



**164th Meeting of the
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
October 21-22, 2015**

Governor H. Rex Lee Auditorium (Fale Laumei)
Utulei, American Samoa

Protected Species Synopsis

8. Protected Species

A. American Samoa Longline Fishery Biological Opinion

The Council will hear a presentation from NMFS PIRO staff on the American Samoa longline fishery Biological Opinion (BiOp). Reconsultation for this fishery was triggered due to exceedance of leatherback and olive ridley turtle incidental take statements, listing of new species (Indo-West Pacific DPS of scalloped hammerhead shark and corals), and the Council action on the Large Vessel Prohibited Area (LVPA) amendment to the Pelagics Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). Consultation was initiated on May 8, 2015.

In a letter dated May 8, 2015, the Council requested the opportunity to review draft sections of the BiOp in accordance with the NMFS Policy Directive 01-117 regarding the integration of Endangered Species Act Section 7 with Magnuson-Stevens Act Processes. In a correspondence dated September 29, 2015, PIRO indicated that draft sections of the BiOp will be shared with the Council after completion of internal review.

B. Update on Leatherback Turtle Interactions in the Hawaii Deep-set Longline Fishery

The Council will receive an update from staff on an effort to review and improve the understanding of leatherback turtle interactions in the Hawaii deep-set longline fishery. The Council may provide further direction for this effort.

Based on a recommendation from the Protected Species Advisory Committee, the Council at its 163rd Meeting directed staff to evaluate further spatial and environmental information regarding leatherback turtle interaction trends in the Hawaii deep-set longline fishery to assess if there are any significant correlations that should be considered in analyzing impacts and developing proposed fishery actions. The recommendation was based on slightly higher observed leatherback interactions observed in the fishery in 2014 and the first two quarters of 2015.

PIRO Sustainable Fishery Division, in coordination with Council staff and PIRO Protected Resources Division, convened a working group to review leatherback turtle interactions in the longline fishery. Council staff presented preliminary analyses of interaction patterns based on observer data at a working group meeting held in August 2015. Next steps for analyses were developed through the working group meeting and additional follow up discussions with PIFSC

staff.

C. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations

1. Advisory Panel

The Council will review and consider any Advisory Panel recommendations regarding protected species issues.

2. Fishing Industry Advisory Committee

The Council will review and consider any Fishing Industry Advisory Committee recommendations regarding protected species issues.

3. Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee

The Council will review and consider any Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee recommendations regarding protected species issues.

4. Scientific & Statistical Committee

The Council will review and consider any SSC recommendations regarding protected species issues from the 121st Meeting held in Honolulu, Hawaii.