



WESTERN
PACIFIC
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FISHERY
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COUNCIL

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Cost of Fishing and Climate Change Impacts on Marine Ecosystems to Highlight June 18 Fishers Forum

HONOLULU (12 June 2008) Fishermen and other members of the public are invited to attend the June 18th Fishers Forum to be held this coming Wednesday from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Ala Moana Hotel, Hibiscus Ballroom 2, 410 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu.

Special guest Charlie Veron, former chief scientist of the Australian Institute of Marine Science, will open the Forum with a presentation on ocean acidification and climate change impacts on coral reef ecosystems and associated fisheries. His presentation recognizes 2008 as the International Year of the Reef.

“Anthropogenic carbon dioxide is increasing so abruptly that it is now causing fatal mass bleaching of corals worldwide and is set to trigger global mass extinctions through ocean acidification,” Veron notes. “The rate at which this is happening has no precedent in all Earth history.”

Participants will also hear presentations on the rising cost of fishing and management options that might alleviate these impacts for “small-scale” fisheries.

“Fuel costs now account for nearly 70 percent of a small-boat fisherman’s trip expenditures,” says economist Justin Hospital with the NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center. At the Forum, Hospital will reveal these and other findings from a 2007 economic survey, which shows the economic and social importance of traditional fishing operations in the state of Hawaii.

The Forum will explore which fishermen fall within a potential “small-scale fisheries” management category. Potential criteria could include such components as boat size, effort level, harvest amounts, earnings, gear type, targeted species, geographic location and the principal reason for fishing, such as for fun, subsistence, sharing, etc. Public comments on this topic could help determine decisions made by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council that may alleviate some of the increasing economic and bureaucratic burdens on fishermen.

The Fishers Forum is part of the Council’s 142nd meeting, being held at the Ala Moana Hotel, June 16 to 19, 2008. The public is also invited to participate in the Council meeting, which includes several additional opportunities for public comment. The Council is the policy-making agency for fisheries management in offshore waters surrounding the State of Hawaii, Territories of American Samoa and Guam, Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands and the US Pacific remote island areas.

For more information on the Fishers Forum and the Council meeting including the agenda, contact the Council at (808) 522-8220, email info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov or go online to www.wpcouncil.org.

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