



WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

Report of the 101st Meeting of the Scientific and Statistical Committee

Kailua-Kona, Hawaii
July 20-22, 2009

1. **Introductions**
2. **Approval of Draft Agenda and Assignment of Rapporteurs**
3. **Status of the 100th SSC Meeting Recommendations**
4. **Report from the Pacific Fisheries Science Center Director**
5. **Program Planning**

A. Recommendations on Fishing Regulations for Pacific Monuments

Council staff provided the SSC with potential definitions of various types of fishing activities that would occur in the recently established National Marine Monuments in the Pacific (excluding the NWHI National Marine Monument). There was a considerable amount of discussion among SSC members about these fishing activities, their definitions, and their comportment with MSRA. **For all of the monuments under consideration, the SSC recommends the least restrictive of the definitions as provided by the Council and recommends applying a single definition for all permitted fishing as stipulated in the Monument Proclamations. The SSC also recommends that Guam representation be included on the Advisory Council for the Marianas monument.**

B. Instituting Limited Access Privilege Programs for the Western Pacific Region

Council staff provided an introduction and overview to LAPPs and catch shares to the SSC. Staff provided a definition of catch shares and noted that LAPPs are a type of catch share that allocates individual fishing quotas shares to individuals, vessels, permits, captains, crews, or communities, that are a percentage of the quota and not necessarily the same share every year. She also went over the requirements for the development of a LAPP as defined by the MSA and presented issues of concern regarding LAPPs.

C. PIFSC Coral Reef Ecosystem Division Surveys

1. Review of CRED Survey Methodologies

At the 100th meeting of the SSC, members had expressed concerns about the robustness and utility of previous CRED survey results (2002-2005) for making management decisions for the recently established Marine National Monuments in the Pacific. Dr. Jerry Ault (University of Miami) presented the final report of a workshop to develop cost-effective sampling methodologies for ecosystem monitoring of the Northwest Hawaiian Islands National Marine Monument. A review of previous survey data had revealed significant sampling design issues, including low precision and the lack of sampling effort across the different habitats proportional to habitat areal coverage. Among the recommendations of Dr. Ault was to emphasize the use of

Neyman allocation curves to better project sampling size and precision. Also, Dr. Ault suggested that future surveys should utilize forward-looking survey designs that sample across a broader range of habitats, although some fixed stations (which provide demographic life history info) should be retained.

2. Modifications to CRED Surveys

Mark Nadon (CRED) presented modifications to CRED survey methodologies in Rose Atoll. These modifications included adding a second REA boat, increasing the number of sites surveyed per day, and efforts to standardize the sampling design. Additionally, habitat mapping of shallow water reef habitats is currently insufficient. There was also discussion among the SSC about whether the depth that these surveys were primarily conducted does not accurately capture the deeper reef communities, although this was acknowledged to be a technical limitation of the scuba survey method.

D. Vulnerability Evaluation WG Final Report

The SSC heard the final report from the Vulnerability Evaluation Workshop Group including the application of productivity-susceptibility analyses as a useful tool to determine vulnerability for data poor stocks. These results will be incorporated into future guidelines.

E. Research

1. 5-Year Research Priorities

Council staff provided the SSC with the list of ranked research priorities that had been developed in the 99th meeting. **The SSC reviewed the list and did not recommend revising the list pending the PIFSC's report on these issues.**

2. Cooperative Research Projects and Priorities

Mike Seki updated the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center's Cooperative Research Program. Currently, \$558,000 has been allocated to fund bottomfish research in Hawaii and the Center hopes to fund bottomfish research in the Territories and CNMI in the near future. **The SSC is supportive of these research priorities and hopes that the cooperative research will serve to align PIFSC research with WPRFMC priorities.**

F. Public Comment

No public comment.

6. Insular Fisheries

G. Hawaii Archipelago

1. Recommendations for Hancock Groundfish Moratorium

Council staff presented options for the management of seamount groundfish at Hancock Seamount. He provided a background on seamount groundfish explaining that it is the Council's only overfished stock. Staff also provided information on historic catch and effort by international fisheries in the areas, management measures implemented by other countries, the development of a regional fishery management organization for seamount groundfish, and current Council management of the fishery.

Severance asked if additional funding would be provided if the Hancock Seamount was designated as an LMEMA for research. Staff responded that it would be ideal to receive more

funding, but its up to NMFS.

Daxboeck asked if the stock needs a rebuilding plan since it is overfished. Bill Robinson, NMFS Administrator, replied that a rebuilding plan needs to be done, but it hasn't been a priority because the fishery is closed. Pooley replied that the North Pacific RFMO has discussed doing cooperative research with the Japanese and Russian fleets to determine stock status in the area, but he doesn't see any funding for research in the near future.

The SSC recommends that Council adopt Option 2, to extend the moratorium for a further 6 years until August 2016. The SSC also notes that there are important surface fisheries in the area and recommends that the Council explore the costs and benefits of consulting with NMFS and the North Pacific RFMO to develop a rebuilding plan, especially for Armorhead.

2. WPSAR Stock Assessment Review

Robert Skillman reported on a comprehensive WPSAR review of a 2009 PIFSC stock assessment for the MHI bottomfish species complex fishery. He identified some concerns with the data such as lack of accounting for zero-catch trips and recreational take. More important concerns related to (1) how the CPUE (catch per "bottomfish" trip) metric was derived as zero-catch trips were excluded and the metric was sensitive to the criteria used to define a "bottomfish" trip, (2) the data standardized modelling procedure used that did not include environmental variables and (3) the limited stock assessment model documentation. The review noted that a species complex was modelled rather than a single species and that the species composition of the catch changed over time. Both these issues present important challenges for the current stock assessment approach. So the review panel concluded that the Bayesian population dynamics modelling approach used in the stock assessment might be adequate but that more appropriate priors for a species complex and the species composition changes over time should be investigated.

The SSC thanks Robert Skillman for an informative presentation and thanks the WPSAR panel for conducting a thorough and insightful review.

The SSC endorses the WPSAR report and is confident that future PIFSC stock assessments of the MHI bottomfish fishery would benefit from adopting the data processing and stock assessment modeling recommendations presented in the report. The SSC specifically suggests the following —

- **that species-specific stock assessments might be considered in future instead of trying to model a species complex with time varying species composition**
- **otherwise multilevel and time-varying priors for some key parameters such as rmax for the species complex be used in any further Bayesian stock assessment model**
- **that a comprehensive assessment the genetic spatial structure relevant to bottomfish stocks in the Hawaiian Archipelago be completed**
- **that spatial structure be considered for the MHI stock assessment**
- **that the CPUE standardization modeling include relevant environmental variables and appropriate technology change variables**

3. Recommendations on MHI Bottomfish TAC

Council staff presented 5 alternative 2009-2010 TACs for the MHI commercial Deep-7

bottomfish fishery based on a 2009 stock assessment. The alternatives include a range of fishing levels with zero risk of Archipelagic-wide overfishing but various levels of MHI overfishing risk. Dan Polhemus noted that the State Administrative rule package to develop parallel rules for the recreational bag limit in state waters and permit and reporting had been resubmitted to the AG office without the reporting requirement

The SSC notes that while no Archipelago-wide overfishing has occurred that some local depletion in the MHI has occurred.

The SSC reiterates its previous recommendation (SSC 99, October 2008) that a precautionary TAC of 254,050 lbs for the MHI commercial Deep-7 bottomfish fishery be set that limits the risk of overfishing.

4. Recommendations on MHI Bottomfish LAPP

Limited Access Privilege Programs (within the broader category of known as catch-shares) allocate catches to individuals or groups and are a management instrument provided for by MSRA. A key challenge for LAPP implementation is to whom or to what entity the allocation is made. Council staff presented options for developing a LAPP for the MHI bottomfish fishery. She noted that there was some interest in managing bottomfish through a LAPP among some highliners in the commercial fleet. Some SSC members and the Regional Director cautioned the SSC on the importance of designing any LAPP carefully so there is as much equity as possible in the initial allocations, since allocations are difficult to change after the program begins. There are also many other issues in LAPP development such as transferability, recovery costs, the availability of catch history data, and the character of the bottomfish fleet. An additional important consideration is the affect of LAPPs on CPUE trend data

The SSC notes that adoption of LAPPs is not an urgent issue at the moment so there is time for more detailed consideration of the management implications of a MHI bottomfish fishery LAPP.

The SSC recommends that a review of the recent literature on the social and economic impacts of ITQ and LAPPs in other regions such as Alaska be developed for SSC and Council consideration. The SSC also recommends that a social and economic baseline study of the Hawaii bottomfish fleet be carried out in addition to the outreach efforts to be taken by the Council to provide the basic information needed for development of an equitable and functional LAPP or other management alternatives.

H. American Samoa Archipelago

1. Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary Coral Recovery

No report was available.

I. Setting ABCs for Insular Stocks

Council staff advised that the SSC must soon set ABCs (allowable biological catch) for US insular fisheries. There are 4 SSC meetings left before the deadline or ABCs will be set by NMFS. The MSRA requires that SSCs establish fishery-specific ABCs. An SSC recommends an ABC that is no more than an OFL (overfishing limit) set for a fishery where an MSY estimate exists. A Council then sets an ACL (annual catch limit) for that fishery based on the SSC's recommended ABC. The WPRFMC insular fisheries with MSY estimates that need ABCs are

some bottomfish, precious corals, crustaceans and small pelagic and coral reef species.

The SSC notes that this is a critical task with a very short deadline and has agreed to create a small working group to review the data needed to develop ABCs for some of the species for the October SSC meeting. SSC members Polhemus, Kleiber, Deriso, Trianni and Sabater agreed to serve and the SSC recommends that Hampton also be asked to participate.

J. Public Comment

No public comment.

7. Pelagic Fisheries

A. Recent Changes at the Top and Bottom of the North Pacific Pelagic Ecosystem

Jeff Polovina presented two studies that looked at ecosystem change at the top and bottom of the trophic chain in the North Pacific.

Catch rates for the 13 species most abundant species caught in the deep-set Hawaii-based longline fishery over the past decade provide evidence of a change at the top of the North Pacific subtropical ecosystem. Catch rates for apex predators such as blue shark, bigeye and albacore tunas, shortbill spearfish, and striped marlin declined from 3 to 10% per year while catch rates for 4 mid-trophic species, mahimahi, sickle pomfret, escolar, and snake mackerel increased from 10 to 18% per year. The mean trophic level of the top 13 species in the catch declined by 5% from 3.85 to 3.66, and the mean production to biomass (P/B) value increased by 21%, from 0.80 to 0.97. The increase in the mean P/B ratio suggests that this ecosystem may now be more responsive to climate variability.

A 9-year time series of SeaWiFS remotely-sensed ocean color data is used to examine temporal trends in the ocean's most oligotrophic waters, those with surface chlorophyll not exceeding 0.07 mg chl/m³. In the North and South Pacific, North and South Atlantic, outside the equatorial zone, the areas of low surface chlorophyll waters have expanded at average annual rates from 0.8 to 4.3%/yr and replaced about 0.8 million km²/yr of higher surface chlorophyll habitat with low surface chlorophyll water. It is estimated that the low surface chlorophyll areas in these oceans combined have expanded by 6.6 million km² or by about 15.0% from 1998 through 2006. In both hemispheres, evidence shows a more rapid expansion of the low surface chlorophyll waters during the winter. The North Atlantic, which has the smallest oligotrophic gyre is expanding most rapidly, both annually at 4.3%/yr and seasonally, in the first quarter at 8.5%/yr. Mean sea surface temperature in each of these 4 subtropical gyres also increased over the 9-year period. The expansion of the low chlorophyll waters is consistent with global warming scenarios based on increased vertical stratification in the mid-latitudes, but the rates of expansion we observe already greatly exceed recent model predictions.

B. Preliminary Oceanographic Characterization of Ocean Slicks off Kona

Don Kobayashi presented initial results from a new study on surface slicks, or areas of calm water of the Kona coast. Slicks are widespread oceanographic phenomena characterized by regions of the ocean which are noticeably slick and glassy in appearance, distinctly contrasting with surrounding water. Slicks can be generated by many different mechanisms related to the

aggregation of surface film compounds which change the surface tension of the water. Under appropriate conditions this change in surface tension dampens surface ripples and produces a region visually smooth in appearance. The aggregation of surface film compounds can occur via hydrodynamic mechanisms such as in a region of convergence or down-welling. Such regions also accumulate floating organisms (neuston and plankton) as well as natural and anthropogenic floating debris. The combination of these factors often turn these oceanic regions into miniature “hot-spots” with increased abundances of small and large fauna to the extent of being targeted by fishermen and other predators. The Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center has been conducting research cruises aboard the NOAA R.V. Oscar Elton Sette to investigate the oceanography and ecology of surface slicks off the leeward coast of Hawaii for several years. This presentation will summarize preliminary results from seven of these cruises from 2004-2009 including a recent cruise in April 2009 which utilized a portable CTD unit to characterize the fine-scale water column structure in and around slicks. The hypothesized importance of slicks to the early life-history stages of commercially important insular and pelagic species will be discussed.

C. Longline Management

1. Update on Hawaii Shallow-set Fishery

Alvin Katekaru summarized the recent proposed rule stemming from Amendment 18 to the Pelagic Fisheries Management Plan (PFMP) was published on June 19th 2009 which would remove the annual limit on the number of fishing gear deployments (sets) for the Hawaii-based pelagic longline fishery. The rule would also increase the current limit on incidental interactions that occur annually between loggerhead sea turtles and shallow-set longline fishing. The proposed rule is intended to increase opportunities for the shallow-set fishery to sustainably harvest swordfish and other fish species, without jeopardizing the continued existence of sea turtles and other protected resources. The preferred alternative to Amendment 18 is to remove fishing effort limits, increase the annual sea turtle interaction limit to 46 interactions with loggerhead sea turtles, and retain the current limit of 16 interactions with leatherback sea turtles. This alternative would also retain all other shallow-set fishery management measures, including 100% observer coverage for the fishery and the turtle handling and release requirements.

2. Tuna Quota Management

a. Update on 2009 Longline and Purse Seine Tuna Quota

Tom Graham summarized the NMFs proposed rules in the Federal Register for purse seine and longline bigeye catch limits. The June 1, 2009 proposed rule, which explains how it will implement Conservation and Management Measure 2008-01 from the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission for US purse seiners operating in the West & Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) in 2009-2011. The objectives of CMM 2008-01 include achieving, over the 2009-2011 period, a reduction in fishing mortality on bigeye tuna in the WCPO of at least 30 percent and no increase in fishing mortality on yellowfin tuna in the WCPO, relative to a specified historical baseline. The June 1st FR notice explains how NMFS intends to develop a US purse seine fishing effort baseline based on the 2004 level of fishing effort (vessel days), when 21 purse seiners fished in the WCPO, and then expanded or pro-rated to accommodate the 40 vessels currently fishing in WCPO under the South Pacific Tuna Treaty.

Also included in the proposed rule are prohibitions on FAD fishing, and fishing within specified high seas areas enclosed by the EEZs of Pacific Island countries, requirements for full catch retention. The proposed rule also implements the requirements of CMM 2008-03 on the handling

and release of sea turtles taken incidentally by purse seiners fishing in the WCPO.

The Council commented extensively on this proposed rule, especially on the application of the 2004 baseline with only 50% of the purse seine fleet active to 2009, when all 40 licenses have been used. The Council noted that Paragraph 10 of CMM 2008-01 clearly states that purse seine fishing effort in the period 2009-2011 must not exceed the average annual fishing effort in 2001-2004 or that in 2004. NMFS' proposed rule would expand the amount of purse seine fishing effort for the high seas and U.S. EEZ waters far beyond that which occurred in 2004 when 21 U.S. purse seine vessels were active. The Council also noted that NMFS' proposed rule misconstrues both the meaning and the intent of CCM 2008-01 since Paragraph 7 explicitly prohibits such expansions ("the registration of bilateral agreements or arrangements does not provide a basis for establishing effort levels on the high seas").

The longline proposed rule was published in the FR on July 8 by which NMFS proposes regulations under authority of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act (WCPFC Implementation Act) to establish a catch limit for bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) in the U.S. pelagic longline fisheries in the western and central Pacific Ocean for each of the years 2009, 2010, and 2011. Once the limit of 3,763 metric tons (mt) is reached in any of those years, retaining, transshipping, or landing bigeye tuna caught in the western and central Pacific Ocean would be prohibited for the remainder of the year, with certain exceptions. The limit would not apply to the longline fisheries of American Samoa, Guam, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The proposed rule militates against domestic charter arrangements whereby Hawaii-based vessels are contracted by American Samoa, Guam or CNMI to catch fish and it into Hawaii, the principal market, and provide both fishery development revenues and catch history.

With respect to the Environmental Assessment (EA) associated with the proposed rule, the Council noted that it was deficient in the range of alternatives that were analyzed, and did not consider maintaining purse seine effort levels at the 2004 baseline, nor fully considered the alternative of applying bigeye catch limits to US purse seiners which is an option in CMM 2008-01.

b. Recommendations on Tuna Quota Management (Action Item)

Paul Dalzell explained that NMFS has informed the Council that it will publish the 2009-2011 WCPFC bigeye catch limits for the U.S. longline vessels under the WCPFC Implementing Act, and has requested the Council to take action on the yellowfin catch limits (letter dates February 18, 2009 from Bill Robinson to Sean martin). NMFS also requested the Council to consider additional measures (beyond the publication of the 2009-2011 bigeye catch limits) to effectively manage the longline fishery. These requests have created the need for the actions considered here. The purpose of this action is to minimize adverse impacts to the human environment, including fishery participants and fishing communities, optimize yields and socioeconomic benefits, and maintain viable longline fisheries in the Western Pacific Region.

In December 2008 the WCPFC reached consensus on a new conservation measure (CMM 2008-01) for the years 2009-2011, applicable to bigeye and yellowfin tuna catches from the WCPO. This new measure includes a 30 percent longline bigeye catch reduction (as compared to 2004 landings) phased in by 10 percent increments over the three year period.

For fresh fish longline fisheries catching less than 5,000 mt annually (such as the Hawaii-based longline fleet), the reduction applies only to 2009, with 2010 and 2011 catches to be maintained at the 2009 level, i.e., at a 10 percent reduction. If the actual 2004 bigeye tuna landings of 4,181 mt (9,198,200 lb) are used as a baseline, the Hawaii annual longline bigeye quota would be 3,763 mt (8,278,600 lb). CMM 2008-01 states that the catch of yellowfin tuna is not to be increased in the longline fishery from the 2001-2004 levels. The 2004 total longline catch of yellowfin by the Hawaii fleet in the WCPO was 694 mt (1,526,800 lb), while the 2001-2004 average was 771mt (1,696,200 lb). It is anticipated that the Hawaii longline bigeye catch limit could be reached in October or possibly earlier. However October-February are prime bigeye fishing months for Hawaii-based vessels in terms of catch rates), and restrictions on targeting or retaining bigeye during this time would be expected to have higher negative economic impacts than during other time periods. Bigeye is also culturally important in Hawaii for Christmas and New Year's celebrations, which can persist through February with the various Lunar New Year festivals.

These conclusions are based on the baseline and catch limits calculated in the preceding paragraph. However, another methodology proposed by NMFS, in their proposed rule (74 FR 26160 – see above) and associated Environmental Assessment, to calculate annual fishing effort limits for the US Pacific purse seine fleet could be applied to the Hawaii-based bigeye longline fleet. Using this method, the 2004 catches would be expanded to account for the fact that only 125 of the allowable 164 permits were in use in 2004. Under this approach the 4,181 mt of bigeye landed in 2004 would be multiplied by the ratio 164/125 to yield a bigeye baseline of 5,486 mt (12,069,200 lb). A 10 percent reduction of this baseline would yield an annual Hawaii longline bigeye quota of 4,963 mt (10,918,600 lb). Applying this same approach to yellowfin tuna gives a 911 mt (2,004,200 lb) catch limit on the 2004 catch alone and 1,011 mt (2,224,200) catch limit based on the 2001-2004 average.

American Samoa, Guam and CNMI are among the small island developing State members and participating territories in the Convention Area with annual landings of less than 2,000 mt, that are undertaking responsible development of their domestic fisheries. As such the catch limits for bigeye and yellowfin under CMM 2008-01 do not apply, however, the Council, may if it wishes, set domestic catch limits for longline fisheries in these areas.

Council staff have drafted a document that considers a range of approaches for managing the regions longline fisheries under tuna catch limits. Appropriate approaches are likely to vary by species and area fished (i.e. WCPO bigeye is likely to be managed differently than EPO yellowfin). Among the options analyzed in the document, apart from the No Action Alternative are:

- Region-wide limited entry longline program
- region-wide port access program
- Catch shares or limited access privilege program (a.k.a. LAPPs/IFQs/ITQs)¹
- Sector allocations
- Trip limits for non-target sector
- Temporary bigeye or yellowfin prohibition triggered by reaching X percent of quota
- Seasonal tuna prohibition
- Change fishing year

¹ Council held a training workshop for Council Members and Council Staff on catch shares on June 25 and 25, 2009.

- Monthly landing limits
- Establishment of domestic bigeye catch limits for Guam, CNMI and American Samoa
Waiver of observer requirements when no observers are available
- Three year rolling catch limits

At the 145th Council meeting, the Council is expected to recommend a management approach, or a combination of approaches which they deem most appropriate to optimize yields and socio-economic benefits for longline fisheries in the Western Pacific Region. The approaches described in this document are not intended to be exhaustive and Council members may recommend other approaches for further consideration and analyses. The Council may also recommend pursuing one type of measure for the long-term, while recommending one or more a different short-term measures for the immediate future. **The SSC's task will be to consider which approaches the Council may consider to manage bigeye catches by US longline vessels in the Western Pacific Region, either one or more of the above list or other measures suggested by the SSC.**

3. Recommendations on Tuna Quota Monitoring (Action Item)

Eric Kingma reviewed the operational aspects of monitoring bigeye tuna catch limits. The Hawaii longline fishery is subject to an annual bigeye catch limit in the WCPO and based on historical landings, the quota could be reached prior to the end of the fishing year. The current hardcopy catch reporting/data logging system cannot adequately monitor fishery catches to avoid inadvertent quota underages and overages. Thus there is a need for more a timely monitoring system. The purpose of this action is to implement a near real time reporting system using available technologies which will facilitate accurate and timely quota monitoring in the US Pacific longline fishery. The SSS/Council will consider several options that involve daily reporting via two technologies: 1) VMS and 2) satellite phone.

D. Non-Longline Management (Action Item)

1. Recommendations on Cross Seamount/NOAA Weather Buoy Fishery Limited Entry Program & New Control Date

Paul Dalzell explained that the purpose of this action is to limit entry into the offshore non-longline pelagic fishery in Hawaii which uses a mix of different fishing gears, including longlines, handlines and shortlines. The need for the action stems partially from the unique role the main fishing ground for this fishery, the Cross Seamount, plays in offshore bigeye recruitment and in increasing harvests of seamount monchong from this fishery. Additional entry in the offshore fishery could create the potential to deplete the seamount monchong and bigeye tuna on the Cross Seamount as well as increase the potential for gear conflict in the limited fishing area above and around the Cross Seamount. There may also be the potential for in nearshore waters through vessels using shortline gear to target bigeye on other seamounts and nearshore areas of bigeye abundance (*koas*). This could create additional gear conflict issues, with other non-longline pelagic fishing vessels, which have occurred in the past between conventional longliners and non-longline boats, and led to the implementation of the 50-75 nm longline areas closure through Amendment 5 to the PFMP in 1991 (WPRFMC 1991).

Such entry into the offshore non-longline pelagic fishery could be driven by the bigeye tuna quotas implemented through the Pacific tuna Regional Fishery Management Organizations

(RFMOs). This may lead to a gap in the market for domestically caught bigeye from offshore non-longline pelagic vessels and some of the smaller longline vessels which have the potential to convert to shortline fishing.

At the 142nd Council Meeting, the Council directed staff to incorporate implementation details (e.g. eligibility criteria, gear descriptions and area of application), and associated impacts in an analysis of a range of alternatives that would establish a limited entry program for offshore handline and associated (non-trolling) hook-and-line fishing around Cross Seamount, weather buoys and private FADs in EEZ waters around Hawaii. Subsequently, Council staff recognized that trying to develop a comprehensive amendment for both the offshore handline fishery and the private FAD fishery was too complex, as highlighted from comments received at public meetings held in Hawaii in August 2008. As such the first action will be to develop a limited entry program for the offshore handline fishery focused on Cross Seamount and the NOAA Weatherbuoys. The Council will be asked to deal with four issues relating to limiting:

Issue 1: Affected area

Over which area should the limited entry program apply, Cross Seamount only, Cross Seamount and NOAA Weather buoys, or Cross Seamount, NOAA Weather buoys and other areas

Issue 2: Affected gear types

Which gear types should be included in a limited entry program, longlines only, longline and shortline, longlines shortlines and handlines, or these and other gears.

Issue 3: Participation criteria

What criteria will be used to establish eligibility to participate in a limited entry program? Should a control date be set, and if so when? Should a points system be used instead or maybe a combination of both points and control date?

Issue 4: Permit transferability

Should permits be freely transferable (as in the Hawaii longline fishery) or revert to NMFS when surrendered (as in the NWHI bottomfish fishery)?

At the 144th Council Meeting, the Council adopted a recommendation to put this item on the agenda for the next meeting, and to consider a control date for this fishery at the 145th Meeting. **The SSC's task will be to review the options for a limited entry program under the four topic areas listed above and recommend to the Council the best combination which will meet the objectives of the purpose and need and ensure the continuity of the offshore non-longline pelagic fishery.**

E. American Samoa and Hawaii Longline Quarterly Reports

Dave Hamm and Russell Ito presented the latest quarterly reports from the two US longline fisheries in the Western Pacific.

F. International Fisheries/Meetings

1. IATTC Conservation and Management Measures

Rick Deriso summarized the outcome of the June 2009 meeting where IATTC adopted a referendum Resolution C-09-011 (Resolution on a Multiannual Program for the Conservation of Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in 2009-2011). Colombia objected to the tabled conservation and management measure and has been provided until July 15, 2009 to respond to the IATTC on whether or not it will maintain its objection. On July 15, Colombia announced that it would comply with Resolution C-09-011. Under the proposed measure, US longline vessels operating in the EPO would be subject to a 500 mt (1,100,000 lb) annual catch limit. There is a small volume of longline catch made by vessels operating in the EPO based on the US West Coast. Although less than three longliners have operated from the West Coast since 2007, the 500 mt catch limit must be shared between this small fishery and vessels operating from Hawaii. As a contingency, in the event that Colombia maintains its objection and no consensus is formed, the remaining IATTC members agreed to an identical measure, and recognized that it was non-binding, but asked members to implement the agreed to measures domestically.

2. Report of the Second Tuna RFMOs Meeting

Charles Karbealle summarized the Second Tuna RFMO meeting. The Government of Japan, with technical assistance provided by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), organized and hosted the first Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs from January 22 to 26, 2007 in Kobe, Japan. The meeting included participants from 54 Members and Cooperating non-Members of five tuna RFMOs (IATTC: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission; ICCAT: International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas; IOTC: Indian Ocean Tuna Commission; WCPFC: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission; and CCSBT: Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna), as well as representatives of the Secretariats of the five tuna RFMOs, one non-Member, seven inter-governmental organizations and seven non-governmental organizations.

The second meeting will be convened in San Sebastian, Spain, June 29 - July 3, 2009. Among the issues to be discussed at the meeting are:

A workshop to review actions agreed in Kobe, in particular:

- Review and follow up to performance reviews as well as governance issues;
- Enhanced co-operation on data collection and scientific work;
- Means to avoid data gaps;
- Identification of means and areas for enhanced co-operation and harmonization of work between tuna RFMOs.

Workshop on capacity issues, in particular:

- Discuss concrete actions that can be taken to ensure that fishing capacity is commensurate with fishing opportunities available and;
- How to integrate the aspirations of developing nations.