



WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

183rd Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

September 15-17, 2020

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HAWAII ARCHIPELAGO COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES REPORT

1. Poseidon Fisheries Research LLC

Poseidon Fisheries Research (PFR) launched their Life History Fishing Tournament on the islands of O‘ahu and Maui. For the months of July and August, tournament species were A‘awa (Hawaiian Hogfish) and Mu (Bigeye Emperor) and participants were entered into a random drawing for a \$75 gift card from POP Fishing and Marine. The biggest fish of the month was awarded a \$75 gift card from West Marine and was featured on their Facebook page. For September and October, PFR selected Ulua Aukea (Giant Trevally) and ‘Ōmilu (Bluefin Trevally) with the largest ulua and ‘ōmilu receiving a cash prize of \$300 and \$250 respectively.

2. Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council recommendation towards EO 13921

When then-President Clinton signed the Executive Order creating the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve it also established a Reserve Advisory Council (RAC). The role of the RAC is to provide advice to the National Marine Sanctuary program to transition the Reserve to a National Marine Sanctuary. With the designation and overlay of a Marine National Monument, that action has been delayed indefinitely. The RAC continues to meet with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) as a non-voting member.

The RAC met on August 20, 2020 and discussed the Council’s response to the Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth Executive Order (EO 13921). The RAC drafted and passed a resolution in opposition to the Council’s request to President Trump to remove the fishing prohibitions in the marine national monuments. The Council’s representative noted the Council’s opposition to the resolution. The RAC’s letter will be sent to the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Superintendent, who in turn will provide to the National Ocean Service Administrator.

3. Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) was established in March 1996 in response to the 1992 Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary Act. The role of this council is to provide advice to the sanctuary superintendent on the sanctuary's operations and to serve as liaisons to constituents in the community. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) is a voting member of the SAC.

The SAC met on July 14 to discuss the Council's request to remove the fishing prohibitions in the Marine National Monuments under EO 13921. The SAC drafted and voted on a resolution in opposition to the Council's request. The Council was the lone No vote and the resolution was passed. The resolution will be provided to the HIHWNMS Superintendent to pass on to the National Ocean Service. The SAC also voted on and passed two other resolutions that supported the expansion of the Flower Gardens Bank NMS and a proposal for Chumash Heritage NMS. The Council's designee, after discussions with the other regional fishery management council staff, voted to abstain from both of the resolutions.

4. C&C of Honolulu COVID-19 Relief

O'ahu Mayor Kirk Caldwell announced a new "fish-to-dish" initiative to help Hawai'i's Fishing industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Caldwell noted that Hawai'i has an "incredible longline fishing industry and local fishermen who go out every day in grueling conditions, catch fish and bring it back to feed the residents and visitors of Hawai'i." In an effort to help, the mayor said the city would commit \$2.6 million in federal coronavirus funds to help the fishing industry get back on its feet. The "fish-to-dish" program will work in partnership with HLA, the United Fishing Agency and the Hawai'i Seafood Council to distribute fish to the community. In addition to the city's farm-to-car initiative and small business relief and recovery programs, the "fish-to-dish" program is intended to help the local economy.

In addition, in August 2020, Mayor Caldwell's office announced that local commercial fishermen are eligible for Honolulu County's Small business Relief and Recovery Fund. Launched in May, the City and County of Honolulu has provided over \$45 million in grants to 5,300 Oahu businesses and the offer is being extended to small business commercial fishermen who are residents of Oahu and hold Hawaii Commercial Marine Licenses. Those that qualify will be eligible for up to \$2,500 in grants for expenses such as license and renewal fees, bait and ice costs, fuel and oil, and wages paid to crew members.

5. Mo'omomi, Molokai CBSFA

The Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources held a public hearing on the proposed Mo'omomi Community-Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA) on August 19, 2020. the goal of the CBSFA is to establish a marine managed area to maintain sustainable long-term harvest of key subsistence fish stocks and to reaffirm traditional and customary native Hawaiian subsistence fishing practices. The proposed CBSFA extends from 'Ilio Point on the west to Nihoa flats in the east, from the shoreline out to approximately one mile. The proposed changes to the Hawai'i Administrative Rules would establish new bag limits, size limits, seasonal

closures, and/or gear restrictions for uku, kumu, kole, moi, ula, opihi and limu. This would prohibit night diving and SCUBA spearfishing; prohibit commercial fishing, with exceptions for bottom fishing for deep-7 bottom fish and trolling for all species; and establish special regulations to minimize disturbance of the marine environment in Kawa‘aloha Bay.

Testimonies were split between support and opposition. While there was large support in online testimonies, the state also took in-person testimonies at various locations around the islands and some of those places had large amounts of comments in opposition to the CBSFA. The Council had previously supported the CBSFA for Mo‘omomi.

6. Virtual Fishers Forum

The Council held a “Virtual Fishers Forum” on August 27, 2020, via Webex to support its ongoing efforts in reviewing the Hawaii small-boat fishery management regime. Guest presentations included pelagic fish tagging by Molly Lutcavage (PIFG), Hawaii biosampling by Cassie Pardee and John Wiley (Poseidon Fisheries Research), and small-boat socioeconomic surveys by Justin Hospital (NMFS PIFSC). Council staff provided presentations on a review of the Hawaii small-boat fishery and options for mandatory permitting and reporting in the Hawaii small-boat fishery.

The Forum drew over 90 participants who viewed the presentations online and were able to provide comments. Commenters discussed the need to keep the longline exclusion zone in place or perhaps even expand it. There were also comments from the public that stressed the need for knowing how many people were actually fishing. A few commenters also said that the Council needs to communicate with the fishermen more as their observations can lead to better management.

7. Proposed Ka‘ena Point National Heritage Area

Hawai‘i Representatives Ed Case and Tulsi Gabbard proposed bill HR 6603 on April 23, 2020, to make Ka‘ena Point a National Heritage Area (NHA). This bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating Ka‘ena Point as the Ka‘ena Point National Heritage Area. The feasibility study provides the US Congress and the National Park Service with the information needed to determine if this designation is suitable.

If the designation is approved, then NHA legislation requires the development of a management plan within three years of the designation. These plans include long-range policies, goals, strategies, and actions. The NPS provides assistance to Heritage Area entities on the development of management plans to ensure that they address all federal requirements. The Hawaii AP was concerned that there may be potential impacts to fisheries from a NHA designation at Kaena Point, O‘ahu and will report updates on this bill at the next council meeting.

8. Hawai‘i Outreach Activities

The Council has continued to conduct outreach efforts in Hawaii with the Go Fish! radio show with Mike Buck and the Hawaii Fishing News publication. Recent radio discussion topics included highlights from the June Council meetings and the importance of data collection, the main Hawaiian Islands uku stock assessment, small-boat electronic reporting and the virtual Fishers Forum on August 27. The Council contributed articles to the Hawaii Fishing News on the uku fishery in Hawaii, and precious corals and essential fish habitat, and virtual participation in Council Meetings.