

# COUNCIL CALENDAR

## FEBRUARY

- 10-13 Reef Fish Stock Assessment Workshop, Council office, Honolulu
- 15-20 2004 Ocean Research Conference, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu
- 22-29 24th Sea Turtle Symposium, San Jose, Costa Rica
- 24-26 85th Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting, Council office, Honolulu
- 24-25 US Coral Reef Task Force Meeting, Washington, D.C.

## MARCH

- 1-4 Marine Ornamentals '04, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu

- 1-5 US South Pacific Tuna Treaty Consultation, Tuvalu
- 1-5 Aquaculture 2004, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu
- 16-19 Indian Ocean-South-East Asian Marine Turtle MoU, Bangkok
- 22-25 122nd Council Meeting, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu

## APRIL

- 8 Precious Corals Plan Team Meeting, Council office, Honolulu
- 12-16 Annual Council Chair /Executive Directors Meeting, Kauai
- 19-23 Preparatory Conference for the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly

- Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific, Bali
- 20-22 Coral Reef Plan Team Meeting, Council office, Honolulu
- 23 Crustaceans Plan Team Meeting, Council office, Honolulu
- 27-29 Pelagics Plan Team Meeting, Council office, Honolulu

## MAY

- 2-6, 4th World Fisheries Congress, Vancouver, BC
- 5-6 Bottomfish Plan Team Meeting, Council office, Honolulu
- 17-21 2nd International Sea Turtle Workshop, Council office, Honolulu

- 22-23 Ko Olina Boat Show and Ocean Expo, Ko Olina, Honolulu
- 24-27 55th Tuna Conference, Lake Arrowhead, CA
- 30 -6/4 PACON 2004, Eleventh Pacific Conference on Marine Science & Technology, Waikiki Beach Marriott, Honolulu

## JUNE

- 7-18 Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, Lima
- 8-10 86th Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting, Council office, Honolulu
- 15-18 123rd Council Meeting, Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu
- 28 -7/2 International Coral Reef Symposium, Okinawa

## Recipe Misozuke Opah (Serves 4-5)

### INGREDIENTS

When preparing this recipe, look for the opah belly portion which is more marbled and flavorful than the top fillet portion.

2-1/2 to 3 pounds fillets sliced into 2-3 oz. portions  
Kosher salt

### Misozuke

12 ounces white miso  
3 ounces mirin  
7 ounces sugar  
1 tablespoon fresh ginger root, finely chopped

### PREPARATION

Salt fish portions with kosher salt, 1/2 tablespoon per fillet, on both sides. Let sit for 60 minutes to draw out excess water. Combine misozuke ingredients and marinate fish for 2 days in refrigerator.

Wipe misozuke off with a paper towel leaving light coating. Bake fish on a sheet pan at 350 degrees for 5-10 minutes on each side, or until fillet begin to brown. Serves 4-5.



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

# Pacific Islands Fishery News

Newsletter of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council

Spring 2004

## SWORDFISH FISHERY PLAN

R E C E I V E S   W A V E S   O F   S U P P O R T

At its 121<sup>st</sup> meeting in November, the Council unanimously approved a plan to re-establish Hawai'i's swordfish industry with a model fishery that includes new measures to protect endangered sea turtles.

Under the plan, Hawai'i's longline fleet would be required to apply specific fishing technologies to decrease the accidental hooking of sea turtles. In addition, conservation measures would be implemented at beaches in the Western Pacific region where the highly migratory turtles have important nesting grounds.

Concern over the impacts of commercial fishing on endangered populations of sea turtles has led the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to keep Hawai'i's swordfish fishery virtually closed since 2000. The new plan would re-open the fishery by allowing a yearly total of 2,120 days of fishing. This number constitutes approximately half of the annual fishing effort expended prior to the closure of the Hawai'i-based swordfish fishery. The plan provides that all interested members of Hawai'i's longline fleet would be eligible to receive an equal share of swordfish fishing days, which would be distributed by NMFS. No new limits would be applied to tuna longlining; however, a recent southern time/area closure affecting the tuna fishery would be removed.

NMFS is reviewing the new plan, and if it is approved, regulations to implement this new management regime are expected to go into effect on April 1, 2004.

"The combination of conservation and technological measures makes this plan very innovative," said Kitty Simonds, the Council's Executive Director. "It is our expectation that international fleets will note its practicality

and effectiveness and adopt similar measures. When this happens, we will have in place a comprehensive global plan, which will be a major boost to sea turtle recovery."

Hawai'i's longliners make up 3 percent of the entire longline fleet in the Pacific Ocean.

Throughout the three year swordfish fishery ban, many Hawai'i longliners expressed concern that the closure did nothing to address interactions between turtles and foreign vessels, whose swordfish catch is often exported to consumers throughout the United States.

"Hawai'i longliners have a long record of working with the Council to develop mitigation measures that are effective in reducing harm to marine life," said Council member and Hawai'i Longline Association (HLA) president Sean Martin, who noted that in the 1980's Hawai'i's longliners were in the forefront of the effort to have Pacific tuna stocks protected under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. "In regards to turtles, we are now in a very good position to model practices that will quickly be exported to other nations where more needs to be done to protect endangered species," said Martin.

The Council's efforts to craft a plan that would become the foundation of a new model swordfish fishery began late last year after a federal judge's ruling invalidated NMFS' biological opinion concerning the status and management of sea turtles. The ruling also eliminated fishery regulations based on the opinion, including the ban on swordfishing. It also invalidated the biological opinion's "incidental take statement," which exempts vessel operators who accidentally hook or entangle sea turtles from legal prosecution. NMFS, the HLA and Earthjustice promptly requested a temporary reinstatement of these regulations out of concern that liability for a single incidental turtle catch could lead to the shutdown of the entire longline industry.



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## ROY MORIOKA: SAVVY STRATEGIST WITH HAWAIIAN SALT

Ask Roy Morioka to describe the allure of fishing and he'll begin by appealing to your sense of freedom: "Being out on an ocean, you are pretty much a free spirit, you're not bound by the perimeters of a tennis court, the confines of a golf course, you can roam anywhere you want. Even during those quiet periods, you're thinking, scanning the ocean, looking for birds—it's all about strategy."

Morioka has just assumed the chairmanship of the Western Pacific Council, after being a member of the Council since 1993. This has been a period when traditional notions of a free ocean wilderness have been challenged and the need for careful fisheries management has increased dramatically. A native of O'ahu, Morioka is a lifelong recreational fisherman and an enthusiastic organizer of major sportfishing tournaments. He is very concerned about protecting marine resources, so his grandchildren will share the same harvest from the sea he has enjoyed.

But he is convinced the way to meet that goal is not to blame the U.S. fishing industry. He sees his job with the Council as a matter of maintaining a balanced perspective. "The Council is guided by the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which requires us to maintain an equilibrium between management and conservation. It's not 'either.. or', but it's both," says Morioka. The pace of change affecting the nation's fisheries has accelerated, and Morioka is concerned that non-commercial fishermen may not get a fair shake. "My effort on the Council has been to improve the representation of individuals that take great pleasure in the sport of fishing," says Morioka. Fueling his concern are international fishing agreements which may impose quotas on member nations. Recreational fishermen risk being ignored if they resist becoming organized, Morioka observes.

Morioka has spearheaded outreach efforts at marinas statewide, hoping to persuade fishermen that it is beneficial for them to par-

ticipate in surveys, come to Council meetings and generally stand up and be counted.

Morioka recalls growing up with shoreline fishing gear in his hands at his father's side at locations from Haleiwa to Diamond Head. He pursued a career in telecommunications, becoming operations manager for Hawaiian Telephone Company. He later worked for the company in Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), where he oversaw the construction of island-wide telephone service. Morioka said that the lessons local people in CNMI taught him about traditional fishery management have influenced his approach to the Council. The right way to get things done, he observes, is to work toward consensus. In many ways, Morioka says, the Council operates much like a Pacific Islander culture, through its "bottom-up approach" that includes experience of resource users in the decision-making process.

Morioka served as president of both the Hawai'i International Billfish Tournament and the Kona Mauka Trollers for several years when he lived on the Big Island. In both instances, he steered fellow sportfishing enthusiasts away from the customary use of catch quantity as the sole criterion for success, promoting a tag and release approach.

"The real winners have a clear strategy, because fishing is really a thinking person's pursuit," he declares emphatically. Though, in the tradition of the pursuit he loves so much, he's not giving up his fondness for lucky charms: "I always have Hawaiian salt and ti leaf. I have my favorite fishing shirt, favorite fishing shorts, all puka puka but it's lucky."



Council Chair Roy Morioka

## NEW STATISTICS TELL THE STORY OF RECREATIONAL FISHING

A clearer understanding of recreational fishing in Hawai'i is certain to emerge, thanks to a statewide survey unprecedented in its scope. The latest results of the Hawai'i Marine Recreational Fishing Survey (HMRFS) are expected to fill a longstanding information gap. HMRFS is a project of the national Marine Recreational Fishery Statistical Survey, which first came to Hawai'i in 1979. The survey return here three years ago through the combined efforts of the Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources (HDAR), NMFS, and the Council.

Because Hawai'i does not require licensing and catch-reporting for recreational fishermen, the impacts of recreational fishing in Hawai'i are not well documented. It's widely assumed that recreational fishing is exceedingly popular here, but more precise information is needed. "Information from the survey will help fishery managers assess the importance of recreational fishing in



Staff members from the State Division of Aquatic Resources conducted field surveys as part of the Hawai'i Marine Recreational Fishing Survey. Pictured left to right are: Walter Ikehara, Richard Beebe, Jason Chang, Steve Kaneko, John Dill, Matt Parry, Gary Boteilho, Wesley Murakane, John Burke. Not pictured: Larry Spalding

Hawai'i, and it will also ensure that the recreational fishermen are represented in decisions that affect fishing resources," said Matthew Parry, HMRFS Project Manager.

HMRFS uses concurrent telephone and field surveys. A random digit dial household survey conducted by NMFS is collecting catch and effort data from boaters and shoreline fishermen. Charter boat effort is tracked by an additional phone survey. Meanwhile, seven HDAR staff members are conducting intercept surveys among fishermen at boat launch ramps, harbors and shoreline fishing sites, obtaining data on lengths, weights and species of catch, as well as preferences for fishing gear and methods. Parry says more than 400 intercepts were completed in less than one year on O'ahu, Maui and the Big Island. "Our surveyors are all experienced fishermen themselves, and thanks to their fishing savvy they knew how to make other fishermen

comfortable enough to volunteer to participate in the survey."

Project data will be used for such purposes as forecasting fishery trends, improving stock assessments, and evaluating effectiveness of harbor infrastructure, as well as the use of fish aggregating devices (FAD's) in Hawai'i waters. Parry emphasized that HMRFS data are open to interpretation and can be useful to anglers. For example, an estimate of effort per unit may be calculated by comparing the duration of fishing trips with the amount of catch. Another purpose for the data involves the charter boat survey that may show a clearer picture of the economic impact of the charter boat industry.

Completed summary data for 2002 will be available later this year on the HMRFS web site:

<http://www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dar/surveys/index.htm>.

### **Swordfish Fishery Plan Receives Waves of Support** *continued from page 1*

The court granted these requests in October, 2003, and also suggested that the Council develop new long-term fishery rules to be implemented by April 1, 2004, when existing regulations will be vacated.

In response, the Council convened a committee of scientists, fishery managers and representatives of industry and environmental organizations to review available information on how to best prevent injury to sea turtles. The Council reviewed the various proposals received from the committee and chose for its final plan one that would require swordfish longliners to use circle hooks, mackerel-type bait and de-hookers. These new gear requirements have worked in the Atlantic swordfish fishery, where NMFS research has shown they substantially reduce turtle interactions.

"The research clearly indicates that the use of certain gear minimizes the impact on turtles," noted Paul Dalzell, Council Senior Scientist. Citing NMFS research, Dalzell affirmed that gear restrictions in the Atlantic reduced the hooking of loggerhead sea turtles by 92 percent and hooking of leatherback sea turtles by 67 percent.

Dalzell said the new gear rules will give Hawai'i longliners the opportunity to repeat the success they had with gear modifications that notably minimized their bycatch of seabirds. Seabird mortality was greatly reduced and the potential for a fishery closure averted, when the longline fishery voluntarily collaborated with the council to test seabird-safe methods of fishing, including the use of towed deterrents and blue-dyed bait, Dalzell said. This resulted in conservation benefits to the birds and operational benefits to the fishermen, added Dalzell. "We have the science and technology that enables us to strike a balance between the health of ocean resources and the viability of an important industry," he said.

As part of its plan, the Council undertook five conservation measures, which focus on protection of turtle nesting beaches and foraging habitats in the Pacific region. The Council and NMFS have now developed partnerships with local non-governmental organizations to halt the harvesting of turtle eggs and end or reduce threats from natural and man-made causes. "Maintaining these types of measures is a key component of the new plan," Kitty Simonds observed. "If we don't protect turtles in all life cycles, no amount of protection in the pelagic or coastal phase is going to make a difference."

Vessel operators in the re-established swordfish fishery will face several other new restrictions, including a "hard limit" for loggerhead and leatherback sea turtles. This means the swordfish fishery will shut down for the remainder of the calendar year if vessel interactions with these species exceed the limit set in the new "incidental take statement" due to be issued by NMFS. Vessel operators will also be required to provide added protection for seabirds by using night-setting when targeting swordfish in waters above 23° N.

Hawai'i's swordfish fishery was once a highly lucrative enterprise. The shutdown of the industry prompted many vessels to become licensed in other regions which have fewer restrictions or to shift their focus to tuna. It is estimated the closure also led to the loss of 500 Hawai'i jobs.

Supporters of the Council's new plan say it marks the end of a three year period which has brought hardship to fishery participants, and prevented fishermen from adopting practices that might educate other nations in effective fishery management. "Now we can go forward and show the world a solution that is practical for fishermen and safe for turtles," said Council Chair Roy Morioka.

For more information, contact Paul Dalzell at (808) 522-6042.

## REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCILS MEET IN D.C.

Members of the Western Pacific Council family participated in a conference in Washington D.C. that spotlighted challenges and achievements in carrying out federal fisheries law.

Managing Our Nation's Fisheries, Past, Present and Future, held November 13-16, 2003, was sponsored by the eight regional Councils and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The conference marked a timely juncture, as Congress prepares to consider re-authorizing the Magnuson-Stevens Act, enacted 25 years ago as the basis for the nation's system of fisheries management.

Along with regional Council representatives, the conference brought together top local, state and federal fisheries administrators, scientists, representatives from universities, US Coast Guard, US Ocean Commission, the recreational and commercial fishing industries, environmental organizations and other NGOs—more than 700 participants in all, for the purpose of exchanging information and educating media and policymakers about the complex process of fisheries management. Sen. Ted Stevens' keynote speech urged fishermen to become more involved in ocean management. Panel-led discussions showcased various regional perspectives on critical issues, such as protection of ocean resources and protected species, prevention of bycatch and overfishing and the application of new data and technologies.

The Council's Senior Scientist Paul Dalzell reviewed steps taken in the Western Pacific region to mitigate interactions between longline vessels and endangered seabirds resulting from gear modifications designed and tested by Hawai'i longliners. Recent trials with a new side-setting technique, where the longline is set from the side of the vessel instead of the stern, have shown that seabird interactions can be reduced to almost none. The underwater setting chute, which sets baited hooks 17 feet underwater out of sight and reach of the diving seabirds, was tested in waters north of Hawai'i. More than 6,000 baited hooks were set during the experiment, and no seabirds were killed. Other methods such as thawed blue-dyed bait, weighted hooks, line shooters, night setting and strategic offal discard (discarding fish or fish parts after on-board processing to distract birds from baited hooks) can achieve up to 90% reduction in seabird/longline interactions.

Dalzell's presentation was one of several that highlighted a designated conference theme, described as the so-called "public perception gap" affecting fisheries management. Many panelists

called for improving public outreach efforts to address the criticism of fisheries management. Many expressed concern that recent court cases and clashes between environmental and commercial interests have overshadowed the real work of keeping the nation's fisheries safe and healthy.

In commenting on the disparity between public perception and the reality of fisheries management, Dalzell said: "Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Council is directed to make use of the best science, and this translates into a highly precautionary management approach." Dalzell pointed to the Council's support of strict limits on commercial fishing licenses as an example of the Council's willingness to put a high premium on the sustainability of resources.

The Council's work in safeguarding Hawai'i's coral reefs was highlighted at the conference by Dr. Jeff Polovina, Acting Director of NMFS' Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center. Polovina took part in a panel discussion on ecosystem-based management. According to Polovina, ecosystem-based management presents a unique set of challenges for fisheries management. "The focus used to be on single species. Now, management decisions must address an entire

web of inter-related life forms," he said. He described how the Council took the initiative in applying this approach to managing Hawai'i's coral reefs. Using extensive research sponsored by the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Council developed its Coral Reef Ecosystems Fishery Management Plan. This marked the first comprehensive application of the ecosystem concept by a fisheries Council. In follow-up comments to his conference presentation, Polovina said the regionalism of the fishery management Councils provides a tailored approach to understanding and managing unique and complex ecosystems.

The well-attended conference received widespread media attention. For more information about the conference, visit [www.managingfisheries.org](http://www.managingfisheries.org).

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Telephone: +1 808 522-8220  
Fax: +1 808 522-8226

Email: [info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov](mailto:info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov)

<http://www.wpcouncil.org>

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Managing Our Nation's Fisheries, Past, Present and Future. Some of the participants pictured here from left to right: Eric Gilman, Paul Dalzell, Roy Morioka, Manuel Cruz, Kitty Simonds, Ray Tulafono, Frank McCoy, Mark Mitsuyasu, and Paul Bartram.

# BOTTOMFISH TOP THE AGENDA AT NEW ZEALAND MEETING



A workshop on bottomfish fisheries took place in November 2003, at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. It was the first time in approximately 20 years such an international gathering of experts had the opportunity to discuss the management of deep slope snapper and grouper species common off island coasts. Hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the workshop brought together experts to review and improve resource assessment and management methods for bottomfish fisheries.

Hawai'i was well represented by several participants who contributed to the workshop. Council staff member, Mark Mitsuyasu, provided a look at the federal approach to managing bottomfish fisheries in waters surrounding the Hawaiian Islands. Walter Ikehara of the Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources (HDAR) described the State's role in the management and monitoring of bottomfish. Robert Moffitt of NMFS' Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center delivered his perspective on stock assessment methodologies used in Hawai'i fisheries.

Around Hawai'i and other tropical islands, bottomfish species inhabit deep slope areas (90-300 feet) of high relief just beyond the fringing reefs. These species are also relatively vulnerable to overexploitation owing to the species' slow growth and late age at first maturity. The higher the percentage of immature fish caught by a fishery the greater the possibility that over-exploitation could have long-term adverse effects on a population.

Several participating countries, (Rarotonga, Fiji and Timor), have newly emerging bottomfish fisheries and looked toward the developed fisheries, such as Hawai'i and Australia, for management examples. The New Zealand workshop highlighted the idea that new fisheries must be regulated early and then be allowed to expand in a slow controlled manner. As workshop participants discussed, new methods for data collection should to be developed specifically considering the diverse structure and deep ocean location of these species. This involves overcoming inherent technical and scientific challenges as well as the economic challenge of maintaining cost efficiency. The cost of bottomfish data collection is relatively high, given the small nature of these fisheries. Participants agreed that collaboration in the production of generic logbooks should move forward on a regional basis. This will support consistent data collection from newer bottomfish fisheries. Regional collaboration also is needed in conducting bottomfish stock assessments.

The New Zealand workshop served as a "warm-up" session for a bottomfish stock assessment workshop organized in January by the Council in Honolulu. The Hawaii workshop brought together an international expert panel to review and assess available fishery dependent and independent information, fishery monitoring programs, management regimes and stock assessment methods. The workshop was held

from Jan. 13-16, 2004 at the Council office and work center in Honolulu. The Council, HDAR and NMFS hosted the workshop to set a course of action for completing stock assessments for bottomfish resources around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam and CNMI. The panel also made recommendations for improving data collection programs and identifying research priorities. Recommendations include:

- Update estimates of maximum sustainable yield;
- Add recreational catches to the data time series;
- Implement and expand tagging program to gather life history information and determine the extent of fish movements;
- Develop strategies to provide meaningful stock assessments given the presence of no-take MPAs;
- Modify data reporting systems to obtain more accurate information on fishing location;
- Investigate the potential existence of grouper spawning aggregations, and if confirmed, consider time/area closures.

A draft report of findings will be presented to the 85th Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting, February 24-26, 2004 in the Council office hearing room.



## COMBATING MARINE DEBRIS PROBLEM

While on a fishing trip in her boat near French Frigate Shoals last spring, Timm Timoney was dismayed to hear the noise of a struggling engine. “I could tell right away the prop was wrapped up in gillnet,” recalled Timoney who is a bottomfish permit holder in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Timoney did what she is accustomed to doing in such situations: “You get out your dive knife, drop down and cut the vessel free,” she said, also adding that it's this kind of experience which has made Hawai'i-based fishermen vigilant participants when it comes to cleaning up derelict fishing nets and other types of marine debris. “We're talking about huge masses of monofilament. It damages vessels and ruins fishing gear, and, worst of all, it can hurt marine life,” said Timoney.

The costly and destructive problem of marine debris continues to be a matter of concern for the Council. As part of its continuing effort to mitigate marine debris impacts on fishery resources, the Council helped sponsor and organize the Derelict Fishing Gear and Related Marine Debris Seminar, held by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation's (APEC) Fisheries Working Group January 13-16, 2004. Other major sponsors of the seminar include the U.S. Department of Commerce, Hawai'i Sea Grant, and U.S. Department of State.

The seminar fostered information exchange between members of APEC and individuals representing fishing industries, fisheries management, recycling and disposal industries, research and scientific programs, international organizations, NGO's, and government agencies. The seminar addressed marine debris issues through a series of panel discussions focused on science and policy, fishing gear and fishing practices, recovery ports and disposal, and domestic and international regulatory structures. Regional case studies highlighting specific experiences with marine debris in the Hawaiian Islands, Japan, Korea, Australia and Taiwan were also presented. A representative from the Korean Maritime Institute described a government incentive program that pays fishermen approximately \$5 for every 40 pounds of marine debris brought back to port.

Port disposal for marine debris has become a particular concern for the Council, following reports from fishermen who say that local facilities are inadequate. “If you go down to the harbor, just about any day of the week, you'll find a fishing vessel hauling in netting that it happened to find floating in the water, but there's no good way to get rid of it,” said Sean Martin.



Hawai'i fisherman Sean Martin encountered this huge mass of netting floating in Hawaiian waters. He hauled it onto his boat and delivered it for disposal to Honolulu harbor. Martin says fishermen typically make the effort to pick up marine debris which can cause harm to vessels, gear and marine life.

According to Martin, fishermen routinely take the initiative to scoop up huge masses of floating debris, but after docking, they find no receptacles available for the non-biodegradable material. Pacific ocean currents near Hawai'i add to the dilemma by bringing in debris from faraway sources, Martin noted.

Participants visited Hawaii Islands Recycling, Inc., which in the past cut nets collected from the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands into smaller sizes for incineration at Honolulu City and County's H-Power facility. Unfortunately, Hawaii Metals Recycling, Inc., which chopped the nets for free, can only process the debris on a limited basis. Finding creative ways to recycle and reuse marine debris is greatly needed. Those with first-hand experience in the marine debris problem say the multinational APEC seminar was a key step towards a solution that must include local, national and international cooperation in order to be effective.

# TURTLE CONSERVATION

## RECEIVES COUNCIL SUPPORT

The Council is supporting a new conservation program focused on stocks of leatherback and loggerhead turtles known to interact with Hawai'i-based fishing vessels. The aim is to protect endangered sea turtles throughout their entire life cycle. As an adjunct to their fishery management measures, the Council's conservation efforts focus on reducing direct harvest, habitat degradation and other threats that affect turtle nesting beaches and foraging habitats.

This comprehensive approach to turtle conservation follows the recommendations of the Council's Turtle Advisory Committee (TAC), a seven-member group of experts in sea turtle biology, research, and conservation. On the advice of the TAC, the Council is launching turtle conservation projects in collaboration with non-gov-



Colin Limpus conducting education and outreach at Mon Repos loggerhead nesting beach in Bundaberg, Australia. The sea turtle eggs were collected and transported to a safer location to increase their chance of survival.



Members of the Council's Sea Turtle Advisory Committee. Pictured left to right are: Peter Dutton, George Balazs, Colin Limpus, Jeff Polovina, Milani Chaloupka

ernmental organizations with ties to local regions. These projects involve long-term management and include the following:

- In turtle nesting beaches of Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) and neighboring Papua New Guinea, turtle eggs are being relocated away from erosion-prone areas and are also being protected from feral pig predation and human poachers;
- In turtle foraging grounds of coastal Western Papua, pressures of direct harvesting of adult leatherback turtles are being studied and addressed;
- In waters off of Baja, Mexico, researchers are collaborating with Mexican fishermen to reduce their incidental capture of juvenile loggerhead turtles in the halibut coastal gillnet fishery in Baja, Mexico.

The Council also continues to coordinate the development of a regional sea turtle tagging database which is a critical step towards understanding population trends for Pacific sea turtles. The second database meeting convened in December 2003, at the Mon Repos loggerhead nesting beach in Bundaberg, Australia focused on database development and included a unique opportunity to view loggerhead conservation in action. Special thanks are extended to generous hosts at the Queensland Parks Authority and to regional collaborators for another successful workshop to promote regional sea turtle conservation.

For more information on the Council's sea turtle conservation projects, contact Irene Kinan, Sea Turtle Program Coordinator at 522-7495 or e-mail Irene.Kinan@noaa.gov

## WORKSHOP CALENDAR

The Council has or will host several fishery-related workshops in partnership with NOAA Fisheries in 2004:

**Workshop on the Development of Bottomfish Resource Assessment Methodologies for the U.S. Central and Western Pacific Fisheries.** The purpose of this workshop was to improve data collection and analyses to achieve reliable resource assessments. **January 13-16, 2004, Council office, Honolulu.**

**APEC Seminar on Abandoned Marine Fishing Gear:** The goal of this seminar was to raise awareness and promote a meaningful exchange of information on science and policy, gear and disposal issues, and current regulatory structures. **January 13-16, 2004, East-West Center, Honolulu.**

**Reef Fish Stock Assessment:** The aim of the meeting will be to improve stock assessment of coral reef ecosystem resources in the Western Pacific Region. **February 10-13, 2004, Council office, Honolulu.**

**2nd International Sea Turtle Workshop:** This workshop will bring together sea turtle experts to continue dialogue regarding sea turtle conservation and management to promote recovery. **May 17-21, 2004, Council office, Honolulu.**

**Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management Workshop:** The goal of this meeting is to describe current models, explain data requirements, and examine management and policy options. **July 26-30, 2004, Council office, Honolulu.**

**3rd Scientific Symposium on Resource Investigations in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands:** This symposium will provide a review and synthesis of recent scientific developments in ecological, biological, oceanographic, and resource assessment research in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, identify knowledge gaps and delineate future research needs. **November 2-4, 2004, Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu. (Open to the public)**

Contact the Council office at (808) 522-8220 or log onto [www.wpcouncil.org](http://www.wpcouncil.org) for more information.