

**WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL**

About Us:

Eight regional fishery management councils were established by Congress through the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (now called the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA)) to manage fisheries in U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters. The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council manages the U.S. EEZ waters of the Hawaii Archipelago, American Samoa Archipelago, Mariana Archipelago (Guam and C.N.M.I.), and the Pacific Remote Islands Area (PRIA) -- an area of over 1 million square miles.

During its first 30 years, the Council's accomplishments have run the gamut from being the first Regional Fishery Management Council in the nation to prohibit drift gill-net fishing and to develop an ecosystem-based fishery management plan to being the pioneer of the vessel monitoring system (VMS) for fishing vessels, which is now being implemented in fisheries worldwide.

The Council is made up of 16 Council members, the Council staff and several Council advisory groups. The Council process is a bottom-up process, emphasizing public participation and involvement of fisheries management at the local and community levels.

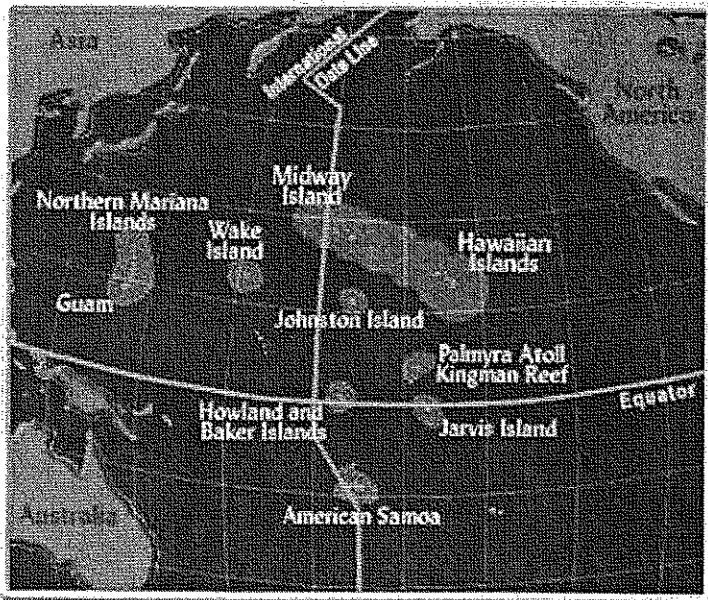
Council decisions are based on the best available scientific information provided largely by the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and the Pelagic Fisheries Research Program and are transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for approval.

Management measures created by the Council and approved by the Secretary are implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Regional Office and enforced by the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, the U.S. Coast Guard 14th District and local enforcement agencies.

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30 Years of Accomplishments

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRFMC) Milestones:

1976 Congress approves Fishery Conservation & Management Act, which establishes eight Regional Fishery Management Councils

1976 Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) lobster fishery begins

1983 WPRFMC establishes Precious Corals Fishery Management Plan (FMP)

- Ban on bottom trawling and other potentially destructive and non-selective gear throughout the Region's entire 1.5 million square nautical miles of exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters
- Minimum sizes and quotas
- No-take marine protected areas (MPAs) in NWHI (WesPac Refugia) and around the Pacific remote islands areas (PRIAs)

1983 WPRFMC establishes Crustaceans FMP

- Marine conservation zone in NWHI
- Limited entry
- Gear restrictions to protect monk seals and to release bycatch and undersized catch
- Vessel size limit
- Risk-based bank-specific quotas (catch equivalent of 13% of the exploitable biomass with 10% risk of overfishing)
- Real-time reporting, vessel monitoring system, observers

1984 WPRFMC co-hosts the first of three international marine debris conferences

- Second conference in 2000 co-hosted by WPRFMC
- Third conference in 2003 co-hosted by WPRFMC
- 2006 instrumental in establishing the Honolulu Derelict Net Recycling Program

1986 WPRFMC establishes Bottomfish & Seamount Groundfish FMP

- Bottom trawling and other potentially destructive gear banned throughout the Region's entire 1.5 million square nautical miles of EEZ waters
- Fishing by large commercial vessels restricted around Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and NWHI
- Seamount groundfish moratorium at Hancock Seamount in NWHI
- NWHI limited entry and observers
- Quotas for NWHI and main Hawaiian Islands (MHI)
- Commercial and non-commercial permit and reporting for MHI
- Vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirements for >40-foot vessels in CNMI

1987 WPRFMC establishes Pelagics FMP

- Drift gillnetting banned throughout the Region's entire 1.5 million square nautical miles of EEZ waters prior to Congress passing the Driftnet Impact Monitoring Assessment & Control Act
- Limited entry programs for Hawaii and American Samoa
- Spatial management near coastal areas—e.g., Protected Species Zone around the NWHI—to minimize impacts on protected species and user conflicts throughout Region
- Automated satellite VMS developed by WPRFMC, which implements its first application worldwide for fishing vessels
- Hawaii longline fishery deemed first environmentally responsible longline fishery in the world, using effective sea turtle (circle hooks and mackerel bait) and seabird mitigation (side- and night-setting) methods
- Hawaii longline fishery determined to be 94% compliant when evaluated by the UN FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
- Longline observer coverage (100% Hawaii swordfish trips, 20% Hawaii tuna trips, 8-10% American Samoa trips)
- Mandatory closure after 17 loggerhead or 16 leatherback sea turtle interactions for Hawaii longline swordfish fishery
- First workshop on South Pacific albacore longline fisheries convened by WPRFMC

1990 Congress includes tunas in Magnuson Act

1996 WPRFMC instrumental in achieving amendments to the Magnuson Act

- WPRFMC instrumental in achieving amendments to the Magnuson Act to recognize indigenous fishing rights for native peoples and the unique historical, cultural, legal,

political, and geographical circumstances of the Pacific Insular Areas and the critical importance of fisheries resources for their economic growth.

- Community Development Program
- Community Demonstration Project Program
- Marine Education and Training Program

1997 WPRFMC initiates program to reduce albatross interactions with longline fisheries

- Project on Hawaii longline vessels to test mitigation techniques
- First international black-footed albatross population dynamics workshop convened by WPRFMC
- WPRFMC strategic goal of reducing seabird bycatch by over 90 percent achieved

1999 WPRFMC convenes Recreational Fishing Data Task Force to work with State of Hawaii to re-implement the NMFS Recreational Fisheries data survey, which is accomplished in 2002

1999 WPRFMC hosts the Fourth Session of the Multilateral High-Level Conference for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Central and Western Pacific Ocean in February

- Fifth Session in September 1999 hosted by WPRFMC
- Sixth Session in April 2000 hosted by WPRFMC
- Seventh and Final Session in August-September 2000 hosted by WPRFMC, at which time the convention became open for signature
- Convention enters into force in June 2004, establishing the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

2000 Council adopts international turtle research and mitigation resolution

- Instrumental in evolution of Hawaii as a center of excellence for developing bycatch solutions for longline and static net fisheries
- Nesting beach and foraging ground conservation projects in Melanesia, Indonesia, Japan and Mexico for loggerhead and leatherback sea turtles
- Instrumental in circle hook exchange program in South American artisanal longline fisheries
- International Fishers Forums convened by WPRFMC in Hawaii, Japan and Costa Rica to transfer best practices to reduce bycatch and tackle other issues
- Turtle tagging database for Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia developed and maintained through WPRFMC partnership with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
- Strategic goal of reducing sea turtle bycatch by longline vessels by 90 percent achieved by WPRFMC

2001 FMP for Coral Reef Ecosystem

- First ecosystem plan for fisheries in the US

- Destructive and non-selective gears prohibited
- No-take and low-take MPAs established
- NWHI, Marianas, American Samoa and the PRIA marine resources protected, ensuring near pristine predator-dominated ecosystems prior to establishment of marine monuments

2007 WPRFMC approves Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs) shifting management focus from a species-based to a place-based conservation ethic

- Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committees formed on each archipelago to increase participation by communities and agencies not typically involved in fisheries management (e.g., county governments, non-government organizations, businesses, universities and colleges, and the Offices of Samoan, Hawaiian, Chamorro and Carolinian Affairs)
- Traditional cultural practitioners from throughout Hawaii convened by WPRFMC to discuss establishment of cultural community consultation process with educators and policymakers

2005 WPRFMC hosts Fisheries Legislation and Community-Based Fisheries Management Workshop, with support from FAO and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community

2006 Congress Reauthorizes Magnuson Act, which includes implementing legislation for WCPFC

- Key role of WPRFMC in international fisheries management recognized

2007 WPRFMC convenes International Pacific Marine Educators conference, which launches the International Pacific Marine Educators Network (IPMEN)

- IPMEN holds successful 2008 conference in Townsville, Australia, and begins organizing for 2010 conference in Fiji