Pacific Islands Fishery News *Newsletter of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council / Summer 2015*

ISSN 2151-2329 (PRINT) ISSN 2151-2337 (ONLINE)

Annual Catch Limits for Hawai'i Bottomfish Specified

At its 163rd meeting, June 16 to 18, 2015, in Honolulu, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council recommended a three-year annual catch limit (ACL) specification for seven prized species of deep-water bottomfish (known locally as the Deep 7) caught in waters around the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI). The recommended ACLs are 326,000 pounds for fishing year 2015-16, 318,000 pounds for fishing year 2016-17 and 306,000 pounds for fishing year 2017-18. The fishing year runs from Sept. 1 to Aug. 31 of the following year. The recommendations will be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council made an annual catch limit recommendation of 326,000 pounds for year-one (2015–16), 318,000 pounds for year-two (2016–17) and 306,000 pounds for year-three (2017–18) for Hawai'i's Deep 7 bottomfish.

The proposed ACLs were based on a 2011 stock assessment model by Brodziak et al. with additional data to year 2013.

The specification process included a May 6, 2015, workshop to re-evaluate the scientific uncertainty around the model as recently highlighted by the Center of Independent Expert review of the 2015 stock assessment update. The working group rescored the four dimensions of scientific uncertainty: 1) assessment information, 2) uncertainty characterization, 3) stock status and 4) productivity and susceptibility. The working group recommended a risk of overfishing level of 39 percent and an acceptable biological catch (ABC) of 306,000 pounds, a reduction of 40,000 from the previous ABC.

At its 119th meeting, June 9 to 11, 2015, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) applied a phased-in approach, which lowers at a rate of 50 percent per fishing year to minimize the potential impact of the new catch level. The SSC adopted a slow-up fast-down approach similar to what the International Pacific Halibut Commission had used in the management of the halibut fishery.

The Council accepted the SSC's recommended ABCs and set the ACLs equal to the ABCs for all three years as the social, economic, ecological and management uncertainties had not significantly changed over the past three years. For the accountability measures, the fishery will continue to be monitored in near-real-time through the State of Hawai'i's trip level fishermen reports. The Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center will project the current year's catch to determine the fishery closure date in order to prevent the ACLs from being exceeded. In the case that the ACL is exceeded, the amount of overage will be deducted from the next year's quota. While the ACL is based on commercial catch records, the closure would apply to both commercial and noncommercial vessels in both federal and state waters. Currently, the MHI Deep 7 bottomfish stock is not overfished and is not experiencing overfishing.

Hawai'i Longline Fishery for Bigeye Tuna Restricted throughout the Pacific

On July 28, 2015, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced that US pelagic longline vessels fishing in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) for bigeye tuna will no longer be able to retain and land bigeye tuna from Aug. 5, 2015, through the end of the year. This is because the fishery has reached the US longline bigeye catch limit of 3,502 metric tons (mt) (less the overage of 52 mt, per the international management measures), established by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in 2014. The pelagic longline fleet based in Hawai'i accounts for most of the US longline catch of bigeye tuna in the WCPO.

The United States is a member of the WCPFC, which is an international fisheries organization consisting of more than 30 countries charged with managing tuna and other highly migratory fish stocks in the WCPO. The WCPO is the world's largest tuna fishery, driven by the industrial purse-seine fleets targeting skipjack and yellowfin, with recent annual catches estimated at around 3,000,000 mt.

Longline catch limits are among a suite of measures adopted by the WCPFC for the conservation and management of WCPO bigeye. Overexploitation of bigeye has developed over the past 30 years with increasing catches of juveniles by purse-seine vessels, on top of the catch of adults by longliners. Purse-seine vessels incidentally catch small bigeye while fishing on drifting fish aggregation devices (FADs) when targeting skipjack and yellowfin for canned markets. Longline vessels target adult bigeye for sashimi markets.

No bigeye catch limits are required of the various fleets of tuna purse-seine vessels in the WCPO, which collectively catch more bigeye in total than the longline fleets. Instead, the WCPFC international measures focus on the efforts of the purse seine fleets and tend to limit fishing days. Over the past decade, longline fleets throughout the WCPO have reduced their bigeye catches consistent with WCPFC conservation and management measures. Purse-seine bigeye catches, however, continue to rise, reaching record levels in 2013 of 82,000 mt (of a non-target species) versus a longline catch in the same year of about 63,000 mt.

The WCPFC bigeye conservation and management measure for the purse-seine fisheries established a seasonal FAD closure, among other FAD limits, which has not been very effective in terms of reducing the impact of purse-seine catches on bigeye overfishing.

(Continued on page 2)

ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES IN THE US PACIFIC ISLANDS

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council was established by Congress in 1976 to manage marine resources and maintain opportunities for sustainable domestic fishing in the US exclusive economic zone waters and high seas around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the eight US Pacific remote island areas.

Combined Bigeye Catch Limit Recommended

At its 163rd meeting in June, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council recommended that the United States develop a national Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) bigeye tuna catch limit that would apply to both US longline and purse-seine fisheries and consider including the catch limits provided for the US Pacific Territories. This recommendation reflects growing Council concern about how the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) manages the bigeye stock between purse-seine and longline vessels operating within the WCPFC area. The WCPFC's first Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) applicable to the United States for bigeye tuna was in 2008, which placed catch limits on longline vessels, except for the US Territories, but not on US purse-seine vessels.

The Council believes that the WCPFC's approach in setting bigeye limits only for longliners is inequitable and does not reflect existing conditions, where recent evidence shows that purse seiners are now the largest source of bigeye mortality and have the greatest impact on the stock. Further, an increasing volume of research shows that high latitude longline fisheries, such as the Hawai'i fleet, have minimal impact on the bigeye stock. Most fishing mortality occurs to the bigeye stock within the equatorial latitudes (10°N–10°S), which tagging studies show has little connection to elements of the stock in higher latitudes, e.g. 20°N and above.

Unlike longliners, purse-seine vessels are not limited in the volume of bigeye they can catch in the WCPO. Purse-seine catch is incidental to fishing on fish aggregating devices (FADs) when targeting skipjack and yellowfin tuna. Bigeye is not a good product to put in cans and is not preferred by canneries. Currently, there are no incentives to reduce the bigeye catch by purse-seine vessels; an existing seasonal FAD closure simply delays bigeye fishing mortality. A new paradigm is needed that supports a fishery that targets bigeye tuna for Hawai'i consumption and that provides incentives for the incidental purse-seine bigeye tuna catch to be reduced. In doing so, the WCPFC conservation objectives could be met while responsibly managing US tuna fisheries in the Pacific.

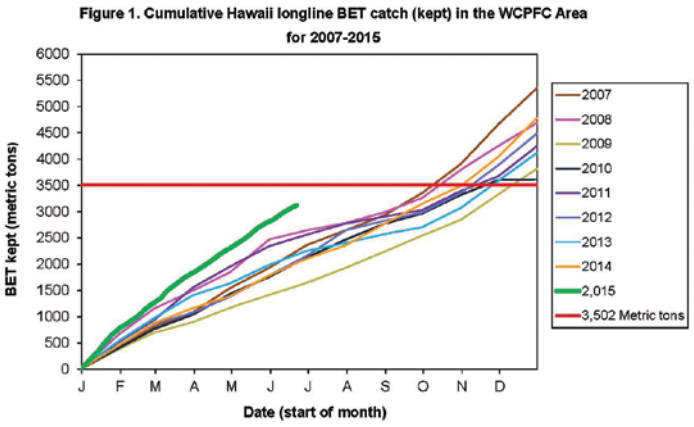


Figure 1 illustrates the cumulative Hawai'i longline bigeye tuna catch kept in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries WCPFC area for 2007 through 2015 (14 July 2015 edition). Source: Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center Internal Report IR-15-022

Purse-seine fisheries are managed only by their fishing effort (i.e., vessel days) and how much they can fish on the high seas and around FADs. The US purse-seine fleet typically catches between 6,000 and 10,000 metric tons (mt) of bigeye annually. The Council recommendation calls for the development of a single catch limit that would comprise the US longline limit (3,345 mt in 2017) and the 6,000 mt of longline bigeye for the three US Pacific Territories (who are not limited under the WCPFC's CMMs but are under an agency regulation), as well as a figure based on the catch history of the US purse-seine fleet.

For example, using an average of 6,000 to 10,000 mt for the purse seiners, plus the WCPFC limit for the US longline and the US Pacific Territories regulatory limit, produces a total of 15,345 to 19,535 mt of bigeye. With a single combined limit, the US longline and purse-seine fisheries would each have to ensure that this combined bigeye limit is not exceeded each year. This approach would provide better control of the bigeye stock and better achieve the WCPFC's objective of ending WCPO bigeye overfishing. The Council believes that the National Marine Fisheries Service should explore whether a combined US longline, US Pacific Territories and purse-seine bigeye catch limit would provide more effective management of the fisheries while helping to ensure sustainability by reducing impacts on juvenile bigeye captured in association with FADS.

Hawai'i Longline *(Continued from page 1)*

The WCPO purse-seine bigeye catch is at high record levels, whereas the WCPO longline catch of bigeye is reduced by 30 percent, near 1996 levels. The US purse-seine fleet has advocated for a total seasonal closure of the purse-seine fishery as an alternative to the seasonal FAD closure, as there is concern that not all fleets are complying with, and not all WCPFC members enforcing, the current FAD closure to the same extent as the United States. However, the WCPFC has failed to adopt this proposal by the US delegation. In the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO), east of 150 degree West longitude, there is 62-day purse-seine total closure that has been implemented under a different international tuna management regime, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, which has been effective in conserving bigeye.

Although the catch of bigeye in the WCPO will be restricted, US longline vessels will be able to fish for bigeye in the EPO. However, US longline vessels in the EPO are subject to a 500 mt bigeye limit if the vessels are greater than 24 meters (m) in length. Approximately, 23 percent of the Hawai'i longline fleet is over 24 m. On Aug. 5, NMFS announced that US longline vessels over 24 m in length operating in the EPO will be prohibited from retaining bigeye tuna from Aug. 12, 2015, through the end of the year.

"As I've said repeatedly," responded Sean Martin, president of the Hawaii Longline Association, on hearing the announcement of the longline restrictions by the international fishery management organizations, "it's not about conservation, it's about allocation."

The effects of these regulatory restrictions will reduce the supply of Hawai'i longline-caught bigeye tuna to the Honolulu fish auction. From an economic perspective, each Hawai'i longline vessel can be likened to a "mom and pop store" or similar small business. Not being able to fish is like a store closing for the same amount of time, with disastrous effects on livelihoods.

There is a ray of light on the horizon for Hawai'i consumers who prefer locally caught bigeye tuna. Under federal regulations recommended by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, the US Participating Territories to the WCPFC, which include Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, have the ability to allocate their bigeye resource to certain US vessels permitted under the Council's management plans, which includes the Hawai'i longline fishery.

The Council has managed the Hawai'i longline fleet for the past 30 years, and it continues to be a well-managed, highly monitored, environmentally responsible fishery. The Hawai'i fleet targets bigeye at high latitudes, well outside the tropical and equatorial zones, where 90 percent of bigeye fishing mortality occurs. Scientific research has shown that the operational area of the Hawai'i fleet has very little impact on bigeye stock status.

The potential interruption in bigeye catch and the climate of uncertainty will have a negative impact on the seafood industry in Hawai'i, especially those dealers and consumers who prize US caught bigeye above foreign imports. There is an increasing demand by consumers for retailers to supply not only locally caught fish but also to know that the supply is from an environmentally responsible fishery, like the Hawai'i longline fleet.

Guam's Indigenous Fishing Rights Act of 2008 Yet to be Implemented

Traditional Talayero fishermen net fishing at Tumon Bay, Guam.

Public Law 29-127, the Indigenous Fishing Rights Act, became law in December 2008. The Indigenous Fishing Rights Act intended to establish special fishing rights for Chamorro people that would redress past discriminatory practices and a long history of colonization, which included efforts to direct the Chamorro community away from its oceanic culture and toward agricultural pursuits. The legislature cited concern that without these fishing rights traditional fishing and harvest practices would be lost. Almost seven years later, the Indigenous Fishing Rights Act has yet to be implemented and the Attorney General of Guam, who in 2009 was supportive of the Act, has now withdrawn support and declared the bill unimplementable. The latest status hearing on the proposed rules and regulations relative to the implementation of the Act revealed the Department of Agriculture has not touched the 21st draft version of the proposed procedures since 2012.

The Department of Agriculture was tasked with implementing the law within 90 days in September 2009, using Guam's Administrative Adjudication Act (AAA). The AAA established a procedure to authorize appropriate government agencies to establish rules and regulations, similar to Hawai'i's Chapter 91 process. Another task of the Department of Agriculture was to create an Indigenous Resource Task Force to advise the Department in the drafting of rules and regulations for the indigenous harvest of fish and natural resources. The task force was to consist of four men, four women and two youths of indigenous descent, all members representing indigenous grassroots organizations. Formation of the Task Force, being hampered by both overly prescriptive criteria for membership and lack of criteria for performance, has also yet to be actualized.

In 2009, acting director of the Department of Agriculture Joe Torres proposed a plan to create a new task force, divide the task force into three interest groups and begin the drafting of rules and regulations. After a series of community workshops held in villages of Inarajan, Barrigada and Tamuning that established the importance of traditional indigenous rights in Pacific island communities, Mr. Torres developed a process utilizing the knowledge of local fishermen to allow the traditional harvest of mañahak (juvenile rabbitfish), i'e' (juvenile jacks) and tiao (juvenile goatfish) during a two-week window. This program, though not a policy, is still in place and preserves an important traditional practice in Guam.

Since then, communities have expressed interest in expanding the traditional harvest program at the discretion of the village mayors. In response, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council shared information about Hawai'i's Aha Moku initiative and community-based fishery management plans (CBFMPs). The CBFMP process could accomplish the intent of the Guam Indigenous Fishing Rights Act by seeking exemptions to existing rules and regulations that prevent traditional practices at traditional locations as was done with the traditional harvest program.

A CBFMP has already been established in the village of Malesso (Merizo), where the community is working with the Council and Guam agencies to accomplish their goals and objectives, which include continued traditional, historical fishing practices in the locations where those practices were exercised. The Malesso plan called for a *Peskadot* committee to establish fishery priorities and a Malesso code of conduct. Another committee identified in the Malesso Plan is the *Saina* (Elders) committee under the Mayors' Council of Guam, which advises the Mayors on traditional practices. The *Saina* committee could fulfill the role of the Indigenous Resource Task Force as described in PL 29-127. The CBFMP process is also compliant with Guam's AAA process of establishing rules and regulations and has the support of the Mayors' Council of Guam.

Some people in Guam, including Senator Judith Guthertz, have eschewed the AAA approach as ineffective and instead favor a legislative approach to establish the Indigenous Fishing Rights Act. This was attempted but defeated in 2009–2010 with Bill 190. Another legislative approach would be to amend the existing law in a way that the law can be more easily implemented.

The Council has expressed support of traditional fishing rights in Guam through the development of a CBFMP and the seasonal run harvest exemption, and believes that the implementation of these programs are a de facto exercise of the AAA process. The Council has supported the preservation and restoration of traditional fishery harvest and management practices in the US Western Pacific Region as valuable and important activities that support social cohesion, protect native cultures and enhance community participation in the Council process. Traditional ecological knowledge contributes valuable information to the effective management of ecosystems and natural resources.

Community-Based Fishery Management Planning Process Begins in Marianas

NORTHERN ISLANDS

On April 22, 2015, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council staff met with Northern Islands community members at the Garapan Community Center in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), to begin the planning process for a community-based fishery management plan (CBFMP). Jerome Aldan, mayor of the Northern Islands requested the Council's assistance in developing the CBFMP in November 2014 after seeing a presentation of the Malesso (Merizo), Guam CBFMP.

Northern Islands community members identify natural resources at a community-based fishery management planning workshop at the Garapan Community Center in Saipan, CNMI in April 2015.

The first phase of the planning process involved a multiple-day workshop focused on community efforts to define goals and determine priorities in the management of marine resources. Participants targeted repatriation to their ancestral lands, resource planning for sustained subsistence and economic development as their top priorities.

It was determined that the management process would start with the island of Pagan as it is currently being accessed by the community and the Northern Mayor's office. Anatahan, Sarigan, Alamagan and Agrihan would follow as islands that once had permanent settlements. All of the islands have archeological sites and known cultural uses and values. Community members identified resources and cultural sites on each of the islands.

The community was very dynamic and had strong participation in the planning process. Their knowledge of the resources in the Northern Islands is extensive and deep, and had been submitted for consideration in the expansion of the Mariana Islands Training and Testing (MITT) draft environmental impact statement (EIS). While the military's draft involved numerous surveys of flora and fauna, not using the ecological knowledge that exists in the community about Pagan and Farallon de Mendinilla while developing an EIS for this area is a failure in the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act.

As a small community seeking resettlement and repatriation to their ancestral lands, another major objective was to ensure the Northern Islands community's continued presence in the area. The distance from the main islands and difficulty of access protects the area; however, military expansion in the area is a major threat.

There are approximately 300 Northern Islands community members living in Saipan. In 1981, residents of the Northern Islands relocated to Saipan prior to the eruption of the volcano on the island of Pagan. Resettlement of these islands has been difficult for the community because of the lack of economic, legal and political power needed to access the islands. Being part of the homestead program would give the community access to homesteading opportunities available to other CNMI citizens.

The Northern Islands is a large area rich in resources, a strong culture and history, and numerous unique habitats. It has great potential for economic development in tourism and reef fisheries. Geothermal and geological resources may also be available for development. Small agricultural production may contribute to a diversified economy. There is a strong need for planning for the entire community and a strong willingness to continue with this planning process. The second phase of the CBFMP, which involves strategizing and the development of an action plan, is scheduled for August 2015.

YIGO

In response to a request from Mayor Rudy Matanane, the Council held a workshop on April 23, 2015, to address the Yigo community's desire to increase access to and management of their marine resources.

Yigo is the northernmost municipality and the largest village on Guam with an area of 35 square miles and a population of 20,539 (2010 Census). Andersen Air Force Base constitutes roughly half of Yigo.


Yigo mayor Rudy Matanane addresses community members at a November 2014 meeting where the Council introduced the community-based fishery management planning process.

This initial workshop was the first of two phases in the development of the CBFMP in Yigo. Participants were introduced to both the concepts and challenges of community-based resource management. Cultural and natural resources were identified, but it was clear that the community will be doing more thinking about resources in the interim between this introductory workshop and the second and final phase. Completion of the two phases will provide enough information to develop the Yigo CBFMP, which defines the community process that would enable the community to manage their marine resources.

The community concluded that the study area would include the entire island of Guam but will need to arrive at a consensus on a more specific management area as well as whether or not to include the Andersen Air Force Base.

In the second workshop, scheduled for August 2015, the community will identify and rank community resources and areas of conflict as well as strategize and develop recommendations to address these issues.

New Study Examines Guam Fishing Conflict

At the request of members of the Guam fishing community, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council has been investigating reports of fishing conflicts and increasing tension between long-time residents of Guam and newcomers, especially from the US Freely Associated States (FAS).

Presently, there are three sovereign states that have this type of relationship with the United States — the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Republic of Palau.

In November 2014, the Council convened a public meeting to address the topic at the Guam Fishermen's Co-op. Approximately 60 local fishermen were in attendance and many expressed concern about fishing styles, locations, frequency and the quantity of fish being taken by the newcomers.

In January 2015, the Council contracted the University of Guam 4-H Extension to conduct interviews with several FAS immigrant groups to learn about their fishing activities and perspectives on the conflict. In addition to providing interviewers, the 4-H Extension advised the Council on desired sample sizes, question wording, and interview locations and modes. Between February and May, the surveyors interviewed 175 fishermen from FSM, Palau and the RMI. Preliminary findings suggest that the conflict is slanted toward fishermen from Chuuk, one of four states in the FSM, who appear to be fishing more intensely for income and subsistence than other FAS fishermen. Chuukese fishermen in the sample were also more likely to fish for offshore pelagic species and were more unaware, as a group, about Guam's formal fishing regulations and informal community rules. A number of those surveyed stated that they have been approached by local community members about fishing on private property, catching too many fish, fishing in restricted areas and the volume of fish sales. Several respondents reported that they harvest more fish and use scuba tanks on Guam than on their home islands, which may be explained by the fact that they experience less social control and/or more anonymity on Guam than on their home islands.

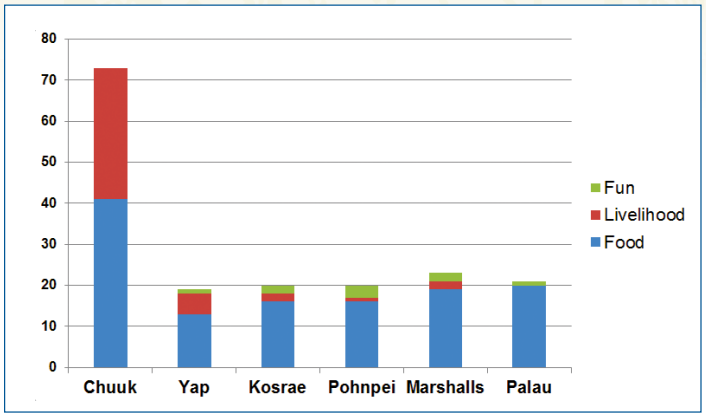


Chart shows the results of a survey of Micronesian fishermen and a question about their primary fishing motivation.

A full report of the study findings will be provided to the government of Guam and the Council's Guam Advisory Panel members prior to the 164th Council meeting in October, 2015.

12th Festival of Pacific Arts to be Held on Guam

One of the key guiding principles of the Festival of Pacific Arts (FestPac), scheduled to be held from May 22 to June 4, 2016, is to foster the protection of indigenous cultural heritage and cultivate global awareness for Pacific arts and cultures. The traditional practices of folk arts among the peoples of the Pacific island countries and territories are an integral part of the cultural heritage that makes this region unique. Guam made its bid to host the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts and was awarded this distinction at the 10th Festival held in American Samoa in 2008. The 2016 Festival will be Guam's opportunity to showcase its unique Chamorro culture that has survived colonization of the past and modernization of the present.

PHOTO: RON CASTRO, GUAM

The opening ceremony of the 2012 Festival of Pacific Arts hosted by the Solomon Islands.

The theme for FestPac 2016 is "Håfa Iyo-ta, Håfa Guinahå-ta, Håfa Ta Påtte, Dinanña' Sunidu Siha Giya Pasifiku" (What We Own, What We Have, What We Share, United Voices of the Pacific). A delegation of 2,500 performers, artists and cultural practitioners will share various fine art disciplines (e.g., carving, weaving, tool- and jewelry-making), performing arts, healing arts and traditional medicine, culinary arts, fishing and hunting traditions, and navigation and sailing. The festival will also feature literary and visual arts as well as forums, seminars and workshops.

In keeping its guiding principle to "recognize the importance of island cultures and traditional fishing practices in managing fishery resources and foster opportunities for participation," the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, at its 159th meeting at the Guam Hilton on March 20–21, 2014, passed a motion supporting continued encouragement of the use of indigenous culture in the fishery management process and staff participation in FestPac 2016. At the Festival, the Council will feature exhibits on its projects on community-based fishery management plans in the Western Pacific Region and the 2016 Chamorro lunar calendar, which will spotlight traditional knowledge of fishing and hunting as well as the winners of the annual student art contest.

Traditional fishing and hunting has faced major challenges brought forth by the modernization and Americanization of the island of Guam. With its liberation in World War II, almost 75 percent of the island was taken for the military effort. Approximately one-third of the island has been retained for its purposes to this day. The presence of military bases along with the other American concepts such as private property liability, marine preserve areas and Environmental Protection Agency advisories, coupled with natural obstacles such as weather patterns and rough seas have created de facto marine preserve areas that restrict access to most of the island's land and coastal resources. As a result, many of the Chamorro fishing and hunting traditions have gone to the wayside over the decades due to non-practice. However, many are not forgotten as they were practiced all the way up to and immediately after World War II. Guam has traditional knowledge that is in need of documentation and perpetuation. Culture without access to the very resources that sustain it will cease to exist.

In an attempt to combat the erosion of traditional customary practices, FestPac has been held every four years since 1972. As a major regional cultural event, the festival brings together artists and cultural practitioners from 27 Pacific Island nations for two weeks of festivity while enhancing their respect and appreciation of one another.

Public Hearings Held on Proposal to 'Uplist' Green Sea Turtles

Members of the public and government voice their concerns at a July 13, 2015, public hearing on Saipan regarding a proposed change to the Endangered Species Act listing status of green sea turtles.

Public hearings on a proposal that would change the listing status of green sea turtles from 'threatened' to 'endangered' under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) were held in American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) in July 2015. The hearings, held by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), were in response to multiple requests sent from community members and local government representatives who were concerned with the initial decision by NMFS and FWS to hold only one public hearing in Honolulu.

The proposed rule, which was published on March 23, 2015, identifies 11 green sea turtle distinct population segments (DPSs) worldwide, and proposes eight to be listed as threatened and three to be listed as endangered. American Samoa is part of the Central South Pacific DPS, and Guam and CNMI are part of the Central West Pacific DPS, both of which are proposed for the endangered listing. Hawai'i is part of the Central North Pacific DPS, which is proposed to be listed as threatened. The new DPS listings will replace the existing global listing of green sea turtles as threatened (except for the Florida and Mexican Pacific coast breeding populations, which are currently listed as endangered).

NMFS and FWS representatives were met with strong opposition on the proposed rule. At all three hearings, attendees questioned the Services' determination that the green sea turtle abundance in the Central South Pacific and Central West Pacific DPSs are 'low' at approximately 2,800 and 6,500 nesting females, respectively. The Pacific Islands consist of thousands of islands and atolls, yet the proposal is based on nesting data from around 50 nesting sites each for the Central South Pacific and Central West Pacific DPSs.

At the American Samoa hearing held July 6, 2015, multiple attendees expressed concern that in the range of the Central South Pacific DPS, the ESA only applies to American Samoa while many other foreign nations and territories within the DPS allow the take of green sea turtles. Participants commented that the 'uplisting' would place a disproportionate burden on American Samoa and its fisheries. Multiple individuals also questioned why the uplisting was necessary if the level of protection afforded under the ESA is nearly identical between threatened and endangered species.

At the meeting on July 13, 2015, on Saipan, many of the public comments focused on the cultural importance of turtles and the concern that an uplisting to an endangered status would prevent any cultural use of turtles from resuming. NMFS representatives pointed out that another barrier to cultural take of turtles is an international treaty called the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Turtles to which the US has been a signatory since 2000 and prohibits intentional take of turtles in participating countries. Richard Seman, the CNMI Department of Land and Natural Resources Secretary and Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council member, explained that research and conservation efforts in the CNMI over the last 20 years have been geared toward creating an opportunity for cultural take and expressed his disappointment that the international treaty would further discourage the return of traditional practices. "Without turtle take," Seman noted, "there will be no connection between the people and these species which are an important part of their culture."

The last of the hearings were held on Guam on July 15, 2015, where attendees echoed many similar comments and concerns heard in American Samoa and the CNMI. Several attendees also raised questions regarding critical habitat and its potential impacts on military activities. Critical habitat applies to activities that are federally funded or permitted, and NMFS and FWS solicited information on potential critical habitat as part of the public comment period.

Due to the recent CNMI telecommunication outage, NMFS and FWS have extended the public comment on the green turtle ESA listing proposed rule until August 26, 2015. The Services have until March 2016 to publish a final rule.

Make Your Voice Heard

The public comment period on the green sea turtle Endangered Species Act listing proposed rule has been extended to August 26, 2015. To submit comments, go to the website below and click "Comment Now!"

www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2012-0154

Protected Species Experts Convene

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's Protected Species Advisory Committee (PSAC) gathered for their second meeting on May 27 and 28, 2015, to review the status of protected species issues related to fisheries and discuss future improvements for managing and monitoring protected species interactions in fisheries operating under the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs). PSAC consists of nine members who provide technical expertise in sea turtles, seabirds, sharks, marine mammals, corals, oceanography and other related topics as well as representation from the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and Advisory Panel.

Sea turtle and seabird interactions in the Hawai'i longline fishery were successfully addressed through amendments to the Pacific Pelagic FEP during the 1990s and first half of the 2000s. Sea turtle bycatch mitigation measures including required use of circle hooks and mackerel bait were implemented in the shallow-set component of the longline fishery in 2004. These measures reduced loggerhead and leatherback turtle bycatch in the fishery by approximately 90 percent, and remain in place today. Similarly, a suite of measures were implemented in 2002 and 2006 to mitigate seabird bycatch, which resulted in approximately 90 percent reductions on Laysan and of black-footed albatross interactions.

Population-level impacts of the remaining sea turtle and seabird interactions in the Hawai'i longline fishery are considered negligible. In reviewing the post-bycatch measure interaction data, the PSAC noted this negligible impact level and recommended that the Council evaluate spatial and environmental factors that may affect leatherback turtle interactions in the longline fishery to better understand patterns and improve future impacts analyses. Continued efforts to better understand patterns in seabird bycatch are also ongoing, and the Council, with advice from PSAC, will monitor any future developments to ensure impacts of the fishery on protected species remain minimal.

The PSAC also received updates on the proposed rules to revise the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing of green turtles and humpback whales, eliciting a lively discussion on the scientific basis for maintaining the threatened listing for the Hawai'i population of green turtles. In particular, PSAC members expressed concern regarding the apparent disparity between available scientific information and the proposed decision, and the lack of transparency to justify the discrepancy. PSAC provided several recommendations to the Council for their consideration in responding to the proposed rule, which included a statement that the Committee is not aware of any significant population-level threats that would suggest the Hawai'i population of green turtles warrants continued listing under the ESA.

Recommendations from the PSAC were considered and adopted by the Council at its 163rd meeting in Honolulu, June 16 to 18, 2015.

Council Kicks Off Internship Projects

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council kicked off its Fisheries Internship and Student Help (FISH) project on June 1, 2015, and its inaugural US Pacific Territories Fishery Capacity-Building Internship on June 8, 2015. Both programs ran for eight weeks out of the Council office in Honolulu.

After soliciting interns from February to March 2015, the Council received 17 applications from American Samoa, Hawai'i, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), New York and as far away as Norway for the FISH internship. The two students chosen for the 2015 FISH pilot project were Zachary Yamada, a Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) marine biology undergraduate student from Maui; and Kyle Brandt, a University of Hawai'i natural resource and environmental management undergraduate student from Washington.

Yamada, who was a participant in the Council's high school summer program last year, was mentored by the Council's program officer Mark Mitsuyasu on a project to collect fisheries data on Hawai'i fish from local retail markets. Brandt, alongside mentor Chris Hawkins, worked on a project to identify socio-economic indicators that can be monitored in the Council's annual reports. The interns also assisted staff with the Hawai'i high school summer course and learned about fisheries in the region. The interns' participation in the program culminated with participation in the Hawai'i Conservation Conference in Hilo where they assisted the Council with outreach and staff presentations.

The primary aim of the program is to provide high school/college students and new professionals in Hawai'i, American Samoa, Guam and the CNMI with practical experience in coral reef ecosystem, bottomfish and/or pelagic fisheries management to incrementally increase local fisheries management capacity. Secondary aims include introducing young professionals to the Council process so that they can participate more fully in the bottom-up management of fisheries and increasing available data by facilitating undergraduate, graduate and doctoral research in regional fisheries issues. Future internship opportunities will be also offered at other agencies within the region.

Interns (from left) Kyle Brandt, Zach Yamada and Keena Leon Guerrero work on their projects at the Council office in Honolulu.

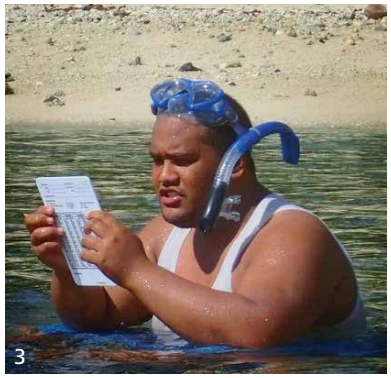
For more information, contact the FISH Coordinator, Joshua DeMello at (808) 522-7493 or Joshua.DeMello@wpcouncil.org.

Keena Leon Guerrero, one of the recipients of the inaugural US Pacific Territories Fishery Capacity-Building Scholarship (see Spring 2015 PIFN, page 13). Her internship focused on creating outreach material on marine protected areas (MPAs) in Rota and Tinian, islands of the CNMI. She created brochures for the Sasanhaya Bay Fish Reserve (Rota) and the Tinian Marine Fish Reserve and will be developing lesson plans for young learners that promote greater understanding and awareness of MPAs. While interning for the Council, Keena says she learned about the process of establishing regulations and hopes to bring the knowledge she has gained from this internship back to the CNMI. After the internship, Keena will be returning to school at HPU, where she is majoring in marine science.

Manu'a Students Learn about Muliava from Afar

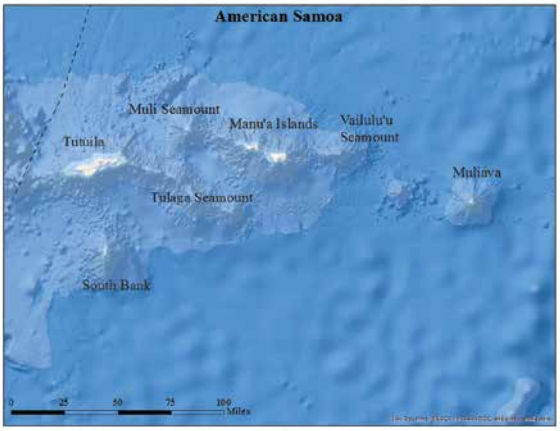
1

2



3

1. *American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resource staff members Mareike Sudek, Trevor Kaitu'u and Alice Lawrence with Manu'a High School students during the Muliava Outreach Project's first module on Ta'ū Island.* ***2.*** *Manu'a High School students prepare to practice their new reef monitoring skills.* ***3.*** *A student records data as part of the ocean module of the Ta'ū education project. Photos by Trevor Kaitu'u, Coral Reef Advisory Group, American Samoa DMWR.*



On June 17 and 18, 2015, staff members Auvaa Soonaolo and Saolotoga Tofaeono from the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) conducted a creel survey training for 14 junior and senior students from Manu'a High School on the island Ta'ū. Creel surveys are used throughout the Territory to estimate catch and effort for coral reef and bottomfish fisheries managed by the DMWR and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. Life history information about the species along with the creel surveys provide fishery managers information needed to set annual catch limits.

The creel survey training was the third and final module of the Exploring Muliava from a Ta'ū Perspective project, organized by the DMWR, the Council and NOAA Ocean Watch–Central Pacific and with the cooperation of the American Samoa Department of Education (Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Accountability), the American Samoa Community College's Samoan Studies Institute and the Manu'a District Governor and Paramount Chief Misaalefua Hudson. The project was funded by a NOAA Marine National Monument grant.

Muliava is the traditional name for Rose Atoll, which became a Marine National Monument in 2009. Because the funds and permission required to visit Rose Atoll are hard to come by, the intent of the project is to teach the students about Rose Atoll by teaching them about Ta'ū. Muliava is considered a part of the Manu'a Islands, which also includes the islands of Ta'ū, Ofu and Oloseaga.

The first module held Feb. 9 to 12, 2015, taught 18 Manu'a High School students the coral reef monitoring methods utilized by Reef Check. DMWR staff members Trevor Kaitu'u, Mareike Sudek and Alice Lawrence led the students through classroom lectures and water safety lessons before the group headed to the ocean to count fish and measure reef coverage.

The second module was taught from Feb. 16 to 20 by DMWR staff members Maria Mauga-Vaofanua and Christina Mataafa. Students learned about the geological formation of the islands and the anticipated impacts of climate change. They were given hands-on lessons on water quality testing and constructing beach profiles. Lucas Moxey, former NOAA Ocean Watch employee, provided the syllabus and lessons for the module and had trained Mauga-Vaofanua and Mataafa along with other educators from throughout the US Pacific Islands in a train-the-trainers workshop organized by the Council in May 2014.

Next steps for the project include outreach to the community about the students' findings and exploring the potential for ongoing student- or community-led water quality and reef monitoring programs on Ta'ū.

American Samoa Youth Fisheries and Marine Resource Management Course Concludes

On July 13, 2015, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's annual youth summer program in American Samoa concluded with a certificate ceremony and beach fun day at Coconut Point in the village of Nu'uuli. The Council's contracted instructor, Alex Baker and several members of the fisheries, and local and federal agencies, teamed up to introduce the course's 13 participants to topics related to fisheries development and management of marine resources.

The three-week program offered local students a "bird's eye view" of the territory's various fisheries and the work being done to manage the marine resources of American Samoa. Students participated in hands-on lessons in fishing methods—rod and reel, and spearfishing—and received water safety and swimming training from Zero I'aulualo, a local open water swimming instructor and his organization, the American Samoa Aquatics Agency. Students also received certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid from Nick King and Karen Kitiona of the American Heart Association. Included in the activities of the 15-day program, was a seafood cooking demonstration by local top chef, Charles Nelson. The demo was held in the Land Grant Wellness Center Demo Kitchen, where Chef Nelson showed the students how to prepare a healthy, delicious seafood meal. As part of the seafood demo, Land Grant staff also gave a presentation on nutrition and the benefits of eating fish and other seafood. The students were also given an opportunity to look at careers in the fields of fisheries and natural resource management as well as environmental protection. The program took students through the various levels of the fisheries, tracking the process from the ocean to the markets and processing facilities, and all the way to the final stop - the consumers. Tours included the Tri Marine Samoa Tuna Processors facility, NOAA facility at Lions Park, National Weather Station and National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa's Ocean Center.

The goal of the program is to serve as a first step toward building local capacity in American Samoa. By generating interest in the fisheries and marine resource management, the Council hopes that these young men and women will pursue higher education in the fisheries, marine and environmental sciences and one day return home to manage the Territory's ocean resources. The Council has just recently initiated its Territorial Scholarship Program, offering full scholarships to students from the US Pacific Island areas that are enrolled in fisheries and marine science programs at specific universities in the Western Pacific Region. Similar programs were also held in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and Hawai'i.


1


2


3


4

1. *NOAA PIRO divemaster Gataivai Talamoa helps Kevin Galoia gear up for a dive as part of the Council's youth summer program.* **2.** *Zero I'aulualo and the American Samoa Aquatic Agency instruct the class in water safety and proper swimming technique at Utulei Beach.* **3.** *Tradewinds Hotel executive chef Charles Nelson prepares his famous Hawaiian-style poke while Trinity Danielson (left) and Perosi Vaefanua (right) look and learn at the American Samoa Community College's Land Grant Wellness Center.* **4.** *Janell Tuaua, a student in the American Samoa summer high school program, practices newly acquired fishing techniques on the runway side of the Pala Lagoon in Tafuna village.*

Fishers Forum Addresses Seafood Safety and Traceability

Speakers at the June 17 Fishers Forum on seafood safety and traceability included (from left) John Henderschedt of the National Marine Fisheries Service Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, Justin Hospital with the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, Donald Hawn of Hawn Pacific Resources Hawai'i and Peter Oshiro of the Hawai'i Department of Health.

In April, May and July, 2015, more than 50 persons became ill on the US mainland after consuming raw fish contaminated with Salmonella. Reports indicate that these and three incidents in 2010 of Salmonella contamination in California and Hawai'i have been attributed to spicy tuna rolls containing previously frozen, carbon monoxide-treated ground tuna product imported from Indonesia. None of the contaminated fish was caught locally in Hawai'i.

So, how do you know where your fish comes from?

More than 100 participants were offered advice and shared their thoughts on this topic at the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's Fishers Forum on June 17, 2015, at Harbor View Center in Honolulu. Local and national professionals addressed topics such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fisheries, seafood fraud, fish flow and traceability, and seafood labeling and inspection.

John Henderschedt of the National Marine Fisheries Service Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection credited the United States with being largely successful in ending overfishing and managing fisheries sustainably and at increasing global capacity for sustainable fisheries management. Yet, with international trade concerns around food security growing and global demand for seafood on the rise, IUU fishing is profitable and a significant percentage of annual fisheries harvests world-wide. Henderschedt provided insight into increasing international efforts to end IUU fishing, which includes the Presidential Task Force on IUU and Seafood Fraud. The task force aims to utilize all available authorities (e.g., the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Lacey Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species Act and bilateral agreements) to combat the issue through international governance, enforcement, partnerships and traceability throughout the seafood supply chain. The task force released its action plan for implementation in March 2015. Henderschedt also served as guest speaker at the 163rd Council meeting the day after the forum.

Justin Hospital with the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center discussed the distribution chains for Hawai'i's longline-caught fish (local and exports), the types of buyers and sociocultural aspects of Hawai'i's seafood distribution chain. He also shared the results of a study done on the economic and cultural importance of tuna and longline fish in Hawai'i.

Donald Hawn of Hawn Pacific Resources Hawai'i addressed the flow and traceability of imported fish and fishery products, which makes up the majority of seafood purchased in Hawai'i. Popular seafood commodities shipped in from around world include, for example, fresh salmon fillets from Canada; frozen, breaded shrimp from Vietnam and preserved, dried squid from Japan. Participants learned about the wide range of agencies that participate in monitoring seafood imports, which includes the US Coast Guard, US Fish and Wildlife Services and US Environmental Protection Agency, with the bulk of the responsibility falling on the US Customs and Border Protection and US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA is responsible for the safety of all fish and fishery products entering the United States through the Imported Seafood Safety Program.

Peter Oshiro of the Hawai'i Department of Health, foregoing a power point presentation, spoke impromptu about seafood labeling and inspection in Hawai'i. One topic that generated interest in the audience was fish, particularly poke, that's been frozen and gassed, a process which can turn brown fillets back to red. Oshiro said that federal law requires sellers to label this fish as "previously frozen" and "treated with carbon monoxide as a preservative to promote color retention." But he conceded that many fish sellers don't comply with the label regulation and recommended that consumers ask questions and call the Health Department if something is not properly labeled. Oshiro also addressed country of origin labeling (COOL) for imported seafood, a mandatory regulation unless the seafood has been significantly altered in the United States (e.g., imported, previously frozen tuna loins that are made into "Hawai'i" poke). Seafood was not affected by the recently passed COOL Amendments Act of 2015, which repealed the label-ing requirement for beef, pork and chicken.

So, what was the take home message and what should consumers do to ensure they are purchasing safe seafood? When at the retail counter, read labels. Ask for all fish to be labeled and for truth in labeling. But the safest choice of all is to eat local fish.

The Hawai'i Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association, Hawai'i Marine Recreational Fishing Survey, Hawai'i State Department of Health, Local I'a Community-Supported Fishery and Conservation International, Pacific Islands Fisheries Group, United States Coast Guard and the Council all had information tables at the event. Several guests took home door prizes thanks to the generosity of the Council, Hana Pa'a Fishing, Hawai'i Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association, Hawai'i Marine Recreational Fishing Survey, Nico's Pier 38, Pacific Islands Fisheries Group/Lawai'a, POP Fishing and Marine, and University of Hawai'i Press. The next Fishers Forum will be held in American Samoa in October as part of the Council's 164th meeting. The forum will return to Hawai'i in March 2016.

New Outreach Material

The Fishermen Code of Conduct, which has been distributed as posters and as signage in some Hawai'i harbors, will soon be available in video and audio format, as postcards and as signage near Hawai'i lifeguard stations. The short (30 to 60 second) video and audio versions will be aired on TV and radio stations in the Western Pacific Region and distributed to local schools. The postcards will be available at the Native Hawaiian Convention (Sept. 22–24, 2015) and the Hawaii Science Teachers Association conference (Sept. 12, 2015). All of these products are also available for download at the Council's website (www.wpcouncil.org/educationandoutreach). Languages featured include English, Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Refaluwasch and Chuukese. If you are interested in helping to promote the important value of responsibility to sustain our fisheries and marine ecosystem, please call Sylvia Spalding at (808) 522-5341 or Sylvia.spalding@wpcouncil.org.

Do you know where your seafood comes from? Check out the Council's two new posters relating to seafood safety and traceability, the topic of the Council's Fishers Forum held June 17, 2015, at Harbor View Center. One poster shows the variety of fish and classifications of seafood products that were imported to Hawai'i between 2010 and 2014 based on US Customs data, and the other looks at where seafood consumed in Hawai'i originates. To view or download the posters, go to www.wpcouncil.org/education-and-outreach/educational-posters/.

Segments from *Go Fish!* with Mike Buck are now available for listening on the Council's website at www.wpcouncil.org/education-and-outreach/radio/. Hear interviews with Council members, advisors, staff and partners on topics ranging from fisheries research to ways for you to get involved in fisheries management decision-making. Go Fish! airs every Saturday from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Hawai'i's KHNR AM690, reairs Sundays at 7:00 a.m. and can be streamed at www.khnr.com. Be sure to let the Council know if there's a topic you would like to hear discussed!

Postcards
from the Western Pacific Region

Participants in the 2015 CNMI marine science and fishery and resource management summer course sponsored by the Council took a break for a photo opportunity at Obyan Beach where they witnessed turtle hatchlings making their way into the ocean.

This 1368-pound, 14.5-foot blue marlin caught by Guy Kitaoka off the coast of Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i on July 28, 2015, is 8 pounds short of the world record.

PHOTO: BOMBOY LLANES

Guam's Team EMMANUEL Captain Mike James, and anglers Christian Camacho and George Arriola show off their 234.5-pound marlin. Catching five marlins in two days, the team took the Grand Prize at the 31st Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament held July 25 to 26, 2015. A record 36 marlins were caught during the two-day derby.

Guam Department of Agriculture director Matthew Sablan poses with the winners of the annual Fishing Derby for Kids where the record for most fish caught was broken.

Middle school students at the Guam 4-H fisheries camp, part of the Council-sponsored marine science and fishery and resource management summer program, participate in a spearfishing safety and gear presentation with Council Advisory Panel member Ray Flores.

Peter Perez with a 385-pound Pacific blue marlin caught June 6, 2015, on Guam's southern banks while fishing with his godson Roland Barcenilla and Dale Alvarez, the captain of the 30-foot Sea Hawk named SI HELEN.

Vaughn (left) and Leon (right) Simpson, a father-son duo, are awarded top angler honors at the conclusion of the 2015 Steinlager I'a Lapo'a International Game Fish Tournament in American Samoa.

Michelle Amador in the Kona Firecracker Open, an annual 4th of July event, on the IHU NUI II caught her first spearfish and this 'ahi (yellowfin tuna) weighing 108 pounds.

Federal Pelagic Fishing Permits Issued in the Western Pacific Region (as of Aug. 14, 2015)

Hawai`i Longline – 140

American Samoa Longline – 46

Western Pacific (WP) General Longline – 0

WP Receiving Vessel – 21

WP Pelagic Squid – 0

Pacific Remote Island Areas Troll and Handline – 3

For more information, contact NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office at piro-permits@noaa.gov.

Federal Archipelagic Fishing Permits Issued in the Western Pacific Region (as of Aug. 14, 2015)

Western Pacific (WP) Bottomfish – 2 (1 Guam, 1 Pacific Remote Island Areas)

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Bottomfish – 2

Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) Noncommercial Bottomfish – 4

WP Lobster – 2 (MHI)

WP Deep Water Shrimp – 4 (MHI)

WP Precious Coral – 1 (MHI)

For more information, contact NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office at piro-permits@noaa.gov.

www.wpcouncil.org

PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERY NEWS
is published by the
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400
Honolulu, HI 96813
www.wpcouncil.org

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

ʻAimalama Lunar Conference

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is continuing its support of the ancient practice of observing the environment holistically in relationship to lunar cycles by helping to sponsor the ʻAimalama Lunar Conference. The conference is scheduled to be held Sept. 25 to 27, 2015, at the Keoni Auditorium, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu. The goals for the gathering are 1) to empower the Pacific peoples with tools to note changes within their environments, adding solutions for survival and adaptability and 2) to publish a paper of the conference findings, highlighting the Kaulana Mahina methodologies used to identify changes occurring in the Pacific, the natural indicators of changing climate, and the adaptive measures to prepare for the change with intention. For more about the conference, go to www.aimalama.org/.

The Council's previous and ongoing activities to help rejuvenate the tradition of observing the environment in relationship to lunar cycles have included the production of traditional lunar calendars annually since 2007 in English and five indigenous languages/dialects for fishermen and classrooms in Hawai'i and the US Pacific territories, support of the Mo'omomi lunar calendar on Moloka'i, the organization and hosting of a regional lunar calendar symposium on Saipan in 2011, supporting the archiving of decades of the Yap lunar calendar, contracting research on the traditional lunar calendar in the Samoa archipelago and on proverbs and stories related to fisheries and weather/climate throughout the Pacific Islands, and development and production of online and electronic observational logs associated with lunar phases for fishermen, fishponds and classrooms. For more on these products, go to www.wpcouncil.org/education-and-outreach/ or email Sylvia.spalding@wpcouncil.org.

English Translation of Hawaiian Language Newspaper Provides Valuable Insight

Fisherman on outrigger.
Photo: Hawaii State Archives

In an effort to make some valuable Hawaiian newspaper articles relating to marine ecosystem management available and accessible to the general public, the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (UH Sea Grant) is developing and housing a website which will display original Hawaiian newspaper articles as well as the English language translations. The initially selected articles are focused on fisheries and indications of changing climate in the islands. While the stories and conversations occurred more than a century ago, some of the struggles with sustainable resource management are still as prevalent today as they were then. In addition, the detailed conversations chronicled in the newspapers provide a unique window into the issues the communities faced, and can be used to help inform today's management decisions.

No other repository of information which includes both the Hawaiian language text and the English transcription exists, so UH Sea Grant, Dr. Puakea Nogelmeier, a profes-sor of Hawaiian language at the Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge and Director of Awaiaulu, and the graduate students who are training to be tomorrow's expert translators are very proud to be making such a highly sought-after resource public. Visit www.seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu/hna to learn more about the Hawaiian newspaper translation project and access the translated Hawaiian language news-paper articles.

Council Family

Women on the SSC

From left: Molly Lutcavage, Judy Amesbury and Mingling Pan at the June 2015 Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting in Honolulu.

Each of the nation's eight Regional Fishery Management Councils is required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to maintain a Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). The purpose of the SSC is to assist the Council in the development, collection, evaluation and review of scientific information relevant to the Council's fishery management plans. Nationally, the SSCs range from 10 to 20 members each, of which women constitute from 0 to 36 percent of the members. In the Western Pacific Region, the SSC includes 20 members, three of which are women.

Judy Amesbury is an archaeologist whose area of expertise is the analysis of faunal remains. "The faunal remains we dig up in archaeological sites on islands are sea shells and fish bones," Amesbury explained. "So I got interested in fishing in the past. I can tell you what people were fishing for in the Mariana Islands two or three thousand years ago." Amesbury also analyzes shell, bone and stone artifacts. "The fishing gear that we find from the Pre-Contact Period in the Marianas was made of shell, bone or stone," she adds, noting that items made of wood or other perishable materials don't last in the ground. Amesbury says it is exciting to use her knowledge from archaeology for fishery management. "I've seen how the fishermen take pride in their long history of fishing in the Marianas," she continues. "I encourage men and women to go into science. It's not just a profession. It's a way of looking at the world."

Minling Pan, PhD, is an economist specialized in natural resource economics and management at the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center. Her expertise is conducting assessments and research to evaluate the benefits and costs of alternative management actions, to prioritize management needs, and to facilitate policy design that sustainably maximizes societal benefits from ocean and coastal resources. "I am passionate about my daily work," Pan says. "Like many other fields of science, it used to be a male-dominated profession. However, more and more women are becoming fisheries scientists." Her advice is "If you love the ocean and you want to have fish from the ocean served on the dining table for you and for your future generations, you would be passionate on this field and good at it."

MaryEllen "Molly" Lutcavage, PhD, is the director and a research professor at the Large Pelagic Research Center (LPRC). Modeled after the Pelagic Fisheries Research Group (PFRP) in the Pacific, LPRC began as a Center to stimulate and conduct research on key species of interest to commercial and recreational fisheries and marine ecosystems in the Atlantic Ocean. The Center, established in 2003 at the University of New Hampshire, functioned as an academic research group and as a coordinator and source of extramural funding for other large pelagic species research. In 2010, LPRC joined the Department of Environmental Conservation at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and the Graduate School of Marine Science, located in Gloucester, Mass.

Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team Overhauled

In order to improve the monitoring and reporting of fisheries performance, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, at its 163rd meeting, approved the appointment of a new set of Plan Team members. The new members represent a broad range of expertise on various facets of the fishery from catch monitoring to ecosystem and climate change indicator monitoring.

The new Plan Team members:

Mr. Paul Bartram
Dr. Keith Bigelow
Dr. Christofer Boggs
Dr. Edward DeMartini
Dr. Reka Domokos-Boyer
Mr. Michael Fujimoto
Dr. Cindy Grace-McCaskey
Mr. Tom Graham
Mr. Jay Gutierrez
Mr. Justin Hospital
Mr. Russell Ito
Dr. Sam Kahng
Mr. Reginald Kokubun
Ms. Jo-Anne Kushima
Ms. Tepora Lavatai
Dr. Kimberly Lowe
Dr. John Marra
Ms. Yvonne Mika
Mr. Alton Miyasaka
Dr. Domingo Ochavillo
Dr. Thomas Oliver
Dr. Michael Parke
Dr. Frank Parrish
Ms. Sarah Pautzke
Mr. Ray Roberto
Dr. Eileen Shea
Mr. Michael Tenorio
Mr. Brent Tibbatts
Dr. Ivor Williams
Dr. Phoebe Woodworth-Jefcoats
Dr. Annie Yau

Monitoring and reporting on fishery performance is critical for the management of the fisheries in the Western Pacific Region. The Plan Team is responsible for development of the Council's Annual Report modules. The reports are being restructured to better integrate ecosystem indicators with fishery dependent variables (e.g., biophysical, protected species, habitat and socio-economic information) affecting the fisheries.

Connect with the Council on the Social Network

Keep up with the Western Pacific and Council meetings and actions. How?

Like us on Facebook (facebook.com/wprfmc)

Follow us on Twitter (@wpcouncil)

Check us out on YouTube (youtube.com/wpcouncil) and Vimeo (vimeo.com/wprfmc)

Visit us at www.wpcouncil.org

PHOTO: FDA

Escolar, a fish often mislabeled by suppliers and restaurants as tuna, tastes buttery and delicious but has a laxative-like effect on a certain percentage of the population.

When Is 'Tuna' Not Really Tuna?

When it's escolar.

A recent study by Oceana, a non-profit organization that campaigns for the protection of the world's oceans, has found almost two-thirds of tuna sold at restaurants and stores in the United States is actually a less desirable type of fish called escolar (Lepidocybium flavobrunneum). California was the worst offender with 52 percent of the state's cans of "tuna" not containing any tuna. The study also found 74 percent of sushi venues are guilty of using escolar instead of tuna, compared to 38 percent of restaurants and 18 percent of grocery stores.

Aside from the problem of fraud, there is also a considerable health risk called gempylotoxism or gempylid fish poisoning. Because escolar consume large amounts of a fatty acid called ester, which humans can't digest, eating this fish may lead to gastrointestinal problems such as severe stomach cramps and diarrhea. The Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, of the Food and Drug Administration, listed gempylotoxism in its second edition of the Bad Bug Book, which provides current information about the major known agents that cause foodborne illness.

Other fish that were purchased by Oceana investigators and discovered to be wrongly labeled included Chilean seabass (actually Antarctic toothfish) and Alaskan halibut (blueline tilefish).

The report claims that just 1 percent of seafood is inspected for fraud or investigated for its correct identity despite the United States importing more than 90 percent of its seafood.

Oceana offers this advice on how to avoid buying the wrong fish: 1) ask questions at the restaurant or grocery store, 2) check the price (if it looks too good to be true, it probably is) and 3) buy the whole fish whenever possible.

Samoan Vaisu

Vaisu is a backyard dish because you need live embers on which to grill the fish. The whole fish is cooked with the skin and scales intact so that the flesh steams in the skin. This is the same cooking method as 'beggar's chicken' or fish cooked in a salt crust, which results in the same smooth, soft, charred-tasting flesh.

Makes 3 fish

Ingredients:

3 'plate size' whole fish, gutted, but with scales still on

3 green bananas or plantain

2 cups coconut cream

1 chili pepper, minced

½ cup finely chopped onion

Salt and pepper, to taste

Banana leaf, to serve

Lime or lemon wedges, to serve

PHOTO: SHIRI RAM

Instructions:

Place the whole fish and the green bananas in their skins directly on the coals. Let each side of the fish develop a good 'burn' before turning over—about 5 minutes each side. Turn the green bananas too. In a small pot, simmer the coconut cream with the onion, chili, salt and pepper. To serve, place the fish and the green banana on a banana leaf and the sauce in a bowl on the side as a dipping sauce. Garnish with citrus wedges. To eat, peel back the fish skin and scales and eat the flesh, along with pieces of green banana, dipping into the sauce.

2015 Council Calendar

August

Aug. 31–Sept. 3: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee, Sapporo, Japan

September

Sept. 2: Habitat Areas of Particular Concern Process Plan Team Working Group, via webex and teleconference

Sept. 16: 120th Scientific and Statistical Committee, via webex and teleconference

Sept. 23–24: Risk of Overfishing (P*) Working Group, Honolulu and by teleconference

Sept. 23–29: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Technical and Compliance Committee, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

Sept. 25: Social, Economic, Ecological and Management Uncertainty Working Group for Territory Bottomfish, Honolulu

Sept. 25–27: 'Aimalama Lunar Conference, Honolulu

October

Oct. 9-10: Rota Fiesta Fishing Derby, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Oct. 13–15: 121st Science and Statistical Committee Meeting, Honolulu

Oct. 17: Fishers Forum Day, Pago Pago, American Samoa

Oct. 19: Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee, Fishing Industry Advisory Committee and Advisory Panel, Pago Pago, American Samoa

Oct. 20: Council Standing Committees, Pago Pago, American Samoa

Oct. 21–22: 164th Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, Pago Pago, American Samoa

Oct. 27–29: Council Member Training, Silver Spring, Md.

December

Dec. 3–8: 12th Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Bali

Upcoming Events

October Fishers Forum to Feature American Samoa Fisheries

The Advisory Panel (AP) and the AP chairs of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council have requested that more education be provided on the region's fisheries and fishery related issues, particularly for the American Samoa community. In response to the recommendation, the October 2015 Fishers Forum in American Samoa, to be held as part of the Council's 164th meeting, will focus on the American Samoa fisheries.

Fishermen and the public are encouraged to attend the Fishers Forum Day to be held at the Sports Fishing Dock from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 17, 2015. The event will include fishing boat tours, demonstrations, workshops, exhibits and more. For updates and additional information, please contact Nate Ilaoa, the Council's island coordinator in American Samoa at Nate.Ilaoa@wpcouncil.org/(684) 252-3175 or the Council's office in Honolulu at info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov.

PHOTO: D. HAMM


PHOTO: D. HAMM

From top: *Larger longliner and purse seiner, bottomfish alia, and longline alia.*

Nominations Open for the Richard Shiroma Award


Richard Shiroma

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is now accepting nominations for the Richard Shiroma Award. This award is presented to a person for his or her exemplary dedication and performance as a member of the Council or one of its advisory groups. The award is offered in recognition of 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 send nominations to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop St., Ste. 1400, Honolulu, HI 96816 USA; fax 808 522-8226; or email Joshua.DeMello@wpcouncil.org. 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 performed on behalf of the Council. Nominations must be postmarked, emailed or faxed by Sept. 15, 2015.