



Recreational Fisheries Data

- ! In March 1999, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council endorsed a Scientific and Statistical Committee recommendation that a Recreational Task Force be assembled to advise the Council on how to improve reporting of recreational data.
- ! In April 1999, a planning committee recommended that the Task Force focus on small boat recreational fishing. The recreational data collection initiative would aim to estimate the purely recreational catch and to record the unsold portion of the catch from expense fishermen, i.e., recreational fishers who sell a portion of their catches to cover expenses.
- ! An initial estimate of the expense and recreational catch for the years 1995 and 1996 may be available from a recent Pelagic Fisheries Research Program study. However, these estimates were derived from boat ramp surveys and may reflect the catches of only active recreational and expense fishermen. A follow-up survey is required to obtain a true picture of overall recreational fishing activity in Hawaii.
- ! Recreational fishermen within the state appeared to accept recreational licensing and other restrictions for freshwater fishing, but some remain opposed to recreational licensing for marine fishing. New U.S. Coast Guard vessel safety regulations for commercial fishing vessels may force some part-time fishermen currently holding Commercial Marine Licenses not to renew them, thus exacerbating the overall reporting problem.
- ! Because boat and fishing clubs keep records of monthly catch and size data, they may be a source of recreational data, as well as Task Force participation. Clubs might also be a valuable source of socioeconomic data, particularly when regulatory initiatives require impact assessments. However, surveying fishing clubs in the state could be a full-time occupation. Boat clubs appear to be in decline, but as many as two dozen clubs may be still active. Tournament data may also have some uses, but such data are collected only during a very small time interval in any given year.
- ! The 100th Council Meeting in June will select a Task Force chair and the first Task Force meeting will be convened in August or September 1999. Task Force members would include purely recreational fishermen, expense fishermen, gear tackle store owners, fishing club members, charter fishermen, Hawaii Department of Business Economic Development & Tourism staff, staff and writers associated with *Hawaii Fishing News*, harbor masters, as well as technical people from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources, U.S. Coast Guard and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

