



Recreational Fisheries Data Planning Meeting

**8:30 am-12:30 pm, April 1 1999, Council Office
1164 Bishop St, Honolulu HI 96813**

Present: Craig Severance (UH-Hilo), Dave Itano (PFRP, UH-Manoa, Sam Pooley (NMFS Hon Lab), Marcia Hamilton (NMFS PIAO), Walter Ikehara, Reggie Kokubun, Alan Rabacal (HDAR), Paul Dalzell, Mark Minton, Mark Mitsuyasu (Council Staff)

Paul Dalzell opened the meeting at 8.30 am explaining the reason for convening the meeting and the importance of recreational catch data (global catch estimates, bycatch, annual reports, catch composition, CPUE trends, socio- economic data, allocations under MHLC).

The Council had endorsed the SSC suggestion that a task force be assembled to advise the Council on how to improve reporting of recreational data. The meeting began by discussing the definition of recreational fishing. Would any recreational data initiative target 1. all pelagic (boat) fishermen, 2. all boat fishermen or 3. all boat plus shoreline fishermen? It was decided to limit any initiative to boat fishermen, but not limited to only pelagic fisheries, so option 2 seemed the most appropriate? Marcia Hamilton noted that about 23% of the respondents in her recent PFRP survey of the Hawaii small boat fishery stated that they did not sell their fish. This led the meeting to discuss whether the objective of any future sampling/reporting initiative was to catch the unreported catch (i.e., recreational catch plus unsold commercial catch) or the purely recreational catch generated by those fishermen who never sell their catch.

The meeting consensus was that both the unsold portion of the catch, and that portion thereof which is purely recreational catch should be estimated. It was noted that the data to make an estimate of the expense and recreational catch is available from Marcia Hamilton's small boat survey for the years 1995 and 1996. It was noted, however, that there is a large avidity bias in intercept surveys, i.e. that only the keenest recreational and expense fishermen. A phone survey of registered boat owners was therefore essential. Once the structure of the population is known, intercept surveys will provide detailed data on identifiable sub-sectors.

The discussion moved to recreational licensing. Recreational fishermen within the State appeared to accept recreational licensing and other restrictions for freshwater fishing, but some remained opposed to a recreational license for marine fishing. There was also concern voiced by the meeting that new USCG regulations may push some part-time fishermen currently holding CMLs not to renew them, thus exacerbating the overall reporting problem.

Sam Pooley noted that the problems of incomplete and non-reporting were not a new topic and had been looked at in the past. Sam stated that he would be willing to put together a matrix showing the number of participants and reporting rates in each sector of the small boat fishery to identify where data reporting was deficient.

The meeting then discussed the potential of boat and fishing clubs as a source of recreational data, as well as for task force participation. Boat clubs appear to be in decline but there may be as many as two dozen clubs active in the State. Hawaii Fishing News was also identified as a potential source of information.

Boat clubs keep records of monthly catch and size data. This information can potentially be used to estimate catch per unit of effort (CPUE). There were reservations about this, however, since recreational fishermen may use a variety of gear types and target a variety of species dependant on a myriad of factors, including targeting to achieve catch totals for club competitions, and thus the CPUE estimates may have little meaning. However, the clubs could be a potentially valuable source of socio-economic data, particularly in support of regulatory initiatives where impact assessments are required. It was noted that just surveying the fishing clubs in the State would be a full time occupation. The value of tournament data was also discussed. However, it was noted that this data is only collected during a very small time interval in any given year.

Craig Severance thought that it was important to have a one or two purely recreational fishermen who never sold their catches on the task force. Craig also raised the question about the number of marginal operators (i.e., expense fishermen) who don't report and are not interested in reporting catches and what type of investment/multiplier effect they have on the economy and how to assess it.

Walter Ikehara asked whether it was necessary to have CPUE data to develop expansions for total catch. Could it be obtained from average catch and participation data, or from the CPUE data in the annual report with participation records? Walter noted that using participation estimates for blue marlin and commercial blue marlin CPUE rates gave an informal estimate of blue marlin recreational catch of between 5-7 million lbs per year.

There was some discussion of the MHI-MRI program at HDAR, which has a 10 year life-span and creel surveys has been established on the Big Island and Maui. This led to discussion of recreational licensing in Hawaii as a source of information. HDAR does not have the authority to issue recreational licenses, and must obtain this from the legislature. The possibility of a voluntary licensing and a reporting system was discussed. The recreational license would identify a target universe for sampling and basis for expansion.

The recent partial disapproval of the comprehensive SFA amendment was discussed, with respect to the failure of NMFS to conduct the MFRSS in Hawaii for a decade. The cost of this survey

was thought to range between \$0.5- 1 million dollars, but might be accomplished for much less than this amount.

The composition of the Task Force was discussed. The following were identified as potential Task Force members: purely recreational fishermen, expense fishermen, gear tackle store owners, fishing club members, charter fishermen, DBEDT staff, staff and writers associated with Hawaii Fishing News (Chuck Johnston, Rick Gaffney, Jim Rizutto), harbor masters, as well as technical people from NMFS (HL & PIAO), HDAR, USCG, and Council.

Terms of reference for the Task Force were discussed. The type of information required from sampling the recreational fishing sector were required for: biological assessment, socio-economic data, allocation issues, and impact assessment.. The role of the Task Force will be to identify methodologies on how recreational data can be obtained, explore options for data collection, and which funding sources may be used to support this work.

The first Task Force meeting should include a synopsis of reports and surveys conducted by the various agencies etc in Hawaii on recreational fisheries, a matrix on the fishing sectors and where data is lacking, an explanation to Task Force members on the fishery management process, and show why rec data is needed. A suggestion was made to invite Mark Holliday (NMFS-MRFSS) and his equivalent in the USFWS to attend a Task Force meeting, to appreciate the complexities of the Hawaii fishing sector.

The Task Force will be comprised of active and retired small boat-fishermen (recreational, part-time commercial, and subsistence) spokespersons for the recreational and sports fishing sector and fisheries management and data specialists.

The objective of the Task Force will be to provide advice to the Council on the best ways to collect information on recreational, part-time commercial and subsistence fishing activities in Hawaii, including levels of participation, catch and fishing effort.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm

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