



Report of the Guam-Mariana Archipelago FEP Advisory Panel Meeting

Saturday, May 30, 2020

9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Guam Advisory Panel meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. AP members in attendance included Jason Biggs, Jason Miller, James Borja, Ken Borja (Guam AP Vice Chair) and Judy Amesbury. Clay Tam, AP Chair, was also in attendance.

Also in attendance: Council Staff (Felix Reyes, Joshua DeMello, Mark Mitsuyasu, Zach Yamada, Mark Fitchett, and Marlowe Sabater) and Council Member Monique Amani.

Members of the public included: Eric Cruz, T. Todd Jones and Joe O'Malley (NMFS PIFSC), Thomas Remington, Tom Flores and Tino Aguon (Guam DAWR) and Javan Santos.

2. Review of Last AP Meeting and Recommendations

Council Staff provided a report of the Guam AP's last meeting and provided a status of their recommendations. Regarding bottomfish, the Council recommended an ACL for territory bottomfish in Guam at its 181st meeting similar to what the Guam AP recommended and is working on improving reporting with a data collection app. Regarding bigeye tuna quotas, the Council agreed with the AP's 2,000 mt limit, but recommended a transferrable limit of 1,500 mt with a cap of 3,000 mt total, rather than the AP's recommendation of 1,000 mt. The AP was concerned at that time that a 1,500 mt transferrable limit would prevent one territory from being able to participate in the future.

3. Council Issues

A. Guam Marine Conservation Plan

Council staff reported on the Guam Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) and noted the prioritized projects. He said the Council will be looking at this MCP for approval at its upcoming meeting so this is the last opportunity to provide input prior to the Council's action.

The Guam AP agreed with the projects and recommended the Council approve the MCP.

B. Pacific Remote Island Areas Marine Conservation Plan

Council staff presented on the PRIA Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) noting that the Council will be looking to approve the MCP at its 182nd meeting in June. He provided a background on the MCP and its process and noted the additions made by USFWS and the State of Hawaii. He reviewed the projects and asked for comments from the AP. There were no comments.

C. Mandatory Electronic Reporting

Council staff presented an overview of mandatory electronic reporting (ER) noting that the Council recommended January 1, 2021 to implement ER in the Hawaii longline fishery. The issue that remains is should ER be implemented in American Samoa. He went over how the ER

systems work and is being implemented, with a timeline on a full roll-out of ER to the Hawaii longline fishery. He noted that staff is working on implementation in American Samoa with the American Samoa AP. He noted license holders will have access to encrypted data and that they will input information using a tablet. The information gets downloaded to a server via satellite for access by the Council, NMFS or the end user.

D. 2019 Annual SAFE Reports

Remington provided a presentation on the 2019 Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Reports developed by the Council's Plan Team with help from local agencies and the science center. The Annual SAFE Reports provide a tool for monitoring the fisheries. He provided the trends in bottomfish and pelagic fisheries landings and revenue, as well as ocean and ecosystem variables and indicators. At an all-time high of 411 parts per million, the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the water continues to increase meaning that the water is becoming more acidic.

An AP member asked if the catch data for Guam came from expanded survey information. Remington replied that the creel survey data was used for the report. The AP member was concerned because some of the numbers like the total pelagic catch of 840,000 pounds was curious and added the skipjack tuna accounted for a little more than 50% of the catch.

E. Update on Data Reporting App and Launch Plans

Council staff presented on the development and launch of a data reporting app. He said that the current fishery data collection system does not accurately capture the fisheries. Fishermen want to share their data directly rather than waiting to be interviewed. He said with the overfished situation in Guam, this should be motivation enough for fishermen to want to report their catch. The solution that was devised to help address this problem and verify survey data was to create an electronic smartphone app. Electronic self-reporting would ideally be in tandem with a mandatory permitting system. He explained how the "Catch-it Log-it" app works and the benefits of having access to data in near real-time. He noted he is trying to make it to Guam to assist in the launch of the app this summer and will be working with the AP for a massive outreach campaign and to conduct a series of training workshops while on island.

An AP member asked about mandatory fields because fishermen may not want to provide location. Staff noted that some fields are mandatory like the catch and species information but location is not.

Another AP member asked about the data fields and about what the data can be used for. There were concerns that the data will be used to track fishermen who sell fish and not report it as a business transaction. Staff noted the app will not serve that purpose and is purely from a data collection standpoint. The information collected will be subject to strict confidentiality standards.

Staff noted that Covid-19 affected everyone and had there been a list of fishermen and a valuation of their fisheries, Guam might have been able to qualify for more funding than the \$1 million CARES Act relief funding they received.

A member of the public asked if the fishing app and the fish vendor would be double-counting information. Staff said that the app has a license number so the fish vendor would have to provide the fishermen's license number and the data would be linked and flag errors to avoid double-counting.

4. Guam Reports

Council staff reported that 6 of the government's 14 FADs are online right now and the Department of Agriculture is working with the community on the Guam CARES Act funding. An application form will be circulated to the fishing community soon with a focus on those that demonstrate at least 35% loss in fishing income. Vendors can certify that fishermen sold fish to them in the past to help fishermen provide proof of this loss. He reported that the current pandemic has also impacted events such as the cancellation of the DAWR Kids Derby and other tournaments are still deciding whether or not to hold their events.

5. Report on Guam-Mariana Archipelago FEP AP Plan Activities

AP members are working to deploy a FAD and have been getting it ready with a satellite buoy along with cleaning and painting it. AP member Jason Miller is the point of contact and hopes to get the buoy deployed by this summer. A vendor has been identified who is willing to help deploy the buoy at no cost.

The AP is also working on a Guam bottomfish tournament in September and the awards will be given out at the Fishers Forum on Guam during the Council's 183rd Meeting in the Mariana Archipelago. AP members were requested to support these events.

6. Island Fishery Issues and Activities

AP members reported fishing has been up and down with small runs of mañahak. DAWR opened a couple of the normally closed MPAs for the seasonal run of rabbitfish as well. They also noticed that more people are fishing during the pandemic. Issues remain with the boat washdown facility at the Agaña marina. It's broken again and the port has no plans to remove it and a faucet at the Agat marina remains accessible for washdowns.

The shark DNA project is ongoing although no one has turned in completed kits. Fishers have the option of mailing the kits directly to Hawaii or turning it in to Brent Tibbatts at DAWR who will collect the finished samples and mail them.

One AP member said UOG awarded \$20 million for the next five years through EPSCOR to dive into coral reef sustainability and bleaching. Part of the study is to try and figure out what is happening to corals while they are bleaching to see if there is anything medicinal chemists or others can do to reverse those trends and help speed up recovery or increase resiliency. He is also working with Carl Meyer to track shark depredation studies and to track fish moving into and out of Guam's MPAs. A third project is the mañahak candy project from the MCP-doing timed plankton tows during larval stages of rabbitfish and recruitment events-to identify if zooplankton at certain times of the year can help rabbitfish larvae survive year round. Another project is a community outreach event with traditional sailors with outrigger canoes to move into the pelagic world to push stone age fishing as a way to increase the conversation in sustainable fisheries and

open up the local minds to look at alternative ways of looking back at the culture to see what we should be doing in fisheries today.

7. Public Comment

No public comment.

8. Discussion and Recommendations

The Guam Advisory Panel recommended the following:

- **The Guam AP recommended the Council Members from Guam work with staff and fishermen to continue to push for Guam's participation in the BET Quota transfer with Hawaii Longline Association.**
- **The Guam AP recommended the Council approve the Guam MCP at its next meeting in June.**

9. Other Business

Council staff provided an update on 2021 BET specifications and options that the Council may look at for next year. He noted that the BET is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Staff added discussion on the 2021 US treaty and the specifications for the territory ACL. Multiple year specifications were help up due to Covid-19. On food safety, staff said Hawaii's largest internally produced food product is fisheries which will not only help Hawaii but will allow the territories should they decide to participate on getting funding for fishery development. Council action is considering recommending specifying catch limits for 2021 for the territories as well as total transfer limits.

The AP was concerned that Guam was not participating in the territorial quota. AP members said that the Council Members from Guam needs to continue pushing the Governor to participate in the quota because Guam is losing out on the funding. Staff noted the Hawaii AP supports Guam having a part of the catch as well and is encouraging the Guam AP to keep trying to get some of the money.

The AP discussed the CARES Act funding and how it must be fairly allocated to fishermen, especially with those who maintain fishery records. The application form and criteria has been created and will be released in the next few days.

Council staff also noted that the recent Executive Order by President Trump requests the Council to submit, within 180 days, a prioritized list of recommended actions to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and to increase production within sustainable fisheries, including a proposal for initiating each recommended action. Actions may include changes to regulations, orders, guidance documents, or other similar agency actions. The Council will be developing the list and providing it to the President within the time period.

Adjourned at 11:06 am.