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Fact Sheet

Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Mau Zone Bottomfish Fishery

- The Mau Zone of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) encompasses federal waters surrounding Nihoa and Necker Islands, beginning at 161°20'W longitude and terminating at 165°W longitude (see map).
- In 1989 the Mau Zone became a federally permitted open-access area for bottomfish.
- In March 1997, a moratorium on issuance of new permits was established.
- About a dozen permits are currently issued for the area.
- On June 14, 1999, the Mau Zone became a permanent limited entry program, designed to ensure long-term productivity of bottomfish stocks by reducing the number of participants in the Mau Zone bottomfish fishery to 10 through attrition.
- By decreasing the number of bottomfish vessels allowed to operate in the Mau Zone, the limited entry program will further reduce the potential for interactions with monk seals in the area.
- Of the 10 limited entry permits, two are designated for a Community Development Program (CDP).
- Before the two CDP permits are issued, regulations and criteria for the program have to be established by the federal government and proposals for the permits have to be developed by eligible communities
- As part of the permitting process for the Mau Zone bottomfish fishery, captains have been and will continue to be required to attend a workshop designed to lessen the potential for negative interactions between threatened and endangered species and bottomfishing operations.
- A two-year National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) observer program in the early '90s concluded that the NWHI bottomfish fishery is not generally taking fish that are considered prey for monk seals.
- According to NMFS, there are no known mortalities of monk seals attributed to the NWHI bottomfish fishery.

A Council authorized by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976

1164 Bishop St • Suite 1405 • Honolulu • Hawaii • Telephone (808) 522-8220 • Fax (808) 522-8226

www.wpcouncil.org

Hawaiian Archipelago and Bottomfish Management Zones

