



Report of the Hawaii Archipelago FEP Advisory Panel Meeting

Thursday, June 20, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Council Office

Honolulu, Hawaii

1. Welcome and Introductions

Gil Kualii, Hawaii Advisory Panel (AP) Vice Chair, opened the Hawaii Archipelago Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) meeting and welcomed the participants. AP Members in attendance included: Ed Ebisui III, Nathan Abe, and Clay Tam. Missing was Kahng Dang, Carrie Johnston and alternate Michael Lee.

Also in attendance was: Joshua DeMello, Thomas Remington, Marlowe Sabater and Mark Mitsuyasu (Council Staff), Becky Walker (NMFS PIRO), Craig Severance (SSC Member) and Zachary Yamada.

2. Review of the last AP meeting and recommendations

Vice Chair and Council Staff provided a review of the last AP meeting in March 2019. He noted that the AP reviewed its AP Plan and had no recommendations.

3. 178th Council Meeting Action Items and Issues

a. Kona Crab Annual Catch Limits

Council staff provided a presentation on the proposed Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for Main Hawaiian Islands Kona crab. He reviewed the process and the results of the P* and SEEM* Working Group meetings, as well as the Allowable Biological Catch (ABC) specified by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). He noted that the Council will take all of this into account and set an ACL equal to or below the ABC. Council staff provided options to the AP for its consideration.

The AP discussed using the Kona crab stock assessment, along with the bottomfish assessment, as examples of how the Council has helped fishermen improve their data in order to provide more opportunity for fishing. They noted that there is still a need to improve the data for Kona crab and maybe it takes an extreme event (like hitting rock bottom) to force them to understand the need for the fisheries data. They said that there needs to be a way to change people's minds and Kona crab is such a small fishery that it would be a good place to start. *The AP discussed need to improve the uncertainty and start taking a bite out of it at a time-starting with trip reporting for Kona Crab and Uku.*

The AP discussed the alternatives going before the Council and noted that if all the landings (commercial plus non-commercial) were reported, the ACL would probably be exceeded. They noted that the ACT allows for the monthly reporting differences and that realistically the lag in reporting might not be that much. They also said that a lower ACT might be a good way to sell to the community that the uncertainty is hurting them. They recognized that the opening of the BRFA's and the removal of the no-take of females might have an impact and that there may be a need to have a shift in the closed season (through September). *The AP recommended Alternative 4 and further recommended that the no-take of females is removed by the State and the closed season is shifted through September. There would need to be a look at the impact of getting rid of the September catch by shifting the opening vs saving the berried females.*

b. Precious Corals Essential Fish Habitat Changes

Council Staff presented on potential changes to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Precious Corals Management Unit Species under the Hawaii Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). He provided a background on the review that was done that warranted the changes and presented options that the Council will consider.

The AP discussed the need for the Council to use the best available scientific information and the need for the Council to revise the EFH based on it. The AP didn't agree with broadening the EFH for precious corals or designating any areas as essential where precious corals "may" occur. The AP was comfortable with revising the existing beds and updating the narrative information but noted that the fishery wasn't very large so their concerns focused on the effects of designating new EFH areas on existing fisheries. *The AP agreed that Alternative 2 should be recommended to the Council.*

c. Annual SAFE Report Updates

Council staff reported on the 2019 Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report providing a highlight of the changes in the fishery and trends indicated by the fishery data. He also provided the annual report website: www.wpcouncildata.org as an easier way to look at the data, trends and download information.

4. Hawaii Reports

a. Community Report

Council staff reported that it held a Main Hawaiian Islands Bottomfish Working Group Meeting on April 26, 2019 with NMFS and the State of Hawaii to report on the status of the fishery and to review proposed rule changes by the State. At the meeting, the state provided its plan to open four of the Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas (BRFA), which will be treated separate from the changes to the reporting grids, which will also need to be done in order to accurately assess the impacts of the BRFA opening. Council staff reported that the state, at that meeting, said they were aiming for June 2019 to officially open the four BRFAs and the state announced at the recent SSC meeting that the four BRFAs will open on July 1, 2019.

Council contractor provided a report on the existing bottomfish fishery over the past few years.

b. Education Report

Council staff noted that a new staff person, Amy Vanderhay, was hired as the Council's Outreach and Education Coordinator and has started on June 1. She is currently working on the Council's newsletter, lunar calendars, and other outreach materials.

The Council has begun work on its 2020 lunar calendar which will feature fishermen, classrooms and organizations that use the calendar. The Council also continues to participate in different media, including the Go Fish! Radio program with Mike Buck on AM 690 (KHNR) as well as providing articles to both Hawaii Fishing News and Lawaia Magazine. Council staff was also recently interviewed on "Hawaii Matters" a radio show, regarding the upcoming Fishers Forum.

The Council's High School Summer Course is again running at Moanalua High School from June 13 to July 9. The Council is also assisting in the planning for Ocean Observation '19 conference (September 16-20), the International Pacific Marine Educators Network (July 8-11, 2020), and the National Marine Educators Association conference (July 14-16, 2020).

The AP discussed the need to send the Fishers Forum flyers to AP members earlier and possibly take out ads in the newspaper. They also discussed the idea of AP members manning a table at the fishers forum to field questions or put out surveys on issues they are discussing. This would be a good way to receive feedback on the AP's issues and could possibly give out a prize at the forum as well. They stressed the need for a hook to get the community interested in these issues and suggested that if they can get shoreline people interested through an issue they are concerned with, it would bring them to the table so that the Council's message could get out to them and others as well. AP members said there are opportunities for more outreach and education at the tournaments (Wee Guys has thousands of people, Tokunaga has 600 people, etc.) and they would be willing to work on hosting a meeting or forum during these times. The AP will work on developing a tournament schedule (with contacts, needs, etc.) in order to request support for a Council booth/forum/meeting at the tournaments and conduct Council outreach.

c. Island Report

Council staff noted that they just received the Island Report from the State of Hawaii and had yet to review it.

d. Legislative Report

Council staff noted that there were many bills that were introduced in the legislature but only one bill made it to the Governor's desk. That bill would prohibit the take and restrict interactions with Manta Ray. The original bill would have severely restricted interactions with sharks as well, but those parts were omitted from the final bill that was passed. The bill is still with the Governor for signature.

5. Report on Hawaii FEP Advisory Panel Plan

The Hawaii AP members reviewed their AP Plan and provided updates on their projects. Discussion centered on the need to make the AP Plan easier to digest and the AP suggested that they work on determining which issues are long-term and short-term, listing out the steps needed to accomplish the tasks and meet the goals. The AP agreed that they need to re-look at which things the team can accomplish and put efforts into what can be done first.

6. Island Fishery Issues & Activities

a. Issues

The Vice Chair provided an opportunity for each member to bring fishery issues to the attention of the group and provide discussion. The following issues were addressed:

- An AP member said that the AP needs to work on utilizing its network to work on issues and provided an example of FADs in the territories. He said the fishermen there were having problems with deploying FADs and noted that AP members here have expertise on building and deploying FADS that the territories could take advantage of. He also said the AP needs to work on prioritizing projects in the Hawaii AP plan to rank those that have greater service to the community;
- An AP member noted that protected species is a big problem in Hawaii (oceanic white tip sharks, spotted dolphin, false killer whales) and that a small take limit could close fisheries. He said members need to be vigilant on that and the data that is collected, noting that Federal fisheries have a take permit, but none under the state, so state fishermen could be in trouble and get shut down if they aren't paying attention to what is happening. He said that there is a push to get more data on interactions. Another AP member noted that professionals have a hard time identifying the "black fish" out at sea, so its important that fishermen don't make assumptions of what that species may be, especially when talking with researchers. Another AP member said

that even in NOAA, they have issues and conflicts and some people will do anything to protect the species and there are others that are willing to compromise the fishermen to do it.

- An AP member noted that fish are a food source and while farmers get subsidized, tax breaks, etc., fishermen who provide food don't get anything.
- Another AP member was concerned that the state of Hawaii spent the time to work with the community to manage the aquarium fishery then they let someone take it away under the guise of protection, but really because of popular opinion. He said the fishery is well managed but because animal rights activists were upset, they lost their fishery.
- AP members discussed the importance of data. They said that all fishermen are in the same boat and need to be collecting the right data. They need to do better to do something now before they can't do anything and agreed that the non-commercial troll fishery will be the hardest nut to crack because that's 95% of the fishing going on out there. One AP member noted that the biggest hurdle will be to get the information into the community.
- AP members discussed Green Sea Turtles (i.e. Honu) and a cultural take for Hawaii. An AP member noted that throw net fishermen are having problems because they can't throw without hitting a turtle, while others noted that the turtles are having an impact on the environment/habitat. AP members said that there is a bigger call for culling turtles but those calling for a cultural take varies from island to island. *The AP said that there is a need to reduce the amount of sea turtles and whether it's through a lottery or whatnot, it's important to perpetuate the Hawaiian culture and tradition and there should be an allowable take of honu. There is a potential for loss of knowledge from those folks that have the traditional information for use and harvest of sea turtles.*

b. Activities

Council staff noted the need to fill in the alternate AP member positions left vacant by the resignations of both Matt Yamamoto and Shyla Moon. He noted that a solicitation for members ended last month but there were only three applicants.

The AP discussed the need for fishery representation from all of the Hawaiian Islands. They continued to stress that the change in the AP caused a loss of this representation and most of the AP members are either from Oahu or Hawaii Island right now. They would like to have members from Maui and Kauai as well on the AP, or at least as alternates. The AP agreed that there needs to be a better recruitment from those islands and would like the opportunity to find those potential members. *The AP decided to request the Council hold off from any appointments to the AP alternates for Hawaii until there are applicants from Kauai and Maui in order to round off the AP with increased representation.*

7. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

8. Discussion and Recommendations

The Hawaii Advisory Panel made the following recommendations:

Regarding Precious Corals EFH:

- **The Hawaii AP recommended the Council select Alternative 2: Update Precious Coral EFH in the FEPs and revise the existing beds and add new beds for deep water precious corals.**

Regarding MHI Kona Crab ACLs:

- **The Hawaii AP recommended the Council select Alternative 4, using the 2018 benchmark assessment and P* level 10% lower than the value from the SEEM analysis (with an ACL of 30,802 lbs and an ACT of 28,324 lbs); Further the Hawaii AP recommends the Council request the State of Hawaii look at removing the prohibition on take of female Kona crab, changing the closed season to include September, and work towards trip reporting for both Kona crab and uku.**

Regarding Protected Species:

- **The Hawaii AP continues to recommend the Council push to provide a cultural take of sea turtles for the indigenous communities of the Western Pacific.**

Regarding Hawaii Fishery Issues:

- **The Hawaii AP requests the Council provide assistance to the AP to provide education and outreach on the Council and Fishery Issues to the community at the larger fishing tournaments in Hawaii.**

Regarding Administrative Matters:

- **The Hawaii AP requested the Council to extend the solicitation for Hawaii AP alternates in order to more accurately reflect the distribution of fishermen in Hawaii.**

9. Other Business

The Hawaii AP discussed internal logistics and agreed to meet informally to continue discussions on the AP plan. The Vice Chair will be contacting members on setting up informal calls, starting with Friday, July 19. He will also work with staff and AP members to look at hosting meetings on other islands during the tournaments and have meetings and public commenting on action items at the same time. There is a need to work more in the community and being more active and bringing the Council to the community instead of expecting the community to come to the Council.