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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Fishery Scientists Discuss Sea Turtle Conservation and Marlin Management

Scientists from the mainland United States and the Pacific will convene in Honolulu May 6-8, 2003 to discuss fishery management issues in the US Pacific islands. Among the key discussion items are the following:

Sea turtle conservation: The committee will review a range of management options which are intended to conserve sea turtles. Area closures, longline gear modifications, protection of nesting beaches, international management, fishermen incentives and education are among the options that will be considered.

Marlin management: The status of pacific-wide stocks of blue marlin may be approaching MSY (maximum sustainable yield). The committee will discuss management options, taking into consideration the status of the stocks and their importance to sports fishermen and other fishery sectors.

2002 Annual reports and fishery statistics: The SSC will review the most recent fishery statistics on pelagic and bottomfish fisheries from the 2002 annual reports. The pelagics annual report indicates that the longline fishery in American Samoa is now greater in volume than the Hawaii longline fishery, although the value of the landed catch is still greater. The Western Pacific as a whole is now the principal pelagic longline area in the US.

Fishing Capacity: Dr. Minling Pan will present draft quantitative assessments of fishing capacity for the Hawaii and American Samoa longline fleets.

For more information on these or other items, contact the Council at 522-8220, e-mail info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov, or log on to the Council website at www.wpcouncil.org.