indigenous peoples and conservation NGOs. Hopefully MHLC 6 will also contain recreational fishery representatives. The Kiribati-Spain agreement brings a new player into the Central-West Pacific purse seine fishery. The Spanish vessels are large (1000-3000 mt) and fish in a group using untethered FADs. They are thought to be highly efficient, more so than single vessels fishing on open schools. FAD fishing also means high bycatch levels and possibly larger volumes of juvenile bigeye tuna in catches.

Council process

Explanation of selection procedure for Council members and AP selection and structure.