

COMMUNITY VOICE

# All For Sustainability, But Not Monument Expansion

Expanding the Papahānaumokuākea monument will make fishers work harder for their catch and knock a hole in Hawaii's economy.

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ABOUT 12 HOURS AGO · By Shane Yoshimoto 

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Fish and the ocean are significant to Hawaii's history and culture. Whether it was fishing from shore or getting a half pound of poke, fish was always apart of my life and now it's my livelihood.

When I first heard of the Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Monument Sanctuary I thought it was a great idea. Protecting the fish, habitats and other marine life is something I stand for. But as I found out more about it, I completely changed my mind.

The trend now is to be sustainable — eat sustainable foods and drive cars with sustainable energies. Our Hawaii fishing fleet is an example of fishing sustainably with federal observers onboard, uniquely developed fishing gear and world-renowned handling practices. Strict quotas and GPS tracking on every boat make it nearly impossible to hide anything.



*The advocacy group Fishing Means Food holds a rally at Pier 38 to protest the proposed expansion of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.*

There is a lot of negativity toward the fishing industry due to overfishing, destroying corals and habitats and pollution. Much of overfishing is caused by purse seine boats that are usually operated by foreign countries. A purse seine boat catches its fish by surrounding an entire school with a net and essentially closing the top like a purse. The school of fish doesn't stand a chance to survive.

Many complain about drifting nets the size of buildings floating in the ocean and causing damage to the reefs and corals; this is all because of purse seiners.

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Our Hawaii fishing vessels are all longliners, meaning every fish is caught off an individual hook and line. Every boat only catches a small percentage of the school and doesn't affect corals or seamounts. We have little by-catch (turtles,

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sea mammals), and by fishing by way of longlining instead of nets, we allow tuna and other fish species to have a better chance of reproducing.

If the monument expands and our Hawaii fleet isn't allowed to fish there, it will force fishers to go elsewhere, further away, [to replace 8 percent of our annual catch](#). That will have a domino effect on wholesale and retail business alike, as well as Hawaii's economy.

What many people for the expansion don't know is even if this area is protected, foreign fishing vessels likely will continue to fish there as they please. There is insufficient enforcement on the waters to control them, and if our industry is short on supply, foreign countries will be selling it back to us. This is fish and money that should have stayed here in Hawaii all along.

People want to stop overfishing. People want to be more sustainable, and people want to protect the oceans and its creatures. Hawaii is doing all of this but if this expansion goes through, Hawaii will be punished for doing the right thing.

As someone who has worked in Hawaii's seafood industry for almost 20 years, this is a huge part of me and my life. I am open to compromising and being for the expansion only if Hawaii's sustainable fishing fleet is allowed to continue fishing there.

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### About the Author



#### **Shane Yoshimoto**

Shane Yoshimoto works as a fish buyer at the Honolulu Fish Auction for the wholesale and retail markets, both in Hawaii and the mainland. He strives to protect the industry he loves and educate the public about Hawaii's sustainable fishery.

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