

Pacific Islands Fishery News

Newsletter of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council

Fall 2002

Hawaii Longline BiOp Has Drastic Impact

The March 29, 2001, Biological Opinion (BiOp) intended to minimize the Hawaii-based longline fishery's interactions with sea turtles has had widespread socioeconomic impacts.

According to a preliminary estimate by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the statewide effect of the BiOp and surrounding regulatory changes includes losses of roughly \$35 million to \$45 million in business sales, \$15 million to \$20 million in personal income and \$2 million to \$3 million in State and local taxes as well as impacts to 500 to 600 jobs. In addition, Hawaii-based longline landings and revenue fell by approximately 35 percent, i.e., from \$50.2 million in 2000 to \$32.7 million in 2001.

"This shocking socioeconomic loss demonstrates the need to include those familiar with the Hawaii-based longline fishery as part of the consultation process in drafting BiOps for this fishery," noted Frank Farm, chair of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council. The staff of the NMFS Office of Protected Resources based in Washington, DC, and California, drafted the current BiOp.

"The Council has written to the Secretary of the Commerce asking that those more familiar with the fish-



Photo: WPacFIN and AS Dept. of Marine and Wildlife Resources

The limited entry program for the American Samoa longline fishery aims to maintain the benefits of the fishery to the local community, which primarily uses 30-foot alia catamarans, without overly hampering the fishery's overall development or risking its sustainability.

Council Approves American Samoa Limited Entry Program

The American Samoa longline fishery was the focus of attention at the 113th meeting of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, held June 24-27, 2002, in Pago Pago, American Samoa. After intensive deliberations, the Council voted to approve a limited entry program for the longline fishery in the exclusive economic zone around the territory. The decision aims to keep the fishery healthy without overly hampering its development and limiting the benefits to the local community.

The Council began considering a limited entry program for the fishery in 1997, due to concerns about rapid expansion of fishing effort and fleet

size. Between 1997 and 2002, the fleet increased from about 21 mostly small vessels to 75 vessels of various sizes.

Groups representing different sides of this controversial issue have been meeting to hammer out an agreement that would be acceptable to everyone involved.

"I feel great," said Chief Afoa Lutu, after the Council vote. Representing some of the local American Samoan longline fishermen, Lutu noted the long process to arrive at the decision. "But we finally got it." He also acknowledged the tireless work to reach this agreement undertaken by Henry Sesepasara, American Samoa advisor to the Council.

"This agreement means that both sides are able to

In This Issue

American Samoa Limited Entry Program Approved ...1
Hawaii Longline BiOp Has Drastic Impact1
American Samoa Governor Voices Fishery Concerns3
115th Council Meeting Notice.....3
Sea Turtle Workshop Proceedings Available4
Tuna "Dangers" Vex Industry4
TV Show Features US Pacific Island Fisheries.....5
Panel Recommends Indigenous Projects.....6
2nd Judge Upholds HLA's BiOp Rights6
Fishers Forum Extends Call for Participants.....7
Council to Develop Invasive Species Program.....7
Council Calendar8
Western Pacific Recipe8

Continued on page 2

Continued on page 4



John LaGrange, representative for the South Pacific Longliner group (far left), and American Samoa Advisor to the Council Henry Sesevasara (far right) worked hard to negotiate the terms of the limited entry program so they were acceptable to the various fishermen in the fishery. Also pictured are Council Executive Director Kitty Simonds and Council Chair Frank Farm.

come together and move forward as a single group from now on,” said John LaGrange, representative for the larger longline vessels. “I feel very good about that.”

While the Council was able to agree on the basic structure of the limited entry program at the 113th meeting, it was agreed that an additional meeting was needed to develop the specifics to be incorporated in the regulations. Accordingly, the 114th Council meeting was held on Aug. 29, using telephone and video conferencing to address the regulations that will define the operations of the limited entry program. As proposed, the program would include the following components:

- ★ Individuals qualifying for a longline permit must have owned a longline vessel on or before March 21, 2002, that landed in American Samoa prior to this date species that are managed by the federal pelagic fisheries management plan and were caught using longline gear.
- ★ Permits for vessels larger than 40 feet can be transferred to anyone with documented longline catch landed in American Samoa.
- ★ Permits for vessels smaller than 40 feet can be transferred to a permit holder's family or to a local community.
- ★ No one entity can own more than 10 percent of the total permits.
- ★ Certain permits can be upgraded to a larger size vessel.
- ★ To keep their permit, vessels 50 feet or less must land at least 1,000 lbs of pelagic fish every three calendar years; vessels over 50 feet must land at least 5,000 lbs.
- ★ All vessel owners and operators must attend annual protected species workshops.
- ★ Vessels larger than 40 feet must carry observers if required by the National Marine Fisheries Service.
- ★ The effectiveness of the program will be reviewed after three years.

The proposed limited entry program will now be forwarded to the US Secretary of Commerce for approval. However, there will be a further opportunity for public comment when the proposed regulations are published in the *Federal Register*. For other recommendations of the 113th and 114th Council meetings, please contact the Council at +1 808 522-8220 or by fax at +1 808 522-8226; email info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov or log on to www.wpcouncil.org.



Pago Pago Harbor crowded with longline vessels. Between 1997 and 2002, the fleet increased from about 21 mostly small vessels to 75 vessels of various sizes.

Photo: WPacFIN and AS Dept. of Marine and Wildlife Resources

American Samoa Governor Voices Fishery Concerns to the Council



The Honorable Tauese Sunia (right), governor of American Samoa, opened the 113th meeting of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, stressing the importance of the ocean and its resources to the local people.

The Honorable Tauese Sunia, governor of American Samoa, opened the 113th meeting of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council on June 25, 2002, welcoming fisheries experts from throughout the western Pacific region to Pago Pago. He described Fa'a Samoa (Samoan culture) and stressed the importance of the ocean and its resources to the local people.

"The ocean is our home," Gov. Sunia stated. "What we are, who we are, and what we live for is the ocean."

While the elders in the community still hold the same reverence for the ocean, the changing global economy is causing some in the local community to move away from harvesting their own resources, the governor noted.

"The ocean used to be our great backyard and living room. Not any more. Now, we let the others do the fishing for us," he said.

He described some of the difficult issues the local fishermen face, such as problems with adequate refrigeration on board the alia

catamarans (30- to 40-foot outboard-powered vessels equipped with longline gear) and competition from vessels larger than 50 feet.

To improve the situation for the local fishermen, the governor stressed the need for federal agencies to communicate more closely and effectively.



Alosina To'omalatai uses a catchment cistern to raise tilapia in the village of Onenoa, American Samoa.



Council members and staff took time out from the 113th Council meeting in American Samoa to attend a Sunday morning service at a Congregational church in Petesa-Uta village, at which Council member Aitofele Sunia is a deacon.

115th Council Meeting Notice

The 115th meeting of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council will be held Oct. 14-17, 2002, at the Aloha Tower, Pier 11, in Honolulu. Key topics to be discussed include the following:

- ★ Managing recreational fisheries
- ★ Managing the offshore bottomfish fishery in Guam
- ★ International fisheries
- ★ Mariculture of tuna
- ★ Community Demonstration Projects
- ★ Hawaii coral reef fishery statistics
- ★ Designation of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands as a National Marine Sanctuary

Prior to the Council meeting, the Council's Advisory Panels will meet Oct. 10-12 at the Council conference room. For more information, please contact the Council at +1 808 522-8221 or visit the Council website at www.wpcouncil.org.

Pacific Islands Fishery News

Pacific Islands Fishery News is published by the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813. All rights reserved. Unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Telephone: +1 808 522-8220;
Fax: +1 808 522-8226;
<http://www.wpcouncil.org>

Chair Frank Farm (Hawaii)

Vice Chairs

Aitofele Sunia (American Samoa)

Judith Guthertz (Guam)

Edwin Ebisui (Hawaii)

Benny Pangelinan (Northern Mariana Islands)

Executive Director

Kitty M. Simonds

ery, i.e., the Council and Hawaii Longline Association (HLA), be a party in the drafting in any future BiOps for this fishery," Farm said.

The Council has also proposed that new BiOps for the Hawaii-based longline fishery should state their objective (i.e., a given reduction in take in sea turtle interactions), consider various options for reaching this objective and include socioeconomic analysis to determine which option to implement.

"The Council agrees that there is a need to reduce fishery impacts on turtles," Farm added. "However, the Council, along with NMFS, has recognized that the impacts by US fisheries, especially the Hawaii longline fishery, are small compared to land-based impacts."

He noted that the BiOp for the California-Oregon Drift Gillnet Fishery describes measures to protect and conserve leatherback turtle populations by working cooperatively with the governments of Mexico and Costa Rica to protect nesting beaches.

"The new BiOp for the Hawaii longline fishery should include similar provisions," Farm said. "The new BiOp should require cooperative work with countries to protect the nesting beaches of those leatherback turtle populations that transit through the Hawaii longline fishing grounds."

William Hogarth, the head of NMFS, in a recent response to the Council's letter to the Secretary of Commerce, suggested that it may be too early to assess the economic impacts of the March 2001 BiOp on the Hawaii longline fishery.

Sea Turtle Workshop Proceedings Available

The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council is pleased to announce that the Proceedings of the Western Pacific Sea Turtle Cooperative Research and Management Workshop have been published. They can be downloaded from the Council website at www.wpcouncil.org. For a hard copy or a copy in CD-ROM format, please contact the Council at +1 808 522-8220. The workshop was held Feb. 5-8, 2002. It was sponsored by the Council as a forum to disseminate information and to promote greater regional collaboration for research and management of Pacific sea turtle populations.



Tuna "Dangers" Vex Industry

The tuna industry has been hit with a triple whammy this summer as media and government focused on the potential "danger" of tuna to consumers, pregnant women and even national security. These concerns come as the popularity of tuna, one of the nation's most popular seafood, is on the rise.

In July, *The Wave* noted the award of \$100,000 in federal grant to the University of Rhode Island to determine whether tuna that has been processed with "tasteless smoke" is "safe" and "healthy." The process involves subjecting fresh tuna to carbon monoxide (CO) in order to stop the oxidization process. This process causes the flesh to retain a bright, watermelon red color, so consumers are no longer able to tell the freshness of the fish visually.

In 2001, CO treated yellowfin tuna resulted in consumer illness in Las Vegas. Analysis revealed that the tuna steaks were decomposed and some were over the Defect Action Level of 50 ppm of histamine set by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Also, in 2001, an analysis of 106 treated tuna products imported through California ports revealed 28 samples with histamine levels above the current FDA guideline and seven with levels up to four times greater than the FDA's poisonous action level for tuna.

"The high levels of histamine in a product that visually appears to be of superior quality indicate a considerable risk to consumers of CO-treated tuna," stated a report from the FDA San Francisco District.

Media in July also highlighted an FDA advisory panel's decision to recommend that pregnant women should limit their consumption of tuna due to concerns about methylmercury levels. The advisory panel also suggested that the FDA set recommendations for children's consumption of tuna. However, the panel did not add tuna to the list of fish that pregnant women are warned not to eat. That list, issued in January 2001, includes swordfish, king mackerel, shark and tilefish.

Also in July the FDA confirmed that counterterrorism surveillance is impacting the supply of imported tuna, including canned tuna. "These sorts of surveillance will come and go unannounced as we work to ensure the safety of imported commodities," an FDA spokesperson said, according to *The Wave*.

Among recently detained tuna was \$20 million worth of canned tuna from American Samoa held at the Port of Los Angeles. The FDA held the embargoed shipment for three weeks for bioterrorism inspection, *The Honolulu Advertiser* reported.

TV Show Features US Pacific Island Fisheries



The three-part cable TV series, *FishQuest*, being filmed on location in American Samoa in June.

A common misperception is that all fisheries are overfished or being overutilized. It is true that many inshore fisheries located near population centers worldwide are overexploited due to easy access to the resource from shore and small vessels. But it is simply not true that all fish stocks are in peril. For example, except for the Pacific armorhead (which was overexploited by foreign fleets prior to US management of the resource), all the fish stocks in the 1.5 million square miles of mostly offshore and at times remote waters managed by the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council are considered healthy.

To address this misperception and provide factual information, the Council has partnered with the Hawaii Department of Education and the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) to produce a three-part television series focusing on fisheries and fisheries management. The series is produced through KidScience, an interactive distance-learning program that reaches students in about three dozen states as well as the Territories of Guam and American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The program is aired in classrooms and homes through live broadcasts from Hawaii that are replayed on local cable stations.

The three-part series features fisheries in American Samoa, Guam, CNMI and Hawaii, highlighting the importance of fisheries to island communities and the complexity of managing them to ensure continued use by future generations. The series, *FishQuest*, answers such questions as Why do fish resources need to be managed? What fish are being caught, and how? How do the fishermen know where to find the fish? How do the scientists know how many fish are in the ocean?

Fishery managers, scientists, fishermen and others will help students answer these questions.

In "Fishing for Facts," students review the different types of fisheries and see what happens to the fish after fishing vessels catch them.

In "Fishing for Food," students are given a real-life fishery management problem and review the different options that managers have to solve it. The teachers in the classroom assign the students roles to play, and the students have one week to come up with solutions.

In "Fishing for Solutions," students review the different solutions and learn about efforts by scientists and managers to solve some difficult fisheries issues, such as the unintended catches of sea birds, sea turtles and other species by some fishing gear.

A free teacher's guide is available to enhance the learning experience. It contains lesson plans and student activities, such as crossword puzzles, word searches, a fish design, a fishery species identification exercise, a fishing gear and fish species matching game and instructions on how to do fish printing and how to design a fish trap. The guide can be obtained by logging on to www.kidscience.net.

FishQuest aired on Hawaii Public Television in September. For the broadcast schedule in other areas, please call your local cable station. For more information about this program, please call Cindy Knapman, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, at +1 808 522-5341 or email Lucinda.Knapman@noaa.gov.



FishQuest features fisheries in American Samoa, Guam, CNMI and Hawaii, highlighting the importance of fisheries to island communities and the complexity of managing them to ensure continued use by future generations.

Advisory Panel Recommends Indigenous Projects under New Grant Program



Net fishing at City of Refuge, Honaunau, Hawaii, 1918. Photo credit: Tai Sing Loo, Bishop Museum

In August, the Advisory Panel for the Western Pacific Community Demonstration Projects Program (CDPP) met to review and rank proposals received from the Council's first solicitation under this new grant program. Fifteen proposals for projects were received by June 17, 2002, the close of the proposal period. Proposals were received from fishing associations, communities, non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and individuals. Six proposals were from American Samoa, two from Guam, two from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and five from Hawaii.

The CDPP Advisory Panel reviewed and ranked proposals based on established eligibility criteria, priorities and evaluation standards. Proposed projects included a range of activities, including aquaculture and fish farming, coastal zone conservation and management, training for fishermen, environment restoration, vessel design and acquisition, fish processing and research. Nearly all proposals aimed to improve the situation for native fishermen in the island areas.

The Council will consider the Advisory Panel's recommendations at its 115th meeting in October. A total of \$500,000 is available in this funding cycle to support three to five demonstration projects. Projects can involve research, community education and the acquisition of equipment and materials to carry out the demonstration project. All projects must

benefit the indigenous communities of the western Pacific region.

The Council will also consider recommendations from the Advisory Panel on improving the program for future funding cycles. These include improvements in the workshop materials and application process. The next solicitation will take place within the next few months.

Native fishermen, communities, organizations and individuals will be encouraged to participate in future workshops and are invited to propose projects that would demonstrate traditional indigenous fishing practices and develop or enhance fishing opportunities for native people of the western Pacific region.

For more information on the CDPP, please contact Council CDPP Coordinator Charles Kaaia at +1 808 522-8227 or send an email to charles.kaaia@noaa.gov.



Hawaiian fishhooks. Photo credit: Bishop Museum

2nd Judge Upholds HLA's BiOp Rights

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will probably be doing business a little differently as it completes its new Biological Opinion on the Hawaii longline fishery. According to the Sept. 24, 2002, order by Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly, US District Court for the District of Columbia: "The Court expects that between now and Nov. 15, 2002, the agency will undertake an intensive effort to complete the new BiOp. This effort will include treating the Plaintiff [HLA] as an applicant and proving Plaintiff with a draft copy of the BiOp in time sufficient to conduct meaningful comment and review on the proposed BiOp. Regardless, of how the agency proceeds, the 2001 BiOp will be vacated and remanded to the agency on Nov. 15, 2002, whether or not the NMFS has promulgated a new BiOp."

She noted "the Court agrees with Magistrate Judge [John] Facciola, that Plaintiff's procedural rights were violated when it was not treated as an applicant under the governing regulations and not provided with a copy of the draft 2001 BiOp." Judge Facciola's Report and Recommendation on the case was filed on April 25, 2002.

Council to Develop Invasive Species Program

In response to increasing concerns about the introduction of invasive alien species into island ecosystems, the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council will conduct an invasive species risk assessment for each island area under its jurisdiction. The assessment will gather available information on the presence of invasive species in the region, determine the extent to which fishing vessels may contribute to alien species introductions and identify the most practical mechanism for mitigating invasive species introductions by fishing vessels.

In general, invasive species can be introduced to island ecosystems from both fishing and non-fishing vessels by shipwreck, accidental grounding of floating materials harboring alien species, hull fouling, live hold bait wells and ballast water exchange.

Because of their small size and discrete areas of operation, fishing vessels probably pose a very small risk to alien introductions. However, the Council would like to ensure that all fishermen operating in the Western Pacific Region are made aware of invasive species issue and become more proactive in preventing their spread.

To generate this awareness, the Council is developing educational materials and will hold workshops for fishermen on invasive species issues and "best vessel practices" to prevent the spread of alien species.



***Kappaphycus alvarezii* has a high growth rate, doubling in size in 15 to 30 days. It can be detrimental to corals by shadowing or smothering them, thus causing them to die.**



***Acanthophora spicifera* was unintentionally introduced to Hawaii from Guam. It is one of the most abundant alien algae in Hawaiian reef flats, often out competing other native reef algae.**

Fishers Forum Extends Call for Participants

The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council will host the Second International Fishers Forum (IFF2) at the Hawaii Convention Center in Honolulu, Nov. 19-22, 2002.

The forum is being convened to reduce the unintentional catch of sea turtles by longline gear and to build on efforts generated from IFF1, held in 2000 in New Zealand, to reduce the unintentional catch of seabirds.

Since this is truly a global problem, it is extremely important that IFF2 secures participation of longline fishermen, as well as researchers, gear manufacturers, fishery managers and other interested parties. Eliminating the bycatch of sea turtles and seabirds requires cost-effective solutions that are developed by fishermen and scientists working together and that can be implemented internationally. Every country with commercial longline fisheries has been invited to send at least two representatives from their fishing communities to the forum. To encourage the participation of the fishing industry, the forum is free to longline fishermen.

The forum will begin with plenary sessions the first day to set the stage for the next two days of breakout groups and small working sessions. The keynote speakers will present overviews on seabird

and sea turtle biology, distribution and population status; longline fishery impacts and data collection; mitigation measures, research; modeling; and both international agreements and national programs. Participants will receive workbooks containing information about sea turtle and seabird species and how longline interactions can be reduced.



Whatever your background in the fishing industry, research or wildlife conservation, you will find the forum a useful and important opportunity to exchange ideas and solutions.

For more information, contact the Council at +1 808 522-8220, visit the Council website at www.wpcouncil.org or send an email to iff2@noaa.gov.

COUNCIL CALENDAR

OCTOBER

2-3	US Coral Reef Task Force meeting, San Juan, Puerto Rico	14-17	115th Council meeting, Aloha Tower, Pier 11, Honolulu	5-7	4th International Florida State University Mote Symposium in Fisheries Ecology, Sarasota, Fla.	18-22	Western and Central Pacific Tuna Management Commission, PrepCon3, Manila, Philippines
8-10	81st Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting, Council conference room, Honolulu	22-28	Assessment and Management of New and Developed Fisheries in Data-Limited Situations, Anchorage, Alaska	12-14	Symposium on Effects of Fishing Activities on Benthic Habitats, Tampa, Fla.	19-22	2nd International Fishers Forum, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu
10-12	Council Advisory Panel meeting, Council conference room, Honolulu			18-21	International Fisheries Observer Program Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana	25-28	2nd International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium (ITEMES), Manila, Philippines

NOVEMBER

1-5 National Fisheries Institute meeting, Pasadena, Calif.

Western Pacific Recipe

Escabeche

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. fish (snapper recommended, any kind)
 ½ tsp. salt
 ¾ cup salad oil
 ½ lb. green vegetables (eggplant, cabbage, pepper leaves, green beans, bell pepper)
 2 medium yellow ginger (turmeric) grated
 1 onion
 3 garlic cloves, chopped
 6 Tbsp. vinegar
 2½ cups water

Clean fish. Slit in several places. Add salt to slitted areas. Fry fish in ½ cup salad oil, and set aside. Cook the vegetables in ½ cup of oil to desired doneness, and set aside. In a separate dish, place a layer of vegetables and then a layer of fish. Repeat until vegetables and fish are all used. Set aside. In a saucepan, fry ginger, onions and garlic in oil. Add vinegar and water. Boil for about five minutes. Pour over vegetables and fish, and let stand about five to 10 minutes so seasoning can permeate the vegetables and fish. Serve hot or cold.

Recipe courtesy of the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative



Western Pacific Fishery Management Council
 1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400
 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 USA