



**Report of Second Recreational Fishery Task Force Meeting,  
Western Pacific Fishery Council Offices,  
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400, Honolulu, Hi 96813  
8.30-1.00 pm, Tuesday, November 21, 1999**

**1. Introduction**

Recreational Task Force Chairman Richard Shiroma opened the meeting at 8.50 am and welcomed participants to the second Recreational Fishery Task Force Meeting. He noted that there was a much better turnout for the second meeting. He asked Mark Mitsuyasu, Council staff, to make a brief announcement concerning World Fisheries Day, and the need for fish for the Hawaii food bank. He outlined who from the commercial fishing sector was giving fish to the food bank and hoped that there would be a similar response from the recreational sector.

**2. Review of minutes from TF1**

Paul Dalzell reviewed the minutes from the first Task Force meeting and for the benefit of members who were not present at TF1, elaborated on the topics and discussion therein.

**3. Review of recommendations arising from TF1 and progress to date**

Richard Shiroma reviewed the recommendations arising from TF1. He noted that these had not yet been presented to the Council since it was important to solicit comments from Task Force members who were not at TF1.

**1. Council staff to prepare for the next Task Force meeting a summary of the methods used to allocate catches between recreational and commercial pelagic fisheries on the East Coast.**

Paul Dalzell explained that he had contacted Rebecca Lent, head of the NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division about formulae used for allocation of Gulf and Atlantic HMS. Lent explained that ICCAT limited national shares of bluefin, and that the dividing up of this between user groups was based on catch history. She also explained that allocation was also based on abundance of particular

size classes of bluefin tuna. User group history had also been used to generate allocations for sharks. This had also been influenced by a re-building schedule for depleted shark stocks which resulted in cutting of commercial and recreational quotas by 50%.

Lent noted that there was little recreational swordfish fishing so recreational fishermen did not have a quota for this species. All marlin, on the other hand, was allocated to recreational fishermen, with a total non-retention policy for longline marlin catches.

Paul Dalzell explained the basis of Spanish Mackerel allocation, based on notes received from the NMFS Southeast Region Science Center. Dalzell suggested that Spanish Mackerel was a good model for possible allocation for species such as mahimahi or wahoo in the Western Pacific. Under an FMP jointly administered by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Councils, a Spanish Mackerel TAC had been declared and allocated to recreational and commercial fishermen based on the relative contributions to catches between 1979-1985. This led initially to a 76:24 split in favor of the commercial fisheries, but this was changed to 50/50 under Amendment 4. The South Atlantic Council recommended the change because the 76:24 commercial:recreational allocation was contributing to the early closure of the recreational fishery and creating negative socioeconomic impacts. Also, the Council believed that the 50:50 allocation of the TAC better represented the distribution of catch between the commercial and recreational sectors during the mid-1970s when the fishery was not overfished.

The 12-inch fork length minimum size limit was implemented under the FMP to prevent harvest in excess of MSY, prevent harvest of Spanish mackerel below the size required for optimum biological yield and was reasonably consistent with the maximum yield per recruit which indicated an average age of recruitment of 1.0 years when fishing at  $F(0.1)$ . The average age of a 12-inch Spanish mackerel is 0.5 years.

Recreational bag limits were established based on bag limit analyses from MRFSS data performed by the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, socioeconomic analyses and consistency with state regulations.

Discussion by the TF noted that there had been a substantial recreational fisheries for swordfish in Florida and New England that were eliminated with the advent of longline fishing. A swordfish recreational fishery at Kona was also thought to have been eliminated with the rejuvenation of longline fishing, targeting swordfish, in Hawaii in the late 1980s. Size limits for marlin had also wiped out certain classes of light tackle sports fisheries on the US East Coast, since fish caught below the minimum size could not be kept to verify records.

**2. Recommend that Council seek sources of funding to conduct a Hawaii small boat phone or mail survey to estimate the percentage of vessels that catch Management Unit Species, but do not sell to obtain estimates of avidity, catch and motivation.**

It was explained that while a great deal of information had been gathered through recent PFRP projects on small vessel fisheries using intercept surveys, there still existed a need to properly define the universe of recreational fishermen due to avidity or keenness bias. It was noted that such survey was going to require substantial funding.

**3. Explore the possibility of a new part-time commercial fisherman category in Hawaii in connection with definition of part time category as an incentive for fishermen to report non-commercial portion of catch.**

This draft recommendation generated a substantial volume of discussion by the TF. It was explained that the establishment of a new category of part-time commercial fishermen that might not need all the USCG requirements for commercial fishing might act as a carrot or incentive for fishermen to report catches. There is also the fear that declared catches by part-time commercial fishermen will increase their tax liability, even though it was the unsold portion of their catches that was of interest to the TF. The sold portion of the catch should be picked up through the HDAR dealer reporting system which is increasing the range of coverage.

It was noted that when the USCG first published vessel safety regulations in the federal register, it acknowledged that some fishermen would be displaced due to the costs of safety equipment. The average trailer vessel cost in the vicinity of \$30-40,000. The price of equipment such as EPIRBs was dropping below \$1000, but the most expensive item was still a life raft with a cost of between \$3-4000. Most of the part time commercial vessels were small boats and it was hard to mount a life raft on these size of vessel.

A better statement of the objectives of this recommendation was thought necessary to facilitate understanding by state agencies. Unless enforcement was effective, fishermen would still fish without a license. It was estimated that 80-90 % of recreational fishermen sell some of their catch. It was proposed to divide this recommendation to one covering USCG regulations and another dealing with the under-reporting problem. It was noted that sales of fish in Guam have to exceed a certain dollar value threshold to be taxable. Most fishermen only sell a few thousand dollars worth of fish each year and it might be possible to have recreational fishermen sign up for such a license if there was some partial tax exemption.

Such a scheme would, however, require the cooperation of several agencies if such a recommendation was accepted, particularly the taxation authorities. The majority of pelagic fish in Hawaii ends up in the market and so the commercial sales data should present a fairly accurate assessment of pelagic fisheries. Once United Fishing Agency is on line through the dealer reporting program, the majority of the state's fisheries transactions will be covered by the HDAR scheme. The intention of the scheme is to get the initial or first time buyers to report their transactions, ultimately leading to getting roadside peddlers to report.

The need to consider commercial data was perhaps being over-emphasized. It was noted that the minutes from the previous meeting included recreational, part time and full time commercial catches, but not sports-fishing. Sports fishermen's prime motivation for fishing was pure recreation as opposed to the part-timers who fished to make payments on vessels and gear. The commercial fishery data base may already contain the part-time fishery data. It was explained that at the original planning meeting for the TF that recommended focus would be on the pure recreational catch, and the unsold portion of the catch from part time or expense fishermen.

The possibility of a volume threshold on commercial catch was discussed. This was used in California to distinguish between true commercial fishermen and fishermen making some additional income from occasionally selling fish. There was also a different mind-set between Hawaii and the mainland with respect to fish sales which are far more regulated on the mainland than in Hawaii. Surveys of small vessel fishermen have shown that selling catch in Hawaii is not a good guide to splitting recreational and commercial fishermen.

The discussion focused on licensing of fishermen and on the possibility of licensing all fishermen, regardless of whether they were commercial, expense or purely sports fishermen. Then all licensed fishermen could be asked to keep a log book, obviating the need for bodies such as this Task Force. It was noted, however, that most places with recreational licensing still have to conduct creel surveys to obtain accurate data. The TF also mulled over the question of whether it should deal with recreational licensing. It was noted in this context that the recreational fishermen comprised a large, possibly the largest unit of the small vessel fishing universe and these need to be identified.

Following this discussion the consensus was to change recommendation 3 to read as follows:

**The Council should seek USCG commercial fishing vessel safety equivalencies to encourage reporting by part-time commercial fishermen**

**4. Explore the possibilities of conducting ongoing phone or mail recreational fishery surveys in conjunction with vessel registration.**

It was noted that surveys of small boat fishing vessel had been conducted by the Pelagic Fisheries Research Program at the University of Hawaii. Some information could also be gathered in connection with vessel registration (At this point it was suggested that all the recommendations concerning surveys could be lumped together in the draft of the meeting report).

There was further discussion defining recreational fishermen and a perceived reluctance by the TF to develop a definition of recreational fishermen. Marcia Hamilton's PFRP project on small boat fishermen had shown that it was possible to profile those fishermen that do not sell their catch. However, the PFRP survey was only part of the entire population and the need for a broader phone survey was needed.

The concept of a marine recreational license was discussed as a means to obtain recreational fisheries data. In Hawaii there may be problems associated with a marine recreational license from objections by Native Hawaiians requiring a license to conduct fishing. Fishing was also a guaranteed right under the State Constitution. Walter Ikehara explained the recent changes for bottomfish management by the State, which required all vessels that intended to target bottomfish to register with HDAR. Ikehara showed the breakdown of the registered vessels both state wide and for Oahu. Statewide, about one third of vessels had registered as non-commercial fishing vessels. In Oahu over half the registered vessels were registered as non-commercial fishing vessels.

A similar scheme could be done for pelagic fishing vessels. This could be accomplished under an administrative rule by HDAR, by requiring at registration a statement if the vessel was for recreational or commercial fishing. The vessel registration could also be compared with the existing commercial license database as a check to verify responses. It was agreed that the registration process could be very useful if applied to pelagic fishing vessels, but implementation may still be a lengthy process even under an administrative rule. It was also noted that any registration process should not eliminate non-powered vessels which also participate in recreational fishing.

**5. Develop an education program to impart the benefits of recreational reporting before any sampling/survey initiative is begun.**

The TF agreed with the importance of an education process to explain to the fishermen why it was to their benefit to, report recreational fishing data.

**6. NMFS Honolulu Laboratory to obtain a better understanding of the methodologies employed by the USFWS recreational fishing and hunting survey in Hawaii.**

Sam Pooley explained that the USFWS survey dates from the 1950s and their survey methods had changed over time, making it difficult to make comparisons over time. The USFWS survey was due for another round in 2001. The TF considered whether some of the TF goals could and should be pursued through this survey, given that failure of the NMFS-MRFSS to conduct a survey in Hawaii for the past two decades. Most national surveys of this kind were pretty rigid but the TF may be able to tack on some questions related to the aims of this group. Pooley had received the survey methodology on a CD and would explore this further.

**7. Any new recreational fishery survey should involve focus groups and pre-testing in pocket areas of the State prior to implementation**

The TF concurred with this recommendation

**8. Council staff and/or NMFS staff to obtain the source by zip code and gear type of the tax moneys that generate Dingell-Johnston and fishing restoration funds for Hawaii.**

Paul Dalzell referred the TF to the response from USFWS to this question, which suggested that tracking down this information was not an easy task. However, it was noted that until recently about 90% of the recreational fishing gear sold in the State was sold through 2-3 stores, so it may be relatively easy to follow up on this. Referring to the material supplied by USFWS, questions were asked about the 15% of DJ funds that were allocated to the State. Were they used on fishing projects or were they simply added to the State's coffers? This funding was used to support boat ramp construction and maintenance, FAD construction and deployment, education and restocking projects. What was the value of this 15% in dollar terms? This was unknown, and it was thought that even if a marine license was introduced, this value was unlikely to change.

**9. Council will continue to try to get NMFS MRFSS survey implemented in Hawaii and identify other sources of funds for recreational surveys.**

P. Dalzell noted that the Council had contacted Mark Holliday, Chief of the Economics and Statistics Division at NMFS HQ about re-instating the MRFSS in Hawaii. The letter was sent on the 27<sup>th</sup> October, and no response had so far been received. Dalzell indicated that he and the Council would continue to press for the MRFSS reinstatement.

**10. Council, NMFS, HDAR, UH and other agencies to ensure coordination of various surveys within the State to avoid duplication and overlap.**

The TF concurred with this recommendation.

Following the review of recommendations there was discussion about the decision making process of the TF, namely when recommendations were generated, should these be put to the vote or agreed upon through consensus or what? Paul Dalzell explained that with most Council advisory bodies, decision were generally taken through consensus rather than for voting, in common with Pacific Island traditions. Dalzell cited the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) which had only ever taken one vote, and that was not to decide on recommendations by voting but by group consensus.

There was agreement in the TF that achieving a consensus was the best way to proceed if it reflected the majority opinion of the group. However, opinions that differed from the consensus should also be reported, and Dalzell was asked to generate a recommendation to reflect this. This draft recommendation is as follows:

**11. Decision making and recommendations from the Council's Recreational Fisheries Data Task Force shall be developed through the consensus of the group, however, opinions of Task**

**Force Members that differ or disagree with the group consensus should also be reported along with the text of any decision or recommendation.**

### **3. USCG safety requirements for small commercial vessels**

Lt Mike Tossato of the United States Coast Guard gave a presentation on the USCG Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Requirements. Lt Tossato explained the elements of vessel safety compliance were accomplished through both education and enforcement. He also explained how regulations were designed based on vessel size and operating area. The regulations also contained a mechanism or framework for determining exemptions or equivalencies, which had been developed for American Samoa and Guam. The vessel safety regulations apply to all uninspected commercial fishing vessels, of which there are three categories:

1. all US documented fishing vessel > 5NT
2. State registered fishing vessels that conduct commercial fishing
3. Small passenger vessels that conduct commercial fishing.

Recreational vessels also were required to comply with a list of safety equipment including, personal flotation devices, throwable floatation devices, visual distress signals, sound producing devices, fire extinguishers, ventilation, backfire flame control, navigation lights, marine sanitation devices.

Commercial fishing craft had to have all of these, and in addition required survival craft and an EPIRB (emergency position indicating radio beacon).

There were also additional requirements for vessels with greater than 16 people on board. Fireman's Outfits, SCBA, 1st Aid/CPR & training, hazard guards/covers, navigation, information, compass, anchor & radar reflector, general alarm system, communications equipment, high water alarms, bilge system, electronic positioning, emergency instructions, safety orientation and drills.

Termination of a fishing trip could be made for the following reasons: insufficient lifesaving equipment, no EPIRB, inadequate firefighting equipment, instability, operator intoxicated, no navigation lights (at night), missing or inoperable watertight closures, excessive fuel in the bilge, flooding or uncontrolled leakage and inoperable bilge system.

Lt Tossato explained the mechanism for developing equivalency programs and how these were applied in Guam and American Samoa. The Guam program was for vessels # 36 ft with up to four people on board and traveling distances up to 30 miles. The American Samoa program is similar, but covers vessels traveling up to 20 miles from shore. Vessels must fish in pairs, carry cell phones with a spare battery change, VHS radio, and a GPS device. This exempts commercial fishing vessels from carrying an EPIRB and survival craft.

Following further discussion the USCG position was that it did not want to be perceived as an impediment to complete and accurate data collection through the imposition of safety regulations for commercial fishing vessels. Unlike Guam and American Samoa, however, the USCG had not identified an homogenous group of fishermen for which an equivalency program could be developed. Such a group might be identified through the TF and possibly a special category for expense or part time commercial fishermen may be implemented, for which an equivalency program may be developed.

It was also important, however, for the TF to maintain its focus, on pure recreational fishing and that this should continue to be the priority for the group, followed by expense fishing.

#### 4. Discussion topics from TF1

TF member Rick Gaffney, unable to attend TF1, had suggested some items which were placed on the agenda for TF2. These were now open to the meeting for discussion

##### ***i. Review of support for recreational fishing in Hawaii by WESPAC, NMFS, DAR, DOBOR, DBEDT, JIMAR, etc.***

There was support from the TF for a review of the type suggested in the this recommendation. Paul Dalzell stated he was willing to draft letters to all the various institutions listed above, plus any others which may have a connection with recreational fishing, and present the responses at the next TF meeting.

##### ***ii. Economic impact of recreational fisheries in the Western Pacific Region***

The comparison of the value of recreational and commercial fishing in Hawaii was one which always attracted a certain amount of controversy, particularly the allocation of tourist expenditures and the estimate of the nonmarket value of recreational fishing. P. Dalzell noted that this was a recommendation from the Pelagics Advisory Panel and still required addressing by the Council. He hoped that the Council could identify funding to hire a suitable contractor to conduct this work.

This led to discussion of catch and release in recreational and charter fisheries and if these would be factored into subsequent allocation. This led to the following TF recommendation:

**The value of catch and released fish should be incorporated into quota based management allocation systems for highly migratory species in the Western Pacific. Quotas should be established on catch volume rather than landed volume.**

##### ***iii. Current and possible future impacts of current and proposed FMPs on recreational fishing in Hawaii***



Paul Dalzell reviewed a summary of current Council FMP regulatory activities (see attached table). He noted those FMP amendments where there may be some impacts on recreational fishing. Current pelagic amendments would have little impact on recreational fishermen. Overall it was thought that the coral reef FMP may have some impact with its proposed requirements for permitting and reporting by all classes of fishermen.

## **5. Marine Recreational Fisheries Symposium in June 2000 and other meetings**

Paul Dalzell stated that the Council would be sending representatives to participate in the NMFS Marine Recreational Fisheries Symposium in June 2000. He asked the meeting for suggestions for a theme for any presentations and displays that would be part of the Council's participation. The value of recreational fishing in Hawaii appeared to be the consensus of the meeting. Dalzell asked the TF members to continue thinking about additional ideas for the next TF meeting. Dalzell also alerted TF members to other recreational fisheries meetings taking place over the next year, and noted that the Council would consider any application for financial support to attend recreational fishery meetings by TF members, although this was contingent on resources being available.

## **6 Conclusion: date and topics for TF3**

Prior to conclusion of the meeting TF member Rick Gaffney related his recent experiences in generating a report on ulua for HDAR's participation in the Hawaii Fisheries Forum 2000, held on November 13<sup>th</sup>, prior to the TF meeting. He noted the large archive of recreational fishery data in the angling clubs, from tournaments, publications such as Hawaii Fishing News and the charter vessel database in Kona. P. Dalzell noted that similar topics had been discussed at the initial planning meeting for the TF where it was recognized that collecting this type of information was not a part-time undertaking. Dalzell suggested that a PFRP project could be developed to conduct such an investigation, to identify data sources, develop a directory of fishing clubs in the State, develop a catalog of archived recreational data, and evaluate archived data for socio-economic and fishery biological purposes.

Dalzell stated that he was willing to draft a letter of intent with assistance from Sam Pooley and Marcia Hamilton, to develop a full proposal for the latest round of funding under the Pelagics Fisheries Research Program. The closing date for the letter of intent was January 3 2000. If the PFRP Steering Committee gave this the go-ahead then a full project proposal would be drafted and reviewed by the TF. Dalzell suggested that if the project became a reality, then it would report regularly to the TF, whose members would also be asked to assist in approaching fishing clubs, tournaments etc to secure access to data archives. The TF agreed that Dalzell should proceed with letter of intent, which would be circulated prior to the next TF meeting for members review and comment.

There was a little further discussion about the need to better define the Task Force and what its objectives were. P. Dalzell referred to the original planning document that had developed the terms of

reference for the TF and would make it available for those who were interested. This document was also included in Council and SSC briefing books earlier this year.

The date for the next meeting was set for Wednesday January 19<sup>th</sup>, and an entire day would be allotted for the meeting. Chairman Shiroma then adjourned the meeting at 12.50 pm.

### **Summary of recommendations**

**1. Council staff to prepare for the next Task Force meeting a summary of the methods used to allocate catches between recreational and commercial pelagic fisheries on the East Coast.**

(Recommendation accomplished, with some further information received subsequent to TF2 but summarized here)

**2. The following recommendations be considered when developing recreational fisheries surveys**

- i. Recommend that Council seek sources of funding to conduct a Hawaii small boat phone or mail survey to estimate the percentage of vessels that catch Management Unit Species, but do not sell to obtain estimates of avidity, catch and motivation.**
- ii. Explore the possibilities of conducting ongoing phone or mail recreational fishery surveys in conjunction with vessel registration.**
- iii. Develop an education program to impart the benefits of recreational reporting before any sampling/survey initiative is begun.**
- iv. NMFS Honolulu Laboratory to obtain a better understanding of the methodologies employed by the USFWS recreational fishing and hunting survey in Hawaii.**  
(information obtained but not yet studied in full)
- v. Any new recreational fishery survey should involve focus groups and pre-testing in pocket areas of the State prior to implementation.**
- vi. Council will continue to try to get NMFS MFRSS survey and other sources of funds for recreational surveys**
- vii Council, NMFS, HDAR, UH and other agencies to ensure coordination of various surveys within the State to avoid duplication and overlap.**

**4. The Council should seek USCG commercial fishing vessel safety equivalencies to encourage reporting by part-time commercial fishermen**

**5. Council staff and/or NMFS staff to obtain the source by zip code and gear type of the tax moneys that generate Dingell-Johnston and fishing restoration funds for Hawaii. (Some information obtained to date but further inquiries necessary).**

6. Decision making and recommendations from the Recreational Fisheries Data Task Force shall be developed through the consensus of the group, however, opinions and expressions of dissent from the group consensus by Task Force Members should also be reported along with the text of any decision or recommendation.

7. The value of catch and released fish should be incorporated into quota based management allocation systems for highly migratory species in the Western Pacific. Quotas should be established on catch volume rather than landed volume.

8. Council staff to develop in conjunction with NMFS Honolulu Laboratory and Pacific Islands Area Office a letter of intent to develop a project for PFRP funding collecting and evaluating recreational fishing data archives in Hawaii.

#### Names and contact data for Recreational Fisheries Data Task Force members

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