



**WESTERN  
PACIFIC  
REGIONAL  
FISHERY  
MANAGEMENT  
COUNCIL**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

February 22, 2013

FROM: Kitty M. Simonds

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kitty M. Simonds".

SUBJECT:

**1. Management Options for American Samoa South Pacific Albacore Fishery**

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The Council will consider this issue summarized below, including any public comments on this initiative. The Council is expected to take action on this at its 156th Council Meeting to be held between Tuesday, March 12, and Thursday, March 14, at the Governor H. Rex Lee Auditorium (Fale Laumei), Pago Pago, American Samoa. Written comments should be sent to the Council's Executive Director by 5:00 p.m. (Hawaii time) March 4, 2013, by mail, FAX or email as indicated below.

**Mail:** Executive Director  
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council  
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**FAX:** (808) 522-8226

**E-mail:** [info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov](mailto:info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov)

## **1. Management Options for American Samoa South Pacific Albacore Fishery**

The American Samoa longline fishery is the second largest fishery in the Western Pacific Region. The American Samoa fishery is based almost entirely on fishing for South Pacific albacore (SPALB) caught for the American Samoa canning industry, with only a small domestic market, and limited access to overseas markets. SPALB is also important to the central South Pacific countries neighboring American Samoa, which also supply the American Samoa canning industry.

Catches of SPALB by all fleets south of the equator have more than doubled in the past decade and are currently about 90% of the MSY. This is due primarily to the doubling of vessels from China fishing under access agreements with the Solomon Islands and switching by Taiwanese longliners from targeting bigeye to targeting albacore.

The Council needs to examine options and scenarios to maintain the viability and continuity of the American Samoa longline fishery, taking into account current management measures, SPALB stock status, and regional fishery initiatives and likely Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) for SPALB implemented by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

The SSC and Council will be presented with options and scenarios that are framed somewhat differently from the typical alternatives for amending a Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). The future of the American Samoa longline fishery is intimately bound up with regional and sub-regional fishery management arrangements of neighboring Polynesian countries belonging to the Forum Fisheries Agency and Te Vaka Moana arrangement. Like the American Samoa longline fleet, the long term prosperity of the longline fisheries in these neighboring countries is dependent on the American Samoa canning and fish processing industry.

The options the Council may consider include:

### **1. No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, no additional management measures are implemented either domestically for the American Samoa longline fishery, or regionally by additional Conservation and Management Measures by the WCPFC.

### **2. The Council takes no action domestically and complies with any new CMM from the WCPFC for SPALB**

Under this alternative the Council would not develop further domestic management measures for the American Samoa longline fishery, but would comply with any additional CMMs for SPALB

### **3. The Council works closely with TVM to explore management options**

The Council would fully engage with TVM in management of SPALB, and in particular mutually acceptable SPALB catch limits within EEZs and on the high seas. Under this alternative the Council would:

- 1) Explore with TVM the mechanism for developing catch limits in zone and on the high seas
- 2) Matching catch limits with fishing capacity transferability of unfished catch limits between TVM members,
- 3) Development of EEZ access agreements

### **4. Government of American Samoa becomes a member of TVM**

Under this alternative, the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources becomes a member of TVM, probably a two stag process, initially as observer, then membership, which would require coordination with the Council and other US Government Agencies.

**Council Action at the 156th Council Meeting should consider these and other potential scenarios and options to address the long term viability of the American Samoa longline fishery in a domestic and international context.**