



Press Release

For Immediate Release – 31 October 2012

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Federal Fishery Managers Recommend 2013 Catch Limits for US Pacific Islands

HONOLULU (31 October 2012) The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council today and yesterday in Honolulu finalized its recommendations for the 2013 and, in some cases, 2014 annual catch limits (ACLs) for federally managed fisheries in the US Pacific Islands.

For American Samoa bottomfish, a two-year ACL of 101,000 lbs/year was recommended. This ACL corresponds to an overfishing risk level of 30 percent and 41 percent for 2013 and 2014, respectively. It is unlikely that the ACL will be exceeded because catches are currently low due to low fishery participation.

For bottomfish in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), two-year ACLs of 66,800 lbs/year and 228,000 lbs/year, respectively, were recommended. These ACLs correspond to an overfishing risk level of 28 percent and 40 percent in Guam and 28 percent and 39 percent in CNMI for 2013 and 2014, respectively. Based on historical catch data, the fishery would need to harvest nearly twice the recent average catch in Guam and seven times in CNMI for two consecutive years for overfishing to occur.

For the shallow- and mid-water bottomfish species in Hawaii, the Council recommended an ACL of 140,000 lbs/year for 2013, which corresponds to less than 26 percent risk of overfishing. The ACL for Hawaii deepwater bottomfish (known as the Deep 7) had been previously established at 325,000 lbs for the fishing year that began on Sept. 1, 2012, and runs through Aug. 31, 2013. The fishing year for all other ACLs corresponds to the calendar year (January 1 through December 31).

For the ACLs for the crustacean and precious corals, the Council voted to roll the 2012 ACLs to 2013 due to no new information being available to significantly recalculate the ACLs.

	America Samoa (lbs)	CNMI (lbs)	Guam (lbs)	Hawaii (lbs)
Deepwater Shrimp	80,000	275,570	48,488	250,773
Spiny Lobster	2,300	5,500	2,700	10,000
Slipper Lobster	30	60	20	280
Kona Crabs	3,200	6,300	1,900	27,600
Black Coral	790	2,10	700	`Au`au Channel 5,512
Precious coral exploratory area	2,205	2,205	2,205	2,205
Pink/Bamboo Coral at Established and Conditional Beds				Makapu`u Bed 2,205/551 180 Fathom Bank 489/123 Brooks Bank 979/245 Ka`ena Point Bed 148/37 Ke`ahole Bed 148/37

The Council also made the following recommendations regarding Hawaii bottomfish research.

- That the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) provide the results of its first three years of bottom camera (bot-cam) research to the Council and its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) at their February/March 2013 meetings and that a final report on the analysis of the full five years of bot-cam data be presented at their June 2013 meetings;

—more—

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- That the NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) convene a meeting of all agencies and institutions conducting Hawaii bottomfish research to coordinate ongoing cooperative research and fishery independent research efforts; and
- That PIFSC expand its multidisciplinary surveys to include sampling within the State's bottomfish restricted fishing areas (BRFAs) to help determine their efficacy.

During the public comment period, full-time commercial bottom fisherman Layne Nakagawa of Maui pleaded to the State of Hawaii DLNR to open up the BRFAs for the benefit of the bottomfish fishermen of Oahu and the Big Island. Other bottomfish fishermen asked the US Coast Guard and the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement whether they enforce the BRFAs. Officials from these agencies responded that they do not because there are no federal regulations for the BRFAs, but they will notify the State if they see a violation occurring. The BRFAs are partially set in federal waters.

The Council will address pelagic and international fisheries this afternoon and reconvene at the Laniakea YWCA-Fuller Hall, 1040 Richards St., tomorrow, Nov. 1, at 8:30 a.m. to address administrative matters, other business and election of officers.

For more information or the Council meeting agenda, visit www.wpcouncil.org or contact the Council at info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov; phone (808) 522-8220, or fax (808) 522-8226. The Council was established by Congress to manage fisheries in offshore waters around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, CNMI and the US Pacific remote island areas. Recommendations made by the Council are transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval.

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council: Appointees by the Secretary of Commerce from nominees selected by American Samoa, CNMI, Guam and Hawaii governors:, Michael Duenas, Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association (Guam); Richard Seman, education and outreach specialist (CNMI); William Sword, recreational fisherman/civil engineer/manager (American Samoa) (Vice Chair); Edwin Ebisui, attorney (Hawaii); Mike Goto, United Fishing Agency (Hawaii); Julie Leialoha, environmentalist (Hawaii); and F. McGrew Rice, charter fisherman (Hawaii). Designated state officials: Arnold Palacios, CNMI Department of Land & Natural Resources (Vice Chair); Mariquita Taitague, Guam Department of Agriculture (Vice Chair); William Aila, Hawaii Department of Land & Natural Resources (Interim Chair); and Ray Tulafono, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources. Designated federal officials: Michael Tosatto, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office; Don Palawski, U.S. Fish and Wildlife; RAdm Charles Ray, U.S. Coast Guard 14th District; and Bill Gibbons-Fly, US Department of State.