

40 Years of Accomplishments

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRFMC) Milestones

- 1976** Congress approves Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which establishes the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) lobster fishery begins.

- 1983** Establishes Precious Corals Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
- Ban on bottom trawling and other potentially destructive and non-selective gear throughout the Region's entire 1.5 million square nautical miles of exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters
 - Minimum sizes and quotas
 - No-take marine protected areas (MPAs) in NWHI (WesPac Refugia) and around the Pacific remote islands areas (PRIAs)

Establishes Crustaceans FMP

- Marine conservation zone in NWHI around Laysan Island
- Limited entry
- Gear restrictions to protect monk seals and to release bycatch and undersized catch
- Vessel size limit
- Risk-based bank-specific quotas (catch equivalent of 13% of the exploitable biomass with 10% risk of overfishing)
- Real-time reporting, vessel monitoring system, observers

- 1984** Co-hosts the first of three international marine debris conferences.

- 1986** Establishes Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish FMP Bottom trawling and other potentially destructive gear banned throughout the Region's entire 1.5 million square nautical miles of EEZ waters.
- Fishing by large commercial vessels restricted around Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and NWHI
 - Seamount groundfish moratorium at Hancock Seamount in NWHI (Ongoing)

Spatial restrictions in NWHI in Crustaceans FMP extended to slipper lobsters.

- 1987** WPRFMC develops Pelagics Fishery Management Plan.
- Drift gillnetting banned throughout the Region's entire 1.5 million square nautical miles of EEZ waters prior to Congress passing the Driftnet Impact Monitoring Assessment and Control Act
 - Spatial management near coastal areas—e.g., Protected Species Zone around the NWHI—to minimize impacts on protected species and user conflicts throughout Region
 - Hawaii longline fishery deemed first environmentally responsible longline fishery in the world, using effective sea turtle (circle hooks and mackerel bait) and seabird mitigation (side- and night-setting) methods

Undertakes efforts to promote native fishing rights.

- 1988** Amends the Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish FMP to establish one of the Nation's first limited entry programs (NWHI Hoomalu zone) and requirement for observers.

Instrumental in establishing the Pelagic Fisheries Research Program.

- 1990** Congress amends the MSA to include highly-migratory tuna species in the Pacific under management authority of WPRFMC.

- 1991** Implements a 50-75 nautical mile longline exclusion zone around the main Hawaiian Islands, permit and reporting requirements, limited entry program, and a mandatory vessel monitoring program.

Creates a 50 nm longline exclusion zone around the NWHI to protect endangered Hawaiian monk seals. It also implemented framework provisions for establishing a mandatory observer program to collect information on interactions between longline fishing and sea turtles.

Creates 3-year moratorium on new entry into the Hawaii-based online fishery.

Implements catch logbooks for the Hawaii longline fishery.

- 1992** Creates longline vessel exclusion zone around the MHI ranging from 50 to 75 nm, and a similar 50 nm exclusion zone around Guam and its offshore banks. The zones were designed primarily to prevent gear conflicts and vessel safety issues arising from interactions between longline vessels and smaller fishing boats. A seasonal reduction in the size of the closure was implemented in October 1992; between October and January longline fishing is prohibited within 25 nm of the windward shores of all Main Hawaiian Islands except Oahu, where it is prohibited within 50 nm from the shore.

Specifies that all tuna species are designated as fish under U.S. management authority and included tunas and related species as Pelagic Management Unit Species under the FMP.

1993

- 1994** Amends the Pelagic FMP to establish limited entry program for the Hawaii longline fishery

Implements automated satellite-based vessel monitoring system (VMS) on the Hawaii longline fishery which is the first application worldwide of this technology to track fishing vessels

Implements observer program for the Hawaii longline fishery.

- 1996** Magnuson-Stevens Act recognizes indigenous fishing rights for native peoples and the unique historical, cultural, legal, political, and geographical circumstances of the Pacific Insular Areas and the critical importance of fisheries resources for their economic growth.
- Community Development Program
 - Community Demonstration Project Program
 - Pacific Islands Area Fishing Agreements

Establishes a risk-based quota system by which the annual harvest guideline would be set based on a constant percent of the population (i.e., proportional to the estimated exploitable population size) based on a specified acceptable risk of overfishing. Amendment 9 set this risk level at 10% and specified that annual harvest guidelines be published by NMFS no later than February 28 of each year. Earlier in-season adjustment procedures were eliminated.

- 1997** Initiates program to reduce albatross interactions with longline fisheries
- Project on Hawaii longline vessels to test mitigation techniques
 - First international black-footed albatross population dynamics workshop convened by WPRFMC
 - WPRFMC strategic goal of reducing seabird bycatch by over 90 percent achieved

Implements VMS for the NWHI lobster fishery that allows for fishing vessels to be in the NWHI prior to the fishery opening. Also allows for reporting of daily lobster catches to monitor quota.

Replaces Amendment 4 moratorium with a limited entry program for Hawaii-based domestic longline fishery with transferable permits, a limit of 164 vessels, and a maximum vessel size of 101' in length overall. It also established a framework procedure for use with implementation of certain new regulations.

- 1999** Amends the Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish FMP to establish the NWHI Mau zone limited entry and create special program to support traditional fishing practices through the MSA Community Development Program.

Convenes Recreational Fishing Data Task Force to work with State of Hawaii to re-implement the NMFS Recreational Fisheries data survey, which is later re-established in 2002

Hosts the Fourth Session of the Multilateral High-Level Conference for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Central and Western Pacific Ocean (MHLC) in February. This is the first of four sessions the Council will host leading to the Honolulu agreement.

Hosts the Fifth MHLC Session in September 1999 which is the second of four sessions to be hosted by the Council.

Implements EFH, Bycatch and Fishing Community requirements of the 1996 MSA reauthorizations.

2000 Co-hosts the second of three international marine debris conferences.

Hosts the Sixth MHLC Session in April 2000 which is the third of four sessions to be hosted by the Council.

Hosts the Seventh and Final MHLC Session August/September 2000 at which time the convention became open for signature.

Adopts international turtle research and mitigation resolution.

NMFS closes the NWHI lobster fishery as a precautionary measure to prevent overfishing. The closure continued through 2002 with a 2003 announcement that no harvest guideline would be published.

2001 Establishes first ecosystem plan for fisheries in the US.

- FMP for Coral Reef Ecosystems
- Prohibits destructive and non-selective gears
- No-take and low-take MPAs established
- NWHI, Marianas, American Samoa and the PRIA marine resources protected, ensuring near pristine predator-dominated ecosystems prior to establishment of marine monuments

2002 Implements seabird bycatch mitigation measures for the Hawaii-based longline fishery under the Pelagic FMP, reducing interactions by over 90%.

Prohibits fishing for pelagic species by vessels greater than 50 ft. in length overall within EEZ waters 0-50 nm around the islands of American Samoa. Exception: vessels that landed PMUS in American Samoa under a Federal longline general permit prior to November 13, 1997.

Convenes first Pacific International workshop convened by Council on Sea Turtle Conservation.

Convenes the Second International Fishers Forum in Honolulu to transfer best practices for reducing seabird and sea turtle bycatch.

Award four Community Demonstration Projects to the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Longline Feasibility Project, He`ei`a Kea Fishpond Restoration Project, CNMI Remote Fishing Station Project, and Hawaii Aku Boat Training Project.

2003 Co-hosts the third of three international marine debris conferences.

Establishes the Sea Turtle Advisory Committee guide Council activities related to sea turtle conservation and related fishery management initiatives. Sea turtle conservation projects funded included the following:

- Nesting beach and foraging ground conservation projects implemented since 2003 in Melanesia, Indonesia, Japan and Mexico for loggerhead and leatherback sea turtles
- Instrumental in circle hook exchange program in South American artisanal longline fisheries
- Turtle tagging database for Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia developed and maintained through WPRFMC partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

2004 The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Convention, which resulted from the series of MHLC sessions, enters into force in June.

NMFS approves amendment to reopen swordfish fishery implementing measures to achieve optimum yield while not jeopardizing sea turtles and other listed species. Required shallow-set swordfish fishery to use circle hooks with mackerel bait, re-implements sea turtle handling and resuscitation requirements, requirement for night setting. The measure reduced sea turtle bycatch by 90 percent.

Convenes Second Pacific International workshop convened by Council on Sea Turtle Conservation

Awarded five Community Demonstration Projects to Ewa Beach Limu Project (EBLP), American Samoa Cold Storage Installation Project, Saipan Traditional Fishing Education Project, Niche Marketing to Reduce American Samoa Longline bycatch, and Saipan Fishermen's Cooperative.

2005 Amends the Pelagic FMP to establish the limited entry program for the American Samoa longline fishery.

Establishes the Marine Mammal Advisory Committee.

- MMAC formed to recommend measures to minimize interactions between marine mammals and pelagic longline fisheries
- Various research recommendations generated prior to NMFS establishing the False Killer Whale Take Reduction Team required under the Marine Mammal Protection Act

Hosts Fisheries Legislation and Community-Based Fisheries Management Workshop, with support from FAO and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Establishes limited access system for the American Samoa longline fishery through the Pelagic FMP.

Convenes first of a series of ecosystem based management (EBFM) workshops on data and modeling needs for EBFM in the Western Pacific Region. First workshop on bio-physical needs.

Amends Pelagic FMP to minimize turtle interactions by non-Hawaii based domestic longline vessels operating in the Western Pacific under general longline permits.

Convenes Third Pacific International workshop convened by Council on Sea Turtle Conservation.

Convenes the Third International Fishers Forum in Japan to transfer best practices for seabird and sea turtle bycatch, sustainable tuna and shark fisheries, cetacean depredation, and illegal, unregulated and unreported fisheries.

Awarded five Community Demonstration Projects including Traditional Fishing Practices for Chamorros and Carolinians, Wai`anae Aku Boat Project, Heeia Fishpond Revitalization Project, and Small Scale Longline Fishery Development For the Manu`a Islands.

2006 Implements mandatory federal observer program initiated for the American Samoa longline fishery.

Convenes first workshop on South Pacific albacore longline fisheries.

Instrumental in establishing the Honolulu Derelict Net Recycling Program.

Initiates the Puwalu series that brought together traditional lawai`a (fishermen) and mahiai (farmers) from across the State to share their knowledge of traditional fishing and farming practices and management. The first Puwalu Ekahi: Lae`ula (Experts) of five Puwalu was held in August 2006. The five Puwalu series resulted in the renaissance of traditional resource management being applied in today`s context.

Hosts the second of five Puwalu `Elua: Ke Kumu Ike Hawai`i (Educators) in November.

Hosts the third of five Puwalu `Ekolu: Lawena Aupuni (Policymakers) in December.

Convenes second of a series of ecosystem based management (EBFM) workshops on data and modeling needs for EBFM in the Western Pacific Region. Second workshop on social science needs

Allows operators of Hawaii-based longline vessels fishing north of 23 degrees, as well as those targeting swordfish south of 23 degrees north, to utilize side-setting to reduce seabird interactions in lieu of the seabird mitigation measures required by Framework Measure 1.

2007 Amends the Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish FMP to establish annual quotas for the NWHI and main Hawaiian Islands bottomfish fisheries requiring complementary State and Federal regulatory changes.

- Region's first federal non-commercial permit and reporting for MHI bottomfish fishery
- Non-commercial bag limits for Deep-7 bottomfish species

Amends the Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish FMP to establish the 50 nm area closure around Guam for vessels larger than 50 feet in length targeting bottomfish management unit species.

Hosts the fourth of five Puwalu 'Eha: Kukulu Ka Upena (Building the Structure) in April.

Hosts the fifth of five Puwalu 'Elima: E Ho'oni I Na Kai 'Ewalu! E Ho'ale Ka Lepo Popolo (Stir up the Eight Seas! Rise up the Makaainana!) in October/November.

Approves Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs), transitioning from species-based to place-based conservation. Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committees formed for each archipelago to increase participation by communities and agencies not typically involved in fisheries management (e.g., county governments, non-government organizations, businesses, universities and colleges, and the Offices of Samoan, Hawaiian, Chamorro and Carolinian Affairs)

Traditional cultural practitioners from throughout Hawaii convened by WPRFMC to discuss establishment of cultural community consultation process with educators and policymakers

Convenes International Pacific Marine Educators conference, which launches the International Pacific Marine Educators Network (IPMEN).

UN FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries determines Hawaii longline fishery to be 94% compliant.

Convenes third of a series of ecosystem based management (EBFM) workshops on data and modeling needs for EBFM in the Western Pacific Region. Third workshop on policy needs.

Convenes the Fourth International Fishers Forum in Costa Rica to transfer best practices for seabird, sea turtle, cetacean and shark bycatch mitigation.

2008 Council-led IPMEN holds successful conference in Townsville, Australia.

Amends Pelagic FMP to add squid to management unit species list requiring permits and reports for vessels over 50 feet in length that target pelagic squid.

Amends the Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish FMP to establish the 50 nm area closure around Saipan, Rota and Tinian and a 10 nm around Alamagan for vessels larger than 40 feet in length targeting bottomfish management unit species.

- Vessel monitoring system (VMS) required for >40-foot vessels in CNMI
- Federal permit and reporting for commercial vessels.

Amends FMP Adds deepwater shrimp (*Heterocarpus spp.*) as management unit species and created permits and reporting requirements for the deep water shrimp fishery.

Coordinates and hosts the first national workshop of all the Scientific and Statistical Committees in November 2008. The workshop focused on the review of MSA requirements regarding SSCs, and using stock assessments and a peer review process in SSC determination of fishing level recommendations.

Implements observer program for American Samoa longline fishery.

2009 Amends species-based FMPs to restructure as four Archipelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEP) for Hawaii, Marianas, American Samoa and the Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIA), and one Pacific Pelagic FEP, shifting WPRFMC's management focus to an ecosystem-based conservation approach.

Convenes technical workshop on mitigating sea turtle bycatch in coastal net fisheries.

Hosted a data workshop in November 2009 aimed to determine whether the data collection systems implemented in all jurisdictions are sufficient to address the requirements of a catch limit based management

2010 Council- led IPMEN holds successful conference in Fiji.

Convenes the Fifth International Fishers Forum in Taipei to facilitate information exchange on marine spatial planning and bycatch mitigation.

2011 Implements Sea turtle mitigation measure (minimum set depth at 100m) in the American Samoa longline fishery under the Pelagic FEP to minimize interactions with green turtles.

Publishes book on ecosystem-based fishery management in the Western Pacific.

Established the ABC control rules and ACL and accountability measure specification process

Convened an ACL Workshop for the data limited coral reef fisheries

2012 Specified Annual Catch Limits for 109 management unit species/species groups/stock complexes meeting the 2006 MSA ACL deadline requirement

Implements ACL for the Main Hawaiian Islands “Deep-7” bottomfish fishery that considers management uncertainty and socioeconomic considerations.

Hosts the First Stewards Conference for coastal peoples to address climate change at the National Museum of American Indian, Washington DC.

Approves first Community Development Plan submitted to region under the CDP regulations.

- 2013** Establishes fishing regulations for the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, and Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument.

Leads the creation of the joint Endangered Species Act (ESA) Working Group of the Council Coordination Committee, Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to improve transparency of ESA Section 7 consultations for fishery management actions which led to the national policy on ESA consultations.

Establishes the Fisheries Data Collection and Research Committee and assembled a technical committee to improve fishery data collection and coordinate fishery research and monitoring for the Western Pacific region.

- 2014** Provides scientific and socio-economic information that supported efforts to keep 287,000 square miles around the US Pacific Remote Islands open to US commercial fishermen after President Obama announced plans to expand the Pacific Remote Island Marine National Monument.

Establishes a Regional Operating Agreement between the Council, Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) and Pacific Islands Fishery Science Center (PIFSC) to document the roles and responsibilities of the Council and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in developing, approving and implementing fishery management actions under the MSA.

Amends Pacific Pelagic FEP specifying process for catch and effort limits and accountability measures for pelagic fisheries in American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands and authorize each of those governments to allocate a portion of its specified catch or effort limit to U.S. fishing vessels through a specified fishing agreement. Specified a catch limit of 2,000 metric tons (mt) of longline-caught bigeye tuna for each of the U.S. Pacific Island territories, and authorized each territory to allocate up to 1,000 mt of that limit to eligible U.S. longline fishing vessels.

Establishes and convenes the Fishing Industry Advisory Committee as required by the MSA to address local, regional and national issues impacting the commercial fishing industry in the Pacific Island region

Initiates the process to review the Council's FEPs by contracting services to independently review their structure and content of the FEPs and engage the Council family and broader community in reviewing the FEPs in each archipelago area.

Convenes workshop with world-renown coral expert to submit best available science for consideration to final decision to list reef building corals under the ESA, which resulted in a smaller number of corals being listed.

Convenes international workshop on Disproportionate Burden of WCPFC Conservation and Management Measures

Assists Cook Islands Fisheries establish a satellite office in Pago Pago, AS.

Developed a data poor approach to support estimation of MSY for the data-limited coral reef fish using the Biomass Augmented Catch-MSY approach (Sabater and Kleiber 2014). This CIE reviewed method used for specifying ACLs for the coral reef fisheries, non-deep 7 bottomfish in Hawaii, and spiny lobsters for fishing year 2015-2018.

Finalizes and publicly vets Malesso, Guam, Community-based Resource Management Plan.

2015 Coordinates two international workshops focused on purse seine bigeye management in the WCPO. The workshops held in April 2015 (Honolulu) and August 2015 (Majuro), with industry and government participants from Asia, Pacific Islands, European Union, United States, and Latin American.

Convenes a meeting for a briefing on the Vessel Day Scheme from Parties to the Nuaru Agreement (PNA).

Convenes informational workshop on catch shares for Hawaii longline industry.

Coordinates and hosts the fifth national workshop of all the Scientific and Statistical Committees in February 2015. The workshop focused on the evaluation of the catch process and uncertainty characterization, National Standard 2 implementation, incorporation of climate change and habitat information in the fishery management process.

Updates the WPSAR policy and protocol to incorporate fishermen's knowledge and better address the development and production of stock assessments in the WPR.

Develops a multi-year human dimensions (socioeconomic) plan.

- Revitalizes the Council's Social Science Planning Committee (SSPC).
- Developed a suite of social, economic, and cultural data elements to be monitored via the Council's annual fishery ecosystem annual reports (and created a process whereby the SSPC reviews the draft reports)

- Revised the five FEPs to include explicit mention of human dimensions considerations.

Launches Council Internship Program – Fishery Internship and Student Help (FISH) – to provide opportunities to college underclassmen to intern at the Council to learn more about fishery management while gaining experience in a real-world setting working on a project with staff mentors.

Initiates the WPSAR Tier 3 review of the 2015 Territorial Bottomfish Stock Assessment Updates. The 3-man-panel review was held at the Council Office in August 2015.

Amends Pelagics FEP to allow access of longline vessels to within 12 nm of the American Samoa Archipelago to improve fishery performance.

Publishes Council’s approach to estimating MSY for data poor stocks in a CRC Press book on the interrelationships between corals and coral reef fisheries.

Expands contents of Pelagic and Archipelagic Annual Reports (SAFE Reports) to include protected species information, social and cultural data, marine planning, habitat, and climate change indicators.

Established the Pacific Island Fisheries Research Program that aims to enhance research opportunities to address the Council’s 5 year research priorities as required by MSA

