Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region

1998 Annual Report

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for the

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Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region C 1998 Annual Report

I. Introduction

A. Background

The Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region was implemented by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration=s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on 23 March 1987. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRFMC, or Council) developed the FMP to manage the pelagic resources that are covered by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 and that occur in the US Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the US possessions in the Western Pacific Region (Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef and Palmyra, Jarvis, Howland, Baker, Midway, and Wake Islands).

The objectives of the Pelagics FMP were revised in 1991. The abridged objectives are to:

- ! Manage fisheries for Pacific pelagic management unit species (PPMUS) to achieve optimum yield (OY).
- Promote domestic harvest of and domestic fishery values associated with PPMUS¹ (e.g., by enhancing the opportunities for satisfying recreational fishing experience, continuation of traditional fishing practices and domestic commercial fishers to engage in profitable operations).
- Diminish gear conflicts in the EEZ, particularly in areas of concentrated domestic fishing.
 Improve the statistical base for conducting better stock assessments and fishery evaluations.
- Promote the formation of regional/international arrangements for assessing and conserving PPMUS throughout their range.
- Preclude waste of PPMUS associated with longline, purse seine, pole-and-line or other fishing operations.
- **!** To promote domestic marketing of PPMUS in American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Non-tuna PPMUS are sometimes referred to as **A**other PPMUS@in this report. This term is equivalent to PMUS (Pelagic Management Unit Species) used in annual reports previous to 1992, before tunas were included in the management unit.

The PPMUS are caught in the troll, longline, handline and pole-and-line (baitboat) fisheries. They are caught in oceanic as well as insular pelagic waters. Most of these species are considered to be epipelagic because they occupy the uppermost layers of the pelagic zone. All are high-level

¹ The Magnuson Act was amended to allow the inclusion of tunas in US fishery management authority as of January 1992. In the Pacific, tuna management is the responsibility of the regional fishery management councils. Pacific pelagic management unit species (PPMUS) includes former pelagic management unit species (PMUS) and tunas.

predators in the trophic sense. Pelagic fisheries for PPMUS are among the most important, if not the dominant Pacific Island fisheries.

B. <u>Report Content</u>

This report contains fishery performance data from each of the four island groups through 1998, interpretations of trends or important events occurring in the fisheries and recommendations. This report was prepared using reports submitted by the following agencies . The Hawaii report is an integration of State of Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources and NMFS summaries.

- ! Territory of American Samoa, Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources
- ! Territory of Guam, Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources
- ! Territory of Guam, Department of Commerce
- ! State of Hawaii, Division of Aquatic Resources
- ! Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Division of Fish and Wildlife
- ! NMFS, Southwest Region (including Southwest Fisheries Science Center Honolulu
- Laboratory, Pacific Islands Area Office and Office of Law Enforcement)
- ! US Coast Guard, District 14
- Pelagic Fisheries Research Program, University of Hawaii

C. Report Appraisal

The report content has not changed significantly from previous years.

D. Plan Team Members

The FMP requires the Council=s Pelagic Plan Team (Team) to prepare an annual report on the status of the pelagic fisheries taking place in each of the island areas served by the Council (American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii and Northern Mariana Islands), to evaluate the effectiveness of the FMP in meeting its goals and objectives, and make recommendations for future management and administrative action.

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English Common Name	Scientific Name	Samoan or AS local	Hawaiian or HI local	Chamorroan or Guam local	S. Carolinian or NMI local	N. Carolinian or NMI local
Mahimahi (dolphinfishes)	<i>Coryphaena</i> spp.	Masimasi	Mahimahi	Botague	Sopor	Habwur
Wahoo	Acanthocybium solandri	Paala	Ono	Toson	Ngaal	Ngaal
Indo-Pacific blue marlin Black marlin	Makaira mazara: M. indica	Sa=ula	A = u, Kajiki	Batto=	Taghalaar	Taghalaar
Striped marlin	Tetrapturus audax		Nairagi			
Shortbill spearfish	T. angustirostris	Sa=ula	Hebi	Spearfish		
Swordfish	Xiphias gladius	Sa = ula malie	A = u k ã , Broadbill, Shutome	Swordfish	Taghalaar	Taghalaar
Sailfish	Istiophorus platypterus	Sa=ula	A = u lepe	Guihan layak	Taghalaar	Taghalaar
Oceanic sharks	Alopiidae, Carcharinidae, Lamnidae, Sphynidae	Malie	Mano	Halu≠u	Paaw	Paaw
Albacore	Thunnus alalunga	Apakoa	≻Ahi palaha, Tombo	Albacore	Angaraap	Hangaraap
Bigeye tuna	T. obesus	Asiasi, To≠uo	≻Ahi po=onui, Mabachi	Bigeye tuna	Toghu, Sangir	Toghu, Sangir
Yellowfin tuna	T. albacares	Asiasi, To=uo	≻Ahi shibi	>Ahi, Shibi	Yellowfin tuna	Toghu
Northern bluefin tuna	T. thynnus		Maguro			
Skipjack tuna	Katsuwonus pelamis	Atu, Faolua, Ga = oga	Aku	Bunita	Angaraap	Hangaraap
Kawakawa	Euthynnus affinis	Atualo, Kavalau	Kawakawa	Kawakawa	Asilay	Hailuway
Dogtooth tuna	Gymnosarda unicolor	Tagi	Hagatsuo	Dogtooth or white tuna	Ayul	Owel
Moonfish	<i>Lampris</i> spp	Koko	Opah		Ligehrigher	Ligehrigher

Table 1. Names of Pacific pelagic management unit species

Oilfish family	Gempylidae	Palu talatala	Walu, Escolar		Tekiniipek	Tekiniipek
Pomfret	family Bramidae	Manifi moana	Monchong			
Other tuna relatives	Auxisspp, Scomber spp; Allothunus spp	(various)	Ke=0 ke=0, saba (various)	(various)	(various)	(various)

Species	American Samoa	percent change	Guam	percent change	Hawaii	percent change	Northern Marianas	percent change	Total	percent change
Barracuda	4,474	-51.1%	6,819	143.4%			99	-44.1%	11,392	-6.1%
Kawakawa	82	-77.8%	3,576	9.8%					3,658	0.9%
Mahimahi	30,961	-17.0%	251,357	-1.0%	800,000	-27.3%	20,529	-18.0%	1,102,847	-22.1%
Marlin, Black	0	-100.0%							0	-100.0%
Marlin, Blue	42,097	10.9%	43,616	-52.1%	1,300,000	-31.6%	3,361	-40.6%	1,389,074	-31.7%
Marlin, Striped					900,000	0.0%			900,000	0.0%
Misc. Billfish					400,000	0.0%			400,000	0.0%
Misc. Pelagics			15,199	-8.7%	300,000	50.0%	740	-62.3%	315,939	44.5%
Moonfish	1,749	-38.6%			900,000	12.5%			901,749	12.3%
Pomfret										
Rainbow Runner	512	-1.7%	1,928	-57.9%			603	-18.5%	3,043	-47.9%
Sailfish	6,701	8.6%	700	1000%			83	-17.0%	7,484	19.3%
Sharks	7,404	-34.1%	8,017	53.1%	6,300,000	26.0%			6,315,421	25.9%
Spearfish			894	1000%					894	1000%
Swordfish	3,373	737.0%			7,200,000	12.5%			7,203,373	12.5%
Tuna, Albacore	637,821	1.6%			3,000,000	-25.0%			3,637,821	-21.4%
Tuna, Bigeye	5,695	2.7%			7,400,000	32.1%			7,405,695	32.1%
Tuna, Bluefin					40,000	-20.0%			40,000	-20.0%
Tuna, Dogtooth	668	70.0%	356	-80.8%			14,426	89.4%	15,450	56.6%
Tuna, Misc.	366	-5.7%					2,213	-42.1%	2,579	-38.7%
Tuna, Skipjack	54,073	58.1%	191,054	-9.4%	1,200,000	-53.8%	133,819	25.3%	1,578,946	-46.5%
Tuna, Yellowfin	75,052	1.7%	138,351	52.4%	3,400,000	-26.1%	11,656	-31.9%	3,625,059	-24.2%
Wahoo	36,252	141.7%	155,690	139.4%	700,000	-12.5%	5,039	-16.9%	896,981	1.2%
TOTAL	907,425	17.6%	817,087	9.6%	33,840,000	-1.5%	192,568	10.0%	35,757,405	-1.0%

Table 2. Total 1998 pelagic landings² (in lbs) in the Western Pacific Region

* NMFS Hawaii longline logbook summaries aggregate several billfish and tuna species (noted with *) into miscellaneous billfish, tuna, and pelagics categories. All Hawaii totals shown here are NMFS estimates and rounded to the nearest 100,000 lb, except for bluefin tuna and misc. tunas.

2

Landings are reported in island reports (Appendices 1-4), which include recreational and commercial domestic landings data, where available (e.g., for Hawaii, only commercial landings). In some cases, totals may not add precisely due to rounding. These do not include foreign transshipment or domestic cannery landings, which may be reported separately in island modules.

II. Summary ³

A. Plan Administration

No FMP or regulatory amendments governing pelagic fisheries in the Western Pacific Region were proposed by the Council in 1998. See Administrative Activities (p. 14) for details. No permits were requested by any foreign nations to fish in the US EEZ of the Western Pacific Region.

B. Island Areas

In **American Samoa**, fishing effort and landings of PPMUS continued the upward trend that commenced in 1994. This continuation reflects the interest in small scale longline fishing in the territory, targeting mainly albacore. An estimated 909,425 lb (+ 17.6%) of pelagic fish were landed in 1998, of which 820,783 were commercial landings valued at \$ 998,930 (+3%). The average price for all pelagics was \$1.22/lb (+10%).

The number of boats in the pelagic fishery during 1998 decreased 13% from 1997. A total of 47 vessels made an estimated 2,482 trips (-9%), comprising 123 trolling trips (-84%) and 2,359 longline trips (+17%). The average duration of all fishing trips was 7.8 hr/trip, a 15% increase from the 6.8 hr/trip in 1997. Longline trips were on average two and a half hours longer than trolling trips (7.9hrs vs 5.2 hrs). This trip duration increase represents a continued shift from troll to longline fishing method. In contrast to 1996 when twice as many fishing trips used trolling gear and 1997 when longline to troll trips was 3:1, the ratio of longline to troll trips in 1998 was over 19:1 (2,359 longline trips vs 123 trolling trips). Data from the troll fishery suggests that the catch per unit effort (CPUE) in 1998 was its lowest since 1982, but only 17% less than the previous five year average. The overall average CPUE for longline fishing in 1998 was 32 fish/1,000 hooks, of which 20.3 fish/1,000 hooks, or 63%, were albacore. Overall longline catch rates (-19%) as well as albacore catch rates (-35%) dropped between 1997 and 1998.

Cannery landings at Pago Pago during 1997 comprised 112,764 t of skipjack, 41,000 t of yellowfin and 54,500 t of albacore. Most of the skipjack and yellowfin are caught in distant water fisheries, predominantly in the western tropical Pacific, while albacore landings are made by vessels operating in cooler waters to the south of American Samoa. Landings have remained relatively stable during the 1990s for skipjack, while a substantial increase in yellowfin (+30%) and albacore

3

Percentages in parentheses indicate percent change from previous year

(doubled since 1993) has occurred. This partially reflects the increased longline fishing activity in both American Samoa and Samoa (formerly Western Samoa).

In **Guam** landings of all pelagics amounted to 817,087 lb (9.6%), with total revenues increased to \$711,066 (+37%). Non-Tuna PPMUS landings increased similarly to 460,722 lb (10.3%), and adjusted revenues increased to \$503,600 (+43%). Tuna landings increased to 375,782 lb (+23%), with a matching increase revenues (+27%) to \$197,677. The overall landings have fluctuated around a relatively constant average for the past decade. Landings in 1998 followed the 1997 trend in Guam=s pelagic fisheries towards targeting other PPMUS, principally mahimahi and wahoo, rather than tuna. Tunas comprised about 41% of the 1998 pelagic landings, similar to 1997 where they formed 40% of pelagic landings. Mahimahi comprised 31% of the total pelagic landings, followed by skipjack (23%), wahoo (19%, up from 9% in 1997), yellowfin tuna (17%) and blue marlin (5%).

Guam-s adjusted prices for pelagic fish remained fairly stable in 1998, following a general decline since 1980. The adjusted price (\$/lb) of tuna has remained static since 1996, and non-tuna PPMUS has continued to increase since 1995 and rose by 5% between 1997 and 1998.

Virtually all the landings of pelagic fish are made by trolling vessels. The fleet size in 1998 was 438 vessels (-6%). The decline in the fleet reflects a two year trend from a previously marked increase that began in 1980. Nevertheless, the number of trips (14,324), hours fished (59,583) and hours per trip (4.2%) remained unchanged from the 1997 data.

Transhipment activity in Guam markedly increased in 1998, possibly because of the reversal of 1997 climate changes (the strong El-Nino Southern Oscillation event) that negatively affected migrating pelagic fish stocks to the region.

The **Hawaii** fisheries for PPMUS produced total pelagic landings of 33.8 million lb in 1998, a slight decrease (-1.5%) from 1997. Swordfish landings of 7.2 million lb in 1998 were 12.5% higher than in 1997. Bigeye tuna surpassed swordfish as the dominant species comprising 21.9% and 21.3% of the pelagic fishery, respectively. Other major components of the pelagic fishery include sharks (18.6%), yellowfin (10%) and albacore (9%), other tunas (8%). Blue marlin catches declined dramatically (-32%) from 1997 while striped marlin remained unchanged. Mahimahi, wahoo and moonfish landings have fluctuated around a steady average for the past six years. Tuna landings dropped slightly in 1998 from a large increase in 1997. The numbers of sharks retained for their fins increased again in 1998, with an estimated landed whole weight increase of 34%.

Total pelagics revenue decreased by about 10% to \$ 54.7 million, with an average price per pound decrease of 10% for pelagic fish in 1998. In 1998 the inflation adjusted ex-vessel revenue for the

longline fishery decreased 9%, the handline fishery decreased by 30%, the troll fishery decreased 20% and the 1998 aku baitboats decreased by 63%.

Changes in catch rate by trollers were down for all species from 1997; blue marlin (-31%), skipjack (-14%), yellowfin (-11%), mahimahi (-4%) and ono (-0%). Rates for handliners varied by species in 1998; swordfish(+12%), wahoo (+4.5%), blue marlin (-59%), mahimahi (0%), yellowfin (+12%), albacore (+17%), bigeye tuna (71%). Yellowfin was the only species below its long term average.

The Hawaii longline fleet landed 28.6 million lb of fish, a 5% increase on the 1997 landings. Of the billfish landed in Hawaii, longlining accounted for almost all the swordfish (99.8%), striped marlin (95%) and blue marlin (66%). About 34% of the longline landings (9.8 million lb) were billfish, and 73% of billfish landings were swordfish. The longline fleet also accounted for most of the bluefin tuna (90%), bigeye tuna (96%), albacore (82%), moonfish (100%) and sharks (100%) landed in Hawaii. The bluefin landings decreased (-31%) from 1997.

Fishing effort for the combined pelagic fisheries in Hawaii remained at a high level in 1998. The number of longline vessels participating in this fishery increased slightly from 105 vessels making 1,125 trips in 1997 to 114 vessels making 1,140 trips in 1998. The size of the longline fleet declined steadily between 1991 and 1996 from 141 to 103 vessels, although there are a maximum of 164 licenses available in the limited entry system. The number of trips by the troll fishery decreased in 1998 (-11%) to 21,112. This is higher than the 1979-1998 average of 18,274, but the fishery has been relatively static over the past ten years. The number of trips taken by aku baitboats (223) declined substantially (-50%). The present level of aku boat activity, in terms of trips, is about one third the long term average. The number of handline trips in 1998 (5,091) was a 16% decrease on fishing activity compared with 1997.

Landings of all pelagics in the **Northern Mariana Islands** (NMI) increased (+10%) between 1997 and 1998 to 192,568 lb but was only 1% above its long term average. The increase is most likely due to the below average fishing season in 1997 from particularly bad weather (typhoons and super typhoons) causing severe damage on some islands and keeping fishers off the water. Skipjack landings of 133,819 lb were up (+25%) from 1997, only slightly lower (-2%) than the 1983-1997 long term average. Yellowfin tuna landings were markedly reduced (-32%) for the second consecutive year and slightly below the long term average. Landings of mahimahi were down (-20%) from 1997 but were still significantly higher than the long term average. Wahoo landings declined by (-17%) and were equally below the long term average. Blue marlin landings also declined markedly (-41%), but were still slightly above the long term average.

The 10% increase in landings during 1998 were reflected by a 5% increase in total adjusted revenues (\$398,086) over those in 1997. This 5% increase in adjusted revenues was shared equally between tunas and other PPMUS.

The number of fishers making commercial pelagic landings declined for the second straight year (-17%) in 1998 to 89, but remained above the long term average. The number of trips landing PPMUS increased (+9%) in 1998 and was much higher (+34%) than the long term average.

The inflation adjusted prices of non-tuna PPMUS increased by 8% while tunas decreased by 8% in 1998, but both have remained fairly stable since 1993. The average adjusted price of tunas fell to \$2.02/lb and of other PPMUS to \$2.23/lb, both 6% above the long term average.

C. Species

Mahimahi landings (30,961 lb) in American Samoa during 1998 decreased slightly (-17%) from 1997, which had significantly higher landings than any time in the past. Guams 1998 mahimahi landings (251,357 lb) were almost the same as 1997 (-1%) and considerably higher than the long- term average. Mahimahi landings in Guam have displayed wide, unexplained annual fluctuations since 1987. The trolling catch rate for mahimahi has, however, remained relatively stable over the past three years. Mahimahi landings (800,000 lb) made up 4.3% of the 1998 non-tuna PPMUS landings in Hawaii, a decrease of 32%. The longline fishery accounted for 41% of the 1998 landings, with the bulk of mahimahi landings coming from the combined troll and handline fisheries. The troll catch rate in Hawaii was 4% lower than the 1998 rate, but above the long-term average. Northern Marianas mahimahi landings declined in common with most other species and amounted to 20,529 lb (-18%). Mahimahi accounted for 47% of the total non-tuna PPMUS landings. The trolling catch rate in 1998 in the NMI decreased from 1997 by 25% and was below the long-term average by 22%.

Blue marlin catches in American Samoa continued to increase (+11%) as a result of the expansion of the longline fishery, which took 98% of the total blue marlin catch. Guam landings of blue marlin (43,616 lb) were 52% lower than 1997 and 45% below its long-term average. Blue marlin landings (1.3 million lb) in Hawaii were 32% lower than in 1997 (1.9 million lb.) Longliners accounted for 65% of the total Hawaii blue marlin landings. Blue marlin landings in the Northern Marianas (3,361 lb) were significantly down from the previous year (-41%), in common with most species, but still slightly above the long-term average of 1983-1997.

The catch rate of blue marlin in the American Samoa troll fishery was markedly lower (-55%) than in 1997, and at its lowest rate since 1987. In Guam, blue marlin troll catch rate decreased markedly from 1997 (-50%), also 50% off the long-term average. In the Hawaii longline fishery, blue marlin tends to be caught incidentally at a higher rates on mixed trips than in either tuna trips or swordfish trips. The catch rate of blue marlin on tuna and swordfish trips decreased 25% between 1997 and 1998, while mixed trip catch rate decreased 50%. The catch rate of blue marlin in the Hawaii commercial troll

fishery decreased (-45%) and was 33% lower than the long-term average. In the Northern Marianas, the 1997 catch rate was lower than in 1998 (-45%) and 25% below the long-term average.

Striped marlin landings ranked third among the billfish in Hawaii (after swordfish and blue marlin), and in 1998 it accounted for 5% of the commercial landings of non-tuna PPMUS. The 1998 landings of 0.9 million lb were the same as the 1997 landings and lower than the long-term average. Striped marlin is regarded as a secondary target species (after bigeye tuna) in the winter longline fishery and was the third in terms of volume of total longline landings of billfish after swordfish and blue marlin. Landings in the Hawaii commercial troll and handline fisheries during 1998 (43,000 lb, -48%) were markedly reduced from the previous year and about 51% below the long-term average. The species rarely appears in the domestic landings from other areas.

Sailfish landings were insignificant in most areas. American Samoa reported landings of 6,701 lb of sailfish in 1999, a 9% increase on 1997 landings and four times greater than the long-term average.

Estimated domestic landings of Hawaii **shark** increased by 26% between 1997 and 1998. The increase was due to a rise in the retention of shark fins, of which 95% are from blue sharks. Shark landings from other areas were relatively minor. Virtually the entire shark landings come from longline vessels. However, the Bottomfish Plan Team has also noted that Northwestern Hawaiian Islands bottom fishery also lands fins of coastal and reef sharks taken incidentally ⁴, although the quantity has not been estimated.

Shortbill spearfish landings were only reported for Guam at 894 lbs.

The **swordfish** longline fishery in Hawaii began in 1989 with landings of 0.6 million lb, increasing to 3.4 million lb in 1990, and peaking at 13.1 million lb in 1993. Swordfish landings declined in 1994 and 1995 but may be leveling out and stabilizing at about 6-7 million lb. Landings in 1998 amounted to 7.2 million lb, a large increase from the long term average for the fishery. The estimated average size of longline-caught swordfish was 176 lb in 1998, above the 1987-1998 average by 13%. Swordfish comprised the largest proportion of the total non-tuna landings by all fisheries in Hawaii for the ninth consecutive year (38% in 1998, 37% in 1997, 38% in 1996, 38% in 1995, 60% in 1994, 72% in 1993, 73% in 1992, 62% in 1991, and 38% in 1990). The longline catch rate of swordfish in 1998 dropped by 6% from its seven-year high in 1997. 1998 CPUE was still 5% higher than the long-term average between 1991 and 1997. Swordfish landings from non-longline gear were negligible in comparison (0.2%). Other areas did not report landings of swordfish, apart from a few captures in the American Samoa longline fishery.

⁴. WPRFMC Bottomfish Plan Team meeting, March 27-28 , 1996, Executive Centre Hotel, Honolulu, HI.

American Samoa reported landings of 637,821 lb of **albacore** during 1998, the highest yet recorded by the American Samoa fleet and a threefold increase on 1996 landings. Hawaii total landings of albacore (3.0 million lb) was a 25% drop from 1997, but 40% above its long term average. Landings of albacore by longline vessels decreased by 32% in 1998. Other areas did not report landings of albacore.

Hawaii landings of **bigeye tuna** (7.4 million lb) were 32% higher than 1997, almost all (96%) caught by longline. No other areas reported bigeye landings apart from American Samoa, where the emergent albacore fishery caught a modest 5,695 lb of bigeye tuna (+2.7%).

Skipjack tuna landings in American Samoa in 1998 (54,073 lb) rebounded from the 1997 52% drop, gaining 58%. The troll catch rate remained the same as 1997, which is 50% below the long- term average. Guam skipjack landings in 1998 (191,054 lb) represented a decrease of 9.4%, with catch rates 10% lower than in 1997. Hawaii skipjack landings (1.2 million lb) decreased dramatically (-54%) in 1998. The skipjack were caught principally by baitboats, which landed 696,000 lb of skipjack in 1998, one third the volume landed by the fishery in 1997. Northern Marianas Islands 1998 skipjack landings were 25% higher (133,819 lb) than 1997, and the catch rate increased by 15% from 1997 but was still far below the long-term average.

Yellowfin tuna landings in American Samoa (75,052 lb) increased by 1.7%; however, catch rates were 21% lower in the troll fishery than in 1997 and equally below the long-term average. Guam yellowfin landings (138,351 lb) increased 52% in 1998 and the catch rates were 44% above 1997 and 35% above the long-term average. The total Hawaii commercial landings of yellowfin (3.4 million lb) were 26% lower than 1997 and equally below the long-term average. Landings of yellowfin by commercial trollers and handliners in 1998 were reduced by 29%, while landings by longliners increased by 79%. The commercial trolling catch rate of yellowfin decreased by 11% during 1998 and the catch rate from handline fishing increased by 12%. Longline catch rates of yellowfin by directed tuna trips were 20% below 1997 rates, but similar to the long-term average. Northern Mariana Islands yellowfin landings of 11,656 lb reflect a continued decline in 1998 (-32%), following a 43.7% drop in 1997. Catch rates were about 37% lower than in 1997, and 44% below the long-term average.

Wahoo landings in American Samoa increased to 36,252 lb (+142%), to the highest level yet. This increase in landings was generated mainly from the longline fishery as catch rates from trolling dropped by 38% to 0.62 lb/hr, but still higher than the long-term average (0.43 lb/hr). Guams wahoo landings (155,690 lb) increased markedly by 140 % from 1997 with catch rates increasing by 135% from 1997. Wahoo landings in Hawaii decreased from 700,000 lb to 800,000 lb between 1997 and 1998. The 1997 trolling catch rate for wahoo in Hawaii remained stable from 1997, and was well above long-term average. Northern Marianas wahoo landings (5,039 lb) and catch rate (2.26 lb/trip) both decreased for the second straight year by 17% and 24% respectively. The catch was 26% below the long term average and the catch rate was half the long term average CPUE.

D. <u>Gear</u>

Troll fisheries continue to dominate the domestic fisheries in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, in contrast to American Samoa, where the emergent longline fishery now accounts for 97% of PPMUS landings. Growing charter fishing businesses in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands contributed heavily to troll fishing effort. In Hawaii, longline landings continue to dominate pelagic fisheries production and in 1998 accounted for over 80% of the landed volume of PPMUS.

III. Issues

Bycatch and protected species interactions continued to drive most of the management initiatives of the Western Pacific Council in 1998. The Council-s seabird-longline mitigation project was half completed by the end of 1998, resulting in a large volume of information on that measures may be the most suitable for the Hawaii-based longline fleet. This study was complemented in early 1999 by a mitigation study conducted by the NMFS Honolulu Laboratory from the NOAA research vessel Townsend Cromwell. Concern was also focused on blue shark catches as the Hawaii-based fleet continued to retain an increasing portion of the catch for finning. Calls for a ban on finning continued to be made in 1998 from non-government environmental and conservation groups. The Council and NMFS commenced a project to examine the socio-economic aspects of the shark fin trade in the Western Pacific Region. This study resulted in a report in 1999, which is the most thorough examination of shark finning in the Pacific and will be a standard reference for years to come (McCoy, M. & Ishihara, H. 1999). The socio-economic importance of sharks in the US Flag Areas of the Western and Central Pacific, Admin. Report AR-SWR-99-01, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southwest Region, Honolulu, 119 pp). The longline fishery in American Samoa stabilized in 1998, with between 14 and 18 vessels active throughout the year, about the same as in 1997. A framework measure to implement a 50- and 30-nm area closure around the main islands and Swains Atoll, respectively, was sent to the SW Regional Administrator, but was subsequently disapproved. The Council in 1999 directed its staff to continue efforts of the closed area (see Administrative Activities, p. 14).

IV. Recommendations

- 1. HDAR should continue to improve the collection of Hawaii fisheries data so that the data provide useful information on fishing effort.
- ii. The Council should seek funding to conduct a survey of Hawaii small-scale fisheries. This survey is needed to evaluate the significance of non-commercial components of these fisheries.
- iii. The Council should support an analysis of landings and catch rate trends of mahimahi and ono and other incidental catches (e.g. opah, pomfret, rainbow runner,) throughout the Western Pacific Region, including data from EEZ and distant-water fisheries.

- iv. The Council should support an analysis of landings and catch rate trends of blue marlin throughout the Western Pacific Region, including data from EEZ and distant-water fisheries. NMFS Honolulu Lab will conduct a stock assessment of blue marlin.
- 22. Because the Hawaii-based longline fishery is expanding in terms of ports of landing, the Council should authorize NMFS to use VMS information to monitor logbook compliance. The pelagics plan team believes this information to be vitally important for other fishery monitoring and assessment purposes.
- vi. The pelagics plan team asks that when the Council rejects or modifies a Plan Team recommendation, that this be noted in the annual report without modifying the original recommendation wording.

V. Plan Administration

A. Administrative Activities

A regulatory amendment proposed by the Council to close an area around American Samoa to fishing for PPMUS by vessels more than 50 feet in length was disapproved by NMFS on March 11, 1999. NMFS determined that the proposal was not consistent with National Standard 4 (allocations of fishing privileges among US fishermen must be fair and equitable), National Standard 5 (restricting large vessels= access to the near-shore fishery would impose economic costs, or inefficiencies, and the record for the proposal did not show those costs would have been outweighed by benefits to the stocks, fishing communities, or small vessel fishermen), and National Standard 7 (the closure would result in administrative and enforcement costs which did not appear justified in light of the projected benefits).

B. Longline Permits

During 1998, 164 permits, the maximum allowed under the FMP, were maintained in the Hawaii longline limited entry fishery. Administrative activities at PIAO primarily involved the transfer of 28 Hawaii longline limited permits. Of the 164 issued permit holders, 28 were without vessels for those permits. One receiving vessel permit was issued this year in Hawaii. PIAO also processed and issued Western Pacific general longline permits for the pelagic fisheries in American Samoa (49 permits), Guam (2 permits), and the Northern Mariana Islands (1 permit). The number of longline permits issued in American Samoa increased dramatically for the second straight year, with 16 new permits in 1998.

The names of vessels registered with Hawaii limited entry and Western Pacific longline permits and permit holders are listed in Table 3.

C. Foreign Fishing Permits

No administrative actions relating to foreign fishing in the western Pacific EEZ were required because no foreign fishing permits were requested for any vessels with which the US has a Governing International Fishing Agreement.

Table 3. 1998 Hawaii longline limited entry permit holders

Hawaii limited entry longline fishery

VESSEL F/V ADRAMYTTIUM F/V ANNA F/V ARROW F/V B-52 F/V BARBARA H F/V BIG AL F/V BLUE DRAGON F/V BLUE FIN **F/V BLUE SKY** F/V BRANDI F/V CANDACE F/V CAPT. DAVIS F/V CAPT. DIAMOND F/V CAPT. GREG F/V CAPT. LE F/V CAPT. MILLIONS I F/V CAPT. MILLIONS III F/V CAPT. MILLIONS IV **F/V CHRIS** F/V CORI DAWN F/V CRYSTAL F/V DAE IN HO F/V DAE IN HO IV F/V DAEINHO III F/V DASHER II F/V DAWNING STAR F/V DEBORAH ANN F/V DONGWON F/V DOUBLE D F/V EDWARD G F/V ELIZABETH VII F/V FINBACK F/V FIREBIRD F/V GAIL ANN F/V GARDEN SUN F/V GLORY F/V GRACE F/V HAVANA F/V HAWAII POWER F/V HEOLA **F/V HOKUAO** F/V ICY POINT F/V INDEPENDENCE F/V JAGUAR T-L F/V JANTHINA **F/V JENNIFER** F/V JOHN KENNEDY F/V KAIMI F/V KALOKE ANA F/V KASATKA F/V KATHERINE II F/V KATHERINE III **F/V KATHERINE Y** F/V KATY MARY F/V KAY F/V KELLY ANN F/V KEMA SUE F/V KILAUEA F/V KIM THANH I F/V SEEKER II F/V SEVEN STARS F/V SOUTH PACIFIC

PERMIT HOLDER

THK Fishing Inc. MTA Corp. David Kelly B-52 Inc. Arthur/Barbara Haworth R & R Fisheries Inc. B Dragon Corp. Liet An Lu/Mai Thi Do Blue Sky Fishing Producer Success Inc. Natali Fishing Inc. Ho Son Nguyen Capt. Diamond Inc. Aquanut Co. Inc. L & T Fishery Corp. Nga Van Le Capt. Millions III, Inc. H and M Fishery Inc. Kan-Do Pesca Inc Cori Dawn Corp. Davis B Inc. KYL Inc. Wynne Inc. Chunha Inc. DukSung Fishing Inc. Larry B. & Dawn Powers Amko Fishing Co. Inc. Dongwon Marine Inc. Joseph Dettling Edward G. Co. Inc. Tok Chun Son Finback Inc. Firebird Fishing Corp. Gail Ann Co. Inc. Muoi Peter Ngo Rov Yi Sang Yeol Kim Thomas Webster Intl. Quality Fishery Inc H & M Marine Inc. White Inc. Pacific Fisheries Corp. Independence Inc. Jaguar Inc. Trans World Marine Inc. Kil Cho Moon Kinh Nguyen Vessel Management Assoc. Kaloke Ana Fishing Inc. Artemon Basargin K.A. Fishing Co. Inc. K.R. Fishing Inc. Song Fishing Corp. Vessel Management Assoc. K.Y. Fishing Inc. Kelly Ann Corp. Kema Sue Inc. Aukai Fishing Co.Ltd. Kim Thanh I Inc. Seeker Fisheries Inc. Kwang Myong Co. Inc. South Pacific Fishing

F/V KIMMY I F/V KING DIAMOND II F/V KINGFISHER F/V KINUE KAI F/V KOLEA F/V KUKUS F/V LADY ALICE F/V LADY ANN MARGARET F/V LADY CHRISTINE F/V LADY CHRISTINE II F/V LADY CHUL F/V LADY LINDA F/V LEA LEA **F/V LIBERTY** F/V LIHAU F/V LILA F/V LUCKY I F/V MAN SEOK F/V MANA LOA F/V MARIE M **F/V MARINE STAR** F/V MIDNIGHT II F/V MISS AGGIE N F/V MISS JESSICO F/V MISS JULIE F/V MISS LISA F/V MOKULELE F/V NORTHERN VENTURE F/V OCEAN DIAMOND F/V PACIFIC DREAM **F/V PACIFIC FIN** F/V PACIFIC HORIZON F/V PACIFIC PRIDE F/V PACIFIC REFLECTION F/V PACIFIC STAR F/V PEARL HARBOR II F/V PETITE ONE F/V PHI NAM F/V PIKY F/V POHO NUI F/V PRINCESS K F/V PURPLE MARCH F/V QUEEN DIAMOND F/V RED BARON F/V RED DIAMOND F/V RED OCTOBER **F/V ROBIN F/V ROBIN II** F/V SANDY DORY F/V SAPPHIRE F/V SEA BIRD F/V SEA DIAMOND F/V SEA DIAMOND II F/V SEA DRAGON **F/V SEA GODDESS** F/V SEA HAWK F/V SEA MOON F/V SEA QUEEN II F/V SEA SPIDER F/V SEA SPRAY F/V SEASPRAY F/V SPACER K F/V SUNFLOWER III F/V SWORDMAN I

Kim Tran Scotty Nguyen Quan Do Awahnee Oceanics Inc. Paik Fishing Inc. Kuku Fishing Inc. Lady Alice Co. Inc. Lady Ann Margaret Inc. Christine Tran Christine Tran Inc. Jong Ik Fishing Co. Inc. V Nam Inc. M.S. Honolulu Inc. Yu & AAS Corp. White Inc. Samuel Lee Duoc Nguyen KMC & PCC Inc. Two Bulls Inc. Viking V Inc. Viking V Inc. Albert K. Duarte Miles Gould Pacific Seafoods Inc. Quan Do Miss Lisa Inc. Robert Cabos Roy-Al Boat Mgmt. Ocean Diamond Inc. Pacific Seafoods Inc. Fishrite Inc. John Gibbs Pacific Seafoods Inc. Gunn Pacific Reflection N. Pac Fishery Inc. Gilbert DeCosta Ka'upu Ltd. Pilgrim Truong M/V Piky Inc. Vessel Management Assoc. Princess K Fishing Corp. PN Inc Santa Maria III Inc. Donald Aasted Xuan Nguyen Pacific Fishing & Supply Fat City Fishing Robin Fishing Inc. Highliner Inc. Hanh Thi Nguyen Seabird Inc. Nancy Nguyen Sea Diamond II Inc. Long Thanh Nguyen Capt. Washington I Inc. Hawaii Fishing Co. Sea Flower Inc. Thoai Van Nguven Paul Seaton, Trustee Sea Spray LLC Hanson/Hanson Fishing Co. Hwa Deog Kim Le's Brothers Fishing Inc Swordman Inc.

F/V TUCANA F/V ULHEELANI F/V VAN LOI F/V VICTORIA F/V VICTORIA F/V VITGINIA CREEPER F/V VOSTOK F/V VUI VUI II F/V VUI-VUI F/V WHITE NIGHT F/V WONIYA Pacific Boat Corp. Inc. Ulheelani Corp. Van Loi Corp. Victoria Inc. Sylvan Seafoods Inc. Evgeny Basargin Vui Vui, A Limited Partne Santa Maria III Inc. Natalia/Kiril Basargin Sierra Fisheries Inc.

Hawaii longline permit holders without vessels

M&T Fishing Co. Inc. James Chan Song Kim Shaman Partnership Vedoy Enterprises Inc. Master Vincent Inc. Hanh Thi Nguyen Hanh Thi Nguyen Ocean Associates Corp. Henry Niemi Jr. H & M Marine Inc. Lindgren-Pitman Inc. All Star Fishery Inc. Vessel Management Assoc. Hana Like Inc. Finback Inc. Theodore Benjestorf David B.H. Ho Pacific Fishing & Supply Jonathan Lee Tom C.Y. Kim Larry DaRosa Trung Van Ha Vessel Management Assoc. Vessel Management Assoc. Long Thanh Nguyen Vessel Management Assoc. B.J. & W.W. Bowyer Minh Hoang Dang

1998 Western Pacific General Longline Permit

American Samoa Pelagic Fishery

VESSEL	PERMIT
	HOLDER
F/V 38 SPECIAL	Peter Reid
F/V AAONE	Asaua Fuimaono
F/V ALEUTIAN BEAUTY	Dan Gunn
F/V ALIA O SINA	Afoa Moega Lutu
F/V AMIGO	Jay Vaoalii
F/V CAPTAIN JUSTIN LUTU	Afoa Lures
F/V CLASSIC CAT	Frank Gaisoa
F/V DOS GRIS	George Poysky III
F/V EAGLE II	Steve Haleck
F/V FAISUA	Sui Aveina
F/V FAIVAIMOANA I	Faivaimoana Fishing Co Ltd
F/V FAUVASA	Lemaisu Fesili
F/V FOTOLUPE	Lautogia Taula
F/V FUATINO	Nana Aveina
F/V GREEN PEACE I	Maselino Ioane
F/V GREEN PEACE II	Maselino Ioane
F/V ISABELLA	Jose Lugo
F/V LADY ALVINA	Afoa Moega Lutu

F/V LADY ELINOR F/V LADY GEORGIA F/V LADY HERMINA F/V LADY LU F/V LADY POLATAI **F/V LADY RUTA** F/V LADYSMITH F/V LUPESINA F/V MAHI MAHI F/V MALIA F/V MERRY EMMELY F/V MISS MIHI F/V MONA OF THE OCEAN F/V NORTH STAR F/V NORTHWEST F/V OFIRA F/V ORION NO. I F/V PRINCESS DANIELA F/V PTL LIGHT BOAT F/V RACHEL F/V RAINBOW RUNNER F/V REEL CAT F/V SEA VENTURE F/V SILVER BULLET F/V SINATALA F/V SOUTH WIND I F/V SOUTH WIND II F/V SOUTH WIND III F/V SOUTH WIND IV F/V TROPIK CAT F/V WILD CAT

Guam Pelagic Fishery VESSEL

F/V ATALOA F/V KARIYUSHI F/V PIONEER

Paepae Simi Jadran Satalic Lu's Fish Grotto Tagaimamao Masaniai Tau Malae Coastal&Offshore Pac Corp Maselino Ioane Lorn Cramer Uili Talimao Malua/Henry Nickel Timothy Jones Terry Chang Richard Mathisen Harbor Refuse & Environm Asaua Fuimaono Laszlo Lukacs Afoa Lures Lino Schwenke Bethel Inc. Violina Lin Dave Haleck Daniel/Douglas Gunn/Williscroft David Pedro Valavala Enosa Elvin Mokoma Elvin Mokoma Elvin Mokoma Elvin Mokoma Wavne Moors Neil/Alfred

Afoa Lures

Annandale

PERMIT HOLDER

Jim/Nathan Elliott Guam YTK Corp. Sunbeam Seafoods Inc.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Pelagic Fishery vessel F/V CHARITO

PERMIT HOLDER

Renato Azucenas

Hawaii Receiving Vessel Permit

F/V NESIKA

VESSEL

PERMIT HOLDER

Jamie Lee Razov

D. Protected Species Conservation

The Hawaii longline fishery targeting swordfish and tunas has been monitored under a mandatory observer program since February 1994. Beginning March 1994, branch personnel have conducted daily shoreside dock rounds in Honolulu to determine which fishing vessels are in port. These dock rounds are used to obtain an estimate of fishing effort on a real-time basis by assuming that a vessel is fishing when it is absent from the harbor. Approximately 1,180 vessels departed port between January 1, 1998, and December 31, 1998, 48 of which carried observers, representing about 4.1% observer coverage. The following table summarizes protected species interactions for all observed trips that returned during calendar year 1998. Total observed fishing effort was approximately 734,204 hooks and 561 sets; 97 sea turtle and 1 marine mammal interactions were observed.

Loggerhead turtles were the species most often involved in observed interactions (Table 4) with longline gear, followed by leatherbacks and then greens and olive ridleys. Of the 97 turtles observed taken, 69 were released alive, 20 were released injured and 8 released dead (Table 4).

Table 4. Observed longline gear/turtle interactions, 1998						
Turtle Species	Condition					
	Released Alive	Released, injured	Dead	Total		
Loggerhead	44	16	0	60		
Olive Ridley	4	1	2	7		
Leatherback	11	1	1	13		
Unidentified Hardshell	1	1	2	4		
Green	8	1	3	12		
Hawksbill	1	0	0	1		
TOTAL	69	20	8	97		

Estimating total incidental turtle take and mortality for the longline fleet has continued to be a problem for the NMFS Honolulu Laboratory. This is due in part to the low observer coverage (<5%), the rarity of longline-turtle interactions and the different targeting strategies of the elements that comprise the longline fleet. During 1998, the NMFS Honolulu Laboratory produced a report⁵ that included the most

Kleiber, P. 1998. Estimating annual takes and kills of sea turtles by the Hawaiian longline fishery, 1991-97, from observer program and logbook data. Honolulu Laboratory, Southwest Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, Administrative Report H-98-08, 15 pp.

statistically reliable estimated takes and kills of turtles in the longline fishery based on a classification and regression tree model. These estimates, the allowable take and kill levels, determined from the 1994 biological opinion under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, were introduced in 1997, have been updated this year, will continue in future reports and are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Estimated fleet-wide turtle takes and killsin the Hawaiian longline fishery, 1994-1998							
Species	Allowable Level		Es	timated Tal	kes		
		1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	
Loggerhead	305	427	334	390	338	363	
95% CL		260-610	242-518	264-537	244-475	262-515	
Olive Ridley	152	100	110	114	110	118	
95% CL		53-148	59-161	65-167	60-163	65-173	
Leatherback	271	154	163	166	172	174	
95% CL		102-205	107-218	111-221	114-226	114-231	
Green	119	30	31	34	31	35	
95% CL		10-51	9-53	12-56	9-53	12-58	
Species	Allowable Level		E	stimated kil	ls		
		1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	
Loggerhead	46	75	58	68	59	63	
95% CL		41-110	41-93	45-98	39-88	43-92	
Olive Ridley	41	33	37	38	37	39	
95% CL		13-53	15-58	16-60	15-58	15-61	
Leatherback	23	10	10	11	11	11	
95% CL		0.1-20	0.1-21	0.1-22	0.2-23	0.1-23	
Green	18	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	
95% CL		0.04-0.62	0.03-0.63	0.05-0.68	0.03-0.64	0.05-0.71	

Marine mammal and seabird interactions were also recorded by the observers and are summarized below in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6. Observed longline gear/marine mammal interactions, 1998					
Marine mammal species	Condition				
	Released alive	Released dead	Total		
Monk Seals	0	0	0		
Humpback whales	1	0	1		
False killer whales	0	0	0		
Other whales	0	0	0		
Dolphins	0	0	0		
Total	1	0	1		

Table 7. Observed longline gear/seabird interactions, 1998							
Seabird Species	Condition						
	Released alive	Released Injured	Released dead	Total			
Albatross	40	15	168	223			
Booby	0	0	2	2			
Total	40	15	170	225			

Concern for the numbers of albatross taken by the Hawaiian longline fleet has been an important concern for the NMFS Honolulu Laboratory. Estimates of total incidental seabird take and mortality for the longline fleet have been determined in the same fashion as were for the turtle takes. Similar problems with low observer coverage (<5%), the rarity of longline-seabird interactions and the different targeting strategies of the elements that comprise the longline fleet exist for these estimates as well. These numbers are based on a similar classification and regression tree model. These estimates and the allowable take and kill levels, determined from the 1994 biological opinion under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, were introduced this year and will continue in future reports.

Table 8. Estimated fleet-wide seabird takes in the Hawaiian longline fishery, 1994-1998							
Species	Estimated takes						
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998		
Blackfooted albatross	1994	1979	1568	1653	1963		
95% CI	1508-2578	1439-2497	1158-1976	1243-2101	1479-2470		
Laysan albatross	1828	1457	1047	1150	1479		
95% CI	933-2984	767-2308	569-1610	599-1875	822-2336		

E. <u>USCG Enforcement Activities</u>

The U.S. Coast Guard conducted 753 hours of fisheries patrols with C-130 aircraft in the Central and Western Pacific during 1998. Almost 300 days of surface patrols were also conducted. The Coast Guard patrol effort in the eight non-contiguous EEZs was broken down as follows:

EEZ Area	Surface Patrol Days	Aircraft Patrol Hours
Main Hawaiian Islands	65	121
Northwest Hawaiian Islands	9	42
Guam and Northern Mariana Islands	135	329
Johnston Atoll and Wake Island	10	17
American Samoa	6	30
Palmyra Atoll/Kingman Reef	10	40
Jarvis Island	10	51
Howland & Baker Islands	43	123

Table 9. USCG patrol effort in the Western Pacific Region

There were also 58 hours flown in direct support of international High Seas Driftnet (HSDN) enforcement. The USCG flew over 300 hours with HH-65 helicopters in support of fisheries operations; this effort was concentrated in the main Hawaiian Islands and while deployed on high endurance cutters.

In 1998, there were 278 total fishing vessel boardings in the USCG 14th District AOR. The breakdown of vessels boarded is as follows: 182 were American, 40 were Japanese, 28 were Taiwanese, 9 were South Korean, and 19 were of other nationalities.

There were no significant fisheries enforcement cases involving foreign fishing vessels in 1998.

Vessel Monitoring System

The NMFS OLE currently operates a satellite-based fishing vessel monitoring system to help determine the location and activity of vessels fishing around the Hawaiian Islands. VMS can also be used to receive catch and effort data from the fleet, transmit and receive messages, and accurately locate vessels during an emergency. While VMS is currently used only for fisheries around the Hawaiian Islands, the system has potential uses in other fisheries throughout the Western Pacific, where the United States exercises jurisdiction over about 1.5 million square miles of ocean.

The Hawaii Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), monitored in the 14th District Command Center by NMFS and USCG, continues to be an effective surveillance and enforcement tool. In 1998, there were nine significant enforcement cases cued by the VMS information. Using Asignature analysis@ USCG and NMFS identify possible incursions into the main Hawaiian Island (MHI) longline closure area and the Northwest Hawaiian Island (NWHI) Protected Species Zone (PSZ). This

information is passed to patrolling cutters for investigation during at-sea enforcement boarding. The following information applies:

The following violations by fishing vessels were observed during 1998:

On 4 January, Coast Guard and NMFS detected an incursion into the Protected Species Zone around Gardiner Pinnacle and French Frigate Shoals in the NWHI on the Hawaii VMS by the F/V PAN AM II, a Hawaii longliner. The Coast Guard monitored the movement of the PAN AM II and detected a second incursion into the PSZ on 7 January.

On 20 January, the CGC ASSATEAGUE boarded the vessel and documented the violations. The Offense Investigation Report was forwarded to NMFS for disposition.

While patrolling the American Samoa EEZ, CGC SASSAFRAS boarded four Pago Pagobased domestic longliners or alias. No fisheries violations were found; however, the alias compliance with federal Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations varied widely between the four. In one case, the voyage of the GREENPEACE III was terminated and the vessel was escorted back to Pago Pago. The other three alias had minor or no violations.

While on a Central Pacific patrol on 17 February, CGC SASSAFRAS sighted the FFV SHIN YUNG No. 55 actively fishing in the Kiribati EEZ around Canton Island. The Fourteenth District routinely forwards sighting information collected in the course of normal operations to the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA). In this case, the Fisheries Enforcement Unit in Kiribati reported that this vessel had not checked into their EEZ and a violation would be issued.

On 30 April, Coast Guard and NMFS detected an incursion into the Protected Species Zone in the NWHI on the Hawaii VMS by the F/V BLUE DRAGON, a Hawaii longliner. The Coast Guard monitored the movement of the vessel until its return to port. A NMFS enforcement agent boarded the vessel at the dock.

On 1 May, Coast Guard and NMFS detected an incursion into the Main Hawaiian Island longline closure area on the Hawaii VMS by the F/V PETITE ONE, a Hawaii longliner. The Coast Guard monitored the movement of the vessel until its return to port. A NMFS enforcement agent boarded the vessel at the dock.

On 9 May, Coast Guard and NMFS detected an incursion into the Main Hawaiian Island longline closure area on the Hawaii VMS by the F/V CRYSTAL, a Hawaii longliner. The Coast Guard monitored the movement of the vessel until its return to port. A NMFS enforcement agent boarded the vessel at the dock.

On 12 June, Coast Guard and NMFS detected an ongoing incursion into the Protected Species Zone in the NWHI on the Hawaii VMS by the F/V CAPT GREG. The Coast Guard monitored the movement of the vessel and determined that the CAPT GREG was currently setting gear in the Protected Species Zone. A C-130 from Barber s Point was

launched and documented the illegal activity. A case package was developed and forwarded to NMFS enforcement for disposition.

On 28 October, the F/V LADY ALICE (US) was identified on the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) as possibly longline fishing inside the Main Hawaiian Island Longline Closed Area. CGC ASSATEAGUE boarded the LADY ALICE on 29 October and found that the vessels logbook confirmed the violation. A second violation for improperly maintained lob book was issued.

Meetings and Conferences

Throughout 1998, the 14th District Law Enforcement Branch actively participated in meetings and conferences in support of the protection of living marine resources. These events ranged from informal gatherings of fisheries enforcement officials to our participation in the Multilateral High Level Conference (MHLC) on Highly Migratory Species. The Coast Guard was also asked to become a full member of the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Working Group. In addition, in 1998, the Coast Guard executed five combined exercises under Operation PACIFIC COMPASS. Operation PACIFIC COMPASS is a recurring Cooperative Maritime Patrol and Self-Support Operation involving Coast Guard cutters and aircraft, Pacific Island country patrol boats, and Australian and New Zealand maritime surveillance aircraft. The purpose of Operation PACIFIC COMPASS is to expand the 14th District=s partnership with regional fisheries enforcement counterparts in support of US national goals.

F. NMFS enforcement activities

Special Agents of NMFS, Office for Law Enforcement (OLE) conduct investigations of alleged violations of NOAA statutes and regulations, including the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), the Lacey Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. During 1998, Special Agents were assigned to Honolulu, Hawaii; Pago Pago, American Samoa; Agana, Guam; and Honiara, Solomon Islands. The Guam agent responded to complaints in the Northern Marianas Islands and the Honiara Agent assisted nations that are members of the Forum Fisheries Agency.

During 1998, 125 longline vessels fished in the Western Pacific Pelagic Fisheries, primarily for tuna and swordfish. In order to participate in these fisheries, vessels were required to have a limited entry permit and to carry on board a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). Vessels were also subject to a requirement to carry an observer. The regulations imposed reporting requirements on participants and closed approximately 160,000 square nautical miles around the northwest and main Hawaiian Islands to longlining to help protect fishery stocks, and also to protect endangered species that occur in the region, particularly the Hawaiian monk seal. During the year the OLE documented 52 apparent violations of the Western Pelagic Fisheries regulations.

Statistics for 1998

Complaints received	151
Dockside boardings conducted in Honolulu	160
Dockside boardings conducted in American Samoa	a 132
Fisheries investigations opened 68	