



**WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

May 23, 2016

FROM: Kitty M. Simonds

SUBJECT: **Action Items for 166th Council Meeting**

1. Options for revising the risk determination and uncertainty characterization process

2. Hawaii shallow-set observer coverage

The Council will consider the issues summarized below, including any public comments on these initiatives. The Council is expected to take action on this at its 166th Council Meeting to be held from 8:30 to 5:00 p.m. on June 6-7 and 8-9, 2016. The first two days of the 166th Council meeting will be held at Saipan Fiesta Resort, P.O. Box 501029, Saipan, MP 96950, tel: (670) 234-6412 and the last two days at the Hilton Guam Resort, 202 Hilton Road, Tumon Bay, Guam 96913, phone (671) 646-1835. Written comments should be received by the Council's Executive Director by 5:00 p.m. (Hawaii time) June 4, 2016 by mail, FAX or email as indicated below.

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Options for revising the ACL risk determination and uncertainty characterization process

At its 166th meeting, the Council will be taking initial action on the revision of the ACL specification process. This addresses the Council recommendation at its 163rd meeting to explore and provide the Council with details in improving the ACL specification process through an omnibus amendment of the Fishery Ecosystem Plan to include:

- 1) Establishing a process for generating scientific information to support fishery management; and;
- 2) Improving the efficiency of the uncertainty characterizations by incorporating it in a workshop process. Council staff will present different options for the Council to consider at this meeting.

The existing ACL specification process outlines the steps to quantify uncertainties associated with the different species groups and the fisheries. These steps are described in the 'Control Rules' but there is no clear guidance on when to implement the Control Rules. The default trigger is when new data becomes available which would require the recalculation of the MSY. In practice, this default was proven to be logistically impractical.

The Council will consider establishing a decision process on when to trigger the recalculation and triggering the P* (risk of overfishing) and SEEM (Social, Ecological, Economic and Management uncertainty) analysis and also potential changes to the quantification of the uncertainties. The Council will also consider an action to amend the Control Rules:

ACTION 1: Establishing a process for the Plan Team and SSC to evaluate whether there is significant change in the data and the fishery characteristics to trigger revisiting the risk of overfishing level

ACTION 2: Changing the Control Rules. This action would entail the following options –

- Option 1: Status quo – maintain the existing control rules with no change
- Option 2: Modify the existing Tier system of control rule
- Option 3: Use a formulaic approach to risk determination
- Option 4: Use a data and model workshop approach to quantify the uncertainties

Initial Action is expected to be taken on these issues at the 166th Council Meeting. Final Action is anticipated at the Council's 167th or 168th meetings.

2. Hawaii Shallow-set Observer Coverage

The Hawaii shallow set longline fishery has, since its reopening in 2004, been subject to mandatory 100% observer coverage. The fishery reopened using large circle hooks and fish bait, and sea turtle hard caps. The 100% coverage was implemented to document the takes of

loggerhead and leatherback turtles. If either loggerhead or leatherback hard caps were exceeded the fishery would close for the remainder of the year.

The 100% observer coverage has been beneficial in documenting that turtle interactions are rare events and that the fishery has had to close down on only two occasions. After over a decade of 100% coverage in this fishery, it is timely to ask if a fishery operated under hard caps can operate with less than 100% observer coverage. This is analogous to the deep set tuna longline fishery which operates under catch limits for bigeye tuna in the West-Central and Eastern Pacific Ocean, with an observer coverage level of 20%.

A simulation study was conducted by the NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center to examine the possible consequences of different observer coverage levels in the Hawaii shallow-set longline fishery. The issue was also explored by an SSC Working Group who concluded that the study by PIFSC showed that there were generally diminishing returns of increasing observer coverage above 20%. The SSC Working Group also concluded that a series of graphs were needed where the X-axis would be the observer coverage level from 0-100% and the Y-axis the probability that the hard cap was actually exceeded when a trigger level catch was estimated to have been reached. A family of these risk curves at various trigger levels could then be generated to show how many times the hard cap was exceeded at various observer coverage levels and trigger levels.

The Council will consider taking initial action on

1. If the shallow set longline fishery should have observer coverage of less than 100%
2. What level of observer coverage would be acceptable based on a risk curve analysis