

Pacific Islands Fishery News

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SPRING 2007



MAGNIFICENT 7 BOTTOMFISH KAPU IN MAIN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

Starting the stroke after midnight on May 15, 2007, it became against the law to fish for, possess or sell seven commonly caught deep-water bottomfish species from the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI). Known as the "Deep 7" or the "Magnificent 7," they consist of onaga (red snapper), opakapaka (pink snapper), ehu (red snapper), hapuupuu (grouper), lehi (reddish snapper), gindai (flower snapper) and kalekale (Von Siebold's snapper). During the closure, which ends at 11:59 p.m. on Sept. 30, 2007, any of these fish caught incidentally in State or Federal waters (i.e., from 0 to 200 nautical miles from shore) around the MHI must be returned immediately to the ocean.

The new regulations do not prohibit possession or sale of Deep 7 bottomfish that were legally imported or legally caught in the federally permitted Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) bottomfish fishery or caught in the MHI before the closure. The NWHI bottomfish fishery is managed under a Federal limited-entry program and catch quotas, and the NWHI bottomfish populations are healthy. Therefore, the NWHI bottomfish fishery is not subject to these rules.

This seasonal closure reflects coordinated State-Federal regulations implemented to eliminate overfishing of these deep-water bottomfish in the MHI. These rules are being cooperatively enforced by the State of Hawaii Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office for Law Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard.

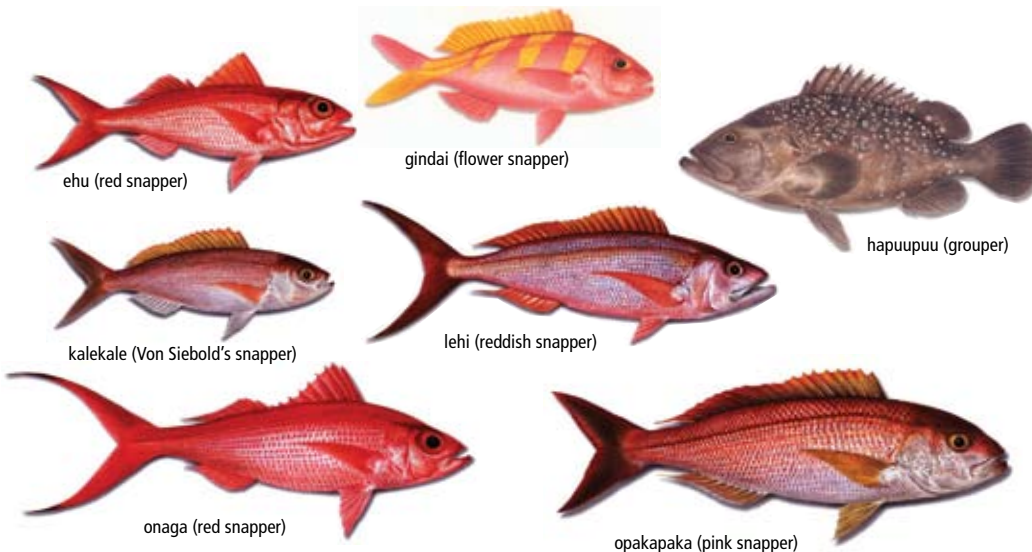
"This cooperative effort between the State and Federal governments is a bold, sweeping action," noted Edwin Ebisui, vice chair of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, during a multi-agency press conference that can viewed at the Council website at www.wpcouncil.org. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



NWHI bottomfish are available during the MHI closure.

IN THIS ISSUE

Magnificent 7 Bottomfish Kapu in Main Hawaiian Islands	1
President Signs Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization	2
Competition Offers Cash for Bycatch Solutions	2
Council Celebrates 30 Years	3
Hawaii Model Swordfish Fishery Opens for Third Season	3
How Responsible Are Hawaii Fisheries?	4
New Appointments	5
Control Date Set for Hawaii-Based Pelagic Charter Fishery	5
1st Annual Spearfishing Tournament in CNMI	5
Workshop Provides Ecosystem Management Options	6
Marine Educators in the Pacific Form International Network	7
Conferences Support Traditional Hawaii Resource Practices	7
Guam Fishermen's Co-Op Celebrates 30 Years of Service	8
More Provisions Approved to Conserve Pacific Tuna	8
Guam Celebrates Earth Week 2007	9
Update on Recent Council Actions	10
Communities Voice Concern about Loss of Traditional Practices	12
Illegal Fishing Vessels Seized in the US EEZ	13
Study Debunks Lobster Importance in Monk Seal Diet	13
Fishermen May Use Electronic Logbooks	14
Native Observer Reaches 1,000-Day Milestone	14
World's Tuna RFMOs Agree on Consensus Approach	15
Borja Wins 1st Annual Richard Shiroma Award	15
Council Calendar	16
Announcements	16





During the main Hawaiian Islands seasonal closure, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) will be the only source for Hawaii's signature local bottomfish valued by local consumers and visitors as well as restaurants and dealers outside of Hawaii. The NWHI fishery has healthy stocks and a stringent management regime and is scheduled to close in 2011 by the Presidential executive order that established the NWHI as a national monument.

MAGNIFICENT 7 BOTTOMFISH KAPU IN MAIN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The seasonal closure came on the heels of an overfishing determination by NMFS following two independent stock assessment studies by scientists from NMFS and the University of British Columbia. The Council is required by law to end overfishing.

The two studies analyzed Hawaii bottomfish catch data from 1948 to the present. They determined that catch per unit effort (or lbs of bottomfish caught per trip) in the MHI was about 40 to 50 percent

lower than it would be if the fishery were operating at maximum sustainable yield (MSY), or the long-term maximum annual catch. The amount of fishing mortality in terms of days fished was determined to be about twice the level of fishing effort that would maintain MSY. The scientific analyses indicate that fishing effort has to be reduced in the MHI by a minimum of 24 percent.

For more information, go to www.hawaiibottomfish.info.

COMPETITION OFFERS CASH FOR BYCATCH SOLUTIONS

The World Wildlife Fund's International Smart Gear Competition was created to inspire and reward practical, innovative fishing gear designs that reduce bycatch—the accidental catch and related deaths of sea turtles, birds, marine mammals, and other non-target species in fishing gear. The competition is open to anyone with an interest in this issue, including fishermen, professional gear manufacturers, teachers, students, engineers, scientists and backyard inventors. The grand prize is \$30,000. Two runner-up prizes of \$10,000 will also be awarded. The deadline for submissions is July 31, 2007. For more information, visit www.smartgear.org.

PRESIDENT SIGNS MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT REAUTHORIZATION

On Jan. 12, 2007, President George W. Bush signed the "Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006," as passed by Congress in December 2006. It is the first time the Magnuson-Stevens Act has been reauthorized in 10 years.

The reauthorized Act improves monitoring and compliance for high seas fisheries and fisheries governed by international fishery management agreements. It allows the United States to participate as a member of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and gives the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council a seat on it. Moreover, the Act ensures participation in the Commission and its subsidiary bodies by American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands to the same extent provided to the territories of other nations.

The reauthorized Act also emphasizes an ecosystem approach to fisheries management; promotes the use of local and traditional knowledge by Native Hawaiians, Pacific islanders and Alaskans to enhance science-based management of fishery resources in these regions; and provides for marine education and training programs and projects to promote marine-related professions among indigenous Pacific islands, Native Hawaiians and other under-represented groups.

It also establishes requirements for limited access privilege programs and for an angler registry for recreational fisheries, and it makes it unlawful to chum for sharks in EEZ waters surrounding Hawaii if harvest of sharks is not being conducted.

For more information, go to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/msa2007

30 years COUNCIL CELEBRATES

(top, l to r) Past and current Council chairs and original council members Edwin Ebisui, Frank Farm Jr., Jim Cook, Paul Stevenson, Peter Reid, Wadsworth Yee, Frank Goto, William Paty, Kitty Simonds (executive director), Frank McCoy, Judith Guthertz, Peter Fithian, Sean Martin, Roy Morioka.



On March 12, 2007, in Honolulu, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council celebrated its 30th anniversary and NOAA's 200th anniversary. Over the years, the Council has promoted environmentally responsible fishing by banning trawls, drift gillnets and other destructive fishing gears and by employing side-setting, circle hooks and other methods to reduce protected species interactions. The Council continues to work towards ecosystem-based management by developing Fishery Ecosystem Plans for the U.S. Pacific islands archipelagic and pelagic ecosystems. The Council also provides opportunities for native U.S. Pacific islanders to participate in fishing and promotes the use of traditional knowledge and practices for fishery management.



Pacific Islands Fishery News is published by the **Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council**
1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400
Honolulu, HI 96813.

All rights reserved. Unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Telephone: (808) 522-8220
Fax: (808) 522-8226
info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov
www.wpcouncil.org

CHAIR

Sean Martin (Hawaii)

VICE CHAIRS

Frank McCoy (American Samoa)

Manuel Duenas (Guam)

Ed Ebisui (Hawaii)

Ignacio Dela Cruz
(Northern Mariana Islands)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kitty M. Simonds

HAWAII MODEL SWORDFISH FISHERY OPENS FOR THIRD SEASON

On Jan. 1, 2007, the Hawaii-based pelagic longline fishery for swordfish reopened for the third year under a regulatory regime that has proven to dramatically reduce the number and severity of interactions with sea turtles. The requirements include the use of large circle hooks and fish bait—sea turtle mitigation measures developed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in collaboration with fishermen. Interactions are reduced compared to historical levels and involve external flipper or jaw hookings rather than ingested hooks that cannot be easily removed.

Additionally, under the regulatory regime, the Hawaii fishery is subject to an effort limit of just over 2,000 sets (about half of its historical average), 100 percent observer coverage and a closure for the year if it interacts with 17 loggerhead or 16 leatherback sea turtles. Under new

rules implemented in 2007, the fishery will close immediately if either of the turtle limits is reached. Previously, fishermen had a seven-day warning period between the time the hard cap was reached and when the fishery closed.

As of May 2, 2007, the fishery has had five interactions with leatherbacks and 14 interactions with loggerhead sea turtles. By comparison, in the 1994 to 1999 period, prior to the mandatory sea-turtle mitigation gear, the fishery had an annual average of 112 leatherback and 418 loggerhead interactions.

Many are calling the Hawaii fishery a model swordfish fishery. Industry, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and NMFS are working together to promote these responsible fishing methods to other fisheries around the world to further reduce fishery interactions with sea turtles.

The Honolulu fish auction has had consistent landings five days per week of swordfish during the 2007 season. Typical landings for vessels have been 25,000 lbs per trip, with some loads as high as 40,000 lbs. Prices have ranged as high as \$5.00/lb, and fish size has been consistent with previous years with average size at more than 150 lbs.



HOW RESPONSIBLE ARE HAWAII FISHERIES?

Sustainable seafood comes from responsible fisheries. But what makes a fishery responsible? Several non-governmental organizations issue consumer seafood guides, such as Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Guide and the Blue Ocean Institute online “Guide to Ocean Friendly Seafood,” to influence seafood consumer decisions. These assessments combine factors such as sustainable fishing, fish bycatch and incidental capture of protected species in a seafood product ranking system. However, the fisheries themselves and their management systems are not comprehensively evaluated.

What is needed is a comprehensive set of criteria for responsible fisheries. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has adopted the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries exactly for this purpose. The Code lists a set of standard norms and practices to help guide nations in developing and managing responsible and sustainable fisheries.

The Hawaii Seafood Project evaluated the Hawaii longline fisheries (tuna and swordfish) using the Code and its provisions as a score card. After the project team made its initial assessment, the agencies involved in the management system reviewed and commented to be certain that their particular roles were accurately described and scored. In all, 282 detailed and prescriptive Code provisions were scored dealing with fisheries management, fishing operations, integration with coastal area management, post harvest and trade practices and fisheries research.



The Hawaii longline fisheries scored 93 percent compliance with the Code. This confirms that Hawaii’s longline fisheries are among the most intensively and responsibly managed fisheries in the world based on an international standard. The high score is an acknowledgement of the exemplary integrated management system and fishery in Hawaii. It also gives recognition to the vital roles of the various organizations, agencies and the fishing industry in achieving and maintaining a model responsible fishery.

Based on feedback from the FAO experts, the Hawaii Seafood Project’s assessment of the Hawaii longline fisheries is the most complete case study in which the Code has been comprehensively applied to the assessment of a specific fishery.

Consumers can help support responsible well-managed fisheries by purchasing sustainable Hawaii seafood products. Consumer guides that seek to direct consumers towards sustainable seafood choices can help by applying comprehensive measures of responsible fisheries based on the provisions of the Code.

For more information on this report, contact John Kaneko of PacMar, Inc., team leader NOAA Hawaii Seafood Project at (808) 735-2602, fax (808) 734-2315 or johnkaneko@pacmarinc.com.

CONTROL DATE SET FOR HAWAII-BASED PELAGIC CHARTER FISHERY

New participants entering the Hawaii-based pelagic charter fishery after the March 16, 2007 "control date" have been put on notice that they are not guaranteed future participation in the fisheries. Participation may be limited if the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council recommends, and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) approves, a program that limits entry into the fishery, or other fishery management measures. The control date is intended to discourage speculative entry into fisheries. However, establishment of this control date does not commit the Council or NMFS to any particular management regime or criteria for entry into the Hawaii-based pelagic charter fishery.

The Council is concerned about expansion of the Hawaii-based pelagic

charter fishery and its potential impacts on billfish and other pelagic fish. In particular, this concern is focused on the Kona coast of the island of Hawaii, where there is a planned expansion of the Honokohau Harbor. A larger harbor could provide more berths for charter fishing vessels, with a resulting increase in fishing effort for pelagic fish. Blue marlin catch per unit effort from Kona-based pelagic charter fishing has already declined significantly over the past 20 years, and similar trends are also apparent for pelagic charter fishing data from the other Hawaiian Islands.

Comments on this action may be sent to AV55ControlCharter@noaa.gov until July 10, 2007. For more information, read the Federal Register, Vol. 72, No. 91, published on May 11, 2007, or contact Bob Harman at (808) 944-2234.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

On Jan. 31, 2007, **Madeleine Bordallo**, Guam delegate was selected to chair the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans, which has jurisdiction over such issues relating to fisheries management, wildlife resources, coastal barrier protection and coastal zone management, and marine sanctuaries. On her appointment, Bordallo said, "I look forward to working with Chairman Rahall and my colleagues in a bipartisan manner to advance and enact legislation that will promote sustainable fisheries, protect our country's threatened and endangered species, and improve the health of coastal marine ecosystems and the welfare of our coastal communities."

Dr. Molly Lutcavage, an associate professor of zoology, and director of the Large Pelagics Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, has joined the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). Lutcavage has been recognized for her cutting-edge research on bluefin tuna through a program she directs that involves charter and recreational fisherman.

Allan A. Smith, interim director of the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) as of May 30, 2007, has replaced Peter Young, former DLNR chair, as the Hawaii designee to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. Smith is a retired senior vice president of Grove Farm Company, in which capacity he managed 40,000 acres on Kauai and directed the company's land development, construction and rock quarrying and crushing businesses. He also administered the company's agro-forestry and diversified agricultural leases and oversaw its commercial and industrial properties activities. Prior to joining Grove Farm, Smith held various positions with AMFAC subsidiaries, including field and irrigation superintendent for Lihue Plantation Co. and mechanical operations manager for Kekaha Sugar Co. Smith holds a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from the University of Hawaii.

1ST ANNUAL SPEARFISHING TOURNAMENT IN CNMI



The participants of the 1st Annual Spearfishing Tournament organized by the Marianas Apnea Spearfishing Club (MASC) pose behind the Aquarius Beach Tower Hotel in Chalan Kanoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), minutes before the competition started on May 12, 2007. The one-day event attracted 26 fishermen who braved the shark infested waters off the western coast of Saipan. The fishermen, which included Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's

Advisory Panel member James Borja from Guam, were confined to fish outside the reef between the lighthouse in Garapan and Agingan Point at the southern tip of the island. The competition, from 8.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., ended with John Starmer (center in black hat) winning first place in the individual category for capturing the biggest fish, a 4.52 lb spade fish. According to Felix Sasamoto, MASC vice president, the inaugural tournament has set in motion the spirit to continue spearfishing competition forever.

WORKSHOP PROVIDES ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT POLICY OPTIONS



The third ecosystem workshop participants included (front row, l-r) Bob DaMate, David Fluharty, Sam Pooley, Mike Orbach, Marc Miller, Paul Dalzell, David Kirby; (2nd row, l-r) Vera Keala, Susan Hanna, Mike Hamnett, Janna Shackeroff, Svein Fougner, Judy Amesbury, Matt Orbach, John Gourley; (back row, l-r) John Kirkpatrick, Fini Aitaoto, Athline Clark, Leanne Fernandes, Ed Glazier, Arielle Levine, Stewart Allen and Craig Severance. **Not pictured** are Lee Anderson, Paul Bartram, Leimana DaMate, Colin Kippen, Minling Pan, John Parks, Frank Parrish, John Petterson, Jeffrey Polovina, John Sibert and Herman Tuiloosega.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council convened the last in its series of three fishery ecosystem planning workshops Jan. 3 to 5, 2007. Local, regional, national and international experts from a variety of relevant disciplines were involved in each of the workshops.

The series of workshops will assist the Council make the move from conventional species-based fisheries management to ecosystem-based fisheries. This process includes changing the Council's five existing Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for bottomfish, coral reef ecosystems, crustaceans, pelagics and precious coral fisheries into five Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs). Four of the FEPs address the insular fisheries (bottomfish, coral reef ecosystems, crustaceans and precious corals) of the Mariana Archipelago (Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands), Hawaii Archipelago (including Midway and Johnston Atolls), American Samoa Archipelago and the Pacific Remote Islands (Howland, Baker, Jarvis, Kingman Reef, Palmyra Atoll and Wake Island), respectively. The fifth FEP addresses pelagic resources and ecosystems.

The final workshop synthesized the results of the first two events and deliberated on policy options for the Council's fishery ecosystem planning process. The workshop participants reviewed the cross-jurisdictional and cross-cultural settings that are characteristic of the region and options for enhancing the ecosystem approach in each island group. They included human beings and their institutions in the definition of marine ecosystems, and they examined the needs and interests of indigenous fishing practitioners and other stakeholders in this context. The group also discussed needs and opportunities for fishery ecosystem research and long-term monitoring in the Western Pacific Region.

Participants generated a number of immediately practical results on the final day of the workshop, including the following:

- Options for meeting the Council's goal of empowering communities and working with local governments to develop place-based fishery management plans,
- Viable means for establishing effective long-term consultation

with communities through the Council's Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee (REAC) process,

- Approaches to documenting Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) through effective and culturally-sensitive collaboration with indigenous practitioners, and
- Possible venues for funding and human resources needed to enable long-term ecosystem research and monitoring across the region.

The final event was moderated by Dr. Michael Orbach of Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment and facilitated by Dr. John Kirkpatrick of Belt-Collins Hawaii Ltd. Workshop proceedings are being prepared by Dr. Ed Glazier of the Pacific Islands Office of Impact Assessment in Honolulu.

Persons interested in the workshop series and ecosystem-based fisheries management in the Pacific are encouraged to review proceedings from the previous workshops for additional context. These may be downloaded from the Council website at www.wpcouncil.org. A report on the final workshop will be available in June.

MARINE EDUCATORS IN THE PACIFIC FORM INTERNATIONAL NETWORK



The International Pacific Marine Educators Conference (IPMEC), which brought together marine educators from 18 countries Jan. 15 to 18, 2007, in Honolulu, has resulted in the establishment of a Pacific network of marine educators designed to ensure the health of the Pacific Ocean and the communities that depend upon it. The network aims to facilitate real action in marine education and highlight the need for ocean stewardship across the Pacific.

The conference was hosted and sponsored by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRFMC). It was originally to be held at and co-hosted by the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji but was relocated to Honolulu after the Dec. 5, 2006, coup in that country. Additional support for the conference came from NOAA Ocean Exploration Program, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, National Marine Educators Association, The Ocean Foundation and the World Ocean Network's Sustainable Actions Committee.

"The Pacific contains the largest and most diverse coral reef ecosystems, produces two-thirds of the world's tuna, extends over almost half of the globe, and has major impacts on the world's climate," notes Kitty M. Simonds, WPRFMC executive director, on the importance of this landmark occasion.

Nearly 100 marine educators participated in the conference both onsite and online during two days of presentations and one day of workshops. The conference featured nearly 60 on-site and real-time web-delivered presentations from areas spanning the East Coast of the United States to Papua New Guinea. All of these presentations as well as the opening and closing ceremonies are now available as web-based streaming video at the College of Exploration website <www.coexploration.org/ipmec/>.

Ben Mikaere Namakin, an environmental educator originally from Kiribati and currently at the Conservation Society for Pohnpei, was selected to chair the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee for the next IPMEC and to further establish the network. He replaces Sylvia Spalding, WPRFMC media and education specialist, who chaired the first committee. Offers to host the next conference came from Australia, Easter Island and Fiji.

Among the outcomes that have already resulted from the networking that began at IPMEC are the following:

- The National Marine Educators Association (NMEA) is considering creating a Traditional Knowledge Committee. Interest has already been expressed from indigenous

and traditional community representatives from the Northern Mariana Islands, Hawaii, the Pacific Northwest and the Atlantic northeast and central/southeast.

- Those involved in the Ocean Literacy (OL) movement are considering embellishing the OL Essential Principles and Concepts to include Pacific culture considerations.
- A proposal has been submitted for the creation of a Center for Ocean Science Education Excellence in Hawaii (HI COSEE). WPRFMC has been invited to join the HI COSEE advisory council.
- The NMEA OCEANIA chapter, which includes marine educators from throughout the U.S. flag and affiliated Pacific islands as well as other Pacific nations, is being strengthened with new activities, a new newsletter and growing membership outside of Hawaii.

Spalding, Namakin and Peter Tuddenham of the College of Exploration will deliver a presentation on IPMEC at the upcoming NMEA conference July 23-27, 2007, in Portland, Maine.

To join or learn more about IPMEC, visit www.ipmec.info or contact Sylvia Spalding at Sylvia.spalding@noaa.gov or Ben Namakin at bnamakin@yahoo.com.

CONFERENCES SUPPORT TRADITIONAL HAWAII RESOURCE PRACTICES

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council continued in late 2006 and early 2007 to facilitate a series of conferences aimed at increasing the participation of the Native Hawaiian community in the management of fisheries under the Council's authority. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), the Council has developed fishery ecosystem plans (FEPs) designed to incorporate the ecosystem-based approach to management of fisheries in federal waters surrounding Hawaii and other U.S. Pacific islands. *The Hoohanohano I Na Kupuna* (Honoring the Ancestors) conference series was designed to engage the Native Hawaiian community in the development and implementation of the Hawaii Archipelago FEP. In the reauthorized MSA, the Council was also directed to "develop means by which local and traditional knowledge

can enhance science-based management of fishery resources of the region."

Building on *Puwalu Ekahi: Lae ula* (Conference One: Practitioners), held in August 2006 (and reported in the Fall 2006 issue of *Pacific Islands Fishery News*), *Puwalu Elua: Ke Kumu Ike Hawaii* (Conference Two: Educators) Nov. 8-9, 2006, brought together traditional practitioners from the first *puwalu* with educators from Hawaii's public, private, charter and Hawaiian immersion schools. The participants agreed to develop a framework to integrate traditional knowledge into curricula for all. The conference proposed and finalized a culturally appropriate protocol to find and engage cultural resources for learning and sharing this knowledge.

Puwalu Ekolu: Lawena Aupuni (Conference Three: Policymakers), Dec. 19-20, 2006, brought together government policymakers,

legislators and government agencies with traditional practitioners to discuss the need to protect traditional practices. There was shared interest in the creation of a community cultural consultation process to inform the development of laws, regulations and policies relating to management of the natural resources of Hawaii and the protection of traditional practices.

Puwalu Eha: Kukulu Ka Upena, April 10-11, 2007, brought the practitioners together to report on their progress on the development of a community cultural consultation process, based on traditional *Aha Moku* (councils on each island). Island leaders, or *luna*, were identified as contact points for each island.

The Council will be organizing similar conferences to engage indigenous communities in the Mariana and American Samoa Archipelagos.

GUAM FISHERMEN'S CO-OP CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF SERVICE



Back row (left to right): Dale E. Alvarez, vice president; Peter B. Kautz, derby director; Edward R. Crain, communications director; Tony L.G. Waki, finance director; Michael P. Duenas, manager

Front row (left to right): Manuel P. Duenas II, president; Tommy R. McKinney, membership director; Carmelita M.C. Bernardo, administrative assistant; James C. Borja, Constitution and By Laws director

Manny Duenas, also serves as a vice chair of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

The Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association (GFCA), the oldest and perhaps the only remaining co-op in the Pacific, celebrated its 30th anniversary in February. Organized the summer of 1976, GFCA was incorporated in February 1977. The fishing organization grew from about a dozen initial members to nearly 300 members in 2000. Membership currently stands at about 200.

"The greatest challenge for the Co-op has been educating the community about seafood safety and quality," notes Co-op president Manuel Duenas. The Co-op adopted the federal Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Program in 1997. Therefore, stringent measures are placed on fishermen to ensure the highest quality product available to Co-op customers.

"The consumers have embraced this program as evidenced by their frequent return to the market," Duenas adds..

The Co-op's support for seafood quality extends beyond its doors. It sponsored the first seafood training program for both its own staff as well as representatives from various government agencies in Guam involved with public health concerns.

"Another factor behind the Co-op's success is its value-added program," Duenas says. Sashimi, Guam-style poke and keleguen are daily staples for many of its customers.

"However, the true value of the GFCA in the community is that we are a representative of the community," Duenas adds. "The goods and services in our operation benefit the community.

We make every attempt to buy Guam first. Our operation is almost entirely supported by local wholesalers (produce to store supplies), farmers, marine stores, tackle shops, grocery stores and many more; combined there are more than 50 business entities."

The Co-op has been a highly involved community organization. It has made donations to various medical fundraisers, homeless programs, youth programs, faith-based organizations and other community needs programs.

The Co-op is also involved in collaborative programs with such entities as the U.S. Coast Guard on safety at sea issues, the University of Guam Agricultural Extension Program (4-H) and the Guam Coastal Zone Management Program on environmental issues.

The Co-op sponsors the Annual Guam Marinas International Fishing Derby, which was once funded by a grant from the Guam Visitors Bureau but is now fully funded by the Co-op with sponsorships from the community. The annual derby is partnered with the Fisherman's Festival where prepared seafood samples are offered along with exhibits from various marine-related organizations to promote awareness of the environment and resource.

Today the Co-op continues to offer the fishermen a place they can call home. The 10-year master plan for the Co-op calls for a new Co-op building, a locally based longline fleet, the management of two local marinas and the promotion of pelagic fish such as mahimahi and tuna to replace the local desire for the limited supply reef fish.

MORE PROVISIONS APPROVED TO CONSERVE PACIFIC TUNA

FROM *FishNews*

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission convened the week of December 10, 2006, in Apia, Samoa. The most pressing issue was the need to respond to scientific advice that fishing effort on bigeye tuna should be reduced 25 percent and that on yellowfin tuna by 10 percent. After considerable debate, the Commission agreed to the following new measures to supplement action taken a year ago to limit fishing effort.

- Begin to address commercial fisheries other than longline and tropical purse seine, most of which are fisheries of Indonesia and the Philippines,
- Cap effort for purse seine fishing on the high seas,
- Call for the development of management plans for Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) on the high seas, and
- Encourage members to reduce FAD-related catches of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tuna, and calls for collaboration between members and with industry on FAD research and for the investigation of full retention and increased port state controls.

Although these measures fall far short of achieving the reductions in fishing mortality called for by the Science Committee, they do represent incremental steps in the right direction.

Another significant result of the meeting was agreement on a high seas boarding and inspection

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

GUAM CELEBRATES EARTH WEEK 2007

Guam celebrated Earth Day 2007 with the theme "Protect Guam's Watersheds." The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council helped in the celebration with a large exhibit that generated a lot of positive comments at the Island Pride Festival on April 21 at Ypao Beach Park. The Council exhibit "A Clean Healthy Ecosystem = Healthy Sustainable Fishing" was a partnership with Elaina Todd of Under Water World and Judy Amesbury of the Micronesian Archaeological Research Services.

Amesbury displayed shell items such as an octopus lure, *kulo* (trumpet), lobster and crab carapaces; cultural artifacts (food, tools, jewelry) connected with the Chamorro people; and pictures of positive activities that work towards sustainability. Among the artifacts were the bills of a blue marlin, sailfish and a swordfish that were caught in Guam's waters and which were carved, sharpened and used as spear tips. Laminated pictures of fish were "swimming" through this whole section of the exhibit to denote that people are a part of the marine ecosystem.

On the left side of the exhibit, posters denoting "threats" carried thought-provoking messages and graphic images to promote critical thinking and discussion. They sparked lively discussions among visitors who were

previously unaware that threats to our marine environment extended beyond issues of overfishing. Several teachers asked for the posters to use in their classrooms.

Another portion of the exhibit featured a pop-up display with a "Name the Threat" interactive game. The display was divided into four sections to accommodate four players at a time. Each player had to match names card to six pictures depicting different threats. The game was quite popular, and some visitors wanted to play all four sections, as each had unique pictures.

The center section of the exhibit featured a turtle table with a poster about the turtles found in Guam waters and the threats they encounter. This section also featured a "Species Identification" game, run by Todd and students from George Washington High School's Marine Mania. The game featured jars containing unique creatures found in Guam waters, such as a stonefish and nautilus. Participants had to match each creature to a description sheet they were given.

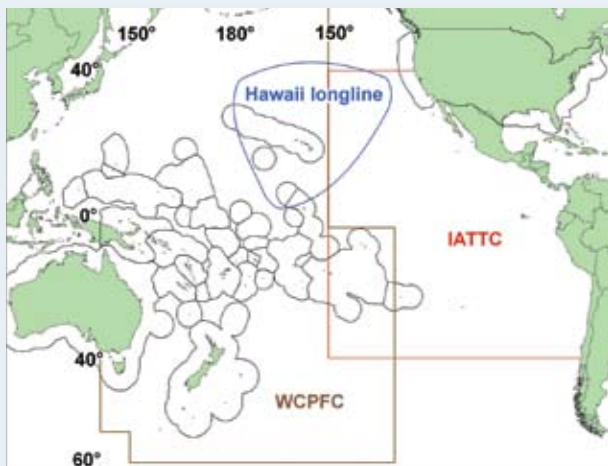
Earth Day attendees were given a passport that they had stamped at the booths with interactive games. The Council exhibit featured two games and was the only double stamp booth at the event.



Elaina Todd of Under Water World explains the Species Identification Game.



Crowd within the Council exhibit space. The group in the front is working on the Species Identification Game and those in the background are participating in the Name the Threat Game.



PACIFIC TUNA (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

scheme. This complicated issue, which has been a source of heated debate since the earliest stages of the negotiation of the Convention, was brought to a successful completion by arriving at an agreement on how China and Taiwan would participate in such a scheme. Other issues finally resolved regarded the use of force and the inclusion of sexual harassment of inspectors as a serious violation. The agreement represents the first post UN Fish Stock Agreement Boarding and Inspection scheme developed by any regional fishery management organization dealing with tunas.

The Hawaii longline fleet operates within waters of both the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC).

UPDATE ON RECENT COUNCIL ACTIONS



Left: Informational meeting on the MHI bottomfish closure. Middle: Basket-style longline gear. Right: Public participation at the 136th Council meeting.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council in late 2006 and early 2007 has focused on the management of the Hawaii bottomfish fisheries and pelagic, precious coral and crustacean fisheries in the US Western Pacific Region. Further discussion and decision-making on some of these topics is scheduled to take place at the upcoming 95th Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) meeting, June 12-14, 2007, and 138th Council meeting, June 19-22, 2007, in Honolulu.

BOTTOMFISH

NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS: At its 135th meeting in October 2006, the Council approved a suite of measures to address the impacts to fisheries by the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) Marine National Monument. Proclaimed by President George W. Bush on June 15, 2006, the monument builds upon the Protected Species Zone established by the Council almost two decades ago. The monument has recently been renamed as the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The monument regulations in the President's executive order ostensibly allowed eight federally permitted NWHI fishing vessels to continue operating for five years. However, the ban on anchoring and on commercial fishing in newly established ecological reserves, special management areas and special preservation areas made fishing impossible.

The Council recommended that the no anchoring provision for the bottomfish fishery as well as the fishing closures in the new special preservation areas and ecological reserves be eliminated. The Council also voted to reduce the geographic boundary of the NWHI bottomfish fishery limited access programs from 200 miles offshore to 50 miles offshore to be consistent with the outer boundary of the monument.

The Council noted that there is no rational basis for the area closures for the NWHI bottomfish fishery given current fishing regulations, which

include a total harvest cap of 350,000 lbs of bottomfish per year and a total prohibition of commercial fishing after June 15, 2011. The Council also agreed with the recommendations made by its Bottomfish Plan Team and by federal stock assessment scientists that closing these areas compromises the historical data stream from the fishery and renders useless several decades of NWHI bottomfish data.

On Jan. 2, 2007, the NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Administrator informed the Council that the recommendation to eliminate the ecological reserves and special preservation areas was in conflict with the monument proclamation and therefore could not be approved. However, according to the Regional Administrator, NMFS was seeking a conservation and management permit that would enable the NWHI bottomfish fishermen to anchor within the monument, with the exception of coral reef areas and protected areas. A draft environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed anchoring permit was released on May 22, 2007.

The Council is finalizing the recommended amendment to redefine the Mau and Hoomalu Zone bottomfish limited entry boundaries, prior to transmitting it to the Secretary of Commerce for approval.

MAIN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS: At its 137th meeting in March 2007, the Council agreed to a five-month seasonal closure from May 1 through Sept. 30, 2007, in federal and state waters for onaga, ehu, gindai, opakapaka, kalekale, lehi and hapuupuu (seven deepwater bottomfish species) harvested around the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI). See article on page 1 of this newsletter.

The Council also voted on a set of additional management measures, which will be analyzed by the Council staff for final Council consideration at the 138th Council meeting in June 2007. These additional measures would be implemented partially in 2007 and partially in 2008 and beyond.

The additional management measures proposed for implementation in 2007 include a total allowable catch (TAC) and refined reporting requirements for commercial MHI bottomfish fishermen; a seafood dealer licensing program to supplement the seafood dealer reporting program and modification of the dealer reporting program to allow for tracking bottomfish from origin/source to retailer; and a federal permit program and modified bag limits for non-commercial MHI bottomfish fishermen. Once the commercial fishery reaches the commercial TAC, both the commercial and non-commercial bottomfish fishery would be closed for the year.

The management measures proposed for implementation in 2008 and beyond include a federal recreational trip reporting program; a seasonal closure from May 1 through Aug. 31, 2008; and a revised TAC limit based on both commercial and recreational catch data with the fishing year to start on September 1 annually. Once the recreational bottomfish fishery is managed under a TAC, the recreational catch limits would be removed. A separate recreational TAC would be developed in the future based on information collected through the new recreational permit and reporting program.

The Council also recommended that the Council's bottomfish working group reconvene to facilitate coordination of the new bottomfish management measures and related scientific monitoring and enforcement activities and that the Council, State of Hawaii, NMFS and US Coast Guard (USCG) conduct a comprehensive education and outreach program in coordination with the implementation of the new permit and reporting programs, fishing restrictions and TAC.

Between March and June 2007, the bottomfish working group reconvened on several occasions. Participants included the Council, NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC), NMFS

UPDATE ON RECENT COUNCIL ACTIONS



MHI bottomfish informational meeting for enforcement agencies.

Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO), USCG, NMFS Office for Law Enforcement (OLE), Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources (HDAR), Hawaii Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement.

Staff from the Council, PIFSC, PIRO and HDAR also convened on several occasions during this period to develop and implement an outreach plan for the new bottomfish regulations. As a result of the group's activities, ads have been placed in the daily newspapers throughout the Hawaiian Islands, informational materials have been mailed to fishermen and seafood dealers, posters have been sent to seafood dealers and tackle shops, and informational workshops have been held for enforcement personnel, seafood dealers and the restaurant industry. Powerpoint presentations on the bottomfish industry and the science behind the new regulations, a bottomfish identification video and a brochure have been developed. These materials are available online at www.hawaiibottomfish.info.

The outreach group is now in the process of organizing informational meetings to be conducted throughout the Hawaiian Islands in late August and early September 2007. The meetings will provide fishermen, seafood dealers, restaurateurs and the general public an opportunity to learn about and comment on regulations to be implemented once the fishery reopens in October 2007.

PELAGICS

In October 2006, the Council recommended a mix of measures for pelagic longline fisheries and tuna conservation in the Western Pacific Region. These included the domestic implementation of tuna quotas stemming from Pacific Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) through the Council process. The Council also recommended that one of the tuna RFMOs, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) support effective conservation measures such as limited entry programs for longline fisheries across the WCPFC convention area as well as the development of pelagic fisheries in the US territories and collect information on the number of pieces of bigeye tuna caught by purse seine vessels. To date, the measures taken by the WCPFC to address overfishing of Pacific bigeye and Western and Central Pacific yellowfin tunas have been insufficient to greatly reduce fishing mortality. Finally, the Council recommend that the Department of State amend the South Pacific Tuna Treaty (SPTT) to include the participation of the US longliners in the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of parties to the treaty and that some of the funds from the treaty be distributed to the US territories for fisheries development. The number of US

longline vessels in the SPTT has dropped over 20 years from more than 50 to about 10 vessels, although the SPTT continues to be the main source of US aid funding to the Pacific Islands countries. Inclusion of US longline vessels in the SPTT may ensure the long-term continuity of this important international fishery treaty, while providing a means to fund fishery development in the US Pacific territories.

The Council also directed its staff to develop option papers for the longline fisheries in the Western Pacific Region that will review the closed areas in Guam, the limited entry program in American Samoa and the potential for the current prohibition on longline fishing in the main Hawaiian Islands buffer zones to include a Community Development Program (CDP) exemption. CDPs are authorized by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act as a means to provide indigenous communities access to federal fisheries.

At its 136th meeting in December 2006, the Council denied an 84-year-old indigenous Hawaiian fisherman's request for an exemption to the 25- to 75-nautical mile longline exclusion zone around the Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI). The Council's decision to deny the request came in large part from memory of conflicts between longline fishermen and small commercial, recreational and charter fishermen prior to the establishment of the current longline exclusion area. While the Council denied the exemption, it did direct its staff to develop CDPs for pelagic fisheries in the Western Pacific Region.

On May 16, 2007, NMFS approved the component of Amendment 14 of the Pelagics Fishery Management Plan (FMP) related to ending overfishing of Pacific bigeye and western and central Pacific yellowfin tuna. The other elements of the amendment—including the Council protocol for international participation, and permit and reporting requirements for commercial non-longline pelagic fishing in Hawaii—were disapproved.

At their June 2007 meetings, the SSC and Council will consider the following pelagic fisheries issues:

- a framework for managing the longline tuna fisheries in the Western Pacific Region through total allowable catches (TACs),
- a longline area closure in waters around Guam, and
- a proposed limited entry program for Hawaii-based pelagic vessels other than longline vessels (which already operate in a limited entry program).

PRECIOUS CORALS

The Council voted to forward the following recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce for approval:

- Reduce the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for the black coral fishery in the Auau Channel (between the islands of Maui and Lanai) by 25 percent (from 5,000 to 3,750 kg per year) and set this as the quota for the entire bed (both state and federal waters);
- Establish a control date of Dec. 21, 2006, for future management of the MHI black coral fishery; and
- Establish a five-year moratorium on the harvest of gold coral (both live and dead) in the Western Pacific Region. The Council also recommended that the moratorium on gold coral be accompanied by research to determine the growth, recruitment, mortality and deterioration rates for this species and that the ecosystem functions of dead gold coral be assessed and methods to distinguish harvested dead from harvested live gold coral be developed.

The Council also directed its staff to undertake the following:

- Work with State and Federal agencies to monitor and track main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) black coral harvest and prevent black coral landings from exceeding the revised MSY values for the Auau Channel fishery;
- Work with the State of Hawaii to create a black coral biological reference area in the Auau Channel where harvest would be banned except for collections related to permitted research activities; and
- Evaluate the creation of a limited access program for the MHI black coral fishery.

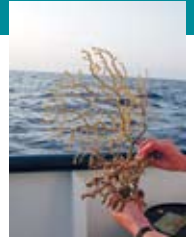
The evaluation of the proposed limited entry system for the Hawaii black coral fishery in the Auau Channel will be reviewed by the Precious Corals Plan Team, the SSC and the Council during their respective meetings in June 2007.

CRUSTACEANS



The Council has recommended that *Heterocarpus* spp. (deepwater shrimp) be added to the Crustaceans FMP for the Western

Pacific Region as a management unit species. Council staff is working on finalizing the amendment for transmission to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval.





The American Samoa REAC met April 4, 2007



COMMUNITIES VOICE CONCERN ABOUT LOSS OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

Local and federal government representatives met with their respective island communities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) on Feb. 6, on Guam on Feb. 9, in American Samoa on April 4 and in Hawaii on April 26, 2007, to discuss activities affecting the quality and condition of their ocean and coastal resources.

The forums were part of the inaugural meetings of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committees (REACs) for the Mariana, American Samoa and Hawaii Archipelagos, respectively. REAC members represent local and federal governments, businesses and non-governmental organizations with responsibility or interest in land-based and non-fishing activities that potentially affect the marine environment. The REACs provide a forum where participants and the community can coordinate management efforts and resources to address fishing and non-fishing related issues that affect ocean and coastal resources.

An overarching concern expressed by communities in all island areas is the deterioration of traditional and cultural practices.

Guam fisherman John Taitano said shoreline access is continually being restricted either by the government through marine preserves or by beach front hotels wanting exclusive use of the beaches for the tourism industry.

"More and more of the customary and traditional fishing grounds used by the elders and children are now off limits," Taitano noted. "If the elders cannot get access to the fishing areas, who is going to teach our children how to fish?"

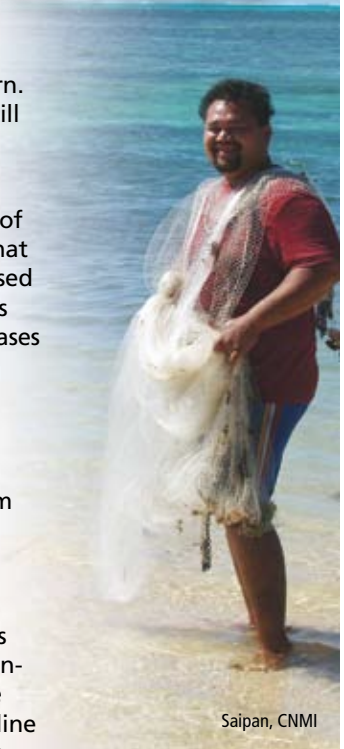
Genevive Cabrera, a Chamorro historian from the CNMI, said that prohibition of more and more traditional practices continues the annihilation of the Chamorro culture.

In Hawaii, the deterioration of traditional and cultural practices is also a major concern. However, there are areas where they are still being perpetuated.

Kanoho Helm, a 29-year-old *Kanaka Maoli* from Molokai, told Hawaii REAC members of a community-based project in Moomomi that sets management guidelines for fishing based on traditional knowledge that links seasons and moon phases to specific life history phases of fishes.

"This is not university science, but it does demonstrate that traditional knowledge still has a place today in marine resource management, at least for Moomomi," Helm said.

Other concerns expressed by island communities to the REAC include the lack of adequate enforcement of fishing laws as well as lax restrictions and controls over non-fishing activities that negatively impact the ocean environment, such as tourism, shoreline development, recreation overuse, pollution and runoff.



Saipan, CNMI



The Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee for the Hawaii Archipelago Fishery Ecosystem Plan convened April 26, 2007, in Honolulu.

ILLEGAL FISHING VESSELS SEIZED IN THE US EEZ

In September 2006, the US Coast Guard (USCG) seized the foreign fishing vessel, *Marshalls 201*, for illegally fishing inside the US Exclusive Economic Zone (0-200 nm) around Howland and Baker Islands, which are about 1,700 nm southwest of Honolulu. The *Marshalls 201* is a 210-foot purse seiner flagged to the Republic of Marshall Islands with a Taiwanese captain and Chinese and Micronesian crew. In the vessel's holds was 500 metric tons of skipjack tuna. The boarding team that took control of the vessel was from the USCG Cutter *Walnut*, a 225-foot buoy tender. The *Walnut* escorted the illegal fishing vessel to Guam. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (MSA), the U.S. Attorney of Guam is the lead authority for prosecution of illegal fishing activities in the U.S. Pacific Remote Islands Areas (Midway Atoll, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Palmyra Atoll, Jarvis, Howland, Baker, and Wake Islands). After the owners of the *Marshalls 201* posted a \$ 2,950,000 bond, the vessel was released. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is currently negotiating a settlement of the case which may result in a penalty of over \$2 million for the owners of the *Marshalls 201*.



Judith Fogarty from the National Marine Fisheries Service's Office of Law Enforcement arrived in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), in September 2006 to present a check totaling \$152,000 collected from the 100-foot Taiwanese longline fishing vessel *Chuan Fa Sheng* for illegally fishing in CNMI waters in March 2006.

In February 2007, the USCG identified two Ecuadorian purse vessels illegally fishing in the U.S. EEZ around Jarvis Island and Howland and Baker Islands. Although the vessels were spotted fishing at least 80 miles within the US EEZ around Jarvis, the USCG was unable to place a cutter on scene in time to board and seize control of them. While pursuing the vessels on the high seas, the USCG in coordination with the US Department of State made a request to the government of Ecuador to board the vessels; however, that request was

denied. The amount of catch illegally harvested by the Ecuadorian purse vessels within the US EEZ is unknown, but estimated to be significant. The NMFS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) has recently completed the case package that will be sent to the US Department of State, which will then initiate a formal diplomatic representation of the US position to the government of Ecuador. NMFS OLE has assessed a penalty of \$130,000 for each vessel, for a total of \$260,000.

STUDY DEBUNKS MYTH OF LOBSTER IMPORTANCE IN MONK SEAL DIET



The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands lobster fishery was closed in 2000 due to uncertainty in the model used to determine bank specific quotas for the fishery.



The long awaited Hawaiian monk seal fatty acid study, which began in 1998 and was designed to characterize the seal's diet, has been completed. The study included a long process to develop the diet estimation model, which involved diet trials and model validation exercises. There are many caveats associated with interpretation of the results.

Samples to run the study were obtained from 248 seal blubber samples, including 15 samples from the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI), and 3,310 prey samples. The outcome is the most comprehensive marine mammal fatty acid library in existence.

Preliminary results suggest that adult and juvenile diets are different, both within atolls and islands and across the geographic range of the archipelago. Moreover, each individual seal appeared to have its own diet, which was

found to change over time. The diets of MHI and Northwestern Hawaiian Islands seals were similar.

The study found that lobsters are not as important in the Hawaiian monk seal diet as has been argued by environmental activists who have blamed the decline of the Hawaiian monk seal population on the lobster fishery. This conclusion is similar to the findings in a study on monk seal scats published in *Marine Biology* in 1998, which found crustaceans comprised 5.7 percent of the Hawaiian monk seal diet and finfish comprised 78.6 percent.

The recent fatty acid study unexpectedly found that the seal diet included deepwater species (including snappers). The findings highlight new areas for future work, including the collection of additional deepwater prey species to further quantify diet composition.

FISHERMEN MAY USE ELECTRONIC LOGBOOKS

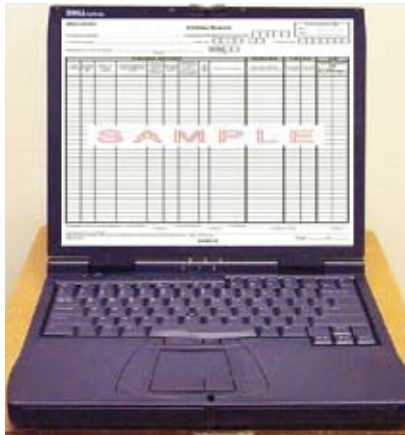


Photo: elogbook

As of May 17, 2007, participants in US domestic pelagics, crustaceans, bottomfish and seamount groundfish, precious corals and coral reef ecosystems fisheries of the Western Pacific Region will have the option of using NOAA-approved electronic logbook forms in lieu of paper logbooks. This action is intended to enhance the efficiency of fish catch and effort data reporting and recordkeeping by fishermen, reduce human error and improve data accuracy. It culminates work by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council that began in the late 1990s to implement electronic reporting.

Historically, federal permit holders regulated under the Council's Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) were required to maintain and submit paper logbook forms to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The time burden to comply with reporting and recordkeeping regulations is substantial. For example, some fishery participants in the Hawaii-based limited entry longline fishery estimate

they spend at least 45 minutes daily filling out paper logbook forms while on a fishing trip. In addition to a time burden, paper logbook forms (and the interpretation thereof) are subject to error due to bad handwriting and the recording of inaccurate information.

Using vessels in the Hawaii longline limited entry fishery, NMFS conducted a pilot project from 1998-2002 and found that electronic catch reporting improves data accuracy and results in significant time and money savings for NMFS as data entry tasks are reduced. Electronic reporting also has benefits in that catch information can be transmitted and compiled in a more quickly, which is important in fisheries now operating under fleet-wide quota limits. In March 2004, the Council took final action on the FMP regulatory amendment that would allow fishermen the option of providing catch data electronically on non-paper media (CD, 3.5" floppy, DVD, flash cards, memory sticks or other approved media) or transmitting data via e-mail or satellite systems. For more information on the electronic logbook option, go to www.wpcouncil.org.

NATIVE OBSERVER REACHES 1,000-DAY MILESTONE



Kahikina Kaawaloa



James Bennett

One of the earliest graduates of the Alu Like Native Fishery Observer Program (NFOP) logged 1,000 days at sea in 2006. James Bennett, a disabled Vietnam veteran, Cherokee and graduate of the 2002 NFOP class is a senior observer in the Hawaii region and the third most

senior observer in the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) nationwide. Kahikina Kaawaloa, from the island of Hawaii and the first woman observer to graduate from the program, had logged over 540 days at sea on 30 trips by the end of 2006. Kaawaloa led the way for five other women from Hawaii, Guam and American Samoa to graduate and join the observer work force.

Alu Like's NFOP provides Native peoples with 14 days of intensive training that gives them the background they need to successfully complete the NMFS Observer Certification course. Previously, acceptance into the NMFS course required a four-year college degree in the sciences. Alu Like's training program recruits students with traditional

knowledge of the ocean and a cultural commitment to stewardship of resources and provides them with training in modern biological practices and observation. NFOP observers have maintained a 60 percent retention rate, and the most senior longline observers in the Western Pacific Region longline and bottomfish fishery are NFOP graduates. The program is now receiving requests to provide training for Alaska Natives.

Alu Like, a Hawaii-based, not-for-profit charitable organization that specializes in providing employment, training and workforce development programs to Native populations. For more information, contact the Council's Indigenous Coordinator Charles Kaaiaai at charles.kaaiaai@noaa.gov.

WORLD'S TUNA RFMOs AGREE ON CONSENSUS APPROACH

The Government of Japan, with technical assistance from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), organized and hosted the first Joint Meeting of Tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) Jan. 22 to 26, 2007, in Kobe, Japan. Meeting participants included 54 members and cooperating non-members of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT), as well as representatives of the Secretariats of these five tuna RFMOs, one non-member, seven inter-governmental organizations and seven non-governmental organizations.

Dr. Sachiko Tsuji (FAO) presented on the status of tuna stocks and data availability of tuna resources. It was noted that most commercially important tuna stocks in the world are fully or over-exploited. Yuichiro Harada of the Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries (OPRT) and Lahsen Ababouch (FAO) presented on the status of the sashimi and canned tuna product markets, respectively. The demand for both sashimi and canned tuna continues to increase on world markets

Dr. Robin Allen (IATTC), Dr. Bill Hogarth (NMFS), Driss Meski, Dr. Jerry Scott and

Dr. Victor Restrepo (ICCAT), John Spencer and Alejandro Anganuzzi (IOTC), Andrew Wright (WCPFC), and Neil Hermes (CCSBT) presented on the organization of, conservation and management measures taken by, and challenges of their respective tuna RFMOs. The challenges commonly faced by those RFMOs include establishment of effective and comprehensive stock rebuilding programs, collection of reliable data for stock assessment, restriction of fishing capacity/fishing effort, implementation of effective MCS (monitoring, control and surveillance) measures, striking a balance between the needs of developed and developing states, and effective cooperation among the tuna RFMOs.

Other issues discussed included illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, trade and catch tracking programs, transshipments, data collection and reporting, and trade and catch tracking. Participants underlined the need for a stronger cooperation and coordination among tuna RFMOs on all of those issues. Unification of lists of authorized as well as IUU vessels, data sharing among tuna RFMOs, and establishment of harmonized regulation for transshipment including a global observer scheme for carrier vessels could be the first areas of coordination, following some technical discussions.

It was agreed that in general global fishing capacity for tunas is too high and should be reduced as appropriate,

while recognizing the aspiration of developing states, particularly small island developing states and territories, for the development of their fisheries industries. The need for tuna RFMOs to set sustainable catch and effort limits and address issues of allocation was discussed in conjunction with overcapacity. It was recognized that an improved, comprehensive and integrated MCS package of measures needs to be developed.

Participants agreed that the five tuna RFMOs should have their performance reviewed in accordance with a common methodology, based on common criteria to the extent possible. They also agreed on the need to implement an ecosystem-based and precautionary approach and the urgent need for measures to minimize bycatch (particularly of sea turtles, seabirds and sharks) as well as ways to increase assistance to developing countries.

Based on these discussions, a draft "Course of Actions for Tuna RFMOs" was developed. It describes key areas and challenges, cooperative measures to address the challenges and follow-up actions. The United States offered to host the technical working group (July 2007 in conjunction with the ICCAT inter-sessional meetings) and an ad-hoc Tuna RFMO Chairs' meeting (January or February 2008). The European Community offered to host the second Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs in 2009.

BORJA WINS 1ST ANNUAL RICHARD SHIROMA AWARD



James Borja, a Council Advisory Panel member from Guam and winner of the first annual Richard Shiroma Award, poses with a 55-lb marbled grouper he caught while free-diving at 50 feet.

James Borja of Guam was the proud and deserving winner of the first annual Richard Shiroma Award. This award is presented to a person for his or her exemplary dedication and performance as a member of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council or one of its advisory groups.

Borja was selected as the winner based on his years of outstanding service as a member of the Council's Advisory Panel.

The Council is now accepting nominations for the second annual Richard Shiroma Award. The award recognizes the service that the late Richard Shiroma dedicated to the Council as the chair of its Recreational Data Task Force and vice chair of its Advisory Panel.

Please address nominations to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96816 USA; fax (808) 522-8226; or email info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov. Please include your name and contact information, the name of the person being nominated, his or her contact information, and an explanation of the outstanding service this person has provided on behalf of the Council. Nominations must be postmarked, emailed or faxed by Sept. 15, 2007.

COUNCIL CALENDAR & ANNOUNCEMENTS 2007

JUNE

- 4 **Precious Coral Plan Team meeting**, Council office, Honolulu
- 5-7 **Capitol Hill Ocean Week**, Washington, DC
- 6 **NOAA Fish Fry**, Washington, DC
- 6 **Oceans Day 2007: The Impact of Invasive Species**, Hawaii Kai, Hawaii
- 7 **Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Awards Ceremony**, Washington, DC
- 7 **Envisioning the Future of Coastal Management**, University of Hawaii, Honolulu
- 12-14 **95th Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting**, Council office, Honolulu
- 18 **Social Science Committee Meeting**, Council office, Honolulu
- 19-22 **138th Council Meeting**, Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu
- 18-29 **Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission annual meeting**, Cancun, Mexico
- 24-27 **Pacific Congress on Marine Science and Technology annual conference**, Honolulu

- 25-7/13 **High School Summer Course on Marine Fisheries and Resources**, Moanalua High School, Honolulu

JULY

- 7 **Teachers Workshop on the Hawaii Seafood Industry**, Honolulu
- 9-10 **Depredation in the Indian Ocean Tuna Longline Fisheries Workshop**, Victoria, Seychelles
- 14-15 **23rd annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament**, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- 17-20 **Bellagio Sea Turtle Conservation Initiative**, Terengganu, Malaysia
- 23-27 **National Marine Educators Association conference**, Portland, Maine
- 25-27 **Hawaii Conservation Conference**, Honolulu

AUGUST

- 4 **Marianas Underwater Fishing Federation Spearfishing Challenge**, Hagatna, Guam
- 5 **Gupot Y Peskadot (Guam Fisherman's Festival)**, Hagatna, Guam
- 11-12 **Guam-Marianas International Fishing Derby**, Hagatna, Guam

- 6-10 **Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Research Plan for Ecological Risk Assessment Workshop**, Council office, Honolulu

- 13-24 **Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Science Committee meeting**, Honolulu
- 15-19 **Tri-national Fishers Exchange**, Honolulu
- 20-23 **US Coral Reef Task Force meeting, Pago Pago**, American Samoa
- 27-29 **Workshop for Coral Reef Managers**, Pago Pago, American Samoa

SEPTEMBER

- 11-13 **Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Northern Committee meeting**, Tokyo, Japan
- 11-14 **South Pacific Regional Environment Programme officials meeting**, Apia, Samoa
- 25-27 **96th Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting**, Council office, Honolulu
- 27-10/2 **Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission's Technical and Compliance Committee meeting**, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

Proceedings of the 4th International Billfish Symposium, Santa Catalina Island, California, Oct. 31 to Nov. 3, 2005, is now available as Vol. 70, Number 3 of the *Bulletin of Marine Science* (Nov. 2006), edited by Kim Holland et al. and published by the Rosenstiel School of Marine And Atmospheric Science, University of Miami. The symposium was made possible through the financial support of the Offfield Center for Billfish Studies, National Marine Fisheries Service, Billfish Foundation, Oceanic Conservation Organization and Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council. For more information, go to www.rsmas.miami.edu/bms.

20th Annual Pacific Congress on Marine Science and Technology, Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu, June 24 to 27, 2007. PACON 2007 will focus on the theme "Ocean Observing Systems and Marine Environment." The Fisheries Technology session will be held 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on June 26 and will feature presentations on side setting to avoid birds, sea turtle avoidance, TurtleWatch, electronic reporting software, automatic identification system-type technology, and certification of electronic reporting applications for use in the U.S. fisheries operating in the Western Pacific Region. Sean Martin, chair, and Kitty Simonds, executive director, of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council are the session's co-chairs. For more information, go to www.hawaii.edu/pacon.

High School Summer Course on Marine Fisheries and Resources, Moanalua High School, Honolulu, June 25 to July 13, 2007. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is again teaming up with Moanalua High School to sponsor this course full of guest lectures, class activities and field trips designed for students in the 10th to 12th grades. For more information or to register, contact Sylvia Spalding or Mark Mitsuyasu at 808 522-8220. Space is limited.

23rd Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament, July 14 and 15, 2007, 6 a.m. to 6 pm. Pre-registration, Inner Cove Marina, 5 to 6:30 p.m., July 13. Awards banquet on July 16. More than 50 boats with over 150 participants from Guam, Palau, Rota, Tinian and the hosting island are expected to participate in this two-day derby staged by the Saipan Fishermen's Association. Game fish categories include billfish, yellowfin tuna, wahoo, mahimahi and skipjack tuna. The SSFA will also have a cash prize for the first marlin weighing over 624.34 lbs and yellowfin tuna over 106 lbs. The Department of Public Safety's Boating Safety Unit will conduct boat safety inspections. Participants needing to have their boat(s) inspected during the week should contact Boating Safety at 664-9180 for appointment. Derby applications, rules and schedule of events are available at the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) office and Fishing Tackle in Susupe. For

more information, please contact Ed Diaz or Frank Tudela at ftudela@mymarianas.com or at the MVA at 664-3200.

Bellagio Sea Turtle Conservation Initiative, Terengganu, Malaysia, July 17-20, 2007. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and US National Marine Fisheries Service are co-sponsoring this international workshop to facilitate the development of a strategic plan to guide the prioritization and long-term financing of Pacific leatherback turtle conservation and recovery objectives. For more information and updates, contact Irene Kinan-Kelly at irene.kinan@noaa.gov

Fourth International Fishers Forum (IFF4), Puntarenas, Costa Rica, Nov. 12 to 15, 2007. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and the Instituto Costarricense de Pesca y Acuicultura (Costa Rica Fisheries and Aquaculture Institute, INCOPESCA), with assistance by the local WWF office, will host IFF4. The agenda will focus on solving the incidental capture of seabirds and sea turtles in longline fisheries as well as address bycatch management of sharks and cetaceans. It aims to motivate fishers and industry to find effective and practical ways to address these issues and promote responsible longline fisheries. For more information and updates, visit www.fishersforum.net or contact Irene Kinan-Kelly at irene.kinan@noaa.gov.