



WESTERN  
PACIFIC  
REGIONAL  
FISHERY  
MANAGEMENT  
COUNCIL

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Federal Management Council Reaffirms Long-Term Measures to End Overfishing of Main Hawaiian Islands Bottomfish**

HONOLULU (21 June 2007) The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council yesterday in Honolulu unanimously reaffirmed a suite of measures to end overfishing of bottomfish in the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) that it had initially approved in March of this year. The measures are scheduled to be phased in beginning Oct. 1, 2007, when the fishery reopens following a five-month prohibition against the taking of seven deepwater bottomfish species in both federal and state waters of the MHI. Known as the Deep 7, they are onaga, ehu, gindai, opakapaka, kalekale, lehi and hapuupuu. Harvesting of these species is not prohibited in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

The aim of the measures is to reduce fishing related mortality of MHI bottomfish by 24 percent, based on the commercial catch data for 2004. A stock assessment by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) says that the local stock is at risk unless fishing-related mortality around the MHI is reduced by that amount.

The regulations would apply in both federal waters (3 to 200 miles from shore) and State waters (0 to 3 miles from shore) through State cooperation. Among the measures are the following:

- A total allowable catch (TAC) limit for commercial fishermen of 178,000 lbs of MHI Deep-7 bottomfish species for the 2007 fishing year, which would commence on Oct. 1. The fishery will be closed for the fishing year once the TAC is reached.
- A four-month seasonal closure, May 1 to Aug. 30, 2008, for the Deep 7 species.
- A Federal permit requirement for all recreational bottomfish fishermen.
- A requirement that both commercial and recreational bottomfish fishermen report their catch on a per trip basis with fishing locations reported by longitude and latitude to the nearest minute. Commercial bottomfish fishermen would continue to provide their reports through the existing State commercial reporting program. Recreational fishermen would be required to report their catches through a federal reporting program to be established by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The owner or operator of the vessel would be required to report the catch for the entire trip.
- Recreational bag limits for recreational bottomfish fishermen in both State and federal waters, until enough recreational data is collected for the TAC to include the recreational sector.

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## Main Hawaii Island Bottomfish Regulations 2-2-2-2-2

The Council reconvened today to consider Hawaii black coral and Pacific pelagic fishing issues, including the Guam longline area closure and a limited entry program for non-longline, non-purse seine pelagic vessels. The four-day meeting ends Friday with discussions on program planning and administrative matters.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) is the policy-making organization for fisheries management in federal waters (generally 3-200 miles offshore) of Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and other U.S. Pacific Islands. Recommendations approved by the Council are forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for approval. For more information and full agendas of the meetings, visit [www.wpcouncil.org](http://www.wpcouncil.org) or contact the Council at (808) 522-8220 or at [info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov](mailto:info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov).

### **WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

Appointed by Secretary of Commerce

- AMERICAN SAMOA: Vice Chair Frank W. McCoy Sr. (longline operator) and Stephen Haleck (Samoa High Talking Chief)
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- Bill Robinson (Pacific Islands Regional Office)

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