



Pacific Islands Fishery News

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RASELA FELICIANO, CHRISTINNA LUTU-SANCHEZ, AND KRISTA CORRY ARE SAMOAN WOMEN WHOSE FAMILIES OWN ALL BUT THREE OF THE US LONGLINE VESSELS BASED IN AMERICAN SAMOA.

Christinna Lutu-Sanchez is longline vessel owner, president of the Tautai O Samoa Longline Association and a member of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. She values culture and family. Pictured with her (l-r) are her nephew, son and daughter.

American Samoa Women Longline Owners Persevere

Society in American Samoa is tightly woven with the culture of its people and the Samoan way of life, or *fa'a Samoa*. The central component of the Samoan culture is the *fa'amatai*, which is the chiefly system of Samoan culture. *Matai*, or the holders of family chief titles, take on a role of leadership for their families and stewardship for the land and oceans connected to those families. While the roles of women have evolved and expanded in the territory, more than 90 percent of the *matai* titles in Samoa are held by men. Despite this, three American Samoa women have blazed a new trail while taking ownership of one the United States' main Pacific fishing fleets. Rasela Feliciano, Christinna Lutu-Sanchez and Krista

Corry are Samoan women whose families own all but three of the US longline vessels based in American Samoa.

On any given day, these women are running their fishing businesses at the Port Administration Main Dock or the Malaloa Marina. While each has her own unique business approach, they share two remarkable similarities in their management style. First, they are hands-on and lead by example. This is most evident in their willingness to take care of the day-to-day tasks, like running errands, so the people who work for them can prepare to go fishing. Second, they treat their crew as family rather than employees. They go beyond the call of duty to ensure their crews are looked after and given the safest possible working conditions. This is quite a contrast to the corporate culture of today's society but aligns with the Samoan culture and the practice of *tautua*, or service to others.

From left: American Samoa longline owners Rasela Feliciano, Carlos Sanchez (husband of Christinna Lutu-Sanchez) and Krista Corry.



After years of being a profitable fishery, the American Samoa longline fleet was hit in 2013 with severe economic conditions. Low

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American Samoa Women Longline Owners Persevere

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The American Samoa longline fishery provides employment opportunities to the Territory. Pictured is the Manaolemoana crew.

catch rates and high operating costs threatened the fleet's survival. The next year, the Tautai O Samoa Longline Association requested relief from the Large Vessel Prohibited Area (LVPA) regulations, which prohibited vessels larger than 50 feet in length from fishing between 0 and 50 nautical miles (nm) from shore around American Samoa. Feliciano, Lutu-Sanchez and Corry have actively attempted to garner support for their fishery from government, private sector and community leaders in the territory. These American Samoa longline owners explain that the local fishery is owned by indigenous families and provides jobs and economic revenue to the Territory and fish to the cannery, which is American Samoa's largest private employer. All three women longline owners believe that they have not received support from the American Samoa government for their fishery, and this is something that they find hard to understand.

Corry explains, "I was born and raised in American Samoa. The fishery has always been the major economy here. ... We need that economy to keep this place running. The fish that we target is albacore That's what we deliver to StarKist."

Corry and her husband run the family company Tuna Ventures, which operates the longline vessels *Fetuolemoana*, *Manaolemoana* and *Sivaimoana*. She stepped in to run the business for her father when her parents left the island to do missionary work for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Corry had a steep learning curve. In an abbreviated amount of time, she had to learn about fish, engine repairs, fishing regulations, vessel management and problem solving.

Despite hardships that come with owning longline vessels in American Samoa, Corry continues and is motivated by a sense of obligation to her family and the people of American Samoa. In her own words: "We are American Samoans. We are part of the community. We put everything back into the community. We buy our groceries here. We support the fishermen from here. We do everything that we can to sustain our companies here."

These women supply one of the largest canneries in the region. At a time when the nation imports the vast majority of its seafood from foreign markets, these families provide American-caught tuna that is required for many military and USDA contracts. Feliciano says that 98 percent of her company's catch of bigeye and yellowfin tuna and wahoo goes to StarKist.

The three women have worked tirelessly over the past four years to gain support for their struggling fishery. When many other boat owners left the territory, having decided that operating a longline vessel in American Samoa had become too difficult or expensive, these women remained.

"Fishing is risky, dangerous and a challenge, but it provides locally produced food," says Lutu-Sanchez. "Fish is our food, yet not enough people in American Samoa fish—commercially, recreationally or for subsistence. Most people buy the fish they eat, and the fish they buy is most likely imported." She notes that the United States imported nearly \$20 billion of seafood in 2016.

Lutu-Sanchez and her husband own Longline Services Inc., a company with five longline boats: *Auro*, *Princess Karlinna II*, *Princess Yasminna*, *Taimane* and *Tifaimoana*. Like her father before her, she runs a large fishing operation that employs people in the territory and supplies tuna to American Samoa's largest private-sector business, StarKist. She is also a full-time mother, the owner of American Samoa's fashion house "Lalelei," the president of the Tautai O Samoa Longline Association and a member of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.



Tifaimoana in Pago Pago harbor.

Lutu-Sanchez has to overcome many obstacles to maintain a long-line operation in American Samoa. Among the challenges are sporadic catches, increased costs to operate, lack of interest by the youth to fish and lack of shore-side facilities.

Feliciano is motivated to make her company succeed so her family will benefit. Feliciano and her husband own and operate Feli Fisheries Inc. with their sons, Edgar and Anthony. Like the other two women, Feliciano is driven to keep the American Samoa longline fishery viable.

Forming the core of the Tautai O Samoa Longline Association, the three women rely on each other for support. While it is a competitive industry, they remain close friends, openly praise one another and help each other succeed. Nonetheless, the fishery needs outside support. One of the main reasons that support is lacking is because some people have argued that allowing the longline boats into a portion of the LVPA would harm the smaller alia fishing fleet. All three of the women strongly oppose this misconception.

"This is never about us taking away from our small fishing vessels or our cultural fishing," Feliciano explains. "Our goal is to coexist with our small fishing vessels to support and help each other, and we continue to do so. Again, we simply asked for help and relief due to the dire situation we are facing."

"It is a struggle every day," Corry adds. "We are fighting to be able to continue to fish and put food on our table and the tables of those who work for us. It is about supporting our families and our economy."

Council Selects New LVPA Amendment Preferred Alternative

At its 171st meeting Oct. 17 to 19, 2017, at the Rex Lee Auditorium in Utulei, American Samoa, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council took initial action on a new proposed amendment to the American Samoa Large Vessel Prohibited Area (LVPA). The new proposal was taken in response to a 2017 decision by the Federal District Court for the District of Hawai'i regarding the initial LVPA amendment recommended by the Council in 2015 and published as a final rule in 2016 by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The court held that the final rule failed to consider the American Samoa Instruments of Cession as "other applicable law" and that cultural fishing rights are protected by inference in the Instruments.



Council members and dignitaries following a traditional 'ava ceremony to welcome the Council prior to opening the 171st meeting in Utulei, American Samoa.

The LVPA extends from 0 to 50 nautical miles (nm) from shore within the American Samoa archipelago and prohibits all commercial fishing vessels 50 feet in length or larger from catching pelagic fish within it.

The LVPA was created in 2002 by the Council to support a fleet of approximately 40 alia longline vessels. The aluminum, double-hulled vessels are generally about 30 feet in length. By 2015 and before the LVPA rule was adopted, that fleet had declined to a single active vessel.

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to help the local fleet of mono-hulled longline vessels over 50 feet in length. Since 2010, this fleet has had declining catches and reduced net revenue attributed to increased competition by subsidized foreign fisheries targeting albacore.



The preferred LVPA alternative would prohibit large fishing vessels from operating within 2 nm of the offshore banks in American Samoa. The banks have been identified as important to troll and bottomfish vessels, like the ones pictured.

The preliminary preferred alternative for the new amendment would allow vessels permitted under the American Samoa longline limited entry program to operate outside 12 nautical miles (nm) around Swains, Tutuila and Manu'a Islands. It would prohibit them from operating within 2-nm of offshore banks. During a public hearing on the LVPA held Oct. 17, 2017, at the Rex Lee Auditorium, the banks were identified as important to troll and bottomfish fishermen.



Success of the StarKist tuna cannery in Pago Pago, American Samoa, is contingent on a continuous supply of albacore, the target species of the American Samoa longline fleet. Charlie the Tuna is the cartoon mascot and spokes-tuna for the StarKist brand.

Council Member Taotasi Archie Soliai, manager of human resources and government affairs for the local StarKist cannery, said continuous supply of albacore is important to the facility. "This year and last year we had to shut down several weeks because of fish supply," he said. "It is very important that uninterrupted supply be sustained. Any interruption that affects supply results in plant closures, which in turn hurts our employees." He thanked the Council for considering the amendment to help the boats that supply fish to StarKist.



Council Member Christinna Lutu-Sanchez, an owner of local longline vessels, said the outcome of the action is not a guaranteed solution to the economic situation, but the Council has to try to continue to help the fishermen and reduce the US seafood trade deficit.

In making its decision, the Council recognized the importance of fishing to the American Samoa economy, culture and food security and its support of all forms of fishing associated with the Territory. The Council has written to the American Samoa government to invite consultation on the proposed action and its potential for impacts to cultural fishing. The Council will consider a range of options and may take final action on the new LVPA amendment at its March 2018 meeting in Honolulu.

The Council also recommended that NMFS, by Jan. 30, 2018, gather information on the issue of cultural fishing in American Samoa, which may include expert interviews and focus groups as well as document fish flow from small and large vessels.

The Council also took final action to modify the American Samoa longline limited entry permit program. The aim of the modification is to eliminate regulatory burdens that may prevent vessels from entering into the fishery. Council Members Soliai and Lutu-Sanchez recused themselves from the vote.

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Other 171st Council Actions

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Other actions by the Council during its 171st meeting included the following among others:

PELAGIC FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN, AMENDMENT 7 SPECIFICATION

PROCESS: The Council will inform Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross that NMFS for the past three consecutive years has failed to authorize the US Territory longline bigeye limit specifications prior to the US longline bigeye limit being reached. The resultant shutdowns of Hawai'i longline vessels have impacted vessel owners, crew and local seafood markets. The Council will ask that NMFS develop a procedure with clear deadlines to authorize the US Territory bigeye longline limit specifications prior to the US longline bigeye limit being reached.

According to Council Member Dean Sensui, delays that lead to closures cost longline boat owners thousands of dollars a week and increase health risks to consumers because they result in more seafood imports.

US LONGLINE BIGEYE LIMIT: The Council recognized that the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) bigeye tuna is not subject to overfishing or considered overfished under the most recent stock assessment by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. The Council will ask the US government to work to obtain a US longline bigeye limit of 6,000 mt under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) tropical tuna measure. The 2017 US quota for longline-caught bigeye tuna in the WCPO was 3,345 mt.

ANNUAL LIMITS ON SEA TURTLE INTERACTIONS IN THE HAWAI'I SHALLOW-SET LONGLINE FISHERY: Council's preliminary preferred alternative recommends removal of the hard cap measure, which requires closure of the fishery for the remainder of the calendar year upon reaching the specified incidental-take level for either leatherback or loggerhead sea turtles. The gear measures implemented in 2004 (large hooks and mackerel bait) have successfully

reduced sea turtle interactions in the fishery. Moreover, recent data indicate that turtle interactions may remain stable in the future and are unlikely to rebound to the peak levels of the 1990s. Continuation of a hard cap measure that results in the closure of a fishery can create uncertainty for fishermen and could open the door for foreign fish (spillover and transferred effects) to supply the local market, potentially increasing overall sea turtle bycatch.

AMERICAN SAMOA MARINE CONSERVATION PLAN (MCP): The Council noted that the American Samoa MCP expires in mid-2018 and recommended that American Samoa Government (ASG) conduct meetings with relevant stakeholders to develop its new MCP before submitting it to the Council in early 2018. The MCP identifies fishery development projects to be funded from certain fines or fees received from fisheries in the US exclusive economic zone around American Samoa.

NON-FISHING IMPACTS ON FISH HABITAT: The Council will ask the ASG to consider which department should have permitting and enforcement authority for sand mining regulations, provide outreach and review the regulations to ensure they are in line with other natural resource management programs. It will also encourage ASG to build capacity to collaborate between the government and communities in ongoing natural resource management and education/outreach efforts.

FISHERIES DATA COLLECTION: The Council will ask the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources to distinguish between foreign longline and domestic longline in the retail fish vendor data.

LONGLINE DOCK EXTENSION: The Council recommended that the ASG commit to identifying funds for the construction of the longline dock extension or the Council will consider reprogramming the funds it has to support the project.

Negotiations End in 1-Year Purse-Seine and Longline Tuna Provisions

A new tropical tuna measure for the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) was reached at the 14th Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC14) held Dec. 3-7, 2017, in Manila. The new measure applies until 2021, but the main operative provisions for purse-seine and longline fisheries apply only through 2018.

The WCPO comprises the world's largest tuna fishery with over 2.6 million metric tons (mt) harvested in 2016. Around 90 percent of the tuna caught in the WCPO is subject to the tropical tuna measure, which covers skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tuna fisheries. Nearly 80 percent of the total catch is harvested by industrial-scale purse-seine vessels, followed by longline, pole-and-line and small-scale artisanal fishing methods, such as hand-line.

Leading up to WCPFC14, the bigeye stock in the WCPO was assessed to be neither experiencing overfishing nor in an overfished condition. This was a major change from assessments over the past two decades, which viewed bigeye as experiencing overfishing due to the combined impact of purse-seine vessels incidentally capturing juvenile bigeye and longline fisheries harvesting adults. New bigeye growth information suggests a more productive stock and a greater

spawning biomass level. Yellowfin and skipjack tuna stocks are also considered healthy.

The 500 attendees at WCPFC14 included delegates from 26 member countries, seven participating territories (PTs) and several cooperating non-member countries, as well as numerous industry and environmental organizations. Among the PTs were the US Territories of American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

Balancing the interests between the purse-seine and longline fishing sectors and between Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and distant-water fishing nations is extremely difficult. WCPFC14 negotiators kept at it until 3 a.m. on Dec. 8 to reach agreement on the new measure.

LONGLINE PROVISIONS

The 2018 measure provides a slight increase for the US longline bigeye quota, which is utilized by the Hawai'i fleet, by restoring the 2016 limit of 3,544 mt. The measure also provides that catches and effort of US flagged vessels operating under agreements with US PTs shall be attributed to the PTs and notified to the Commission.

Longline bigeye limits for four other countries were also reverted back to 2016 levels: 18,265 mt for Japan; 13,942 mt for Korea; 10,481 mt for Chinese Taipei; and 5,889 mt for Indonesia. China received an additional 500 mt increase above its 2016 quota for a total of 8,224 mt due to a one-time quota transfer from Japan. The longline quotas for Japan and Indonesia were maintained even though recent catches have been several thousand tons below their limits. In 2016, for example, Indonesia reported a longline catch of 8 mt.

The PTs and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are not subject to longline limits.

The new measure includes a provision that future bigeye longline allocations may take into account improved levels of monitoring and control for longline fleets. For the Hawai'i longline fishery, the bar shouldn't be high. The Hawai'i fishery is subject to more than 20-percent observer coverage, while coverage levels for many other fleets are below the 5-percent level required by the WCPFC. The Hawai'i longline fishery also rarely transships at sea, whereas foreign fleets readily transship bigeye tuna on the high sea, a practice known for low levels of monitoring. The Hawai'i longline fishery can track its catch through the chain of custody. Its mantra that "every pound can be found" is genuine and should be considered in future allocations by the WCPFC.

PURSE-SEINE PROVISIONS

For the WCPO purse-seine fishery, restrictions will also be eased.

The United States obtained an 8 percent increase in high seas purse-seine vessel days. The catches associated with those operations are to be landed in American Samoa. Supporting rationale for this increase was the lack of fish supply to the American Samoa canneries in the last two years due to the 2016 measures, such as the 2017 fish aggregation device (FAD) closures on the high seas.

In 2017, FAD restrictions for all fleets included either a four-month closure in both the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and on the high seas or a three-month closure and a FAD set limit for each member. For 2018, the seasonal FAD closure in the EEZs will be three

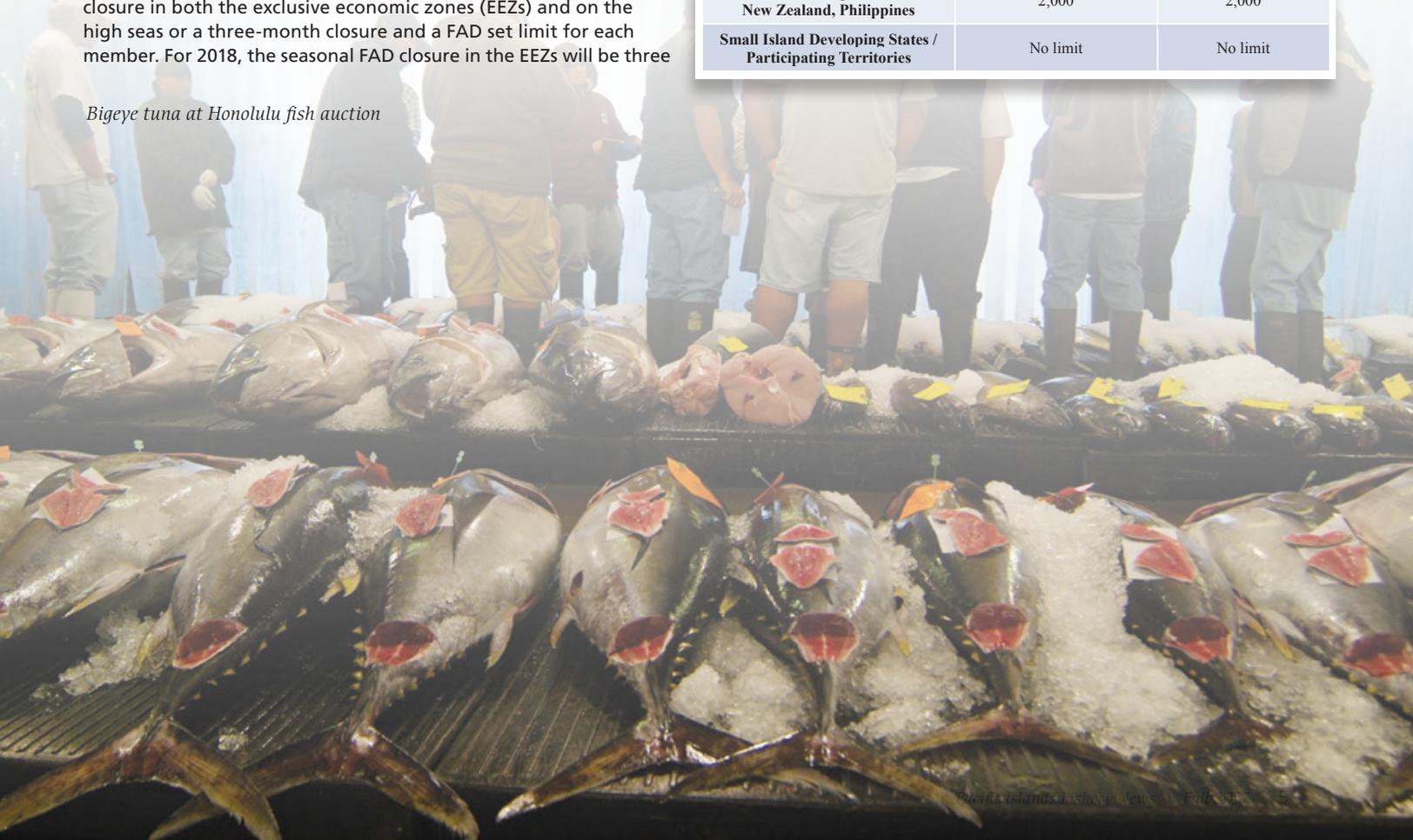
months (July-August-September). Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) member countries may exempt their flagged-vessels to the FAD closure in their waters. The high seas FAD closure will be for two months to be taken either March to April or November to December, and the FAD sets are gone.

SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE

Even though the WCPFC gave itself a mandate to adopt a target reference point (TRP) for South Pacific albacore at this meeting, it did not happen. To achieve the proposed TRP in the future, recent longline catches would have to be reduced by more than 30 percent. Such a reduction does not sit well with several countries, including China and Chinese Taipei, which dominate catches of South Pacific albacore. Proponents for the TRP include members with domestic longline fleets that target South Pacific albacore, like the American Samoa longline fishery. These fleets have faced significant economic challenges in recent years primarily due to lower catch rates attributed increased catches by foreign fleets. Some members used the new South Pacific albacore stock assessment scheduled for next year as a reason to delay action.

Member Countries, Participating Territories, and Cooperating Non-member Countries	Longline Bigeye Catch Limit (mt) in WCPO	
	2017	2018
Japan	16,860	18,265
Korea	12,869	13,942
Chinese Taipei	9,675	10,481
China	7,049	8,224
Indonesia	5,889	5,889
United States	3,345	3,544
Australia, European Union, New Zealand, Philippines	2,000	2,000
Small Island Developing States / Participating Territories	No limit	No limit

Bigeye tuna at Honolulu fish auction



Western Pacific Region Bears Brunt of US Marine Protected Area

With the designation of the Rose Atoll, Pacific Remote Islands and Mariana Trench Marine National Monuments and President Obama's subsequent expansions of two other existing marine national monuments, the Western Pacific Region currently contains 81 percent of the nation's total marine protected area (MPA) waters with commercial fishing prohibitions based on available data from the National MPA Center.

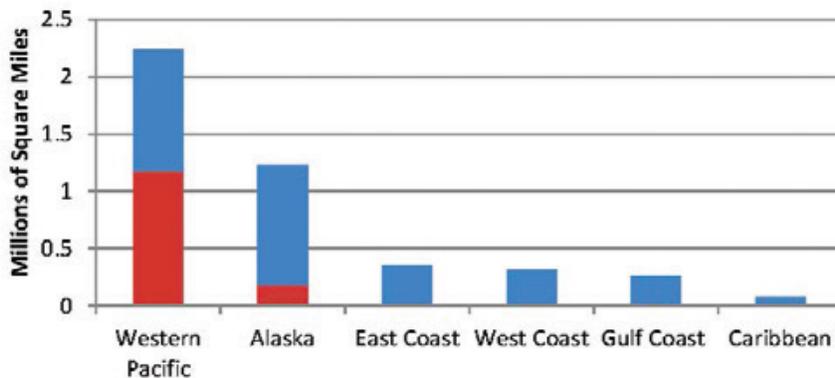
Marine national monuments in the Western Pacific Region claim over half of the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the region and about one quarter of the entire US EEZ.

Extraction of fisheries resources in the US EEZ is normally managed under the Regional Fishery Management Council process as authorized by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. This process relegates decision making to regional councils of fishery experts and state regulators who make recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce based on the best science information available and in a public forum. Through this process, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council closed the Arctic Management Area to all commercial fishing and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council in 2002 established no-take marine protected areas around Rose Atoll in American Samoa and around Kingman Reef and Jarvis, Howland and Baker Islands in the US Pacific Remote Island Areas within which the harvest of all species was prohibited.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management regulates marine minerals extraction in the US EEZ subject to lengthy permitting processes and federal environmental regulations under several federal statutes, much in the same way the fishery regulations are subject to a review with other applicable law.

Prohibition of all commercial activities outside of the normal science-based and participatory resource management channels unnecessarily politicizes these decisions and removes governing power from expert resource users and local regulators.

US EEZ and Large Marine Protected Areas by Region



US EEZ in blue; large marine protected areas with commercial fishing prohibitions in red.
Source: Based on data from the National Marine Protected Area Center, <https://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/dataanalysis/mpainventory/mpaviewer/>

Underwater background photo by Marlowe Sabater

Council Advisors Receive Training on Climate and Fisheries

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council conducted a series of training workshops on climate for members of its Marine Planning and Climate Change Committee (MPCCC), Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committees and Advisory Panels. The workshops were held in September in Hawai'i, October in American Samoa and November in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.



Oceans, Fisheries & Us

The workshop focused on the climate indicators that the Council monitors in its annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation reports. The climate sections of these reports were developed by John Marra, Tom Oliver and Phoebe Woodworth-Jefcoats from NOAA, all of whom also serve on the Council's MPCCC and Plan Teams. Seema Balwani, from NOAA, provided the workshop presentation.

The workshops focused on four major topic areas:

1. Climate variability, including Oceanic Niño Index and Pacific Decadal Oscillation;
2. Heat, including sea surface temperature and degree heating weeks;
3. Ocean acidification, including atmospheric CO₂ and oceanic pH; and
4. Catchability, including sea level/sea surface height and cyclones.

Participants discussed the usefulness of the indicators being monitored and additional indicators the Council proposes to monitor: wind speed and direction, oceanic currents and frequency of storms. They also provided input on other factors that may influence fishery performance and sustainability.

The participants had some general observations. Many felt that the sea surface temperature was the most valuable indicator because of the impact it has

on migrating fish stocks. Several felt that the Oceanic Niño Index was a good indicator to know, but they weren't able to make decisions based on it. Many felt the Pacific Decadal Oscillation was also not useful in decision-making. Participants recognized that ocean acidification poses a challenge to fisheries and discussed the difficulty in communicating the complexities of climate impacts to fisheries to their communities. They also noted the lack of long-term, local data to help predict site-specific fishing impacts at the community level and hoped that the research would continue. Participants discussed ways to lower CO2 emissions in their communities and acknowledged that the issue requires

international cooperation. The participants also talked story about their experiences with cyclones.

Participants talked extensively about what events might be natural cyclical changes as opposed to climate change and the difficulty of separating the two. Most of the participants were satisfied with the current list of indicators being monitored and supported the three new indicators that Council committee recommended. Wind was the most important new indicator to most participants. The participants also felt that community workshops on climate and fisheries would be useful.

Non-Fishing Activities Impact on Fish Habitat May Be Overlooked

The Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committees (REACs) and other advisers to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council met during the last quarter of 2017 to discuss non-fishing human impacts to fish habitat. The Council is required to identify these activities, describe the impacts on essential fish habitat (EFH) and suggest ways to reduce or offset the impacts. These requirements encourage an ecosystem approach to conserving species through means other than traditional harvest management. The information is included in the Fishery Ecosystem Plans for the region. Federal agencies must consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service before undertaking activities that may adversely affect EFH.

The REACs discussed activities unique to their region, such as large-scale anchorages in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and sand mining in American Samoa. They noted that some

overlooked activities, such as shipwrecks or ecosystem restoration, may have unintentional effects on fish habitat. For example, anecdotal reports suggest that ecosystem restoration in Maunalua Bay on O'ahu has resulted in coral mortality and a decline in the o'io (bonefish) fishery because removing invasive algae has caused the sediment previously held in place by the algae to wash over the reef. Participants said anticipating these impacts should be part of the planning and consultation process.

Best management practices (BMPs) were also discussed. In American Samoa, the difficulty of enforcing vessel wastewater BMPs for harbor management was a concern. Illicit discharges have also challenged Guam regulatory authorities. BMPs can effectively mitigate impacts to habitat only if monitored and enforced. Participants noted the importance of conservation and enhancement recommendations that are clear, enforceable and based on the best

scientific information available.

In the spirit of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the discussions touched on balancing protection of fisheries habitat with the need for human activities. For example, projected sea level rise may not only stress fisheries habitat but also require reinforcing coastal infrastructure or developing seawalls. A common theme among all REACs was that intergovernmental coordination is a key to managing nearshore fisheries habitat.

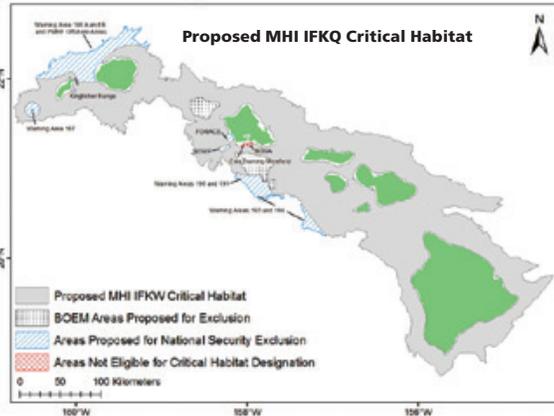
At its March 2018, the Council will consider how the FEPs should reflect updated information on non-fishing impacts and habitat conservation priorities raised during the REAC meetings.

The impact of large-scale anchorages on essential fish habitat is a concern in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Pictured are five of seven large vessels anchored off of Saipan in November.

Photo by Sylvia Spalding

Critical Habitat Proposed for Main Hawaiian Islands Insular False Killer Whales

In November 2017, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposed to designate critical habitat for the Main Hawaiian Islands insular false killer whale (MHI IFKW) distinct population segment (DPS). The proposed critical habitat area encompasses waters from the 45-meter depth contour to the 3,200-meter depth contour around the MHI. Within this depth range, some areas are proposed for exclusion due to economic and national security



considerations. Public comment period for the proposed rule closes on Jan. 2, 2018. Critical habitat is a designated area that contains habitat features essential for the conservation of a species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The MHI IFKW was listed under the ESA as “endangered” in 2012. NMFS identified four habitat features to be essential: 1) island-associated marine habitat; 2) prey species of sufficient quantity, quality and availability to support individual growth, reproduction and development, as well as overall population growth; (3) waters free of pollutants of a type and amount harmful to insular false killer whales; and (4) habitat free of anthropogenic noise that would significantly impair the value of the habitat for false killer whale’s use or occupancy.

The designation adds a layer to an existing consultation process to ensure that federally funded, authorized or permitted activities do not destroy or severely modify the species’ habitat. It does not, by itself, create a protected area or restrict access nor does it directly impact activities without a “federal nexus.” Critical habitat also does not stop development or activities with a federal nexus. Many projects will likely move forward without modifications after consultation with NMFS. However, if NMFS determines that an activity will likely impact (adversely modify or destroy) the IFKW critical habitat, then it must work with the responsible federal agency to modify the activity or take precautions to protect the habitat.

For the purpose of ESA consultations and critical habitat, NMFS considers longline, bottomfish, crustacean, coral reef ecosystem and precious coral fisheries in Hawai’i to be federally managed. These fisheries have the federal nexus for critical habitat due to federal permits, federal management measures or requirements for annual catch limits under the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council’s Fishery Ecosystem Plans. The Hawai’i longline fisheries harvest pelagic fish species that are prey for insular false killer whales, but these fisheries operate well outside of the proposed critical habitat area. Bottomfish, crustacean, coral reef ecosystem and precious coral fisheries have limited or no overlap with known prey species for insular false killer whales.

Hawai’i small-boat non-longline pelagic fisheries, e.g., those using troll, handline or other hook-and-line gear, harvest species that overlap with IFKW prey. NMFS does not consider these fisheries to be federally managed. They do not require federal permits or have federal management measures.

NMFS anticipates that restrictions to Hawai’i fisheries will not be necessary as a result of the designation. Available information suggests that prey competition is low between insular false killer whales and fisheries. However, NMFS said in the proposed rule that future modifications to federally managed fisheries could result as more information about the insular false killer whale foraging ecology becomes available.

Public comments to the proposed rule can be submitted online by clicking the “comment now” button at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2017-0093>

The full proposed rule, supporting documents, and island-specific maps can be found at http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/PRD/prd_mhi_false_killer_whale.html#critical_habitat.

Offshore Aquaculture Management: Coming Soon?

To ensure that aquaculture operations do not impact the sustainability of wild caught fish populations and fisheries, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council recommended in 2010, that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) develop aquaculture permitting and reporting requirements for the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters (3 to 200 miles offshore) of the Western Pacific Region. While no requirements were implemented, a series of aquaculture research projects around the island of Hawai’i became operational under the Council’s Special Coral Reef Ecosystem Fishing Permit provisions (50 CFR 665.224).

Litigation questioning the use of this permit for aquaculture, along with the resource-intensive and time-consuming nature of project-based analysis, has prompted NMFS to develop a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for offshore aquaculture in the US EEZ. The PEIS will facilitate the review and processing of aquaculture fishery proposals and support National Environmental Policy Act reviews for aquaculture fishery projects.

The PEIS analyzes impacts of a potential aquaculture management program that would designate areas suitable for aquaculture development, identify suitable management unit species for aquaculture in the region, authorize reasonably foreseeable types of offshore aquaculture operations and establish gear, permitting and reporting requirements.

An update on the draft alternatives in the PEIS and potential options for Council action on an aquaculture management program were presented to the Council’s Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committees during the last quarter of 2017 in American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and Hawai’i. Participants were concerned with the species allowed to be cultured and their potential impact on the genetic biodiversity of wild fish stocks.

The notice of availability and request for comments on the draft PEIS are expected in early 2018. The Council may select a preferred alternative at its meeting in March 2018. For more information on offshore aquaculture in the region and the draft aquaculture PEIS, visit http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/SFD/SFD_aq.html.

2018-2020 Catch Limits Set for Main Hawaiian Island Coral Reef Fish

Hawai'i coral reef fish are an important cultural and commercial resource managed by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council through the Hawai'i Archipelago Fishery Ecosystem Plan. To maintain the sustainability of this resource, the Council at its 171st meeting in October recommended new annual catch limits (ACLs) for some of the coral reef fish in the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI).

The decision was based on a recent peer-reviewed stock assessment provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center. The stock assessment estimated the natural and fishing mortalities and overfishing limits for 27 reef fish species as well as the stock biomass from underwater census survey and fishery dependent catch information. National Standard 2 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires conservation and management measures to be based on the best available scientific information.

The new assessment was evaluated by a sub-group of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) for its reliability in setting harvest levels. The sub-group, known as the Risk of Overfishing Working Group, used the information to quantify the scientific uncertainty that buffers the overfishing limit, which is used to set the acceptable biological catch (ABC).

Six species were deemed to have adequate information for species level specification: mu (*Monotaxis grandoculis*), ta'ape (*Lutjanus kasmira*), to'ao (*L. fulvus*), uku (*Aprion virescens*), kumu (*Parupeneus porphyreus*) and roi (*Cephalopholis argus*). The SSC did not set an ABC specification of u'u (menpachi; *Myripristis berndtii*) because there is no reliable catch data to verify the validity of the mean length estimates and other concerns. The SSC grouped the other 21 species by their taxonomies and utilized indicator species to establish ABCs for these groups.

At its 171st meeting in October, the Council used the ABCs to set the ACLs. For fishing years 2018-2020, the Council recommended ACLs equal to the ABCs. These new ACLs are generally higher than the 2017 ACLs except for the family of jacks and goatfish.

Underwater background photo by Marlowe Sabater

Grouping	Indicator Species Used to Set ACL	Other Species Covered by ACL	2017 ACL (lbs)	2018-2020 ACL (lbs)
Single species	Kumu (<i>Parupeneus porphyreus</i>)	n/a	Grouped with Goatfish (Mullidae)	2,243
Single species	Roi (<i>Cephalopholis argus</i>)	n/a	Grouped with Groupers (Serranidae)	238,758
Single species	Ta'ape (<i>Lutjanus kasmira</i>)	n/a	Grouped with Snappers (Lutjanidae)	464,950
Single species	To'au (<i>L. fulvus</i>)	n/a	Grouped with Snappers (Lutjanidae)	64,595
Single species	Uku (<i>Aprion virescens</i>)	n/a	Grouped with Non-Deep 7 Bottomfish	127,205
Surgeonfish (Acanthuridae)	Kala (<i>Naso unicornis</i>) Kala lolo (<i>N. brevirostris</i>) Kala lolo (<i>N. hexacanthus</i>) Palani (<i>Acanthurus dussumieri</i>) Pualu (<i>A. blochii</i>) Umaumalei (<i>N. lituratus</i>)	'Api (<i>A. guttatus</i>) Ctenochaetus striatus Kala (<i>N. annulatus</i>) Kala holo (<i>N. hexacanthus</i>) Kole (<i>C. strigosus</i>) Lau 'iplala (<i>Zebrasoma flavescens</i>) Mai'i'i (<i>A. blochii</i>) Maiko / Maikoiko (<i>A. nigroris</i> , <i>A. Leucoparelius</i>) <i>N. casesius</i> Na'ena'e (<i>A. olivaceus</i>)	342,000	496,085
Jacks (Carangidae)	Omilu (<i>Caranx melampygus</i>) Ulua (<i>Carangoides orthogrammus</i>) Ulua aukea (<i>Caranx ignobilis</i>)	Kahala (<i>Seriola dumerilii</i>)	161,200	21,178
Goatfish (Mullidae)	Moano (<i>Parupeneus cyclostomus</i>) Munu (<i>P. insularis</i>) Weke'a (<i>Mulloidichthys flavolineatus</i>) Weke nono (<i>M. pfluegeri</i>) Weke'ula (<i>M. vanicolensis</i>)	Kumu or Moano (<i>Parupeneus</i> spp., <i>P. multifaciatius</i>) Malu (<i>P. pleurostigma</i>) Weke (<i>Mulloidichthys</i> spp.)	165,000	158,740
Parrotfish (Scaridae)	Lauia (<i>Scarus dubius</i>) Ponuhunu (<i>Calotomus carolinus</i>) Uhu (<i>Chlorurus spilurus</i>) Uhu (<i>S. psittacus</i>) Uhu ele'ele (<i>S. rubroviolaceus</i>) Uhu uliuli (<i>C. perspicillatus</i>)	Scarus spp.	239,000	380,050

Workshop Analyzes Albatross Interactions Hawai'i Longline Fishery



Black-footed albatross at Midway Atoll, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Photo by and courtesy of James Lloyd.

A workshop to explore potential drivers influencing black-footed albatross interaction rates with the Hawai'i longline fishery was convened by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, Nov. 7-9, 2017, in Honolulu. The meeting was chaired by Jeffrey Polovina and included representatives from the Hawaii Longline Association, Hawai'i Pacific University, NOAA, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and several other national and international organizations.

Exploratory analyses and information presented at the workshop suggest environmental conditions may be the main driver behind higher-than-

average albatross sightings around Hawai'i deep-set longline vessels in 2015-2016. Shift in wind patterns during El Niño-Southern Oscillation and Pacific Decadal Oscillation conditions during these years created more productive surface waters in the fishing grounds and an apparent shift in black-footed albatross distribution into the fishing grounds.

The Transition Zone Chlorophyll Front, a forage habitat for black-footed albatrosses, also shifted southward, bringing it into the northern edge of the fishing grounds.

Other factors that may have influenced albatross abundance around the vessels include albatross breeding population dynamics, eddies and other mesoscale oceanographic factors, and changes in individual albatross learning and/or vessel behavior.

Changes in the spatial distribution of the fishing effort and mitigation measures were examined but did not differ significantly in 2015-2016 compared to earlier years.

According to population modeling, the 2015-2016 increased black-footed albatross interactions would have minimal population-level effects if the increase occurred only in the Hawai'i longline fishery and are temporary or episodic. If the elevated black-footed albatross bycatch interaction rates are applied consistently throughout North Pacific fisheries, the population is projected to decline. While reliable North Pacific-wide bycatch estimates are not available, information available on Alaska fisheries bycatch suggests that the increase in 2015-2016 is unlikely to be basin-wide.

As next steps, workshop participants discussed building on the current black-footed albatross population model to integrate other available data including spatial resolution. Data gaps must be filled to allow for a rigorous Integrated Population Model to be built, including improved age class-specific data and North Pacific-wide fishery bycatch data. Workshop participants also stressed the importance of continued population monitoring, especially at French Frigate Shoals and Laysan Island, to update breeding and reproductive success data.

2nd Phase of Garapan Fishing Base Project Underway

The second phase for the Garapan Fishing Base Project is now underway following the announcement of the request for proposals to develop architectural and engineering designs and permitting activities. The project is on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). It includes maintenance dredging, extension of seawall and shoreline revetment, and installation of floating dock installation, aids to navigation and solar parking lot lights. Four local companies attended a pre-proposal conference and are interested in bidding for this project.



Top: A request for proposal has been issued to provide additional improvements to the Garapan Fishing Base to accommodate the growing number of fishermen on the island of Saipan. **Below:** The completed phase of the Garapan Fishing Base Project is a boat trailer parking lot.

The additional improvements will complement the recently completed boat trailer parking lot at the site and will continue efforts to accommodate the growing number of commercial, recreational and subsistence fishermen on Saipan who utilize the site.

As with the parking lot phase, the second phase will be funded from money from fishing agreement between the CNMI and Hawai'i longline vessels. This mechanism is pursuant to Amendment 7 of the Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan. It is authorized by the federal government and supports fisheries development in the territory.



Participants of Puwalu Umi.

Puwalu 'Umi, Ola Honua I ke Kupa'a Kanaka

Sixty Native Hawaiian practitioners gathered in Honolulu on Nov. 17 and 18, 2017, for Puwalu 'Umi: Ola honua I ke kupa'a kanaka (Puwalu 10: The earth flourishes with bounty when k̄naka stand together in support). The participants from O'ahu, Kaua'i Molo-ka'i, Maui, Hawai'i and Kaho'olawe gathered to assess what was happening with the 'Aha Moku system and how to move it forward.

The 'Aha Moku system was recognized by the State of Hawai'i in 2012 through Act 288 as the traditional natural resource management system in Hawai'i. Act 288 also created the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee (AMAC) to advise the Board of Land and Natural Resources on traditional management. Members of the AMAC are to be selected by the Governor from nominees provided by island councils.

The Puwalu participants discussed how to organize in order to access funding opportunities at the island level. There was also strong support for improved recruitment, especially among the younger people, to strengthen island councils.

Lisa Maruyama of the Hawai'i Association of Nonprofit Organizations gave a presentation on how nonprofit organizations operate and the value they bring to the Hawai'i community. She offered assistance to any council that needs it to organize. She promoted the theme of legal organization

so that island councils could participate in funding opportunities and receive increased benefit from fundraising activities. There was general agreement of the need for legal organization of the island councils by the participants.

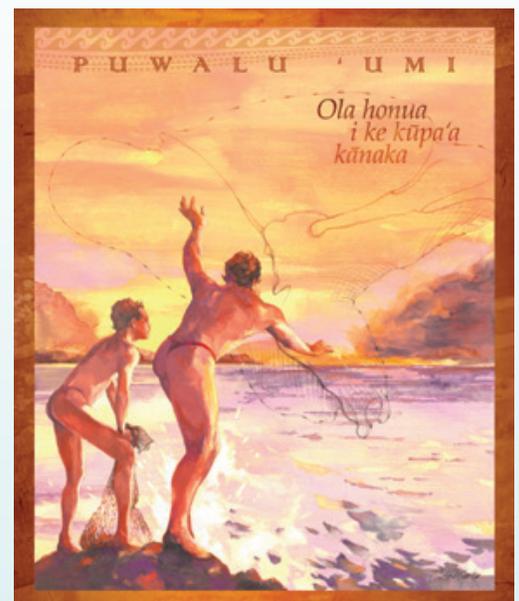
Associate Justice Michael Wilson provided a presentation that tied environmental activism and climate change to global indigenous initiatives.

The Puwalu 'Umi participants discussed organizing into an Association of 'Aha Moku Island Councils. Some questioned the need for the AMAC. However, the discussion could not be resolved, and the island councils were encouraged to send their nominations for the AMAC to the Governor.

As a result of Puwalu 'Umi, the island council on O'ahu has a new chair and the island council on the Big Island is reorganizing. Maui, already organized, is planning outreach activities to each of its 12 moku. Kaho'olawe will have a new 'Aha Moku representative. Kaua'i 'Aha Moku practitioners have renewed their commitment to the 'Aha Moku and, new members will be joining in.

The 'Aha Moku steering committee is reviewing the notes and actions from the Puwalu and will send a report to the participants.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council has supported the Puwalu series of conferences since its beginning in 2006. The Council views the 'Aha Moku system as an opportunity to increase involvement of the Native Hawaiian community and the incorporation of traditional knowledge into the federal fishery management process.



2017 Puwalu conference poster.

Guam's Advisory Panel Participates in 'Fina'nã'guen Peskadot' (Teaching Fishing) Expo

The people of Guam use various types of fishing to obtain food, practice ones culture or simply to pass the time. Traditional talaya (throw nets) and chenchulu (surround nets) are still practiced techniques of fishing today. Some of the more modern methods include rod-and-reel with a hook-and-line and spearfishing with a high-powered spear gun. Fishermen decide what method they want to use based upon what fish is in season and what they want to eat and provide to their families. Anyone can purchase a rod and reel, spear gun or throw net. Knowing how to use them correctly to catch fish has to be learned and comes with time and experience.



Guam AP member James Borja shows how to load a spear gun.

Guam Sea Grant and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council held a fishing expo for families called the Fina'nã'guen Peskadot (Teaching Fishing) at the Guam Museum.

"Fina'nã'guen Peskadot" was an educational opportunity for the community to learn from active fisherman and develop the fishing skills for themselves, stated Marie Auyong, University of Guam Sea Grant extension educator. Auyong coordinated the event with the Guam museum and the fishermen.

The expo taught and motivated families to learn about traditional and contemporary fishing techniques from several experienced fishermen. Presenting their knowledge and techniques were fishermen Bobby Alvarez and Jon Guerrero (chenchulu), Simon and Louis Camacho (talaya) and Marlin Braun (rod-and-rail repair). Also, providing fishery knowledge were the Council's Guam Advisory Panel (AP) members, including Felix Reyes (rod and reel) and James Borja (spearfishing and diving safety).

During the expo, kids were given a Council bag filled with educational material, such as the Council's Fishermen Code of Conduct postcards, the Guam Department of Aquatics and Wildlife Resources' Marianas Food Fish Chart, fish recipes, free lures and light tackle provided by Braun.

"As a kid I learned how to identify the different types of fishes by helping his older relatives during family fishing trips," said Reyes to interested parents and their children. "It takes years to learn about the fish and the equipment you need to catch them."

"I started this method of fishing at a young age and even made spear guns out of wood, rubber and copper tubes," said Borja to a news reporter. "Now, more than 30 years later, I compete internationally in the sport, and I dive recreationally to catch the fish I wants to eat."

The positive interaction between Guam's experienced fishermen and the kids created interest for fishing and appreciation for Guam's ocean resources. At the end of the expo, the demonstrators expressed their willingness to participate in more events to educate the youth and pass on their knowledge of fishing.



Council island coordinator Carl Dela Cruz and AP chair Felix Reyes share knowledge on fishing techniques.

Manumalo Baptist Academy Wins Fisheries Exhibit Contest



Top: First-place Manumalo Baptist Academy with (in back row) Council Executive Director Kitty Simonds and Council members Archie Soliai and Henry Sesapasara. **Below:** 1st-place poster by Manumalo Baptist Academy.

A competition for public and private high schools in American Samoa was conducted as part of the 171st meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. The theme of the competitions was "Fishing: Food. Life. Future." Each school could submit a single three-panel exhibit that explained the different fisheries in American Samoa and how these fisheries are important to the Territory, to their village, to their family or to them individually.

The exhibits were presented with a lot of school spirit and family support at the Fishers Forum on Oct. 18, 2017, at the Governor H. Rex Lee Auditorium (Fale Laumei) in Utulei.

Manumalo Baptist Academy was awarded the first-place prize, a check for \$600. Samoana High School took second-place and \$400, and the third-place prize of \$200 went to South Pacific Academy. All participating schools were recognized and provided with a \$100 check. Other participating schools included Faasao Marist High School, Fagaitua High School,

Fishing Tournament Donates Catch to Hope House

Kananafou High School, Leone High School, Nuuuli Vocational Technical High School, Pacific Horizons Schools and Tafuna High School.

The exhibits were judged by American Samoa Council members Christinna Lutu-Sanchez, Archie Soliai and Henry Sesapasara and Sam Rauch, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries and Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs at NOAA Fisheries.



Top: 2nd place Samoana High School.
Middle: 3rd place South Pacific Academy
Bottom: Sam Rauch, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries and Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs at NOAA Fisheries, judging the exhibit by Nuuuli Vocational Technical High School.

The Fishers Forum also featured exhibits from the American Samoa Alia Fishing Association, Pago Pago Marine Charters, Starkist, Tautai O Samoa Longline Association and nearly a dozen local and federal fisheries-related agencies. The Forum recognized the recent college graduates of the US Pacific Territories Fishery-Capacity Building Scholarship, Faasalafa Diana Kitiona and Valentine Vaeoso, as well as the participants of the Council's 2017 Marine Resources and Management Summer Course.

The Pago Pago Open Fishing Tournament donated 729.4 pounds of fresh local fish to Hope House, Diocese of Samoa. The tournament ran for a half-day out of Malaloa Marina in Pago Pago harbor on Oct. 20, 2017. The event was part of the 171st meeting of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council and was hosted by the Council and the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources. Other sponsors included SOPAC Inc. and Izuo Brothers.

Sixteen single-hull and alia vessels registered to participate in the free fishing tournament. Entrants targeted four pelagic species: tuna, billfish, masimasi (mahimahi) and pa'ala (wahoo). As no pa'ala was landed, awards were given for first- and second-place tuna as well as first-place billfish and masimasi and most landed fish.

Double Hooked and *Double Trouble* were each awarded a Shimano Tiagra 70 trolling reel for the winning 346.2-pound sa'ula-oso (blue marlin) and 26.4-pound asiasi (yellowfin tuna). Diawa T1000 electric reels were awarded to *Miami Vice* and *Harley Rose* for the winning 21-pound tagi (dogtooth tuna) and 24.2-pound masimasi, respectively. While *Harley Rose* landed a 24.0 asiasi, a no sweeping rule kept it from taking the 2nd-place tuna award. *Miracle* and *Miracle V* tied in the most landed fish category, with seven atu (skipjack tuna) each, and were awarded handheld GPS units and VHF radios. All participants received a Council gift bag and a voucher for 20 gallons of fuel.



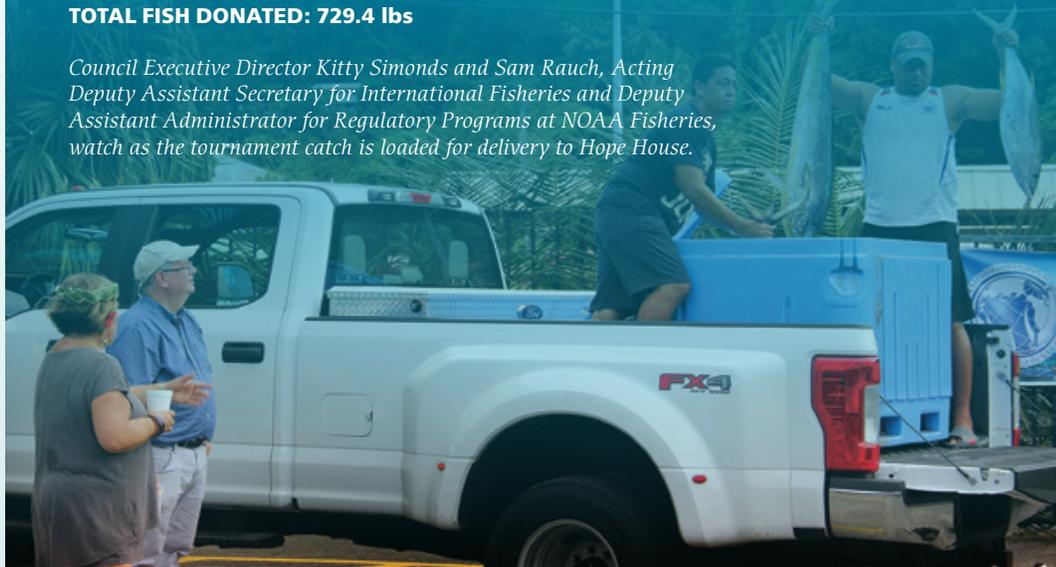
The winning 346.2-pound blue marlin was landed by Double Hooked.

List of Participants and Catch Donated to Hope House

Boat	Captain	Species	Weight (lbs)	Place
Aim High	Rep. Kitara Vaiau	Snake mackerel	Miscellaneous	
Apex Predator	Tim Jones	Tagi	20.0	
Double Hooked	Andy Wearing	Sa'ula-oso	346.2	1st billfish
Double Trouble	Chris Banse	Asiasi	26.4, 19.2	1st tuna
Harley Rose	Dustin Snow	Asiasi Masimasi	24.0 24.2	1st masimasi
Kiona	Abe Mulitalo	Atu	17.8	
Marooned	Brian Peck	Atu Sa'ulā-lele (sailfish)	Catch & release Catch & release	
Miami Vice	Maatulimanu Maea	Tagi	21.0	2nd tuna
Miracle	Telea Lava	Atu	20.6, 16.2, 18.2, 16.2 17.4, 15.2, 14.2	Tied most fish
Miracle V	Paepae Sii	Atu	14.2, 10.8, 16.8, 16.2 12.0, 12.2, 12.2	Tied most fish
Noelani	Tata Aga	Tagi	18.2	

TOTAL FISH DONATED: 729.4 lbs

Council Executive Director Kitty Simonds and Sam Rauch, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries and Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs at NOAA Fisheries, watch as the tournament catch is loaded for delivery to Hope House.



Council Family Updates

COUNCIL OFFICERS: At its 171st meeting in October, the Council appointed the following officers for 2018: **Edwin Ebisui Jr.**, chair; **Archie Soliai**, vice chair American Samoa; **John Gourley**, vice chair CNMI; **Michael Duenas**, vice chair Guam; and **Dean Sensui**, vice chair Hawai'i.



ADVISORY PANEL: New members include **Gil Kualii** (Hawai'i), **Allen Snow** (American Samoa) and **Joaquin "Jack" Torres** (CNMI alternate).



SOCIAL SCIENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE: New member includes **Michelle McGregor**.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: New members include **Dr. Alfredo De Torres**, coordinator, Natural Resources Management Program, Northern Marianas College, CNMI, and **Aufai Areta**, dean and

Top: Dr. Alfredo de Torres; Below: Aufai Areta.

director, Community and Natural Resources/Land Grant Programs, American Samoa Community College.



PAUL DALZELL, senior scientist and pelagic fisheries coordinator, will retire at the end of 2017 after more than 20 years of service at the Council. Prior to employment at the Council, Dalzell

served for seven years as an inshore fisheries scientist for the South Pacific Commission (now the Secretariat of the Pacific Community), three years as a consultant and project leader for the International Centre for Living Aquatic Resources Management, nine years as a fishery biologist for the Department of Primary Industry in Papua New Guinea and two years as a research assistant in the Zoology Department, University of Newcastle upon Tyne in England. Dalzell holds a bachelor's degree in zoology

with honors and a master of philosophy degree in biology and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society.



CHARLES KA'AI'AI, the Council's indigenous coordinator, will retire at the end of 2017. Ka'ai'ai joined the Council in 2000. During his tenure he has taken a key role in several

initiatives, including the Community Development Program, the Community Demonstration Projects Program, Marine Conservation Plans, workshops on the use of green sea turtles by indigenous people, management of coral reef ecosystems, community-based fisheries management, the 'Aha Moku system in Hawai'i and traditional lunar calendars. Prior to joining the Council, he served for three decades as a community development leader and activist for native rights in Hawai'i.

www.wpcouncil.org

New Outreach Materials



New brochures summarizing the **Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs)** for the Western Pacific Region are now available. The brochures include the management goals and objectives that were adopted by the Council in March 2016 as well as updated federal regulations for each FEP. For copies, please go to www.wpcouncil.org/education-and-outreach/educational-brochures/ or contact the Council at info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov or at (808) 522-8220.

Applications Being Accepted for the 2018-2019 Scholarship

Applications are being accepted until **Feb. 28, 2018**, for the 2018-2019 US Pacific Territories Fishery-Capacity Building Scholarship. Applicants should have a strong connection to American Samoa, Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; have completed their first two years of college; and be pursuing an undergraduate degree in marine science or fisheries science at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UHH) or Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) or a graduate degree in marine biology marine science, biology or tropical conservation biology and environmental science at the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology, HPU, UHH or University of Guam, respectively. For more information and the application package, please go to www.wpcouncil.org/2017/09/22/2018-2019-us-pacific-territories-fishery-capacity-building-scholarship-announcement/ or contact the Council at info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov or at (808) 522-8220.

Reflections on Fishery Management in the Western Pacific

Paul Dalzell, senior scientist and pelagic fisheries coordinator for the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, reflects on trends in fishery management since 1996 and takes a stab at a few of his pet peeves and vexations.

During my 20-plus years at the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, I have witnessed a lot of changes. An obvious one is the growth in computer and allied technologies. In my time, the power at our finger tips has increased a thousand fold, and that's not to include the massive growth in cell phones and the internet. When I came to the office in 1996, the server was an old Compaq computer and no one had cell phones. One cool individual in the office had a pager!

In other spheres, change has been slow to non-existent. The job at hand was and is fishery management, primarily through the auspices of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). Despite the attempt to regionalize federal fishery management, the National Marine Fisheries Service continues to operate as a Soviet-era, centralized, monolithic process. Problems in one region, e.g., overfishing, bycatch, habitat destruction etc., become conflated to the whole nation. In the Western Pacific Region, completion of an amendment to final approval and regulatory change takes on average two to three years. In that time, entire fisheries may collapse or the whole management issue may radically alter making any MSA amendment obsolete.

Moreover, the growth of an environmental activist industry means we now have to evaluate the simplest management actions, even those that have no resource impact (such as changing a permit condition), against a raft of MSA provisions and other applicable laws. Conservation advocacy is not new. The Sierra Club was founded by John Muir in 1892. One of its board members was David Star Jordan, Stanford University president and author of the landmark 1905 report "Aquatic Resources of the Hawaiian Islands." However, through the 20th century until the Exxon Valdez incident in Alaska in 1989, conservation advocacy tended to be a small scale, highly regional activity. The growth of environmental activism following this event was exponential, funded by huge philanthropic foundations that sought to influence government policy and limit or eliminate fishing through funding to eco-advocacy groups.



A key problem with environmental activists is they must constantly campaign. The campaign can never die. Thus groups seeking an end to fishing simply shift the goal posts as one issue fades or is addressed by fishery management. Campaigns to address large top predators in the marine ecosystem are supplanted by campaigns gravely concerned about small forage fish. The Hawai'i longline fishery exemplifies the relentless eco-advocacy attack on fisheries. Environmental advocacy organizations have not let up in the suits they've filed against this fishery since the late 1990s.

One of the greatest discoveries of environmental activists has been the US Antiquities Act, which gives Presidents virtually unlimited power to confiscate federal lands in the name of conservation. This statute was first employed in the marine environment by President George W. Bush to create the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) Marine National Monument (MNM). Bush also created additional MNMs in the US Pacific Remote Islands, the Mariana Archipelago and Rose Atoll in American Samoa. President Barack Obama seized on this statute to expand the monuments in the Pacific Remote Islands and NWHI. The political weakness of the Western Pacific (American Samoa, Guam and CNMI have only non-voting delegates in Congress) was never more exposed than when these two presidents sought blue legacies, aided and abetted by well-funded and well-managed environmental campaigns with their quislings in the federal government.

Our fisheries endure an ever increasing regulatory burden to assuage fishery impacts to the environment. We boast that the US has the best managed fisheries in the world. We do our best to minimize the consequences of fishing on fish stocks and the environment, but the tools are very crude: limit the amount of vessels fishing, how much they catch and where they can fish. It is an act of sublime hubris to imagine that we understand let alone control ecosystems. The discipline of ecology

is a manmade paradigm to try and sort through observations on the natural world. But, as our fisheries diminish and seafood demand is increasingly replaced by imports, this becomes a *reductio ad absurdum* ("argument to absurdity").

The broader concern is who in his/her right mind these days would want to become a fisherman? In the past 30 years, the perception of fishermen has shifted from being members of a noble and courageous profession to being eco-rapists and despoilers of the environment. Even in countries with strong fishing traditions, such as Japan, young men no longer want to follow their fathers into fishing. Even in countries with a labor surplus, such as China, laborers for the fishing industry are being imported, some from North Korea. Added to the lack of recruits into the industry is an ageing workforce. In a country built on immigration, the United States may see some relief with new migrants entering the fishery, but this is unlikely to fill the gap nationwide.

The real victims in the process are the fishermen who have been demonized in the same way that enemies are during times of war. No account is given to the fact that fishermen have families with their own hopes, dreams and aspirations or that the relentless environmental campaigns against our nation's fisheries have a serious human cost and dissuades others from entering fishing as a profession.

As a nation we import more than 90 percent of our seafood. A massive investment program is needed to make the US fishing industry attractive and upgrade fleets and facilities. The credit-driven fisheries expansions that followed enactment of the MSA in 1976 and the exclusion of foreign fishing in the US exclusive economic zone resulted in problems, such as overcapitalization, that needed to be addressed. Cheap government credit was anathematized in the 1990s. However, the pendulum has swung the other way. Now, the US fishing industry desperately needs an economic and political shot in the arm to ensure its survival and continuity in the 21st century. Otherwise, historic fishing ports like Gloucester, San Pedro and Honolulu will end up as fishing museums. America will become the custodians of the best managed natural aquariums, where tourists can queue to tour fishing boats once used by men and women engaged in the most dangerous occupation in the United States.



2018 Council Calendar

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- Check us out on YouTube (youtube.com/wpcouncil) and Vimeo (vimeo.com/wprfmc)

January

17-19
6th National Scientific and Statistical Committee, San Diego, Calif.

26
Archipelagic Plan Team, Honolulu

February

18-24
International Sea Turtle Symposium, Kobe, Japan

27-28
Interim Council Coordinating Committee, Washington, DC

March

5
Social Science Planning Committee, Honolulu

6-8
128th Scientific and Statistical Committee, Honolulu

12-16
6th International Marine Debris Conference, San Diego, Calif.

12-15
173rd Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, Honolulu

20-22
Pacific Scientific Review Group, La Jolla, Calif.

April

10-12
Marine Planning and Climate Change Committee, Honolulu (tentative)

10-13
False Killer Whale Take Reduction Team, Honolulu

19-20
Protected Species Advisory Committee, Honolulu

April 30 - May 2
Archipelagic Plan Team, Honolulu

May

3-4
Fisheries Data Collection and Research Committee's Technical Committee, Honolulu

15-17
Pelagic Plan Team, Honolulu

23-25
Councils Coordination Committee, Sitka, Alaska

RECIPE Spicy Ahi

Courtesy of Makani Christensen

Hawaiian tuna poke has become main-stream throughout the mainland. According to Atuna, the number of poke dishes on menus in the United States has grown by 30 percent in the last year and has increased by 90 percent in the last four years. The trend is expected to continue worldwide. Poke is already offered in European restaurants. If you have pieces of tuna that are too small for poke, consider this Spicy Ahi recipe below.

Ingredients

- Ahi, small pieces (bigeye or yellowfin tuna)
- Mayonnaise
- Wasabi (Japanese "horseradish")
- Tobiko (flying fish roe)
- Sriracha (type of hot sauce or chili sauce)
- Green onion (optional)



Method

Take small, fresh, raw ahi pieces that are too small for poke. Cut them super small. Add a little mayonnaise, depending on the amount of fish. Add the wasabi and/or Sriracha to taste. Add enough tobiko to get the look you want. Add green onion (optional) for color. Mix together, and enjoy!

Dry Fish Pacific Style

Got more fish than you can use or give away? Consider drying them to eat later.

Ingredients

- Fish
- Brine

Method

Butterfly the fish. Remove entrails. Wash clean. Marinate in brine solution for 1 to 2 hours.

Sun dry brined fish from one to two days depending on size, or cook the brined fish in an oven at 225° F for four to five hours.

Brine

This tip comes from Leo Ohai of Hawai'i.

To create the perfect brine, take a large bin and add water and enough salt to make an Irish potato float.

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