



WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

Press Release

For Immediate Release

June 11, 2007

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Fishery Scientists to Deliberate on Long-Term Measures to Address Overfishing of Bottomfish in the Main Hawaiian Islands

HONOLULU (11 June 2007) The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council—comprised of scientists from throughout the United States and the Pacific—will convene at the Council office, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu from June 12 to 14, 2007, to discuss fishery management issues in the US Pacific islands.

One of the key items to be considered will be measures to implement after the 2007 main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) bottomfish closure for seven species of deepwater species, known as the Deep 7, ends on September 30. Measurements under consideration include:

- Limiting commercial catches of Deep 7 species to 178,000 lbs, which represents a 24 percent reduction of MHI commercial Deep 7 catches as compared to 2004, and closing both the commercial and non-commercial sectors once commercial Deep 7 landings are reached.
- Changing non-commercial bag limits from the current five onaga and/or ehu combined per person per trip, to five of any Deep 7 species combined per person per trip and extending this bag limit to include not only State water (0 to 3 miles from shore) but also Federal waters (3 to 200 miles from shore).
- Implementing Federal permit and reporting requirements for non-commercial fishermen who catch bottomfish in the MHI.
- Implementing a 2008 seasonal closure for MHI Deep 7 fishing from May through August.
- Implementing a combined commercial and non-commercial Deep 7 total allowable catch limit beginning September 1, 2008. At this point the non-commercial bag limits would be dropped.

Other key items for the SSC to consider include the following:

- Changing the existing 50 mile longline closed area around Guam.
- Establishing a mechanism by which tuna quotas issued by Pacific regional fishery management organizations can be implemented in a timely manner by the Council through the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).

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- Implementing management measures for commercial (and possibly non-commercial) non-longline pelagic fishing in federal waters of the U.S. Pacific islands.
- Implementing a limited entry program for the Hawaii black coral fishery operating in the Auau Channel.

Recommendations made by the SSC will be considered by the Council when it convenes June 19-22, 2007, at the Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu. The MHI bottomfish overfishing issue will be discussed 6:30 to 9 p.m., Wednesday, June 20, 2007.

Those unable to attend the SSC or the Council meeting may provide written comments to the Council by mail, by fax at (808) 522-8226 or by sending an email to info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov. Comments must be received by 5 p.m. June 15. For more information on or a draft agenda for these meetings or other fishery issues, please visit the Council's website at www.wpcouncil.org or call (808) 522-8220.

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

Dr. Stewart Allen	NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
Dr. Judith Amesbury	Micronesian Archeological Research Services
Dr. Brian Bowen	Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
Dr. Karl Brookins	American Samoa Marine & Wildlife Resources Department
Dr. Paul Callaghan (CHAIR)	University of Guam
Dr. Frank A. Camacho	Guam Community College
Dr. Milani Chaloupka	University of Queensland
Dr. Charles Daxboeck	BioDax Consulting Tahiti
Dr. Richard Deriso	Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
Dr. John Hampton	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Dr. Pierre Kleiber	NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
Dr. Molly Lutcavage	University of New Hampshire
Dr. James Parrish	Hawaii Cooperative Fishery Research Unit
Dr. Dan Polhemus	Hawaii Department of Land & Natural Resources
Dr. Craig Severance	University of Hawaii at Hilo
Dr. John Sibert	Pelagic Fisheries Research Program
Dr. Robert Skillman	NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (retired)
Mr. Michael Trianni	Northern Mariana Islands Division of Fish & Wildlife