



**WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL**

FISHERY DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE

June 4, 2016 Saturday
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Fiesta Hotel and Spa
Garapan, CNMI

DRAFT REPORT

In Attendance

Wil Castro (Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans), Domingo Ochavillo (American Samoa Division of Marine and Wildlife Resources), Alton Miyasaka (Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources), David Benavente and Michael Tenorio (CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife), John Gourley (Micronesian Environmental Services), Justin Hospital and Adam Airs (PIFSC), Sunny Bak (Mirae InfoDesign), Julie Lealoha (Councilmember), Richard Seman (CNMI Department of Land and Natural Resources), and Kitty Simonds, Jack Ogumoro, Mark Mitsuyasu, Marlowe Sabater and Rebecca Walker (rapporteur) (Council).

1. Welcome Remarks and Introductions

Participants introduced themselves and their organizations. Wil Castro facilitated the Committee meeting.

2. Update on previous FDCRC recommendations

Sabater updated the Committee on the seven recommendations from previous FDCRC meetings. A spearfishing project geared toward developing a spear fishermen registry in Guam and CNMI and developing a data collection protocol will take off in the summer of 2016. Ochavillo asked if American Samoa was included in the proposal, but Sabater responded that only the Marianas are included in the pilot project. Gourley asked what the goal is for the registry. Sabater responded that the goal is to get names and contact information to develop a sampling frame from the spearfishing universe. Gourley added that there will be a significant crossover between subsistence or artisanal and commercial spearfishers. Sabater clarified that it is not for a license; it's to collect effort, and it will not be integrated with the Western Pacific Fisheries Information Network (WPacFIN) since it is a different data product. Ochavillo advised that throughout the pilot project, participants think about how the project can be transferred to the other jurisdictions. Hospital confirmed that the Council is taking the lead on this project.

Bak will present on the commercial receipt statistical design project later in the agenda. For the proposal packages, the work is delayed because Council staff require more administrative support. There will also be an update on the import/export project later in the agenda. With regard to access to the territory databases, the memorandum of understanding between the agencies are all in preparation, with the exception that the Guam Division of Aquatic and

Wildlife Resources (DAWR) is experiencing a small glitch. Sabater was pleased to report that the Cooperative Research funding has been regionalized, and the success rate for funding projects has reached 50%. Castro commended Kitty Simmonds on the success of regionalizing this funding program.

3. Agency reports on fishery data collection improvement efforts

A. Western Pacific Fishery Management Council

Simonds reported that under the MRIP program, the contractor is improving the military base creel survey information. When asked if American Samoa was involved in this project, Ochavillo responded that American Samoa will learn from the pilot project before implementation. In the commercial receipt project, the vendors are showing a higher rate of reporting. DFW has not integrated the reporting from the contractor, but Benavente reported that the agency is working on data integration. An HPU student is working on developing a catch method tracking system similar to the bottomfish system in Hawaii. The last item was that the Council has put together a matrix of funding opportunities, which the agencies should utilize. Tenorio asked if there is some requirement for that the federal government to be involved in the international funding programs. Sabater responded that the territories are not required to involve the Department of State, but that their Small Island developing State status makes them more likely to receive the funding. Simonds brought up that the US government explore working with the World Bank to assist the territories with data collection improvement, which could be a recommendation of this Committee. Castro postulated that partnering with a not-for-profit organization might be beneficial to the territories in pursuing funding.

B. Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

Hospital limited the discussion today to the socioeconomic program, with which he is familiar. He reported that in the PIFSC response to the Council's 165th recommendations regarding data collection, PIFSC indicated it is interested in collaborating with the local agencies at the program level to develop a brochure on the creel surveys. PIFSC can focus on trip costs or perhaps results from data collection in previous years to close the information loop. Ochavillo recommended that they contact his agency to develop the outreach material. Hospital also reported to the group that PIFSC is working on a web tool to view and download information about fishing communities. Simonds said this web tool will be very useful to the aha moku process. The mapping component will be limited to showing the location of the community. Castro reported that the GovGuam platform is live at mobileapps.guam.gov. There is a land information mobile app – BSP, Department of Revenue and Taxation. It's not a native app, but is pulling live. Flood inundation zones and MPAs will be added to the building layer in a June/July update of the mobile mapping application, and environmental layers will be added later. Hospital reported that PIFSC does have a contract in the works to develop a socioeconomic web mapping application in several phases; Phase I will likely be about \$75,000. Castro said Guam would be happy to collaborate and share their ArcGIS platform. Hospital wrapped up his report by saying the SAFE report will be delivered online so that it is easier to update.

C. CNMI-Division of Fish and Wildlife

Richard Seman provided an overview of the DFW data improvement activities. DFW hired a biologist to manage the shore-based creel survey program. A data transcriber was also hired for data entry. Regular training on survey protocol and fish identification has been conducted. DFW

is developing a survey intercept electronic reporting system, which will improve the timeliness of data entry. Some Council funded program, database analytics and MRIP seasonal run pilot program has been completed. Seman asked how much of an effect the in water prohibition is costing the program. Tenorio responded that it affects our FAD program, boating access program, and research but not the data collection program. Seman asked if the committee could make a recommendation to ask if USFWS could be asked to expedite their Section 7 consultation on the recently listed corals so that sportfish funding in-water work can be completed. Domingo wondered if there is some sort of blanket permit would be acceptable for future listings, as American Samoa is concerned that more petitions in the future, or critical habitat designations, could affect the jurisdiction in the same way. Tenorio said that the FADs are rigged and are ready to put in the water, but the funding has not been released for in water work. Miyasaka said that the USFWS employee should have learned from the Hawaii consultation. Tenorio responded that the agencies provided those assessments and reports for the listed corals, but in Year 2 USFWS has not yet finalized the assessment.

D. Guam – Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources

Sablan was not present at the meeting. Kitty noted that when the director is unavailable to present, staff should be present to present.

E. Guam – Bureau of Statistics and Plans

Castro reported that the Guam and CNMI import/export proposal, which was \$250,000, was a joint submission and they were successful in articulating the regionalization, a concept in which the Council is a leader. Phase I will be to establish the database. The implications, aside from the data for commercial purposes, is food security. At the jurisdictional level, the agencies come together, and at the regional level, CNMI and Guam come together. In the trade negotiations, we hope that data collection is more efficient and effective. Castro said when you get heads of state people respond quickly which we can take advantage of in the future.

F. Hawaii – Division of Aquatic Resources

Miyasaka highlighted the major portions of Hawaii's report. They are completing a back office upgrade to their website, which has been in need of an upgrade to be less vulnerable to cyber attacks. They are working with WPacFIN to create a master commercial license database, which will combine both parts of the database together so that the data are more uniform. Online fishing reporting is another web portal project, which will go live at the end of June. WPacFIN is also working to implement a MySQL file network this summer. Online dealer reporting is also in the works; they are working to change their administrative rules to have a deadline for commercial reporting. It's in the statutes but not in the rules. The authority to require the reporting will go into a rule package, and they just received approval from the board to hold statewide hearings. The rule package will be released somewhere around August; establish commercial marine dealer license, deadline for reporting, and raise our commercial fishing license fees from 50 to 100 in the first year, and \$150 in the second year. The fees are being raised so much because they were sued for charging a different fee for resident and non-resident commercial fishing license, contesting the difference in the fee structure and the State lost. The court said that they have to be able to justify the difference. It only applies to commercial fishing license, not recreational, because of the commerce clause in Federal law. The money will be used to pay for website improvements, online reporting, and new capabilities. We estimate that

when we charge more for the commercial licenses, a number of part time CML holders will chose not to be licensed anymore, and we will lose the data that comes from that sector of the fishery. There will likely be some loss in the data because of this, but a difference between \$100, you are most likely marginally commercial and there isn't a lot of data coming in from them anyway. Any loss of the data is of concern, however, and we cannot anticipate the effect this will have on our long term data trends.

G. Am. Samoa – Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources

Sabater will send out the latest version of the draft. Ochavillo reported that species ID training is underway. They are working with WPacFIN to determine minimum sample sizes for creel survey. Sunny computed the sample size based on the sample, but it has to come from the person who does expansion. For this project, it is best to work with Toby Matthews who has shared his code with Sunny. Ochavillo responded that they used 2009 to come up with the sample size, but they should be using the entire database. American Samoa is pursuing a variety of data collection improvement avenues.

4. Pacific Islands Fisheries Research Program

A. Action on the 2016 proposals

Sabater reported that six proposals were received from various agencies. The Council is planning on funding all proposals, and the FDCRC in the future will be the body to approve the proposals as opposed to the steering committee. Catch estimation, ecosystem modeling for American Samoa do to climate change impacts, connectivity of bigeye tuna in Hawaii, post-release mortality of sea turtles and cetaceans in pelagic fisheries, fishing perceptions on MPA citing, and ecosystem modeling for Hawaii ecosystem services were projects in the proposals received. The top three proposals of the steering committee review were evaluation of ecosystem services, trophic models for American Samoa, and the alternative estimation of annual catch. These three proposals have guaranteed funding and the other three are dependent on whether PIFSC has available funding to supplement.

Castro called for a motion on the floor to approve the proposals. Seman started the motion and Alton seconded the motion. Seman asked if there was any discrepancy in this if it would affect any other program; Sabater said that most of the projects support the Council's 5-year research priorities and do not remove funding from other programs. Members of the committee voted to accept the 2016 proposals. All members were in favor and the motion passed.

5. Alternative summarization and analytics interface

Bak gave an update of her CNMI database analytics. The project aims to provide DFW staff with real time access to the raw data and summarization tool that can be used to guide upcoming data collection. The system had already been installed and running through the local network. Currently the contractor is debugging the system and enhancing the performance of SHINY. Mitsuyasu asked if staff have been able to play with the application; Benavente responded that he has logged onto it and it is useful.

6. Report on the data requirement for the Annual/SAFE reports

Sabater reported that in order for the Council to finish the annual report on time, all the data needs to be in within two weeks of the New Year. There is some follow through required with

the agency directors to get these data in as soon as possible. The Plan Team did not recommend any new data collection activities with the exception of socioeconomic parameters. The issue with fishery performance is only getting the data in on time.

7. Report on FDCRC-Technical Committee

Tenorio reported on the action items and recommendation from the last meeting of the FDCRC. Most of the items were already addressed in previous agenda items.

8. Process for monitoring the regional strategic plan

Marlowe reported that the Technical Committee members had the homework of going over the matrix of the strategic plan to determine if the tasks had been completed, and status lines were provided.

9. FDCRC technical equivalent of Marine States Fisheries Commission

Sabater reported that the FDCRC is functioning in the same way as the Marine States Fisheries Commission. This means the FDCRC should be eligible for the RecFin funding, which in the past has only been available to areas with a marine states fisheries commission. Language will be added to the Council's SOPP to describe this functional equivalency.

10. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

11. Discussions and Recommendations

With respect to the ESA Section 7 consultation recommendation, there was some discussion on how to avoid this problem in the future. John Gourley recommended that USFWS and NMFS investigate the feasibility of establishing a programmatic agreement under the sportfish restoration program to address Ochavillo's concern over future delays associated with new listings, take prohibitions, or designations for critical habitat. This should be included in the letter to USFWS and NMFS.

The recommendations are included below:

Regarding fishery data collection, the Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee recommends the Council direct staff to establish a process for monitoring progress of activities addressing the strategic plan and incorporate that process in the FDCRC-Standard Operating Policy and Procedures.

Regarding fishery data access, the Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee recommends the Council direct staff to explore feasibility of a Memorandum of Agreement on data sharing and data confidentiality and work with fishery agency staff to solidify the Council's access to the Territorial and State fishery data.

Regarding funding for fishery data collection improvement, the Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee recommends the Council direct staff to work with State and Territory agencies to explore funding opportunities for international grants.

Regarding community outreach needs, the Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee recommends the Council request the State and Territory fishery agencies to provide feedback to NMFS-PIFSC Socio-Economic Program on the development of socio-economic outreach materials that will be disseminated to the fishing communities.

Regarding the data collection, the Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee recommends the Council request USFWS Sportfish Restoration Program and NMFS to expedite the resolution of the in-water activity prohibition due to the Section 7 consultation for the corals listed under ESA.

Regarding the FDCRC status as Marine State Fishery Commission, the Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee recommends the Council to work with NMFS on recognizing the FDCRC as a Regional Marine Fishery Commission in order to access the funds for data collection and research.

Regarding the PIFRP 2016 proposals, the Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee endorsed the following proposals for funding through SFF4 funds:

1. Evaluation of ecosystem services under human and environmental drivers in Hawaii;
2. Trophic models supporting ecosystem-based fisheries management and climate change planning in American Samoa;
3. Alternative estimation methods for annual catch of federally managed species in the Western Pacific;

Further, the committee recommends the Council work with NMFS in funding the remaining projects since it addresses the priorities identified in the MSRA Five Year Research Priorities