



Scientists Weigh In on 2013 Fish Quotas, Western-Central Pacific Tuna Management

HONOLULU (26 October 2012) A group of international scientists concluded its three-day meeting in Honolulu today after determining the level of fishing mortality that various fish stocks in the US Pacific Islands can sustainably withstand in 2013. These annual biological catches (ABCs) calculated by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council will be used by the Council when it convenes Oct. 29 to Nov. 1 at the Laniakea YWCA-Fuller Hall, 1040 Richards St., Honolulu. As mandated by Congress, the Council sets annual catch limits (ACLs) for the fisheries based on the ABCs along with information about the social, economic, ecological and management uncertainty aspects of the fisheries. The ACLs cannot be greater than the ABCs. 2013 will be the second year that federal fisheries in the US Pacific Islands will be managed under ACLs. Federally managed fisheries operate seaward of state/territorial waters.

For Hawaii shallow- and mid-water bottomfish, the ABC for 2013 has been set at 140,000 lbs, up 5,000 lbs from last year. The Hawaii 2013 deepwater quota had been previously set at 325,000 lbs. The SSC provided bottomfish ABCs for both 2013 and 2014 for American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) at 101,000 lbs/year; 66,800 lbs/year; and 228,000 lbs/year, respectively.

For the crustacean and precious coral fisheries, the SSC recommended that the 2012 ABCs be rolled over into 2013 and that additional effort be directed to obtaining better harvest estimates so the ABCs can be refined in the future.

Species	2013 ABCs (lbs)
Hawaii spiny lobster	10,000
Hawaii slipper lobster	280
Hawaii's Kona crab	27,600
Hawaii deepwater shrimp	250,773
Hawaii precious coral	Varies by species & location
American Samoa spiny lobster	2,300
American Samoa slipper lobster	30
American Samoa Kona crab	3,200
American Samoa deepwater shrimp	80,000
American Samoa black coral	1,742
American Samoa other precious coral	2,205
CNMI spiny lobster	5,500
CNMI slipper	60
CNMI Kona crab	6,300
CNMI deepwater shrimp	275,570
CNMI black coral	2,100
CNMI other precious coral	1,000
Guam spiny lobster	2,700
Guam slipper	20
Guam Kona crab	1,900
Guam deepwater shrimp	48,488
Guam black coral	700
Guam other precious coral	1,000

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Scientists Weigh In on Fish Quotas, Tuna Management 2-2-2-2-2

In addition to setting the ABCs, the SSC recommended that the gold coral fishery moratorium in the Western Pacific Region be extended for another five years. The moratorium is set to expire on Sept. 11, 2013.

The SSC also made a range of recommendations regarding the management of tuna in the Western and Central Pacific. Tuna are managed internationally by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), to which the United States is a party. The WCPFC is scheduled to meet this December in Manila. The SSC noted that the WCPFC has reduced the catches of bigeye tuna by longline fisheries, such as the fishery based in Hawaii, but has failed to control fishing mortality of bigeye by purse-seiners fishing on fish aggregation devices (FADs). The SSC reiterated its previous recommendation that the WCPFC must address the substantial catch of juvenile bigeye by purse-seine fleets, especially in light of the continued increase in the number of purse-seine vessels, fishing effort, purse-seine catch of juvenile bigeye and prevalence of FAD sets. The SSC recommended that the WCPFC take action to rebuild North Pacific striped marlin stocks and support timely development of conservation and management measures for South Pacific albacore.

The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council was established by Congress to manage fisheries in offshore waters around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, CNMI and the US Pacific remote island areas. Recommendations made by the Council are transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval. For more information or the Council meeting agenda, visit www.wpcouncil.org or contact the Council at info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov; phone (808) 522-8220, or fax (808) 522-8226.

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council: Appointees by the Secretary of Commerce from nominees selected by American Samoa, CNMI, Guam and Hawaii governors:, Michael Duenas, Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association (Guam); Richard Seman, education and outreach specialist (CNMI); William Sword, recreational fisherman/civil engineer/manager (American Samoa) (Vice Chair); Edwin Ebisui, attorney (Hawaii); Julie Leialoha, environmentalist (Hawaii); and F. McGrew Rice, charter fisherman (Hawaii). Designated state officials: Arnold Palacios, CNMI Department of Land & Natural Resources (Vice Chair); Mariquita Taitague, Guam Department of Agriculture (Vice Chair); William Aila, Hawaii Department of Land & Natural Resources (Interim Chair); and Ray Tulafono, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources. Designated federal officials: Michael Tosatto, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office; Don Palawski, U.S. Fish and Wildlife; RAdm Charles Ray, U.S. Coast Guard 14th District; and Bill Gibbons-Fly, US Department of State.

Scientific and Statistical Committee: Dr. Charles Daxboeck, chair, (BioDax Consulting Tahiti); Dr. Stewart Allen (NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, PIFSC), Dr. Judith Amesbury (Micronesian Archeological Research Services), Dr. Brian Bowen (Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology), Dr. Paul Callaghan (University of Guam retired), Dr. Frank A. Camacho (Guam Community College), Dr. Milani Chaloupka (University of Queensland), Dr. Richard Deriso (Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission), Dr. John Hampton (Secretariat of the Pacific Community), Mr. David Itano (NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office), Dr. Pierre Kleiber (NMFS PIFSC), Dr. Donald Kobayashi (NMFS PIFSC), Dr. Molly Lutcavage (University of New Hampshire), Mr. Jim Lynch (K & L Gates, Seattle), Dr. Domingo Ochavillo (American Samoa Dept. of Marine & Wildlife Resources), Mr. Francis Oishi (Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources), Dr. Minling Pan (NMFS PIFSC), Dr. Craig Severance (University of Hawaii retired), Dr. John Sibert (Pelagic Fisheries Research Program retired), Dr. Robert Skillman (NMFS PIFSC retired) and Mr. Todd Miller (Northern Mariana Islands Division of Fish & Wildlife).