



Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 • Tel: 808.522.8220 • Fax: 808.522.8226 • www.wpcouncil.org

Differences between Traditional and Contemporary Fisheries Management

Traditional Management

- People an integral part of the natural ecosystem
- Continuous observation of the resource in its environment, substantial cumulative knowledge
- Source of knowledge was experiential
- Fishery access rights tied to customary, tenure system
- Management of resources at the community level
- Fishing methods using proper conduct at specific times and places
- Long management planning horizon (generations)
- Tighten, relax controls on resource use to match low or high cycles in resource productivity and social needs
- Integrated utilization and conservation

Contemporary Management

- Communities divorced from resource harvesting
- Short-term observation of the resource in its environment, brevity of data
- Source of knowledge is documents
- No private ownership of the resources, fisheries part of the commons

- Management of resources through a remote central authority
- Fishing controls using codified harvest and effort limits
- Short management planning horizon (political appointments)
- Conserve each species in its present abundance
- Conservation and utilization are different agendas



Management of Pacific Island Resources: Refining Current Management with Traditional Practices

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) is the policy making organization for the management of fisheries in the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ, generally 3-200 miles offshore) around the Territory of Guam, Territory of American Samoa, State of Hawaii, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and U.S. Pacific Island possessions, an area of 1.5 million square miles.



The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act puts fishery management partially in the hands of island peoples who are intimately familiar with the ecosystem.

The Council members and their island constituencies have the greatest long-term interest in not only conserving the fish stocks, but in reviving Pacific Islanders' traditionally strong relationship with the sea.

The work of the Council is about preserving the heritage for future generations while demand for the resource mounts and means of harvesting it grow every year.

The Central and Western Pacific is the last ocean where fish stocks have not been overfished.



Conservation Measures Adopted by the Western Pacific Fishery Council

- Amended the Magnuson-Stevens Act to protect the indigenous rights for islanders and to provide for their access to the fisheries by establishing the Western Pacific Community Development Program and the Western Pacific Community Demonstration Project Program
- Developed the Protected Species Zone to minimize interactions between longline fishing gear and protected species in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands
- Pioneered the use of vessel monitoring by satellite
- First to advocate the inclusion of highly migratory species (tuna in particular) within the Magnuson-Stevens Act
- Developed the first Fishery Ecosystem Plan in the U.S. (Coral Reef Ecosystem Fishery Management Plan)
- First to ban high-seas driftnet fishing and trawling
- Established limited entry programs for longline, handline and trap fisheries
- Moved from species-based to archipelago-based management, with enhanced community involvement and recognition of traditional knowledge

Similarities between Traditional and Contemporary Fisheries Management

Management Tool	Traditional	Contemporary
Size limits	Breeding stock was preserved	Preserve breeding stock and/or marketable products
Restricted areas	Social, cultural, and biological purposes	Social, jurisdictional purposes and biological uncertainty
Restricted times	To protect species during vulnerable periods and allow accumulation	To protect species during vulnerable periods
Species	Rights to harvest certain species limited by social and sacred controls	Management of fisheries is species specific
Participants	Fishing was a specialized activity that was performed by experts Rights to particular species went with user rights to the land, native land system, customary practice Resource users responsible for utilization and conservation	Limited Entry based on greatest historical participation Limited Entry based on greatest historical participation Resource users integrated into policy making process

