



## **Report of the Hawaii Archipelago FEP Advisory Panel Meeting**

*June 12, 2015*

*12:00 Noon – 1:30 p.m.*

*By Webconference and Teleconference from Honolulu, Hawaii*

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Gary Beals, Hawaii Advisory Panel (AP) Chair, opened the meeting. AP Members in attendance included: Basil Oshiro, Nathan Abe, Lyn McNut, Roy Sokolowski, Ed Watamura, Clay Tam

Others in attendance included: Council Staff Joshua DeMello, Charles Kaaiai, Sylvia Spalding and Marlowe Sabater and FISH Project Interns Zach Yamada, Keena Leon Guerrero, Kyle Brandt.

### **2. Review and Approval of the Agenda**

Members reviewed and approved the agenda with no changes made.

### **3. Issues to be discussed at 163<sup>rd</sup> Council Meeting**

#### **A. Upcoming Council Action Items**

##### **i. Cooperative Research Priorities**

Joshua DeMello, Council staff presented the Council's cooperative research priorities and explained that these priorities are reviewed every year prior to them being submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) for use in determining cooperative research funding. He noted that Marlowe Sabater, Council staff, is involved in the steering committee that reviews cooperative research proposals in the region before they are put forward to the national cooperative research funding competition.

McNut asked if the priorities are ranked in-house and prioritized by what the Council wants so that it can go out and address them through other funding opportunities. There needs to be a way to be strategic and follow-up on completing the research.

There were no objections with the current priorities.

##### **ii. Five-year Research Priorities**

DeMello also presented on the Council's five-year research priorities. He noted that these priorities are sent up to the higher levels of NMFS and that some funding opportunities will have to address the Council's research priorities.

Watamura commented that the impact of tourism and water quality on nearshore species. He said that he wanted to know if the change in water quality due to increased tourism is affecting species residency. He also said that there should be more work done on genetic connectivity of other fishes between the NWHI and the Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) and with Johnston Atoll. McNut commented that there should also be projects looking at connectivity of fish between Kauai and Niihau. Oshiro noted that opakapaka does travel around Maui from the tagging studies they did, and moved even as far as Hawaii island and stressed the need to gather this information.

There were no objections to the research priorities but the AP wanted to stress the importance of connectivity research and would like to ensure that the impact of tourism on nearshore species is included in the priorities.

### **iii. Specification of Annual Catch Limits for Main Hawaiian Islands Deep-seven Bottomfish**

DeMello also presented the options for specifying Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) for MHI deep-seven bottomfish. He noted that because the best available science for this fishery is still the 2011 stock assessment, the numbers generated were based on that stock assessment that was updated with additional data from the more recent fishing seasons. The most updated MSY for the fishery is 404,000 lbs., which is about 13,000 lbs. less than the 2011 MSY. DeMello noted that the fishery is not currently overfished or experiencing overfishing, and that there is only a 14.7% probability of overfishing occurring. He then presented the projection results from the updated stock assessment and noted that the P\* level from the recent working group was set at 39%. Alternatives for setting the ACL were presented and ranged from no ACL to setting the ACL=ABC (with a gradual decrease in P\* from 44% down to 39%) to setting the ACL to less than ABC or use a phase-in approach where the ACL will decrease each season until it reaches the current P\* level.

Oshiro asked if the stock assessment can break up the stock into island areas and set ACLs by island area. Abe asked why the quota declined. Sabater replied that there are two sources of decline: 1) the retrospective pattern, where the model has the pattern decreasing with increasing data. 2) The model is also correcting itself with additional information due to overestimation. He also said that the P\* risk of overfishing decreased from 41% to 39% to account for scientific uncertainty. Abe noted that there are not that many people fishing for bottomfish full-time and that the bottomfish isn't being targeted that skews the data.

McNut asked if the model was the same one used for Atlantic fisheries. Sabater said that he doesn't know if it is the exact same model, but it is a generic surplus-production model so maybe it is. McNut said that the model should be tailored to our region with fishermen input. Sabater said that PIFSC is going to have a benchmark of the stock assessment and that they are holding a data workshop to tweak the model. Fishermen would be useful to help interpret the data that goes into the model so that the interpretation of the data reflects what is happening in the fishery.

Layne Nakagawa, by email, added that fishermen are contributing over 75% of the cooperative research information on bottomfish life history working with NMFS PIFSC outside of the annual cruises participated in by the Pacific Islands Fisheries Group. He also added that he agreed with the priorities but would like to see a change to highlight the need for greater analysis on CPUE data for bottomfish highliners, since it is a skilled fishery. He said that the CPUE should reflect the skills of the fishermen and that the large numbers of fishermen doesn't mean much if the skill level isn't as great. The AP thought it would be useful to include the bottomfish fishermen from the AP in that data workshop and that they actually listen to the fishermen.

Oshiro commented that the CPUE needs more explanation to the fishermen and how it is both used and developed. There is a need to learn how PIFSC comes up with the numbers. McNut added that it would be good to see where the numbers come from and compare to other numbers.

They agreed that the data workshop would be a good place to learn about the numbers and to provide outreach to the fishermen.

McNutt noted that all of the alternatives have a reduced quota. She said that if more data points are added, the numbers will go down. Sabater concurred and said that it will continue to go down until the numbers stabilize and then go back up, but we don't know when that will happen.

Abe asked if it is because the quota is not being reached? Sabater said no, it is in the addition of CPUE information that back-corrects the model to account for catch and effort that may be different because it has more data points to look at.

Tam asked whether or not an assessment of the BRFA's would make a difference in the stock assessment? He said that it needs to be looked at to get a better handle on the fishery. There is also a need to go back into history and see the changes in the fishery to see how it impacts the CPUE. He cautioned on the use of CPUE in the model because of the quality of the non-standardized data.

Sokowloski asked if the CPUE can be done with observers to compare with fishermen CPUE to standardize the CPUE? Tam said they are doing that in the cooperative research and they are making it available to the PIFSC.

The AP could not come to consensus on any of the alternatives and requested a clearer statement on how the model operates and how the numbers are reached. The AP would also like the next stock assessment done immediately.

#### **B. Hawaii Archipelago FEP Community Activities**

DeMello presented on the other activities the Council will be talking about including the Humpback Whale delisting and the proposed Green Sea Turtle ESA listing. The AP had previous discussion on these issues and made recommendations in the joint meeting held in May.

#### **4. Hawaii Archipelago FEP Issues**

Beals provided time for the AP to bring up other issues or concerns to be worked on by the AP or taken to the Council. He noted the issues brought up in the May 14, 2015 meeting, including the yellowfin tuna minimum size, cross seamount, marine mammal depredation, amongst other issues.

The AP continues to be concerned with the proposed expansion of the Hawaii Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and would like more opportunities to have public discussions. McNutt implored the AP to ask questions in comments because they have to respond to questions. Council staff noted that the comment period is still open so they should put in their comments online or by mail if no other public opportunities are presented.

Tam also asked the Council staff to find out more about the proposed ocean wind farms on public engagement opportunities and pass it along to the AP. DeMello said that he will follow up and pass information along.

Oshiro inquired about the Council supporting the Aha Moku system. Kaaiai said that the Council asked for a proposal and budget and the Council can see what it can fund. Oshiro said that he will talk to the Aha Moku o Maui and get back to him.

## **5. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **6. Discussion and Recommendations**

The Hawaii Advisory Panel made the following recommendations to the Council:

*Regarding Cooperative Research Priorities, the AP:*

- Agreed with the cooperative research priorities and recommended the Council adopt these priorities and develop a plan for addressing these priorities.

*Regarding the Five-Year Research Priorities, the AP:*

- Stressed the importance of the genetic connectivity priorities and suggested adding a priority to determine the impacts of tourism on nearshore fisheries. The AP agreed with the five-year research priorities with the addition and recommended the Council adopt these priorities and develop a plan for addressing these priorities.

*Regarding the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 MHI Bottomfish Annual Catch Limits, the AP:*

- Was not confident in the stock assessment model and its update and therefore could not come to a consensus on an alternative and requested the Council and NMFS provide a clear statement on how the model works and how the numbers are reached. Further, the AP recommended the Council work with NMFS PIFSC to provide better explanation through meetings and workshops and requests NMFS PIFSC include AP bottomfish fishermen in its proposed bottomfish data workshop.

## **7. Other Business**

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 p.m.