



Report of the Hawaii Archipelago FEP Advisory Panel Meeting

Friday, November 20, 2020

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

Gil Kualii, Hawaii Advisory Panel (AP) vice Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed the members. AP members in attendance included: Clay Tam (AP Chair), Khang Dang, Basil Oshiro, Nathan Abe. Excused: Chad Pacheco

Also in attendance was Joshua DeMello, Zachary Yamada, Amy Vandehey and Asuka Ishizaki (Council Staff); Justin Hospital (NMFS PIFSC); Bryan Ishida (DAR); Thomas Remington; and Mark Ladao (Honolulu Star-Advertiser)

2. Review of Last AP Meeting and Recommendations

Council staff provided a report of the AP meeting held on Thursday, August 27, 2020. He reviewed the recommendations and provided a status, noting both the PRIA MCP and the Offshore Energy Plan were approved by the Council at its 183rd Meeting in September and can be found on the Council's website. The Council also endorsed the AP's recommendations for uku Annual Catch Limits and mandatory electronic reporting for the Hawaii longline fishery.

3. Council Issues

A. Options for Including Tori Lines in the Hawaii Longline Fishery Seabird Mitigation Measures

Council staff presented an options paper for including tori lines in the Hawaii Longline fishery seabird mitigation measures. The Council at its 184th meeting in December 2020 will consider options for inclusion of tori lines in the seabird mitigation measures in the Hawaii deep-set longline fishery, including specific considerations for allowing the use of tori lines without blue-dyed bait. Additionally, the Council will consider options to define the scope of the Council action, such as the applicability of the action to the shallow-set sector, modification of strategic offal discard requirement, conversion of requirements to mirror RFMO measures, and addressing cross-taxa impacts associated with weighted branchlines. The Advisory Panel was asked to provide input on the scope of the Council action.

One AP member said Option 5, regarding offal discards, is not an option for the fishery. He said that offal discards could be training sharks and other species and modifying their behavior. Another AP member agreed and said that the longline captains have seen more birds than ever and they wondered if the birds are associating the vessels with food. Council staff responded that the increase in birds may be attributed to changing oceanographic conditions that have expanded their range into the fishing areas. She said that even if the Hawaii fleet is able to get a handle on the increased bird interactions, there will still need to be international cooperation, but having the Hawaii fleet be the example will help to make that change internationally.

Another AP member said that the fleet is always conscious of its impact to protected species. If they don't take a preemptive look at the impacts, someone else will do it for them. Tori lines is a good option and it checks off all the boxes and should be included as something the fleet can use. He encouraged the Council to continue to push forward with the next set of trials. He suggested options 2 and 3 and said that if blue-dyed doesn't work or isn't significant with tori lines, it would be good to remove it but it could also be done through phasing out the purchasing of blue dye as well.

The AP Chair said that more effective testing and legitimacy of tori lines would phase out blue-dyed bait. Applying it across the board is one thing, but for those sectors where there isn't that much impact with birds anyway like shallow-setting, those are important to look at to make sure the impacts are reduced. He suggested looking at the other sectors and potentially phasing-in the recommendation across the fleet.

An AP member wondered what other countries are doing and what methods they are using. Council staff replied that other countries have less observer coverage so it is unknown if they are using any mitigation measures when there are no observers. The combinations of mitigation measures may not be as effective as what the US implemented and the data is just beginning to be shared from other countries. She said that the US is always out front with the mitigation measures which makes the fishery the gold star example in longline fisheries.

B. Considerations for Developing Reasonable and Prudent Measures and/or Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives for the Hawaii Longline Fishery

Council staff provided an update on the development of reasonable and prudent measures (RPMs) for the ongoing Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation for the Hawaii deep-set and American Samoa longline fisheries. The Council, at its 182nd Meeting in June 2020, developed a list of considerations for potential RPMs, which included a focus on improving handling practices to reduce post-hooking mortality. No new information on the consultations have been provided to the Council to inform development of potential RPMs. She said that further input from the Hawaii AP will be sought at a future meeting when that information is available.

An AP member said that there should be measures that give back to the industry instead of always hurting them. The longline industry is important to food production so there needs to be a way to provide something back instead of always taking away. Another AP member noted the difficulty in the fishery because it competes with imports and they can complain but in the end they have to be able to determine what they can stomach. He wished there was relief or greater enforcement and monitoring of international fleets but they can only control what they can control.

C. Comments on False Killer Whale Recovery Plans

Council staff presented on the Main Hawaiian Islands Insular False Killer Whale (FKW) draft Recovery Plan that is open for public comment by NOAA. Whenever these proposed rules are put out that may affect the fisheries, the Council seeks input from fishermen to include in its comments. She provided an overview of the FKW listing under the Endangered Species Act and a history of the recovery plan which is a roadmap to recovering the species. She gave information on the status review, recovery plan, and recovery implementation strategy provided

in the proposed rule and requested comments from the AP to be included in the Council's comments due to NOAA by December 15, 2020.

The vice Chair said that the Hawaii longline fleet is the smallest fleet but the most highly regulated. He asked what the rest of the world is doing to address this issue. Another AP member said that the finger always tends to point just at the fishermen. Closed areas and fishing affects our fishermen but not the international fleet so who knows what their impacts are. He made the point that the target number for a recovered population might not even be realistic as they don't know what the carrying capacity is for these species in Hawaii. He said that the FKW is feeding in Hawaii and may be benefitting from the fish they take off the longlines and that may be helping the population. He added that other species like tuna are seasonal because the food source isn't always available so maybe fishing is what keeps the FKW around rather than it being a seasonal thing.

D. Hawaii Fishery Management Plans

Council staff noted the AP's participation in the small-boat fishery management options for permitting and reporting since the beginning of the year. He said that while options were discussed by the AP at its last meeting, the Council, at its 183rd meeting discussed the options but decided to hold a meeting with the State of Hawaii and NMFS PIRO and PIFSC to address Hawaii fishery management instead. That meeting was held on October 27, 2020 where DAR, PIRO, PIFSC and the Council agreed to work together to address Hawaii fishery management issues, including the lack of non-commercial data. He reported that Council staff is continuing to work with all of those agencies to determine next steps and addressing issues.

4. Hawaii Reports

Council staff reported that the Council continues to participate in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council and the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council and noted their continued meetings during the pandemic. He also noted that both groups would be soliciting for fishing members and encouraged the AP to apply and participate. He also reported that the State of Hawaii is holding public scoping sessions on herbivore management and encouraged the AP to participate.

There was a lengthy discussion on herbivore management and AP members wanted to make sure that the objective of the management was not focused on prohibiting fishing. They encouraged fishermen to attend these meetings and provide support for continuing to allow fishing to occur and management to be based on science.

5. Report on Hawaii Archipelago FEP AP Plan Activities

The vice Chair reported that the AP's plan was hampered due to COVID-19 but he was continuing to work on issues like the community FAD regardless. He did note that there may be unexpected barriers due to new information and processes but wanted to be prepared in case there was an opportunity.

6. Fishery Issues and Activities

An AP member from the Big Island noted he was interviewed by PIFSC and the topic of Guam bottomfish came up and encouraged the AP and Council to push for a good bottomfish stock

assessment in that area. He said that the environment and the people that was developed through the MHI bottomfish stock assessment process was very good and the Guam bottomfish fishermen need to take advantage of the opportunity to work with the scientists that have the knowledge and background while they have a chance. He said they can't lose this opportunity to do the work now because the next generation may not have the people or the environment that we have in place now that could make a real difference.

The AP member from Maui said that COVID issues are still prevalent but was concerned about the bag and size limits for fishes in Maui being potentially exported to the rest of the state. He encouraged the rest of the AP to help Maui remove or revise those limits.

An Oahu AP member noted that Onaga was being sold for \$18-19 today at the auction. This seemed a bit early for the holiday prices on bottomfish so he was surprised. Another AP member from Oahu reported that the weather is bad right now which might explain the price and he hoped for winter weather windows to bottomfish for the holidays.

7. Public Comment

Bryan Ishida requested the Hawaii AP put the call out for fishermen to attend the herbivore scoping meeting and make their voice heard.

8. Discussion and Recommendations

The Hawaii AP made the following recommendations:

Regarding Tori Lines, the Hawaii AP:

- **Recommended Options 2 and 3 and encouraged the Council to complete the tests of blue dyed bait**

9. Other Business

Justin Hospital presented on two economic surveys that NMFS PIFSC is planning to conduct in 2021, including a Hawaii small-boat and Hawaii longline fishery survey. He said they are expecting to get approval for the surveys in January 2021 with the surveys to be conducted in spring 2021. He encouraged the AP to participate and to assist in getting the word out to the fishing community.

Council staff provided a presentation on potential US catch limits for north Pacific striped marlin. He provided an overview of the obligations the Council has to address striped marlin being overfished and experiencing overfishing in the western, central and north Pacific Ocean and noted the Council has one year to develop recommendations to address the relative impact of US fisheries. While the US fishery has contributed to 6% of the historical catch since 1975, it has a relatively larger proportion of the catch in the last five years as well as of all of the international longline fisheries. Options that the Council will consider will include catch and effort limits that may account for relative US impacts that will lead to ending overfishing. This may be done in phased reductions over the next ten years.