



Report of the Non-Commercial Fisheries Advisory Committee Meeting

June 8, 2017

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Council Office
Honolulu, HI

1. Welcome and Introductions

Joshua DeMello, Council Staff, opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. Non-Commercial Fisheries Advisory Committee (NCFAC) members participating included: Steve Lopez and Bill Shontel.

Others in attendance included: Pua‘ala Pascua (NMFS).

2. Review of Agenda

Council staff reviewed the agenda. There were no changes.

3. Council Actions for 170th Meeting

A. Options for Fishing Regulations in the NWHI Monument Expansion Area

DeMello provided a presentation on the purpose and need for developing options for fishing regulations in the Monument Expansion. He provided the options and explained the potential impacts as well as the process for how the regulations will be put into place.

The NCFAC was concerned with who would be fishing up in that area since it was far away, but also did not want to give away the right to fish up in that area. They agreed that the people most affected by these regulations would be those from Kauai and said that those fishermen should be more involved in the decision. The NCFAC members agreed that management of any potential fishery would be needed should it occur and supported a permitting option. In regards to the definition of non-commercial reviewed at the meeting, the members agreed that the definition is a good start and encompasses a lot but also wanted to see customary exchange included as well if it is possible. Also, in parsing the definition of non-commercial, they said that the definition of charter should be looked at because most charters sell fish under a license to sell, but it may not be an issue as the primary commercial purpose of a charter is to provide transport to fishing grounds and logistical support for recreational and/or non-commercial fishing. This definition should be reviewed at a later time and not included in the present recommendation.

The NCFAC recommended the Council select option B2 (permitting of non-commercial fishing in the MEA) with a definition of non-commercial fishing that includes customary exchange (option B4).

B. Research Priorities

Council staff presented the Cooperative Research and Five-year research priorities that the Council will review for approval at its 170th meeting. He noted that the priorities are broad and encompass a large range of issues and asked if the NCFAC had any additional priorities for research in the region.

The NCFAC did not have any additional priorities but said they would like to have more focused conversations in the future regarding ongoing research that may be pertinent to non-commercial activities.

C. Sustainable Fisheries Fund Marine Conservation Plan

Council staff presented on the Sustainable Fisheries Fund (SFF) Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) noting that the MCP is a plan for spending funds that are deposited into the SFF by fines from foreign fishing. He said that the MCP provides a direction on how to spend the funds in Hawaii and the Pacific Remote Island Areas, though funding can go to any of the island areas. He reviewed the projects and objectives with the NCFAC to determine anything missing or projects that needed to be changed.

The NCFAC had no objections to the existing MCP and was interested in how their communities could access the funds or assist in projects. They said that the categories were broad enough to incorporate many ideas that the community may have. One member also noted that this MCP would be a good thing for the Council to use to assist the non-commercial fishing community with issues it may face. Such assistance would be useful in strengthening support for Council programs. The NCFAC suggested staff provide a workshop or meeting where the projects and the MCP can be reviewed more closely. Staff agreed to look at the option for the next revision and to provide an email to the group about the MCP.

D. Re-specification of ACLs for MHI Kona Crab Fishery

Council staff presented on the need to re-specify Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) for the Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) Kona Crab fishery. He discussed the stock assessment and the conflict with the existing ACL, noting that the ACL is much higher than the stock assessment says is sustainable.

The NCFAC didn't have a recommendation on what the Council should do but did note that the non-commercial fishing for Kona Crab in their areas is increasing. In Kona, the species has become known as "summer lobster" and members noted that there seemed to be more pressure, more people, and less catch in some areas they have frequented in the past. The NCFAC said that the Council should probably look closer at Kona Crab and start the discussion on non-commercial catch.

4. Non-Commercial Fishery Updates

Council staff provided an update on the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) activities that the Council is involved in. He noted that the Council has worked on a Regional Implementation Plan that was developed for the region and once it is finalized will be provided to the NCFAC for its consideration. He also provided information on the MRIP Strategic Plan that is being developed and agreed to pass it along to the NCFAC as well.

Also noted was the hiring of a Recreational Fisheries Coordinator at the NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office. Council staff noted that he would be helping to support the Coordinator to conduct his activities and he is happy to provide updates to the NCFAC as well.

5. Non-Commercial Fisheries Module in the Annual SAFE Reports

Council staff noted that an annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report is developed for the fisheries in the region. He said that most of it is based on commercial fishery data and that he hopes to work with the NCFAC to develop a module for non-commercial fisheries. This module would utilize available non-commercial fishery information and encouraged the NCFAC to provide comments on what would be useful from the fishermen's standpoint to be included in the module.

6. Non-Commercial Fishery Issues

The meeting was opened up for non-commercial fishery issue discussion amongst the NCFAC. Members present didn't have issues that needed to come before the Council regarding non-commercial fisheries. However, the NCFAC did have suggestions for making the NCFAC more useful.

One member noted that the non-commercial fishermen are disconnected and there should be an outreach program with the boat clubs to impress the importance of the NCFAC and the Council. Another member said that there needs to be an issue or something of value for the non-commercial fishermen to rally around. He said that most people are self-interested and if you can show how the NCFAC or other Council activities/issues impact them, they would be more willing to participate.

Members agreed that there needed to be more engagement of the NCFAC and ways to workshop ideas other than conference calls. Members agreed that engagement with the NCFAC has fallen off and annual meetings were working to keep them involved but without the face to face meeting, the NCFAC is waning and may lose its momentum and value. Council staff noted the discussion and agreed to work with NCFAC to determine how to better utilize the NCFAC.

7. Public Comment

There was no public comment

8. Discussion and Recommendations

The Non-commercial Fishery Advisory Committee made the following recommendations to the Council:

Regarding Options for Fishing Regulations in the NWHI MEA, the NCFAC:

- **Recommends the Council select option B2 (permitting of non-commercial fishing in the MEA) with a definition of non-commercial fishing that includes customary exchange (option B4).**

9. Other Business

There was no other business. The meeting was concluded at 11:45 a.m.