



# Pacific Islands Fishery News

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Newsletter of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council / Spring 2017

## Fisheries May Find Relief in Trump’s Monument, Sanctuary Reviews

During the last two decades, the ocean has garnered a lot of publicity from campaigns on marine debris, climate change, overfishing and other potential impacts. Past Presidents reacted by designating large swaths of the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) as marine protected areas with restricted access to resources.

The Western Pacific Region bore the bulk of the prohibitions when US presidents proclaimed and expanded four marine national monuments under the authority of the Antiquities Act. Encompassing nearly 760 million acres, these monuments shut down commercial fishing in 51 percent of America’s EEZ around the US Pacific islands. Access to nearly 10 million additional acres of the ocean is restricted by national marine sanctuaries in Hawai’i and American Samoa.

Now, proposals to overlay sanctuaries on top of existing monuments are on the table in Hawai’i and the Mariana archipelago (Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern

Mariana Islands). The Council has expressed concern that these overlays would create additional restrictions, duplicate regulations and increase bureaucracy with no added benefits to the conservation or management of the area.

On April 26, 2017, President Trump signed Executive Order 13792 initiating a review of national monuments designated since 1996 with a focus on monuments over 100,000 acres. This review by the Secretary of the Interior will provide recommendations for Presidential actions, legislative proposals or other actions regarding monument designations. The interim report is due in 45 days and the final in 120 days.

“With the marine national monuments in the US Pacific islands accounting for 98 percent of the acres under the review criteria, it would be appropriate for the interim report to include our Region,” notes Kitty M. Simonds, executive director of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

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### Size of the Marine National Monuments in the U.S. Pacific Islands

Marine National Monument (Proclamation No.)	Size in Acres	Size in Square Miles
<b>Papahānaumokuākea MNM Total</b>	<b>372,847,360 acres</b>	<b>582,574 square miles</b>
Papahanaumokuakea Original (Proclamation 8031)	89,467,520 acres	139,793 square miles
Papahanaumokuakea Expansion (Proclamation 9478)	283,379,840 acres	442,781 square miles
<b>Pacific Remote Islands MNM Total</b>	<b>316,920,929 acres</b>	<b>495,189 square miles</b>
Pacific Remote Islands Original (Proclamation 8336)	55,608,320 acres	86,888 square miles
Pacific Remote Islands Expansion (Proclamation 9173)	261,312,609 acres	408,301 square miles
<b>Marianas Trench MNM (Proclamation 8335)</b>	<b>60,938,240 acres</b>	<b>95,216 square miles</b>
<b>Rose Atoll MNM (Proclamation 8337)</b>	<b>8,608,640 acres</b>	<b>13,451 square miles</b>
<b>All Marine Monuments in US Pacific Islands in Acres</b>	<b>759,315,169 acres</b>	

# Fisheries May Find Relief in Trump's Monument Review

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Closure of fishing grounds to US fishing vessels, as well as fishing effort limits on purse seine vessels, contributed to the closure of Tri-Marine's Samoa Tuna Processors cannery in American Samoa, one of two canneries in American Samoa that were the primary private-sector employers. Right: The United Fishing Agency in Honolulu where the vast majority of the Hawaii commercial longline and troll pelagic catch is landed, fresh (not frozen), making Honolulu one of the America's top 10 fishing ports in landed value.

On April 28, Trump issued Executive Order 13795: Implementing an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy. It directs the Secretary of Commerce to review all national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments designated or expanded within the last 10 years. The review is to include an analysis of the acreage affected and the budgetary impacts of the costs of managing each national

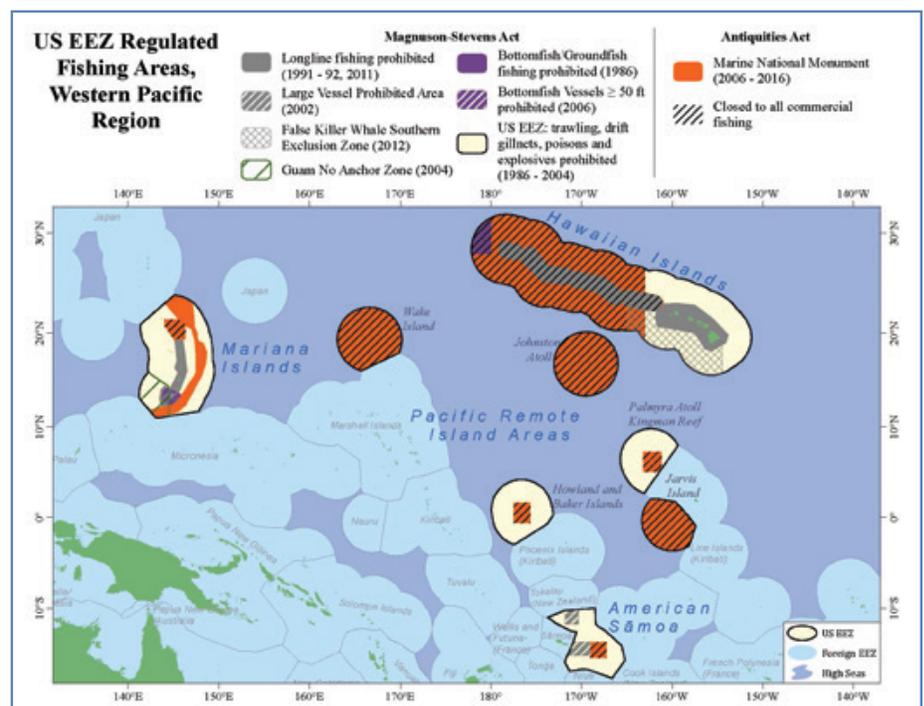
This executive order directs the Secretary of Commerce to refrain from designating or expanding national marine sanctuaries unless the proposal includes "a timely, full accounting from the Department of the Interior of any energy or mineral resource potential"—including offshore energy from wind, oil, natural gas, and other sources—within the designated area and the potential impact the proposed designation or expansion would have

on the development of those resources.

This recent action by the President will require the Departments of Commerce to provide information within 180 days. The results may affect initiatives to overlay national marine sanctuaries over the Marianas Trench and Papa-hānaumokuākea Marine National Monuments. Both monuments explicitly exclude the potential for energy and mineral exploration.

*On April 26, 2017, President Trump signed Executive Order 13792 initiating a review of national monuments designated since 1996 with a focus on monuments over 100,000 acres.*

marine sanctuary or marine national monument designation or expansion; the adequacy of any required federal, state and tribal consultations conducted before the designations or expansions; and the opportunity costs associated with potential energy and mineral exploration and production from the Outer Continental Shelf, in addition to any impacts on production in the adjacent region.



# Court Vacates LVPA Exemption, Recognizes Deeds of Cession

On March 20, 2017, Judge Leslie E. Kobayashi, US District Court for the District of Hawai'i, ruled in favor of the Territory of American Samoa in its case against the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and US Department of Commerce. The lawsuit, filed in March 2016, responded to a regulatory amendment to the Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region (PFEP) to allow US-flagged vessels with a valid American Samoa longline limited entry permit to fish within the American Samoa Large Vessel Prohibited Area (LVPA) up to 12 nautical miles (nm) from shore around Tutuila, Manua Islands and Swains Island. The amendment was

recommended by the Council and approved by the NMFS to provide relief from unnecessarily regulatory measures that were contributing to the fishery's deteriorating economics.

In its lawsuit, the American Samoa government asserted that NMFS failed to review, address or consider the Tutuila and Aunu'u Deed of Cession of 1900 and the Manu'a Islands Deed of Cession of 1904 as applicable law under the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and Administrative Procedures Act. The Deeds of Cession are agreements between the United States government and the chiefs of Tutuila, Aunu'u, Ofu, Olosega, Ta'u and Rose Island that cede

lands and surrounding bodies of water to the United States. In 1929, Congress enacted 48 U.S.C. §1661, which accepted, ratified and confirmed the Deeds of Cession.

The American Samoa government claimed that the 2016 LVPA rule violated the Deeds of Cession by "allowing large longliners to fish within ceded areas that were designated as protected properties." The United States government had agreed "to safeguard and respect the property rights of the native people of American Samoa according to their customs and practices, which include cultural fishing practices." The American Samoa government argued that those practices "will be greatly inhibited when the LVPA is reduced from 50 to 12 nautical miles." It claimed that fishing is an integral part of American Samoa culture and that the LVPA rule would harm alia fishermen and American Samoa cultural practices.

The US Department of Justice, on behalf of NMFS, argued that the Deeds of Cession do not constitute other applicable law with regards to MSA actions, and secondly, even if they did, that NMFS adequately considered and responded to the concerns raised about the potential impact on American Samoan fisheries and fishing communities.

The Court decided that the Deeds of Cession require the United States to preserve American Samoa cultural fishing practices and that the Deeds constitute "other applicable law" for the purposes of the MSA. The Court, in its decision, vacated the 2016 LVPA exemption regulations. Because the record did not specifically show that the rulemaking would preserve and protect cultural fishing, the Court vacated and set aside the exemption regulations.

In early April, NMFS sent a letter to American Samoa longline vessel owners notifying them of the Court's decision and to not fish within the LVPA.

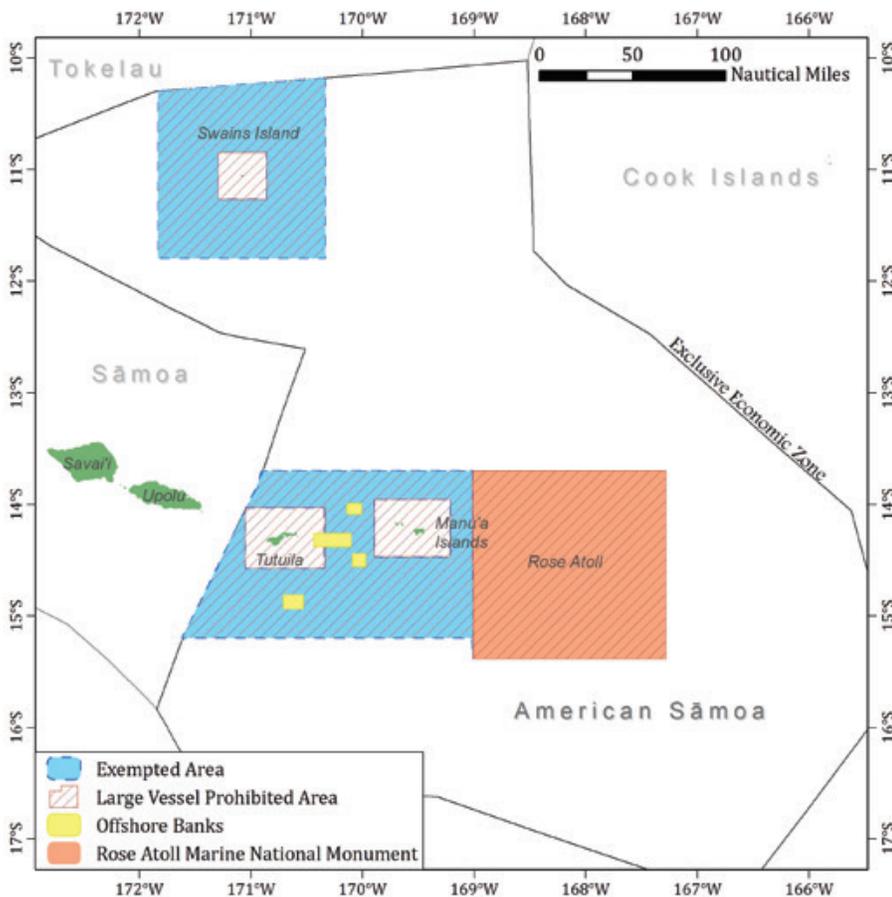


Figure 1: The LVPA is generally a 50 nm box around Tutuila, Manua Islands, Swains Island and Rose Atoll within which pelagic fishing vessels 50 feet in length or greater are prohibited from operating.

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# Court Vacates LVPA Exemption

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In response to the Court's decision, NMFS and the Department of Justice filed a motion asking the judge to reconsider the decision to vacate the LVPA exemption regulations and to allow the longliners to fish within the LVPA during the development of a new rule. The motion argues that the Court erred when she failed to consider the difficult economic conditions that continue to face the locally based fleet before vacating the rule; and that any error in failing to consider the Deeds as "other applicable law" was minor and could be readily addressed. The request relates to the difficult economic conditions that continue to face the locally based fleet and fisheries information that indicates better catches in some areas of the LVPA (e.g., 36-percent increase in catch rates for albacore in the LVPA around Swains than in areas outside). In addition, information collected from alia and troll vessels operating in 2016 indicates that the catch rates for yellowfin and skipjack tuna and other targeted pelagic species increased in 2016 over previous three-year average (Fig. 2). This suggests the LVPA exemption rule did not result in negative impacts to these small scale fisheries in 2016.

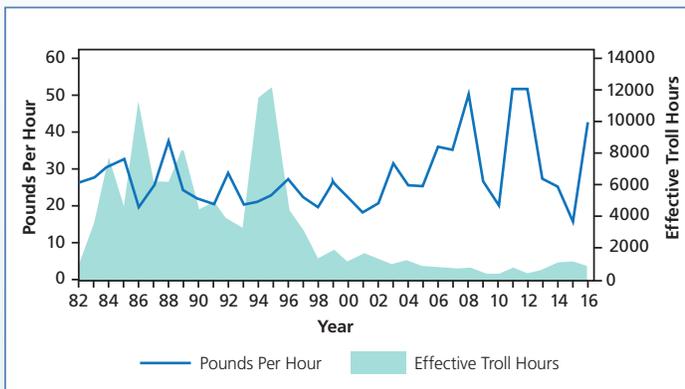


Figure 2: American Samoa troll vessel catch per unit effort showed an increase in 2016 compared to the previous three years, indicating that opening LVPA waters 12 to 50 nm from shore did not have a negative impact. Source: NMFS.

Going forward, the Council has begun a process to identify what American Samoa cultural fishing practices means in the context of the Deeds of Cession. This would include defining what constitutes cultural fishing practices, such as fishing gear used and disposition of catch (e.g., subsistence or commercial sales), and how to evaluate impacts on such practices (e.g., catch rates and fishing participation). The Council will utilize its advisory committees and panels, including its Science and Statistical Committee, and work with other groups, individuals and the American Samoa government to accomplish this task.

## LVPA Overview

**2002** LVPA established by the Council to separate about 40 alia (small fishing catamarans less than 50 feet long) and 25 large conventional mono-hull longline vessels, both targeting albacore tuna using longline gear.

**2006** Number of alia in the fishery decreases to fewer than three on a regular basis.

**2010** The beginning of several years of poor catch rates, high operating expenses and low fish prices leaves the fishery in severe economic conditions.

**2013** Conditions worsen such that the entire fleet displays for sale signs, with several vessels leaving the fishery. NMFS evaluates the fishery, finding that on average every hook deployed in the water by the fleet in 2013 lost money. Only one alia remains active (and continues to be active today).



Longline vessels in Pago Pago harbor in 2013.

**2014** Tautai-O-Samoa Fishing Association of US longline vessel owners fishing out of American Samoa asks the Council to change the LVPA regulations to provide relief to their fishery. The Council initiates action to recommend an exemption for these large vessels to fish closer to shore to promote greater fishing efficiency (shorter trips, less costs) because the gear conflicts between alia and conventional albacore longline fleets no longer exist.

**2015** American Samoa Governor asks for a delay. Council holds several rounds of public hearings in American Samoa and receives more than 270 public comments from individuals, fishermen, organizations, businesses and government agencies. Council takes final action. The Council recommends annual monitoring of the fishery's catch rates, small vessel participation and local fisheries development initiatives.

**2016** NMFS approves the Council's regulatory amendment.

**2017** Hawai'i District Court vacates LVPA exemption for American Samoa large LL vessels. Department of Justice files motion to reconsider. American Samoa Government files opposition to reconsider.



*Above: Council High School Summer Program field trip to Mo'omomi, Moloka'i, learning about marine resources and traditional knowledge. Inset photo: Breakout group discussion for a community-based fishery management workshop in Yigo, Guam.*

## Council Helps Preserve Unique Fishing Cultures of the US Pacific Islands

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council strives to include communities in the management of our natural resources, in line with the grassroots regional approach to fishery policy development through the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA). The Council's position is that "we don't want more, we want different." Each of the US Pacific island areas is geographically, culturally, economically and politically unique. The Fishery Ecosystem Plan place-based approach allows the Council to customize management that recognizes and supports these differences.

Over the past four decades, special provisions have been added to the MSA recognizing traditional fishing practices

and the cultural importance of fishing to US Pacific Islanders. The Western Pacific Community Development Program (CDP), Community Demonstration Projects Program (CDPP) and Marine Education and Training Program (MET) provide statutory authority for the Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to support our local fishing communities through regulations, grants, education and outreach.

The Council's Fishing and Indigenous Community Program assists communities, organizations and local agencies by providing tools and resources to help them coordinate and build capacity to inform fishery science and policy decision-making. CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



# WCPFC: the Long Haul

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) is the newest tuna Regional Fishery Management Organization. Established by the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC Convention), it entered into force on June 19, 2004.

The WCPF Convention draws on many of the provisions of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement with consideration given to the political, socioeconomic, geographical and environmental characteristics of the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) region. The WCPFC Convention seeks to address problems in the management of high seas fisheries resulting from unregulated fishing, over-capitalization, excessive fleet capacity, vessel re-flagging to escape controls, insufficiently selective gear, unreliable databases and insufficient multilateral cooperation in respect to conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks.

How much progress has the WCPFC made on these priorities?

The Commission has made significant advances in catch reporting. Each Commission member and cooperating non-member (CCM) is obliged to provide an annual summary of its pelagic fisheries targeting tunas and tuna-like species aggregated by 5 degree squares. More recently, the CCMs have provided data at a much greater resolution, down to individual fishing vessels. This level of data is extremely important for the stock assessments conducted by the science provider to the WCPFC, the Oceanic Fisheries Program of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Not all CCMs, however, are providing complete operational data.

The Commission has also adopted numerous Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs). These range

from operational measures (such as identification markings for fishing vessels, vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and regional observer reporting) to measures for wildlife (sea turtles, seabirds and cetaceans) and fishery resources (bigeye tuna, bluefin tuna, striped marlin and oceanic sharks, such as silky and oceanic white tip (OWT) sharks).

For each fish species that has shown indications of being over-exploited, the WCPFC has some form of CMM, such as a catch limitation or, as with the OWT shark, a complete ban on retention. Other over-exploited species include the Pacific bluefin tuna, northwestern Pacific striped marlin and bigeye tuna.

For Pacific bluefin tuna, CMM 2016-04 includes vessel effort limits north of the 20° N to remain below the 2002–2004 annual average levels and the reduction of all catches of Pacific bluefin tuna less than 30 kilograms (kg) to 50 percent of the 2002–2004 annual average

levels. Any overage of the catch limit is deducted from the catch limit for the following year. While the Pacific bluefin is severely depleted, this fishery is of interest to relatively few CCMs, principally Japan, Korea and Mexico. The solution lies in finding measures with which these countries can abide.

For northwestern Pacific striped marlin, CMM 2010-01 requires Commission members to limit their striped marlin catch from all commercial fisheries (longline, troll and hand line) to 80 percent of the highest catch between 2000 and 2003. Thus, the US catch limit, which is utilized by the Hawai'i fisheries, is 456 metric tons (mt). This corresponds to 80 percent of 571 mt, the highest catch of the Hawai'i longline and non-longline fisheries between 2000 and 2003.

For bigeye tuna, CMM 2016-01 includes effort limits on purse-seine fleets and flag-based catch limits on longline fleets. Still, bigeye continues to be a concern.

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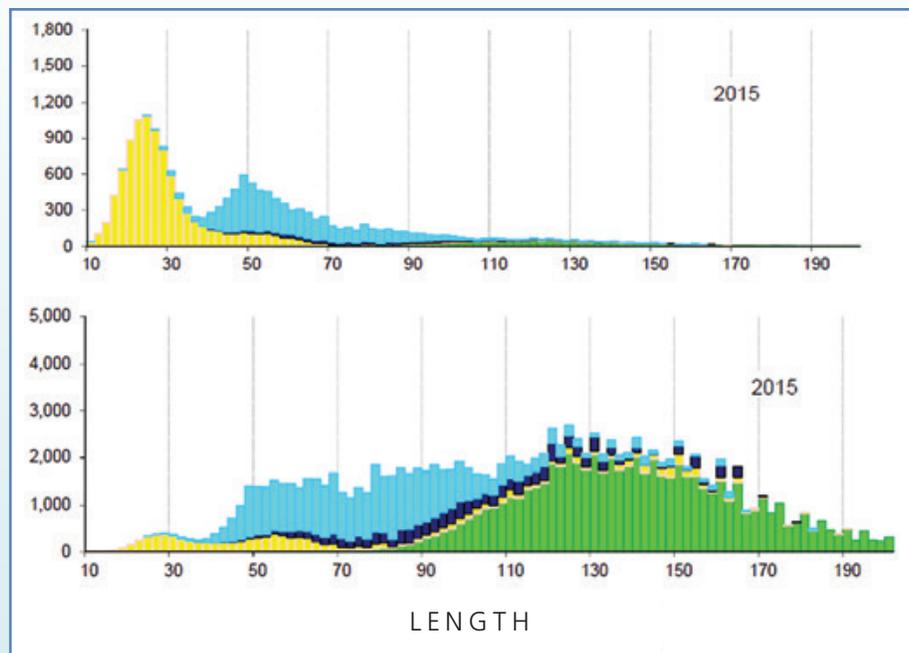


Figure 1: Annual catches (top no. of fish, bottom weight in metric tons) of bigeye tuna in the WCPO by size and gear type in 2015 (green-longline; yellow-Philippine and Indonesian archipelagic fisheries; light blue-purse seine associated; dark blue-purse seine unassociated)

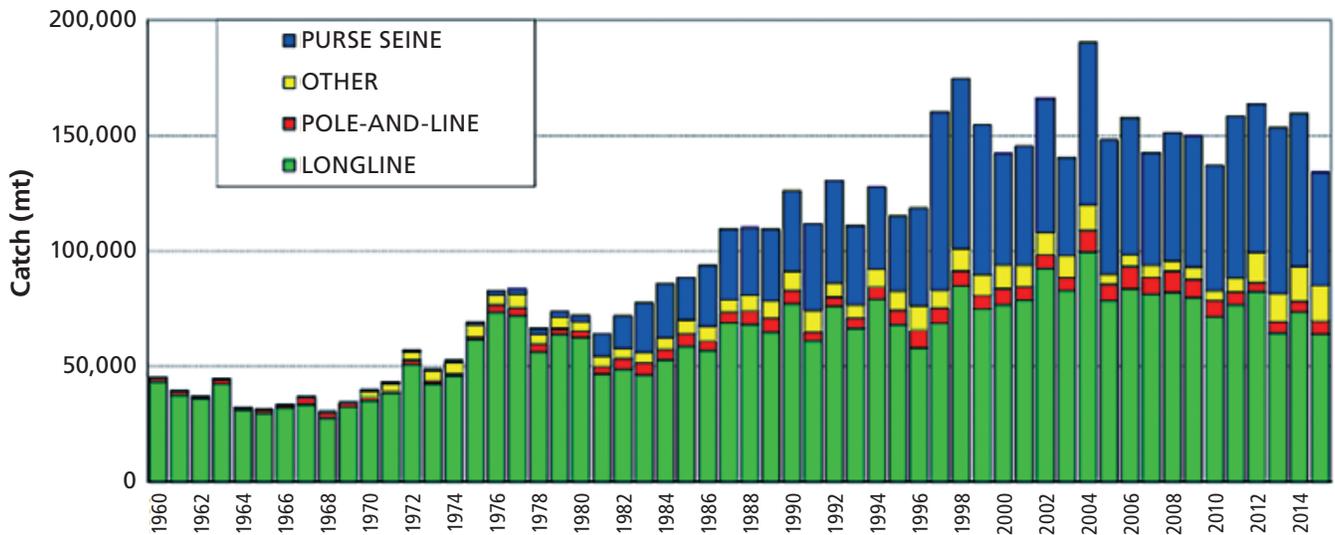


Figure 2: Catch of bigeye tuna in the Western and Central Pacific by gear type

The major source of fishing mortality on the WCPO bigeye stock is a mix of purse seiners in the WCPFC Convention Area targeting skipjack around fish aggregating devices (FADs) or other floating objects (logs, dead whales, abandoned fishing gear) and the Philippines and Indonesia archipelagic fisheries using a handline and ringnet gear (Fig. 1). The bigeye catches by these fisheries are primarily juvenile fish, about 10 inches (25 cm). These juveniles are not the prime species for canning like skipjack and yellowfin. Yet their contribution to the catch by numbers of fish is immense, although less pronounced as catch by weight (Fig. 2). By being captured as juveniles, the bigeye have no chance of reaching spawning size nor recruit to the adult sizes targeted by longline fisheries, primarily for the sashimi market.

The majority of purse-seine effort limit is implemented through a vessel day scheme (VDS) by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA). Purse-seine vessels must buy vessel days to fish within the exclusive economic zone waters of the PNA member countries and an associate territory, Tokelau. The PNA also introduced an additional levy for days where purse seiners set around FADs as an incentive for them to fish tuna schools unassociated with FADs to avoid bigeye. The purse-seine fleets must also choose either a four-month prohibition of setting on FADs or a

three-month prohibition on FAD setting and an annual limit on the total number of FAD sets.

Longline fishing accounts for less than 40 percent of the fishing mortality on the WCPO bigeye stock. The WCPFC longline bigeye catch limits apply only to China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the United States (Fig. 3). They are based on historic catch levels and have been periodically reduced such that the limits are currently 40 percent of the initial quotas established in 2009. Indonesia’s catch limit of 5,889 mt remains unaffected as this represents “aspirational” catch should Indonesia wish to expand its longline fishery. For similar reasons, there are no catch limits for Small Island Developing States and

Territories, including the US Territories of American Samoa and Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Over the years, the US longline catch limit of WCPO bigeye tuna has dropped from 4,181 mt in 2009 to 3,345 mt in 2017. The Hawai’i fishery, which uses the US quota, has dealt with this reduction by purchasing up to 1,000 mt of catch from each US Territory. While the WCPFC has not set limits for these Territories, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council recommended and the National Marine Fisheries Service has implemented catch limits of 2,000 mt for each US Territory. Despite the additional quota, the United States appears to be the

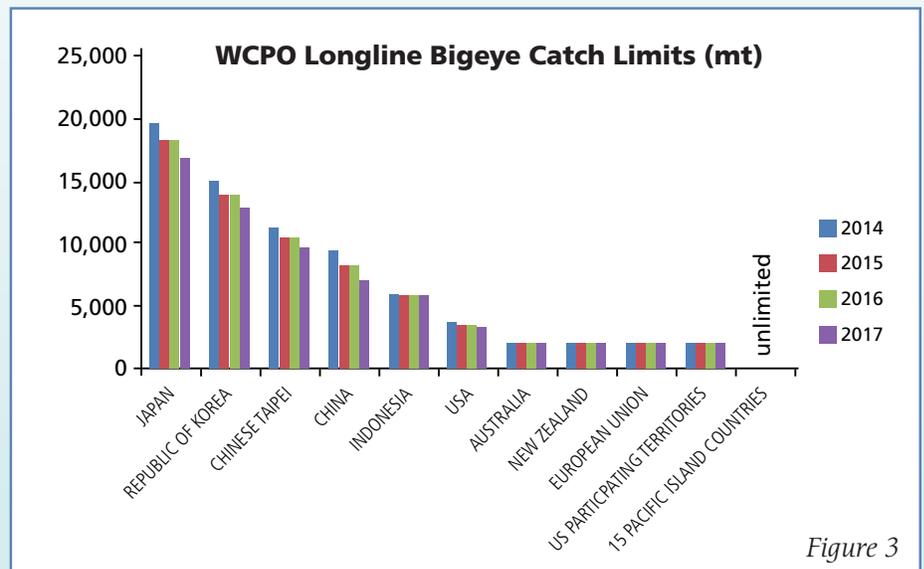


Figure 3

only country that has shut down its longline fishery, which is based in Hawai'i, having achieved its WCPO limit. The same is also true for the US longline fishery in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

A new stock assessment for bigeye will be presented to the WCPFC Science Committee in August 2017.

Moreover, the WCPFC has found it difficult to deal with fishing capacity, especially for purse seiners. According to the WCPFC Tuna Yearbook (<https://www.wcpfc.int/doc/wcpfc-tuna-fishery-yearbook-2015>) there were 213 purse seiners in 2002. In 2015 this number had risen to 383 purse seiners, an almost 60% increase. Conversely, in 2002 there were 4015 longline vessels, which fell to 2983 vessels in 2015, a 26% decrease.

## The Chinese Century

The 20th Century is often called the 'American Century,' and now the 21st century is becoming the "Chinese Century."

The World Ocean Observatory (<http://worldoceanobservatory.org/>) recently looked at the influence of China on marine resources and fisheries. China is the largest consumer, producer and exporter of every species caught by some 3,400 industrial fishing vessels harvesting the waters of over 90 coastal nations and the deep ocean.

China's annual catch is estimated by some to be as high as 15 million tons. Verifiable estimates of China's catch, however, are difficult. Scientific studies have put recent (2000-2011) catches at 4.6 million tons (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/faf.12032/full>). This includes a growing volume of tuna and expanding longline and purse-seine fleets. Like many Chinese fishing fleets, they receive generous subsidies from the national and local governments in China.

In addition, China and other countries, such as Japan, continue to finance the development of canning industries in countries such as Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. These facilities will increase the demand for tuna, which in turn will likely continue the purse-seine FAD impacts to bigeye in the WCPO, unless management measures by the WCPFC can reduce this incidental catch of juveniles.

# 169th Council Actions

Actions of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council at its 169th meeting March 21-23, 2017, in Honolulu focused primarily on keeping US fishing grounds open to sustainable, well-managed US fisheries. Marine national monuments (MNMs), national marine sanctuaries, other marine protected area (MPA) designations and Department of Defense (DOD) training are among the uses that are increasingly closing US fishing grounds. The Council also addressed the introduced amendment to the Billfish Conservation Act that would limit the sale of billfish caught in Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to the US mainland; the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission longline bigeye tuna catch limit for US vessels greater than 24 meters in length in the Eastern Pacific Ocean; management options for the next Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission tropical tuna measure; and local fishery development including fish aggregation devices, marina repairs, boat ramps, docks, training and loan programs.

Council Chair Edwin A. Ebisui Jr. noted that MSA requires not only conservation and protection of marine resources but also their optimal use. The United States imports more than 90 percent of the seafood it consumes an estimated 30 percent or more from illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fisheries. He noted the absurdity of US actions that support these IUU fisheries by closing off US fishing waters for regulated US fisheries.

The voting members of the Council agreed to ask President Trump to consider removal of the monument fishing prohibitions within the marine national monuments in the US Pacific Islands, therefore reestablishing management of those fisheries under the authority of the Council and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The State of Hawaii and Michael Tosatto, Regional Administrator the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Regional Office, abstained. The marine monuments are located in the waters surrounding American Samoa (Rose Atoll MNM), Hawai'i (Papahānaumokuākea MNM), the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands and Guam (Marianas Trench MNM) and the Pacific Remote Island Areas (Pacific Remote Islands MNM).

The Governors of American Samoa, Guam and the CNMI sent a similar request to the President as did the Councils Coordination Committee, which is comprised of the nation's eight Regional Fishery Management Councils.

## Hawaii Archipelago

The Council requested that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) analyze the potential impacts on protected species from effort redistribution related to fishery provisions to prohibit commercial fishing in the Papahānaumokuākea MNM expanded area, 50 to 200 miles offshore around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, encompassing waters twice the size of Texas.

The Council also recommended that the Bottomfish Working Group reconvene to develop options for opening the State of Hawaii

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# 169th Council Actions

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*At the 169th Council meeting, Council members Christinna Lutu-Sanchez (far left) and Henry Sesapasara meet with American Samoa recipients of the Council's US Pacific Territories Fishery Capacity Building Scholarships. The students will be graduating with marine science degrees from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and will be working in American Samoa fishery-related agencies for two to three years, as part of their scholarship agreement.*

Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas. The Council further recommended the State of Hawaii develop guidelines for the closure of any area to fishing, with consideration to require a plan to regularly monitor the area and periodically assess it to determine if management objectives have been met.

## **American Samoa Archipelago**

The Council will work with NMFS and NOAA General Counsel to review the US District Court's decision regarding Large Vessel Prohibited Area and to evaluate next steps, which could include requesting the Court to stay the decision pending reconsideration or appeal of the court's decision.

The longline vessels being prohibited access from the area are owned and operated by American Samoans,

pointed out Council Member Christinna Lutu-Sanchez.

Council Member Taotasi Archie Soliai noted the importance of the albacore tuna caught by the local longline fleet and landed at the StarKist cannery. The cannery is the largest non-government employer in the Territory. A second cannery in the Territory closed earlier this year, in part due to difficulties with tuna landings.

## **Mariana Archipelago**

The Council agreed to communicate to the Secretary of Commerce concerns related to a proposal to overlay a national marine sanctuary on the Marianas Trench MNM, including the scope of the proposal, federal overreach, regulatory duplication and increased administrative costs.

The two petitioners are the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Friends of the Marianas Trench, which was established by Pew in 2008, noted Council Member John Gourley (CNMI).

The American Samoa government is considering to request removal of the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, in part because of its fishing prohibitions, said Council Member Va'amua Henry Seseapasara, who directs the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources.

The Council will request that the DOD and the CNMI, in their consultations on the continued use of Farallon de Medinilla (No'os) for military training and testing, include the fishing community to determine appropriate compensation and mitigation for damage and loss of fisheries. The Council noted that recent expansion of Federal Aviation Administration Restricted Airspace from 3 to 12 nautical miles around the island has further negatively impacted the local fishing community through reduced access to prime fishing grounds and increased transit times.

The Council will ask that the DOD complete an inventory and assessment report of all military dump sites throughout the CNMI and surrounding waters; that the CNMI government evaluate the impacts to trolling and atulai (bigeye scad) fishing operations due to the anchoring of [military] prepositioning ships off the island of Saipan; and that the Guam Department of Agriculture and the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife report on the efficacy of the Guam Marine Preserves and CNMI MPAs to determine how they have met their management objectives.



March 3, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the Governors of the US Territories of American Samoa and Guam and the US Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, humbly request that you use executive authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to remove the fishing provisions applicable to the Marine National Monuments in federal and our island jurisdictions.

Our island communities depend on the ocean for food security and economic opportunities. Our Samoan, Chamorro, and Carolinian cultures are interwoven with the marine environment and fishing. The monument fishing restrictions are unnecessary and impede our socioeconomic and cultural stability. The promises of previous administrations and environmental organizations of monument co-management and revenue generation have not been realized.

Our islands contribute a significant amount of land and water for military training and among the highest per capita US Armed Forces personnel and military casualties, reflecting our resolute American patriotism. Many of our people have not returned from harsh and distant battlegrounds, providing the ultimate sacrifice for our great country.

We trust you will demonstrate your great leadership on this pressing issue and do what is right for our people and the Nation. Please return American fishermen to US waters and remove the monument fishing prohibitions.

Respectfully,

Eddie B. Calvo  
Governor of Guam

Lolo L. M. Moliga  
Governor of American Samoa

Ralph D. G. Torres  
Governor of CNMI

Enclosures

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# Council Celebrates World Tuna Day

The inaugural United Nations World Tuna Day was celebrated on May 2, 2017. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council took up the UN General Assembly's call to join the observation. To commemorate the day, the Council commissioned a World Tuna Day poster, which includes the following Council resolution on the back. Council staff also promoted the event on Go Fish! radio talk show with Mike Buck on KHNR AM 690. The radio interview and the poster can both be accessed at [www.wpcouncil.org/education-and-outreach](http://www.wpcouncil.org/education-and-outreach).

**Whereas the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council** was established by Congress in 1976 with authority over fisheries in the Pacific Ocean seaward of the state waters of the Territory of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Territory of Guam, the State of Hawai'i and the US Pacific Remote Islands Areas of Kingman Reef; Baker, Howland and Jarvis Islands; and Johnston, Midway, Palmyra and Wake Atolls;

**Whereas Pacific Island communities have relied on tunas** for millennia as a valuable food source and a cultural resource linking their traditional island lifestyle to the surrounding ocean and more recently as a major economic resource, with 60 percent of the global tuna harvests produced in their waters;

**Whereas, in the US Pacific Islands, tuna and tuna-like species** account for nearly 95 percent of the commercial catches, such that the port of Honolulu consistently ranks among the top 10 US fishing ports in terms of the value of seafood landings and provides the US with 80 percent of its domestic bigeye tuna and 50 percent of its domestic yellowfin tuna; American Samoa acquires 52 percent of its gross domestic product and the majority of its private-sector jobs from tuna fisheries and canneries; and Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands once supported major tuna transshipment facilities;

**Whereas tuna and tuna-like species** are also major non-commercial and subsistence fisheries throughout the US Pacific Islands and account for nearly 90 percent of the Hawai'i recreational catch by weight;

**Whereas the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council** since its inception advocated for the regulation of tunas and these efforts paid off in 1992 with the amendment that included tunas as managed species under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act;

**Whereas the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council** has addressed potential social and ecosystem impacts of tuna longline fisheries by establishing longline prohibited areas 0 to 50 nautical miles (nm) around populated islands as well as around the unpopulated Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (i.e., the Protected Species Zone) in the early 1990s; by monitoring and enforcing these areas through pioneer use of the satellite-based vessel monitoring system (VMS), a best practice now used by fishing fleets globally; and by working with the fishing industry to develop longline gear and methods that significantly reduce sea turtle and seabird interactions;

**Whereas the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council** recognizes the importance of international cooperation in the conservation and management of tuna and organized the United States' hosting of the 4th, 5th, 6th and final Multi-lateral High Level Conference on Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific, which led to the Honolulu Convention adopted in 2000 and the establishment of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission; and also organized and co-hosted the 2nd International Fishers Forum (IFF2) in Honolulu, IFF3 in Japan, IFF4 in Costa Rica and IFF5 in Taipei to share responsible fishing practices throughout the Pacific as well as the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Longline Vessel Day Scheme informational meeting and the Purse-Seine Bigeye Tuna Workshop in 2015;

**Therefore, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council** proudly accepts the United Nations General Assembly's invitation to observe May 2, 2017, as the first annual World Tuna Day, "in order to raise awareness of the value of tuna, the threats facing tuna populations, and the economic and social benefits of sustainably managed tuna stocks, and to share best practices in this regard";

**Furthermore, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council** encourages the Congressional Delegation, Governors, Mayors, County Councils, fishery and natural resources departments, fishing clubs and organizations, seafood industry, indigenous affairs offices, 'Aha Moku Councils, civic clubs and other agencies and organizations in Hawai'i, American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to join in this observation; and requests that the US Departments of State and Commerce present the UN General Assembly with this resolution and the World Tuna Day poster produced by the Council for this occasion.

MAY 2ND • UNITED NATIONS

# WORLD TUNA DAY



MATALAPO'A (AMERICAN SAMOA)  
'AHI PO'ONUI (HAWAII)  
BIGEYE TUNA (GUAM)  
TOGHU, BIGEYE TUNA (NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS)

ASIASI, TO'UO, TA'UO (AMERICAN SAMOA)  
'AHI (HAWAII)  
YELLOWFIN TUNA (GUAM)  
YELLOWFIN TUNA, TOGHU (NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS)

ATU, AKU, FAOLUA, GA'OGA (AMERICAN SAMOA)  
AKU (HAWAII)  
BUNITA (GUAM)  
BUNITA, ANGARAAP (NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS)

APA'KOA (AMERICAN SAMOA)  
'AHI PALAHA (HAWAII)  
ALBACORE (GUAM)  
ALBACORE, ANGARAAP (NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS)



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CELEBRATING ONE OF OUR PLANET'S GREATEST RESOURCES

# Council Family Updates

## In Memoriam: Richard Seman



On April 4, 2017, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council lost a longtime friend and staunch supporter of managing fisheries through the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Richard Seman, the Council member representing the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) since 2004 and secretary of its Department

of Lands and Natural Resources (DLNR), passed away leaving behind his wife Loraine Mafnas Seman and children Vynicia, Richard, John, Anthony and Lorisha.

Richard started his Council family career as a Plan Team member representing the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) in the 1990s. He quickly rose to become the DFW director in 1998 and then the DLNR secretary in 2004. In between two stints as the DLNR secretary (2004-2006 and 2015-2017), Richard was elected as a representative in the CNMI 18<sup>th</sup> Legislature where he served for four years.

Education was always a big part of Richard's passion. He founded *Marianas Fishing*, which he published for five years. The magazine celebrated fishing and seafood in both Guam and CNMI. Richard also took a position with DFW from 2011 to 2013 as an aquatic educational specialist and taught the Council's summer high school course on Marine Fisheries and Resource Management during that period. He could frequently

be found snapping photos at the fishing derbies and tournament weigh-in.

Many knew Richard as a gentleman, professional and easy-going with a sense of humor that would immediately put the room at ease. He had nick names for everyone and would often greet people in a native tongue, such as *hafa adai*, *aloha*, *talofa*, *konnichiwa* and *annyeonghasayo*.

His contributions as a Council member and adviser helped lay the foundation for the Council's success in sustainably conserving and managing fisheries in the US Pacific Islands. He put the community first and ensured the sustainability of the resources through responsible management.

The Council family expresses its heartfelt gratitude to Richard and his family. *Si Yu'us Ma'ase ya Si Yu'us in fan binendisi.*



Richard Seman, Council Executive Director Kitty Simonds and Manny Duenas, Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association president.

### PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERY NEWS

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Christinna Lutu Sanchez -  
American Samoa

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kitty M. Simonds



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# Recipes

*Every family has its favorite dishes. Below are two from the mother of Peter Perez, who is the chair of the Council's Advisory Panel on Guam.*

## Escabeche

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds fish, cleaned and seasoned with salt
- 2 cloves garlic, mashed
- 1 large onion, sliced
- ½ cup vinegar
- 3 cups water
- 1 TBS turmeric powder
- 1 lb. green vegetables (eggplant, cabbage, pepper leaves/cadogan, green beans)
- 1 large red pepper, sliced (half for garnish)
- 1 cup coconut or salad oil

### Method

Fry fish in oil, and set aside. Boil each vegetable to desired crunchiness, and set aside. In a separate sauce pan, cook onion and garlic for 3 minutes. Mix vinegar, water and turmeric, and add to the onion and garlic. Boil while stirring for 5 to 10 minutes. In a separate dish, dip each vegetable in the sauce and layer with the fish. Repeat until the vegetables and fish are all used. Pour left over sauce in. Garnish with red pepper. Cover, and let it sit for half an hour. Serve and enjoy with the whole family.

## Fish in Coconut Milk

### Ingredients

- Parrot fish or sesyon (scribbled rabbit fish)
- 8 to 10 cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 hot pepper
- ½ cup of water
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 TBS salt
- 1 medium red pepper
- 1 medium green pepper
- 1 can coconut milk

### Method

Place all ingredients except coconut milk into skillet. Cover, and cook for 20 minutes. Add coconut milk, and cover with heat off. Serve and enjoy.



# 2017 Council Calendar

## June

**1**  
Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission's General Advisory Committee, La Jolla, Calif.

**5**  
United Nations Oceans Conference, New York

**8**  
CNMI Advisory Panel Meeting, Saipan

**8**  
Non-Commercial Fisheries Advisory Committee Meeting, Honolulu

**13-15**  
Scientific and Statistical Committee, Honolulu

**15**  
Hawaii Advisory Panel Meeting, Honolulu

**19-22**  
170th Council Meeting, Honolulu

**25-29**  
National Marine Educators Association, South Carolina

## July

**13**  
Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Committee, Honolulu

**15-16**  
13th Saipan International Fishing Derby, CNMI

**17-28**  
Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program, Mexico

**18-20**  
Hawaii Conservation Conference

## August

**9-17**  
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Scientific Committee, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

**20-24**  
American Fisheries Society Symposium, Tampa, Fla.

**22-24**  
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Intersessional Tropical Tuna Meeting, Honolulu

**28-Sept. 1**  
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Northern Committee, Korea

### ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES IN THE US PACIFIC ISLANDS

*The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council was established by Congress in 1976 to manage marine resources and maintain opportunities for sustainable domestic fishing in the US exclusive economic zone waters and high seas around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the eight US Pacific remote island areas.*

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