



Report of the Mariana Archipelago FEP-Guam Advisory Panel Meeting

Held October 9, 2015 at the GFCA Lanai, Hagatna, Guam

1. “Hafa Adai” Welcome and Introductions

Judith Guthertz, AP Chair, opened the Guam Advisory Panel (AP) Meeting at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were: Jesse Rosario, Jason Miller, Tom Camacho, Felix Reyes, James Borja, Ken Borja, William Bradford, Matthew Orot and Alan Ainbinder.

Also in attendance was: Carl Delacruz (Council Coordinator), Eric Cruz (NMFS PIFSC), and Michael Duenas (Council Member)

The AP reviewed the status of the recommendations made at its last meeting and those recommendations that were taken up by the Council.

2. Issues to be discussed at 164th Council Meeting

A. Upcoming Council Action Items

i. Specification of Territorial Bottomfish ACL

Delacruz provided a report on the territorial bottomfish annual catch limit (ACL) action that the Council may take up at its 164th meeting. He noted that this ACL is being calculated based on the 2012 Territorial Bottomfish Stock Assessment being updated with data up until 2013. He went over the process for the ACL and then provided the options that the Council will consider: 1) No action (do not specify an ACL); 2) Status quo (same ACL as the current ACL); 3) Specify new ACLs based on the SSC’s ABC recommendation and the SEEM analysis; and 4) Specify ACL’s lower than the recommended ABC and SEEM analyses. Delacruz noted that the SSC’s ABC recommendation may be based on a different P* and SEEM analysis than the previous ACL and thus would most likely result in a lower limit than the ACL currently in place.

James Borja provided a background on the P* Working Group process and meeting that he participated in with Plan Team Members and others from Guam and the region. He noted that questions in the rating system asked many questions but not many pertained to Guam because there is no pressure on the species being managed. He added that the demand for these species is high but there are not very many people fishing for them. Borja explained that this is just a model and that there isn’t enough pressure on the resource to make a determination.

Camacho added that there is high demand and moderate pressure and this should be considered as part of the model and this is the problem in the decrease in the ACL that fishermen have.

Miller said that he understands the need for precaution in the model because if you wait to notice the reduction and then you make the rules, you are already behind the curve. He noted that the science was trying to stay ahead of any future reduction to the biomass, and even though he disagrees with the reduction in the ACL, he understands it. Borja brought up the reduction to the Main Hawaiian Islands Bottomfish ACL and how that came about. Miller responded that he understands that but they have a better data collection system. Borja said that it is because they have a large commercial fishery. Bradford added that he noticed that Guam does not have many

bottomfish fishermen and that the amount of pressure being put on the fishery is low, so we don't even know if we have reached our limits yet.

The AP did not support a reduction to the current bottomfish ACL. *The AP recommended the Council support the status quo alternative.*

ii. 2016 Territorial Bigeye Tuna Catch Limit Specifications

Delacruz presented on the territorial Bigeye tuna catch limit specifications action that the Council may take up at its 164th meeting. He noted that this action is pursuant to Amendment 7 of the Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan that includes a limit on the amount of catch that could be transferred under specified fishing arrangements in the plan. He said the options the Council will consider will include: 1) No action (no territory specifications); 2) a 2,000 metric ton catch limit with 1,000 metric tons transferrable per territory; and 3) provide a lower or higher catch limit with lower or higher amounts that are transferrable.

Borja said that he supported the negotiation because Guam does not have the amount of Bigeye Tuna resources to utilize the full quota. He noted that none of the local fishermen catch Bigeye Tuna and they would be helping out the Hawaii fishermen while getting something in return. Camacho agreed that the catch limit is not being used at this time. Delacruz added that the funding goes into programs and projects that are in the Marine Conservation Plan for Guam, and Ainbinder said that the funds could be used to help get a boat ramp constructed on the east side of the island. Miller supported it saying that since Guam isn't using it, the negotiation would help Hawaii and will benefit Guam.

The AP supported no change in the current catch limit specification, meaning they would like the Council to consider the second option of having a 2,000 mt limit with a 1,000 mt transferrable. The AP was also interested in the negotiation between the Hawaii Longline Association and the Government of Guam to share a portion of Guam's catch limit in exchange for funding to be used on projects in Guam's Marine Conservation Plan. *The AP was supportive of the negotiation and offered to provide assistance where needed.*

iii. Mariana FEP Review

Delacruz updated the AP on the Mariana FEP review that the Council staff has been working on and the options that the Council may take action on at its 164th meeting. He noted that the current efforts by Council staff includes a revision to the FEP outline, and revising the plan to include new FEP goals and objectives, an emphasis on fishery ecosystem elements, making the FEP easier to read, and making changes to better align the FEP with the Council's annual reports and other guidelines and procedures. *The AP was supportive of the work regarding the Mariana FEP review.*

B. Mariana Archipelago FEP-Guam Community Activities

Delacruz provided a report on the activities in Guam that the Council has been participating in or are being kept aware of, including the indigenous fishing rights initiative, NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) Atlantis integrated ecosystem model, and Yigo community management plan. He noted that the Guam Indigenous Fishing Rights Task Force has been meeting and have been discussing rulemaking that may need legislative action. Delacruz noted

that there appears to be conflict in the group between those that oppose and support the marine preserves and there has been little progress. The model developed by NMFS PIFSC, he reported, will help support decision-makers in their efforts to manage coastal resources in a changing climate. Delacruz noted that the model, when ready, can be used by the local government as well to manage resources. Lastly, Delacruz presented on the efforts of the Council staff to support the Village of Yigo in their attempts to develop a community-based management plan for their resources. He noted that staff held workshops in Yigo in August and is assisting in the development of a draft plan to be presented next year.

Camacho added information regarding the fishing platform and noted that he talked with the Director of Agriculture on why there was a delay in the start of the project. He said that the Director replied that the contractor is working in the warehouse to cut rebar and get materials to specifications so when they get down to the site everything is ready for completion. He noted that the Director will provide him with an update soon.

3. Marianas FEP AP Guam Issues

A. Report of the Subpanels

i. Island Fisheries Subpanel

The Island Fisheries Subpanel reiterated its concerns regarding shark abundance and depredation around Guam. The Subpanel was also concerned with the enforcement of existing rules in Guam. They noted that for local fishing regulations, there is a hotline to call to report violations but no one answers it.

The AP agreed that the limited enforcement of fisheries regulations in Guam needs assistance and *recommended the Council explore ways that NMFS Office for Law Enforcement could provide assistance and NMFS PIRO provide education and outreach.*

Also regarding enforcement, the AP asked what do fishermen do with expired flares? The members were confused on how to dispose of them and end up keeping them onboard their vessels. Rosario noted that the US Coast Guard may be trained to dispose of these pyrotechnics properly. *The AP agreed to recommend the Council request the USCG to provide information on the safe handling and disposal of safety pyrotechnics.*

The AP also noted that there was a lack of opportunities for training in the marine technology field. Members said that people get sent off-island for training/school, but they do not return because of the lack of jobs. *The AP recommended the Council look for ways to provide this type of marine mechanic training in the islands.*

ii. Pelagic Fisheries Subpanel

The Pelagic Fisheries Subpanel did not have anything to report at this meeting.

iii. Ecosystems and Habitat Subpanel

The Ecosystems and Habitat subpanel noted the observation of coral bleaching occurring around Guam and that there have been a number of uncommon low tides. The subpanel has invited sea grant and PIRO habitat staff that support the marine environment to attend meetings and provide assistance with the AP members doing any work that needs to be done.

Some members noted the need to prevent soil erosion from affecting coastal waters and potentially fisheries. The coral and marine life in some areas are being affected and the AP members worry that their fisheries are being impacted. It was noted that the Forestry Department and University of Guam is doing some of this work and *AP members recommended the Council also provide funding for this type of work as well.*

The subpanel noted that there are some reports out in the public by agencies that do not provide the credit to the Malessso community and their Mayor for providing the impetus for the work. The AP was discouraged that its efforts to support the Malessso community and its community management plan are being ignored by the agencies.

The collection of data was also an issue discussed by the Subpanel. They noted that identification of fish has been a problem and that there is a need to provide this type of education to fishermen and surveyors to help gather better data. *The AP suggested developing a smartphone application to provide fish identification for people to access and provide better data.*

iv. Indigenous Fishing Rights Subpanel

The Indigenous Fishing Rights Subpanel reported that it did not have any new information to report on besides the aforementioned indigenous fishing rights initiative. Camacho noted that the Department of Agriculture is spearheading the task force and that there is talk of taking the definitions used for land resources and putting it in place of the rules and regulations but there needs to be an amendment process to do this.

Delacruz noted that the group is also monitoring the local fisheries act legislation that has been proposed in the legislature to provide for a fishery council, additional fishing regulations, and a special fund to be used to manage the fishing resources.

B. Other Issues

i. SK Solicitation and Grant Training

Delacruz provided the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act funding opportunity notice to the AP members and noted that the deadline is November 2, 2015 to put in a proposal on grants.gov. Camacho also noted that the NMFS Marine Education and Training grants funding opportunity deadline will be sometime in February 2016. He said that he was told that tournaments may be eligible for funding so some of the organizations in the AP may apply for this grant.

The AP was excited about the funding opportunities but many were unsure about how to apply for funds. The AP agreed that grant training should be provided prior to the announcement of upcoming grants and deadlines.

4. Public Comment

Eric Cruz, NMFS PIFSC, provided a report on the Marianas Trench National Pilot Mapping Project. He said that the project is a GIS application similar to Google Earth that can be used to see satellite track lines from tags put on whales and turtles, which show where they travel. It also includes ship track lines and past data like the Marianas Resource Assessment Monitoring

Program dives from the NMFS Coral Reef Ecosystem Division work. He agreed to provide more information to the AP as the tool becomes available.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

The Marianas-Guam Advisory Panel made the following recommendations:

In regards to the Territorial Bottomfish ACLs, the AP:

1. Does not agree with the reduction in the ACL and recommends the Council accept the status quo alternative.

In regards to the Territorial Bigeye Tuna Catch Limit Specification, the AP:

2. Recommends the Council accept the status quo alternative (alternative 2, a 2,000 mt catch limit with 1,000 mt transferrable per territory).
3. Supports negotiations between the Hawaii Longline Association and the Guam Government regarding the Tuna quota for Guam.

In regards to the Mariana FEP Review, the AP:

4. Supports the Council's work regarding the Mariana FEP review.

In regards to enforcement, the AP:

5. Is concerned that there is limited enforcement by local conservation officers and recommends the Council explore ways to allow National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office for Law Enforcement (OLE) to enforce Guam's Marine areas and Marine Preserves and for PIRO to provide education/outreach in regards to communication efforts of establishing a hotline to call for violations.
6. Recommends the Council communicate with the U.S. Coast Guard in regards to providing training for the deployment and disposal of expired safety pyrotechnics (i.e. flares).

In regards to Mariana Fisheries, the AP:

7. Recommends the Council develop a smartphone app for fish identification to help with catch reporting and gathering better data.
8. Recommends the Council explore ways to provide Marine Mechanic training.
9. Recommends the Council dedicate funding and support towards working with fishermen and the off-road community to install bio-socks and other tree planting programs in areas that are highly subject to soil erosion that initially affect coastal waters on Guam.

6. Other Business

There was no other business.

7. "At the end of the day"

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.