



## **Report of the CNMI-Mariana Archipelago FEP Advisory Panel Meeting**

Thursday, June 13, 2019

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Micronesian Environmental Services Conference Room  
Garapan, Saipan, CNMI

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

CNMI Advisory Panel (AP) Vice Chair Richard Farrell opened the meeting. In attendance was Michael Fleming, Jun Yamagishi, and Cecilio Raiukiulipiy. Also in attendance was John Gourley (Council Vice Chair), Floyd Masga and Joshua DeMello (Council Staff).

### **2. Review of the last AP meeting and recommendations**

The Vice Chair reviewed the last AP meeting in March 2019, noting that members worked on finalizing its AP plans and no recommendations were made to the Council. He did acknowledge that the Council recommended, at its 176<sup>th</sup> meeting, to solicit for alternates to the CNMI AP. He said that the solicitation notice was provided to the AP, who sent it out wider for potential applicants.

### **3. 178<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting Action Items and Issues**

#### **a. US Territory Longline Bigeye Catch/Allocation Limits**

Council staff presented on the Council's proposed action to establish catch and/or allocation limits for territorial longline bigeye catch. The options being considered would either establish or not establish an overall catch limit for each US Territory, and either establish or not establish a limit on the amount of catch that can be allocated to other parts of the US longline fishery. The AP reviewed these options and discussed whether or not an annual limit is needed, as the CNMI is considered a "Small Island Developing State" or SIDS under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and therefore not subject to a catch limit. The AP noted that in the past, they have always favored an increase in catch and allocation limits. *The AP decided that the third option, not specifying a catch limit and increasing the amount of catch that can be allocated would be best for CNMI. They also agreed that these specifications should be set on a four-year cycle.*

#### **b. Annual SAFE Report Updates**

Council staff noted that the Annual SAFE Reports will be completed by the end of June and explained what the report is and that it is used to monitor the fisheries. The AP noted the importance of looking at the annual reports, especially in light of the results of the draft stock assessment for their bottomfish fishery. AP members expressed their concerns over the data used in the stock assessment. The Vice Chair shared his communication with his counterpart in Guam who is looking into a potential sharing of Annual Catch Limits on an archipelagic scale. He noted that there needs to be more and better data for the entire archipelago to accurately assess the fisheries as the data doesn't accurately reflect the reality that fishermen are experiencing.

### **4. CNMI Reports**

Council staff provided a synopsis of the reports that are provided to the Council at its 178<sup>th</sup> meeting, including the island, legislative, enforcement, community activities and issues, and education and outreach reports. AP members discussed the status of Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) and the issues with procurement procedures. They noted that this is the biggest hurdle to getting the FADs placed in the water.

## 5. Report on Mariana FEP Advisory Panel Plan

The AP members discussed their AP plan for 2019-2022. The Vice Chair suggested that the meet later to determine which projects are achievable and which ones provide the greater local impact that can be addressed utilizing local resources. The AP agreed to continue to discuss the plan and prioritizing actions in the plan.

## 6. Island Fishery Issues & Activities

The AP members provided the following issues for discussion:

- **US Coast Guard:** AP members were concerned with fishermen getting stopped on the ocean in the USCG's monitoring of criminal activities. Instead, the members suggested that the USCG should be recruiting fishermen to help them in their monitoring and helping the fishing community in order for the fishing community to be active eyes and ears for the USCG. They suggested the USCG assisting in deploying FADs in order to help DFW reduce costs and expedite the deployment of FADs around CNMI.
- **Disaster Relief:** AP members noted that fishers on Tinian are looking for assistance due to last year's storms in CNMI. They noted that both FEMA and SBA loans are available and will work with the community to help them
- **Shark Depredation:** Fishermen in the CNMI continue to be affected by shark depredation and the AP members will continue to work with staff on a shark project to identify and quantify the shark depredation issue.
- **Territorial Bottomfish:** An AP Member noted his participation in the review of the draft stock assessment for territorial bottomfish. He stated that the CNMI has good data but still needs to improve the data collection procedures and education on the use of the data. Vendors need to be educated on how to complete forms and provide the data. Fishermen will also need to be aware of the mandatory reporting requirements as well. AP members also plan on participating on a radio talk show to discuss the importance of data.
- **Upcoming High School Summer Course:** The AP discussed the upcoming high school summer course on fisheries that is sponsored by the Council and noted their participation as guest lecturers/instructors. Another AP member noted the efforts on Tinian with its own course, FISH 101 by Mr. John Kaneko, and yet another course being put on by the Saipan Fishermen's Association. This shows that there is a thirst for fishery knowledge in the CNMI and the AP plans to coordinate better with all of the programs in order to work efficiently in the CNMI.

## 7. Public Comments

There were not public comments.

## 8. Discussion and Recommendations

The CNMI Advisory Panel made the following recommendations to the Council:

### *Regarding US Territorial Longline Bigeye Tuna Catch/Allocation Limits:*

- **The AP recommended the Council select option 3, to not specify an annual catch limit and to provide an allocation limit of up to 2,000 mt. Further, the AP recommended the Council provide this specification on a four year cycle starting in 2020 (2020-2023).**

### *Regarding CNMI Fisheries:*

- **The AP recommended the Council request the US Coast Guard's assistance for the deployment of Fish Aggregation Devices in the region.**

## 9. Other Business

There was no other business.