40 Years of Fishery Management in the Hawai‘i Archipelago

Before 1976 and the FCMA

Fisheries in Hawai‘i included foreign fleets that fish for a variety of species from seamount groundfish to black corals prior to 1976. Things changed with the introduction of the Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Now Magnuson-Stevens Act or MSA) in 1976. The MSA created 8 Regional Fishery Management Councils and charged them with developing fishery management plans for conservation, management and promotion of the nation’s fisheries.

1976 to 1989

Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for lobsters, precious corals, bottomfish and seamount groundfish, and pelagic developed.

Major management actions:
- 1983-Spiny Lobster FMP developed: Maximum size limits, take of egg bearing females, Permits Areas, Mandatory logbook and observers, Gear restrictions to minimize monk seal interactions.
- 1985-Change in minimum size from 50 to 55cm.
- 1986-Ban on lobster fishing within 20 nm of Laysan, all NWHI waters shallower than 10 fathoms, and all lagoons.
- 1987-Spawners required as a lobster trap, clipper lobsters regulated with minimum size and requirement to re-lease egg bearing females; name change to Crustaceans FMP.
- 1989-Pacific Coral FMP developed: Management Areas defined, Closed-Red Known Precious Coral Basal, 1989-Consilium species included in management unit.

Major management actions:
- 1986-Bottomfish and Seamount Grundfish FMP developed: Prickly destructive fishing techniques, explosives, poison, trap nets and shrimp von gillnets.
- Mortality based on commercial harvest of seamount groundfish at Hancock Seamounts.
- Developed NWHI permitting system.
- 1988-Wide EEEZ划分 into Ma‘alaea, Hilo/Kona Zones. Limited access system developed for: Hilo/Kona Zone with: transferable permits and landing requirements, & a restricted species gillnetting list required.
- 1987-Pelagic Fishes FMP developed: Initial Management Unit Specific includes: billfish, walrus, mahi mahi and dorado sharks.
- Drift gill nets prohibited and Bilingual zone fishing prohibited without a permit or in closed areas.

1990 to 1999

Tunas were included as fish under MSA management and the 1996 Sustainable Fisheries Act amended MSA to include essential fish habitat (EFH), bycatch and communities.

Major management actions:
- 1993-Overfishing definitions developed for: Blackfin, precious corals, crustaceans and pelagic fisheries.
- 1996-Identification of Essential Fish Habitat, bycatch, and fishing communities in the FMPs.
- Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish FMP.
- 1997-Protected Species Study Zone implemented 50 km around the central Hawaiian Islands.
- 1999-Seamount-groundfish moratorium at Hancock Seamount extended.
- 1999-Geographic species moratorium at Hancock Seamount extended; State of Hawai‘i implements regulations for the NWHI (NWHI, non-commercial bag limits, gear restrictions, vessel registries).
- 1999-Malama Zone defined entry program implemented (non-transferable permits, landing requirements, protected species workstation, mark, weigh length), Community Development Program implemented, for Malama Zone permits provided for indigenous Hawaiian fishermen.
- Aligator FMP.
- 1993-Federal permits and logbooks required for longline fishery, 70 km length protected; species around the NWHI implemented, framework for mandatory observer program put in place, mandatory WMS, for longline vessels in the EEZ implemented.

2000 to 2009

Concerns about protected species regulate the pelagic fishery; MSA is amended again; and fisheries close in the NWHI due to the proclamation of the first marine national monument in 2006.

Major management actions:
- 2000-President Clinton establishes the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve prohibiting commercial and recreational fishing within the Reserve Protection Areas.
- 2001-Coral Reef Ecosystem FMP developed and comes under MSA.
- 2002-Ctablet approved; MSA regulations superseding those inconsistent with the NWHI.
- 2005-Stark Fishing Prohibition Act passed by Congress and amends MSA prohibiting the retention or landing of shark fins with- out their associated carcasses.
- 2005-Hawaii fishing communities amendment approved.
- 2006-Malama National Marine Monument established by President Bush; commercial fishing in the NWHI within 30 nautical miles phased out in 5 years. MSA amended requiring Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) with accountability measures.
- Pelagic FMP.
- 2000-Length area closures north of the Hawaiian Islands are mandated with restrictions on each species. Longline fishery is prohibited; live elasmobranch and bycatch are re- stricted.
- 2004-2006, Hawaii longline fishing requirements and protection are significantly reduced; measures put in place including weighted line, kinked line, circle hooks (2002), circle hooks with monofilament (2004), set limits and 100 feet observer coverage in the shallow set fishery (2004), and side setting (2006).
- 2007-electronic logbook option implemented.

2010 to 2016

Fisheries operate under increased pressure from more and larger area closures, protected species mitigation measures, ecosystem considerations and climate change concerns.

Major management actions:
- 2010-Hawaii Fishery Ecosystem Plan approved; Pelagic fishery CPD stability requirements implemented; Hawaii (PEF) CPD stability requirements and procedures for reviewing and approving plans implemented; Hancock Seamount Ecosystem Management Area established.
- 2011-ACLs and Accountability Measures established.
- 2012-ALCs for Bottomfish, Crustaceans, Precious Corals and Coral Reef Fisheries implemented.
- 2012-Sierra Billfish and pelagic migrations implemented under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, including Southern Eastern Zone and “wedge” circle hooks.
- 2013-Gold Coral Maro re-extended.
- 2016-Bottomfish EFH revised, NWHI marine national monument expanded to the entire EEZ.

Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish FMP.
- 2015-EEZ bottomfish control date issued.
- 2017-Bottomfish fishery in the EEZ closed to address overfishing, while a plan is developed.
- 2016-A Total Allowable Catch limit is implemented along federal non-commercial permits and bag limits, a closed season for deep-7 bottomfish, and an established fishing year of September 1 to August 31.
- 2019-Deepwater shrimp added as a management unit.

NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

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