

# Pacific Islands Fishery News

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## Fishery's Role Elevated in New Guam, CNMI Administrations



At the Jan. 14, 2019, CNMI inauguration (from left) are Lt. Gov. Arnold Palacios and his wife, Wella Sablan Palacios; Guam Gov. Lourdes Aflague "Lou" Leon Guerrero and Guam First Gentleman Jeffrey Cook; and Gov. Ralph Torres with CNMI First Lady Diann Mendiola Tudela Torres.

On Jan. 7, 2019, the first-ever woman governor, Lourdes Aflague "Lou" Leon Guerrero, was inaugurated in Guam. The following week, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Senate President Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan) took their oaths of office as the ninth governor and 12th lieutenant governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Both administrations met with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, expressing the importance of fisheries in their respective territory and sharing their visions for working with the Council.

Gov. Leon Guerrero, the Maga'Håga (female head leader in Chamorro, used today in reference to the governor or his wife), said that fisheries "is critical to economic development

and food security" and "will have a "significant role in her administration." The main fishery issues for her are "ensuring a healthy growth in our fish population, both pelagic and reef; restoring the health of our coral reefs; developing a thriving fisheries industry that evolves at a sustainable level of growth; substantially increasing our economic capacity through the development and support of locally owned fisheries businesses; and improving the health of our people by encouraging the 'eat what you grow or catch' mindset."

The Maga'Håga said she hopes "the Council will be a solid source of technical assistance and capacity building" for Chelsa Muña-Brecht, the new acting director of Guam's Department of Agriculture (DOA), and her team. In her capacity at the DOA, Muña-Brecht will also serve as one of the Council's 13 voting members.

Leon Guerrero said she wants "the people of Guam to benefit from a flourishing economy surrounded by healthy oceans, abundant fish populations, and supported by a responsible natural resource management." She said her administration "will seize every sustainable opportunity to make this happen."

"We have a lot of potential for meaningful, sustainable growth," noted Muña-Brecht. She said the Governor's commitment to expanding fisheries was one of the reasons she was inspired to work in the DOA with the new Administration. Muña-Brecht said implementing the rules and regulations already in place for fishing permits and reporting, gathering accurate quantitative data pertinent to fisheries management and conservation and increasing access for fishermen are among the main fishery issues for the department. She said that the Guam DOA has been given a mission to develop an Agricultural Masterplan and that it is imperative that a solid framework be established for the fisheries component of the plan.

Also new in Guam politics is the role of Michael Franklin Quitugua "Mike" San Nicholas (D-Guam) as a freshman Delegate to the US House of Representatives. San Nicholas previously served as a senator in the 34th Guam Legislature.

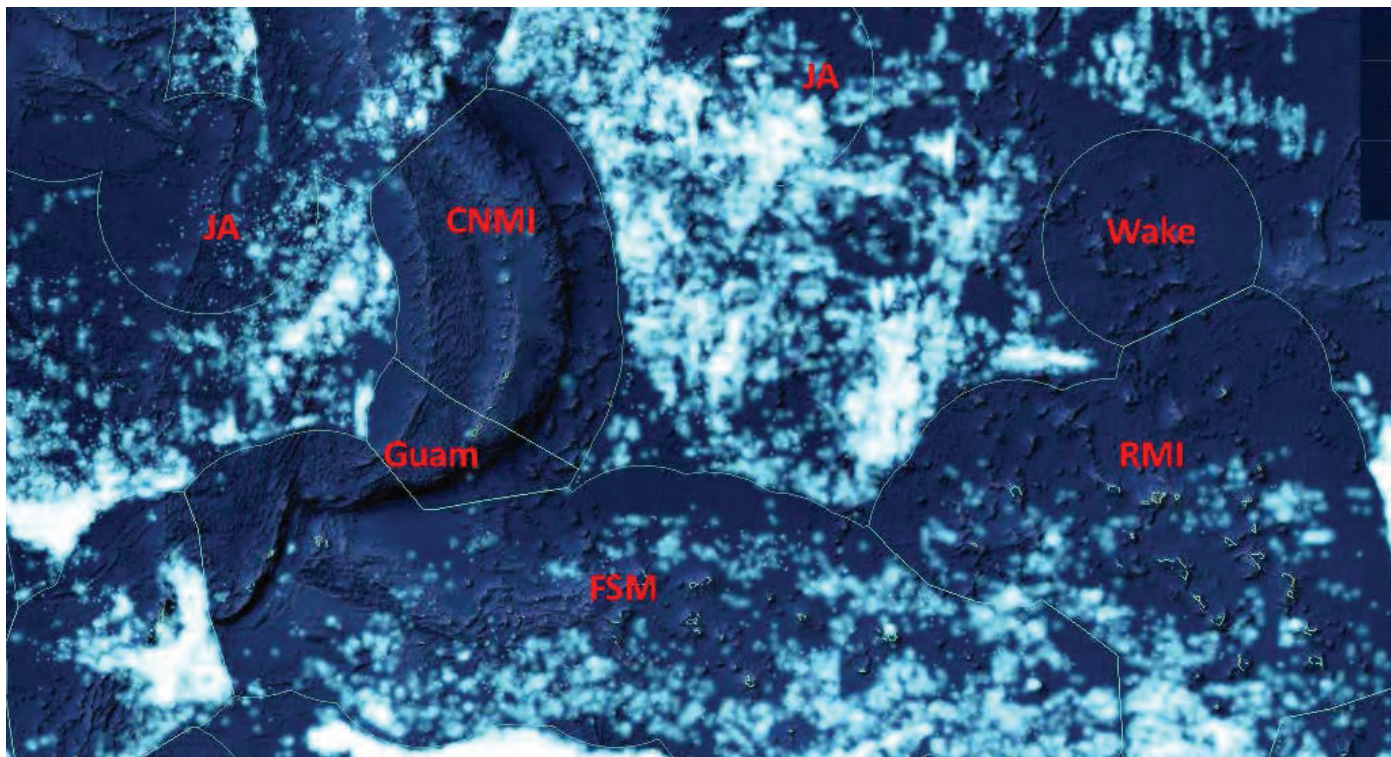


US Rep. Michael San Nicholas (D-Guam).

In the CNMI, Torres (R-Saipan) and Palacios are not new to fishery issues or working with the Council. Torres has served as the ninth Governor of CNMI since the death of Gov. Eloy Inos in late 2015 and is the youngest standing governor in the United States. Palacios has been involved with the Council for 36 years,

# Fishery's Role Elevated in New Guam, CNMI Administrations

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Six months fishing effort Jan 1 - June 30, 2018, shows high levels of activity adjacent to the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) around Guam and the CNMI but little to no activity within the EEZ. Source: Global Fishing Watch.



Anthony Benavente, CNMI DLNR secretary, working with Council Program Officer Mark Mitsuyasu and Council Executive Director Kitty M. Simonds. Photo courtesy of Rufin Inos

serving as an observer from 1983 to 1985 before the Northern Mariana Islands received its full commonwealth status with the United States, as a Council member from 2011 to 2014 and as Council chair in 2013 and 2014. He was also the former secretary of the CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources (DLNR), CNMI Senate president and CNMI House speaker. Anthony Benavente is the current DLNR secretary.

"We have a really good fishing industry here, but we need a lot of technical assistance for our fisheries and our fishermen

on how to fish properly commercially, how to protect and preserve the fish and how to market the fish," Gov. Torres told the Council. "The economy here has grown, and the demand for fresh fish is a mandatory need. Nothing beats eating your own fresh fish."

Palacios said that, over the years, members of the Council and federal agencies have put out a lot of efforts to assist CNMI and other US Territories to develop and manage their fisheries. "A lot of these programs—whether conservation measures, management measures or tangible fisheries development projects—have been possible through cooperative partnership with the Council," he noted.

"The Council has long recognized the huge fisheries development potential for both domestic and export markets in the CNMI and Guam," said Council Executive Director Kitty M. Simonds. "Bottomfish resources are healthy and abundant. Historically, the area has had skipjack tuna industry. Today, surveillance images reveal active fishing occurring around the area immediately adjacent the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surrounding Guam and CNMI but next to none within the EEZ. This can be seen as a lost opportunity."

Simonds said that upcoming projects in the Mariana Archipelago include, among others, research to mitigate the long-standing problem of shark predation, as well as training for the next generation of fishermen in the region.



# Aunu'u Receives Equipment to Boost Its Alia Fishery



*High Chief Titiali'i Kitara Vaiau says the project as an important step in the development of the island's fishery. Photo by Sylvia Spalding.*

**On Aunu'u island,** the small double-hulled *alia* vessels pull double duty. They provide subsistence fishing for pelagic and bottomfish species as well as transportation to and from the island to the main island of Tutuila.

Members of the Aunu'u Council of Chiefs, on behalf of the Aunu'u Alia Association, asked the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council for help with the development of their *alia* fishery. The project includes installation of a flake ice machine and storage bin for use by the island's *alia* fishermen.

The availability of flake ice on the island will allow Aunu'u fishermen to improve the quality of their catch for both commercial and communal exchange purposes. Being isolated from the main island of Tutuila, the residents depend on fish caught by the village's *alia* owners for food and to contribute to community *fa'alavelave* (any event in the Samoan culture that involves the gathering of extended family and community members).

The village of Aunu'u and the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) staff will ensure the ice machine and storage bin are well-maintained and the water filter is tested and replaced regularly. As a part of the project, the Aunu'u Alia Association members will provide catch data to the DMWR's Fisheries Division at regular intervals.

Aunu'u Island's representative to the American Samoa Legislature, High Chief Titiali'i Kitara Vaiau, sees the project as an important step in the development of the island's fishery. According to Vaiau, the equipment will allow fishermen to provide higher quality fish to the local markets and also contribute to the new effort by Island Fisheries Inc. to export fresh fish to off-island markets.



*Aunu'u island. Photo by Nate Ilaoa.*



*Alia anchored at the harbor in Aunu'u with the main island of Tutuila in the distance. Photo by Sylvia Spalding.*



*Housing for the ice machine and storage bin is in the Department of Public Works building, left of the boat ramp. Photo by Sylvia Spalding.*





DMWR Director Henry Sesepasara (front row, 4th from left), with the tournament participants. Photo courtesy of American Samoa DMWR.

## Ofu and Olosega Host Inaugural Manu'a Alia Fishing Tournament

The Ofu-based fishermen's association, Fale Lua Nu'u Fishermen's Cooperative, held its inaugural Tautai O Manu'a Fishing Tournament on Dec. 20 and 21, 2018, with the support of the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. The tournament was open to only *alia* boats based in Manu'a, the eastern most group of islands in the territory of American Samoa. *Alia* is the Samoan name for small, double-hulled catamaran fishing boats.

Eight *alia* fishing boats participated, including one based on Ta'u Island and seven based on the sister islands of Ofu and Olosega, which are connected by a bridge.



Dustin Snow of Island Fisheries Inc. holding the largest catch of the tournament, a 58-pound trevally. Photo courtesy of American Samoa DMWR.

The coordinators and participants of the Manu'a *alia* tournament were not deterred by an unforeseen event that shortened the originally scheduled three-day tournament to one and a half days of fishing. The local government's vessel *MV Sili*, which carried tournament supplies from Tutuila, was delayed getting to Ofu. The supplies included fuel for participating boats and fishing totes, large coolers, ice and prizes for the tournament winners and raffle drawing. The Council donated the fuel; the fishermen's association applied the collected registration fee (\$150 per boat) toward the cash prizes; and DMWR purchased the other prizes.

The tournament aimed to energize *alia* owners on Ofu and Olosega to increase fishing effort and the amount of fish sent to Tutuila. One of the opportunities now open to those Manu'a-based fishermen is selling their catch to Island Fisheries Inc., a new local business that buys fresh fish from local fishermen for export to off-island markets. Company representative Dustin Snow traveled to Manu'a for the tournament and to talk with the fishermen about handling and shipping methods to improve the quality of the fish.



Manu'a Islands map. Courtesy of National Park Service.

Fishing began Thursday afternoon and continued early Friday morning, concluding at 4 p.m. Participants fished for both bottomfish and pelagic species. Target pelagic species included billfish, yellowfin tuna, mahimahi, wahoo and miscellaneous fish (including but not limited to dogtooth, skipjack tuna, trevally, rainbow runner and barracuda). Bottomfish target species included snappers, groupers, emperors, jacks and jobfish. DMWR staff handled weighing duties for the tournament, which landed more than 700 pounds of fish.

Cash prizes were awarded for the heaviest catch weight for each of the species categories in trolling and for total weight for bottomfish. Pita Ili's *alia* took home the grand prize, a fuel drum, for the most combined weight from both bottomfishing and trolling.

The weighed catch from the tournament was donated to the community churches and the elderly residents of Ofu and Olosega Islands. Some fish was also provided for the crews of the *MV Sili* and *Segaula* vessels, which transported the DMWR staff and supplies to the tournament.

Based on the success of the tournament despite the delay, the Fale Lua Nu'u Fishermen's Cooperative plans to make it an annual event the week before Christmas and the Ta'u Island Tai Samasama Fishermen's Cooperative is planning its own tournament on Ta'u Island in April 2019.





*E/V Sivaimoana unloads MSC-certified albacore to StarKist Samoa.*

## Council Assists with American Samoa Longline MSC Certification Review

On Jan. 31, 2019, StarKist's Director of Procurement Cary Gann and Council staff met in Honolulu with a third-party group to conduct an annual "surveillance audit" of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for albacore and yellowfin caught in the American Samoa-based longline fishery. The fishery obtained its MSC certification in November 2017 through funding provided

by StarKist and on the basis of the Council's comprehensive management regime for pelagic longline fisheries.

Albacore and yellowfin landed by American Samoa longline vessels and offloaded at StarKist's Pago Pago cannery receive a premium on a per ton basis as a result of the MSC certification. The premium provided to the American Samoa longline vessels is helpful in combatting difficult economic conditions that have plagued the fleet for the last decade. The annual review is ongoing and should be completed by mid-2019.



*MSC certification ecolabel*

## Wholesaler Fresh Island Fish Transitions to New Ownership

In November 2018, the Dang 'ohana purchased Fresh Island Fish (FIF) from founder Bruce Johnson. Johnson started FIF in 1977 and grew it to be one of Hawai'i's largest seafood distributors. FIF has facilities on O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and the Big Island. They supply restaurants and retail markets with high quality pelagic and bottomfish seafood products from both Hawai'i fishermen and foreign sources. The popular Uncle's seafood restaurant at Honolulu Harbor's Pier 38 remains under Johnson and was not included in the sale.

The Dangs have been fishing with longline vessels out of Hawai'i for more than 30 years and own companies that service longline vessels with fuel and supplies. With the purchase of FIF, the Dangs and their associated businesses demonstrate an extensive integration within the Hawai'i longline fishery and broader Hawai'i seafood industry.



*The Princess Jasmine is one the longline vessels owned by the Dang 'ohana*

# WCPFC Fails to Increase Hawai'i Longline Bigeye Quota

From Dec. 10 to 14, 2018, the Western and Central Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) held its fifteenth regular meeting at the Honolulu Convention Center. The center holds historical significance to WCPFC, as it is where the Honolulu Convention that created the Commission was signed in 2000. This international regional fishery management organization develops management measures for tuna and tuna-like fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, including those operating in the US exclusive economic zone waters surrounding Hawai'i and other US Pacific Islands. The stocks of skipjack, yellowfin, albacore and bigeye that account for 60 percent of global tuna landings, as well as stocks of billfish and sharks, are under the purview of the WCPFC.



WCPFC15 opened with a traditional Hawaiian blessing by Kahu (preist) Kaleo Patterson and opening remarks from WCPFC Chair Rhea Medine Moss-Christian and Executive Director Feleti P Teo (seated at the podium).

Notable issues addressed at the meeting included at-sea labor standards; harvest strategies; target reference points for South Pacific albacore; mitigation of shark, bird and turtle bycatch; compliance monitoring; redefining fish aggregating devices (FADs) employed in purse-seine fisheries; and conservation and management measures for tuna stocks.

The latter issue was a hot topic among the US delegation, which proposed increasing the bigeye tuna quota for the Honolulu-based US longline fishery by 1,070 metric tons (mt). The proposal was based on the positive information regarding the stock status as well as WCPFC provisions that allow the Commission to consider a member country's level of monitoring and control, accuracy of data and

contribution to the conduct of scientific research in the Convention area when determining quota allocations.

## Basis for US Proposal to WCPFC

Convention Article 10.3, on criteria for the allocation of catches and fishing effort, states that among other factors, the following shall be taken into account: "the respective contributions of participants to conservation and management of the stocks, including the provision by them of accurate data and their contribution to the conduct of scientific research in the Convention Area."

Convention Article 29.1 states, "In order to support efforts to ensure accurate reporting of catches, the members of the Commission shall encourage their fishing vessels, to the extent practicable, to conduct transshipment in port."

Conservation and management measure (CMM) 2017-01, paragraph 40, states: "The Commission shall review the bigeye catch limits specified ... in 2018 and 2019 based on any revised stock assessments and the recommendations of the Scientific Committee. The Commission may also take into account in setting any bigeye catch limits any plan submitted to the Secretariat by [Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei, China, Indonesia or the United States] to increase the level of monitoring and control of its longline vessels fishing in the Convention Area."

The US longline fishery for bigeye has observer coverage of 20 to 25 percent and is the only WCPFC member country to consistently meet the WCPFC minimum observer coverage of 5 percent. The United States has in-port monitoring of about 95 percent of the longline vessels that end their trips in Honolulu and essentially no at-sea transshipments in the fishery. The US proposal would have increased the quota of member countries that do not transship at sea by 10 percent. At-sea transshipment is considered to be a point where illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing can be masked.

Members of the US delegation, including Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council staff, contended that increasing the US longline-caught bigeye tuna quota by 1,070 mt would not inhibit the stock from maintaining biological reference points or risk breaching recommended fishing mortality limits. This was based on evidence from projections by the Commission's science providers. These stock projections assumed that participating countries would catch their allocated quotas, which has not been the reality for most members. Despite these points, other Commission delegations resisted the proposed measure, instead rolling over the previous conservation and management measure for tuna to be applicable through 2020. (See figure below).

CCM	2017 Catch (mt)	2018 Catch Limit (mt)	2019-2020 Catch Limit (mt)
Japan	11,669	17,765	17,765
Korea	10,220	13,942	13,942
Chinese Taipei	9,638	10,481	10,481
China	7,023	8,724	8,724
Indonesia	13	5,889	5,889
USA	2,968	3,554	3,554

**WCPFC Longline Bigeye Tuna Limits 2019-2020:** a) Japan to provide an annual 500 mt transfer to China; b) No longline catch limits for Small Island Developing States and Participating Territories; c) Other commission members, cooperating nonmembers and Participating Territories (collectively, CCMs) catching less than 2,000 mt can catch up to 2,000 mt; d) If CCMs exceed limits, overage will be deducted from following year's quota. Source: 2017 catch limits as reported by CCMs. Note: Hawai'i longline vessels operating under the US limit and US Participating Territory agreements landed 5,358 mt in 2017.



Target reference points for South Pacific albacore was another topic of interest to the United States and the Council. Despite the South Pacific albacore stock being far above biological reference points and landing record total catches in 2017, many small island nations and territories (including American Samoa) are experiencing economic hardship in their fisheries as their longline catch rates have declined. Some island delegations noted China's harvest of 45 percent of the albacore in 2017. To placate concerns that China is putting island fisheries into a precarious state, the Commission agreed to interim target reference points over 20 years. They include a spawning biomass that exceeds 56 percent of the spawning biomass in absence of fishing and an 8-percent increase in catch per unit effort from 2013 levels. The Commission's science providers will investigate ways to achieve these targets. The Commission will review the target reference point every three years.



marlin is experiencing overfishing and is overfished (per most recent stock assessments) and that a benchmark North Pacific

The Commission was unable to agree on the designation of North Pacific striped marlin as a northern stock. The Commission acknowledged that North Pacific striped

striped marlin assessment will be presented in 2019. At each of the last four WCPFC Science Committee meetings, a rebuilding plan was approved and recommended but with little follow-up action. The Commission said a rebuilding plan for North Pacific striped marlin should be an urgent priority pending the outcome of the 2019 stock assessment. Countries that harvest striped marlin were urged to provide a rebuilding plan at WCPFC16.

A notable positive outcome of WCPFC15 was a resolution encouraging members to adopt laws implementing internationally accepted minimum labor standards in the fishing industry. The resolution, while non-binding, is a promising step toward assuring enforcement of at-sea labor standards and the safety of fishing crews. The standards include written contractual agreements, reasonable access to disembark fishing vessels with repatriation to home countries and sufficient access to fresh water, proper nutrition and hygiene.

Other continuing issues addressed at WCPFC15 included compliance monitoring and documenting fisheries. The United States and its territories were once again considered compliant in all fisheries reporting and practices. Ongoing and unresolved issues (such as FADs, bycatch mitigation and any interim management measures) will be addressed at WCPFC16, which will take place December 2019 in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. A summary report of the WCPFC15 meeting is available at [www.wcpfc.int/](http://www.wcpfc.int/).



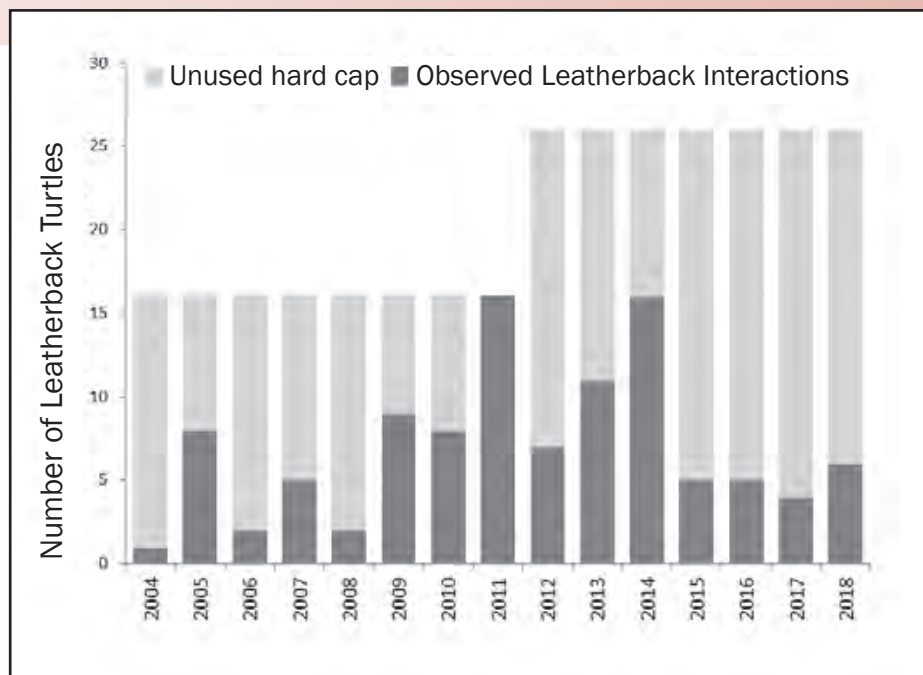
*More than 550 persons from 33 countries and seven territories participated in WCPFC15.*

# Federal Shutdown Impacts Decision on Hawai'i Swordfish Longline Fishery

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council met on Dec. 17, 2018, to consider whether additional conservation measures may be necessary to mitigate Hawai'i swordfish longline fishery's interactions with leatherback sea turtles. After reviewing various alternatives, including individual trip interaction limits, individual annual vessel hard caps and spatial management options, the Council decided to delay action until more complete information is available in the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Biological Opinion (BiOp) currently under development.

Michael Tosatto, regional administrator for the NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office, said at the December meeting that a draft BiOp would be completed by Jan. 31, 2019. The Council expected to reconvene in early February after release of the draft BiOp. However, its completion date was delayed due to the 35-day government shutdown, and a draft BiOp is now expected on March 25, 2019. The Council may consider taking up the leatherback action at its next scheduled meeting March 18 to 21, 2019, if sufficient information from the draft BiOp can be made available to the Council in advance.

The Council previously considered conservation measures for both loggerhead and leatherback turtles at its 173rd meeting in June 2018 in an effort to establish a management framework that includes a mechanism for early detection and response to higher interaction anomalies or hotspots. At the time, the Council focused its recommendations on loggerhead turtles in response to a higher number of interactions observed during the 2017-2018 fishing season. Recent NMFS population vulnerability assessments first presented to the Council at its 174th meeting in October 2018 indicate that the long-term outlook for loggerheads is promising with a 2.4 percent annual growth while the projection for leatherbacks has an estimated 5.3 percent decline over the next century. This projection, while cause for concern, is tempered by recent data showing some rebound capacity with an increase in nest counts since 2013 at two beaches in Indonesia that account for 85 percent of the Pacific leatherback



Leatherback interactions in the Hawai'i swordfish fishery have remained rare and relatively stable since circle hooks and mackerel-type bait were required in 2004. The fishery has 100 percent observer coverage and all leatherback turtles have been released alive.

nesting population. Impacts to the leatherback population include poaching and predation on nesting beaches as well as interactions with international fisheries. Conservation projects are ongoing on nesting beaches, and regional fishery management organizations are developing international mitigation measures.

The Hawai'i swordfish fishery was closed from May 8 to Dec. 31, 2018, and reopened on Jan. 1, 2019, following a court-approved settlement agreement resulting from a split Ninth Circuit decision. The lawsuit settlement also vacated the loggerhead turtle portions of the 2012 BiOp and required NMFS to revert the fleet-wide loggerhead turtle interaction limits (known as hard caps) from 34 interactions per year to 17 per year based on a 2004 BiOp. The fleet-wide hard cap for leatherback turtles remains at 26 interactions per year, based on the 2012 BiOp. Should either interaction level be reached, the fishery will close for the remainder of 2019. The current hard caps of 17 loggerhead turtle interactions and 26 leatherback turtle interactions will remain in place until the BiOp currently in development is completed and NMFS implements new regulations.

Since 2004, when use of circle hooks and mackerel-type bait (as opposed to squid) became mandatory, the Hawai'i swordfish fishery's interactions with loggerhead and leatherback sea turtles have been rare events. The 2005-2018 annual averages are 7.5 interactions with leatherbacks and 12.4 interactions with loggerheads. These statistics are based on 14 years of data collected by NMFS observers, who are

required to be on every Hawai'i longline vessel on every trip targeting swordfish. Based on the observer data, nearly all the turtles have been released alive. However, NMFS considers about 20 percent of the leatherback turtle interactions to result in mortality based principally on the trailing fishing gear on the released turtles and about 15 percent of the loggerhead turtle interactions to result in mortality primarily due to ingested gear.

At the December 2018 meeting, the Council considered NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center's simulations applying potential trip-based and vessel-based mitigation measures to historic interaction rates in the fishery. Because sea turtle interactions are already rare, most options are not expected to result in substantial reduction in interaction rates, but some options may reduce the amount or impact of take. Accordingly, the Council will consider whether additional mitigation is needed once the draft BiOp and more complete information on the impacts of the fishery on leatherback turtle population are available to inform the Council decision.

The meeting concluded with the Council reiterating the recommendation it made in June 2018 requesting that NMFS provide funding to support research in minimizing trailing gear to further reduce post-hooking mortality rates of leatherback and loggerhead turtles. Development of additional tools and techniques would allow quick and safe removal of trailing gear for large turtles that cannot be brought on board.

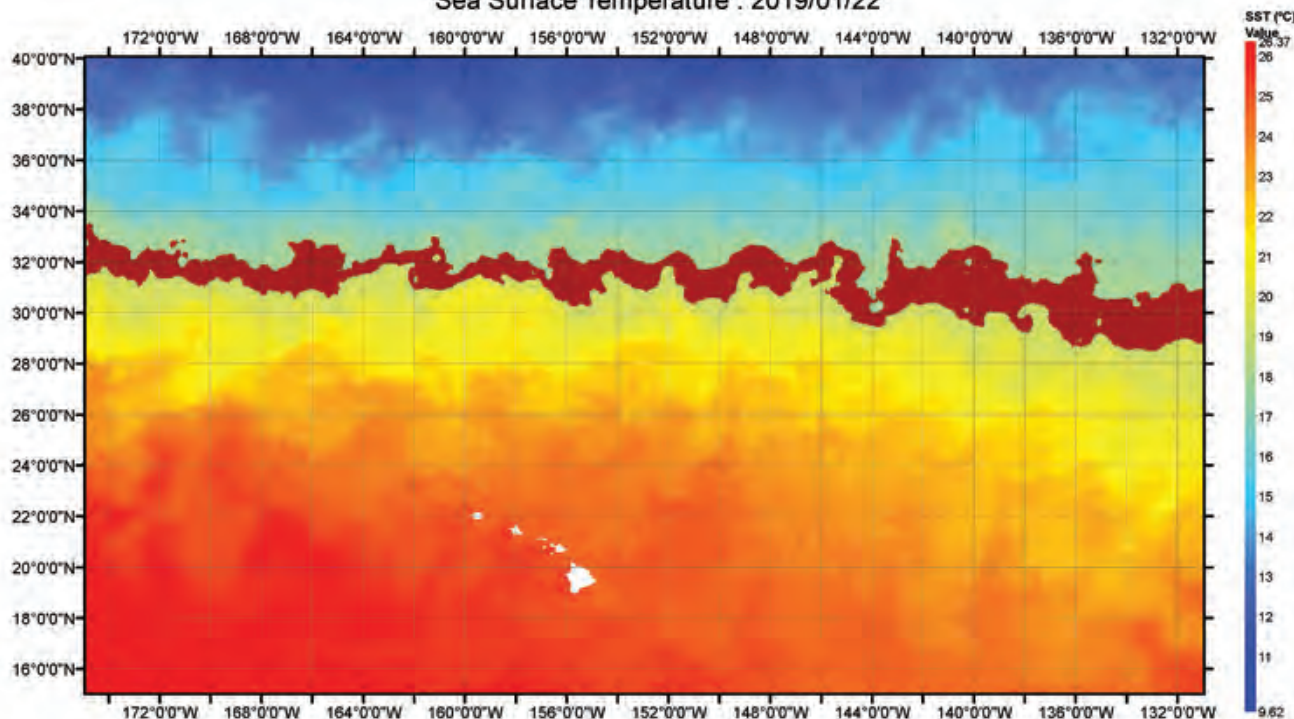


## EXPERIMENTAL PRODUCT

Avoid fishing in the brown area, between 17.5 and 18.5°C sea surface temperature (or between 63.5 and 65.5°F) to help reduce interactions with loggerhead sea turtles.

For any question: [melanie.abecassis@noaa.gov](mailto:melanie.abecassis@noaa.gov)

Sea Surface Temperature : 2019/01/22



*TurtleWatch update for Jan. 21, 2019. PIFSC scientist, Council staff and industry coordinated to restart the TurtleWatch daily updates during the government shutdown.*

## TurtleWatch

One of the federal programs impacted by the government shutdown was TurtleWatch, a tool developed for Hawai'i swordfish longline fishermen by NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC). TurtleWatch is a daily map showing the sea surface temperature range where incidental interactions with loggerhead turtles are likely to be higher. The map helps fishermen avoid loggerhead turtle interactions and stay below the fleet-wide interaction limit known as the hard cap. Under normal government operations, TurtleWatch is updated daily on PIFSC's website and sent to interested fishermen through automated emails.

Last season, the swordfish fishery encountered an unusually high number of loggerhead turtle interactions in December 2017 and January 2018 that brought on a potential for a hard cap closure early in the calendar year. As industry members became aware of the higher number of loggerhead turtles, they turned to TurtleWatch to find areas where they could continue fishing while avoiding turtle interactions, allowing them to remain operating into May when a lawsuit settlement closed the fishery for the remainder of 2018 (see main article).

As the federal government entered what became the longest shut-down in history, the Hawai'i swordfish longline fishery reopened on January 1 under a restricted loggerhead turtle

hard cap of 17 interactions. Shortly after, industry members who were eager to stay on alert for potential higher loggerhead turtle interactions contacted the Council with concerns that TurtleWatch was not being updated. The government shutdown had affected the NOAA servers needed for the daily TurtleWatch updates, leaving swordfish fishermen without access to the map.

Fortunately, the scientist in charge of TurtleWatch was on duty during the shutdown and eager to restart the daily updates to the swordfish fleet. With the NOAA servers down, Council staff stepped in to facilitate daily TurtleWatch delivery to industry members. As of Feb. 1, TurtleWatch was online at [www.pifsc.noaa.gov/eod/turtlewatch.php](http://www.pifsc.noaa.gov/eod/turtlewatch.php).

## Council, NMFS Pick Up Pieces as Government Reopens



Photo by Sylvia Spalding

**Prior to President Trump's announcement** on Jan. 26, 2019, that the government would reopen at least until Feb. 15, plans for the March meetings of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) were up in the air. Without the government opening, the required Federal Register notice for the meetings would not have published. Also, documents from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) needed for the Council to make decisions would not have been prepared. With a three-week window of opportunity, the Council is working to ensure that the meeting notice is published in the Federal Register before Feb. 15. Still, with the backload of work at NMFS after the 35-day shutdown, completion of needed documents in time for the Council and SSC meetings is still an uncertainty.

The Western Pacific Stock Assessment Review (WPSAR) of the benchmark stock assessment on bottomfish in the US Territories of American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands had been scheduled for the week of Feb. 11. It was canceled due to concerns that NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and Pacific Islands Regional Office might not finish the needed preparations for that meeting. The WPSAR review has been rescheduled for April 15-19, 2019.

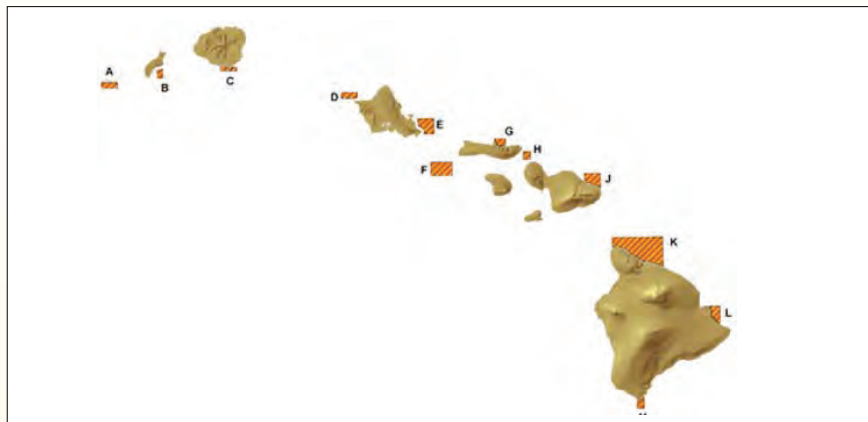
The list of actions awaiting NMFS completion includes review and transmission of a host of past Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan recommendations made previously by the Council (e.g., the American Samoa Large Vessel Prohibited Area, American Samoa longline permit modifications, Amendment 7 modifications, and American Samoa longline swordfish trip limit, to name a few).

Along with the Council and NMFS, fishermen in the Western Pacific Region were directly impacted by the shutdown. For example, in Hawai'i, the NOAA longline permit renewals and online protected species workshops were not available.

## Hawai'i to Open Four Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas

**At its meeting on Jan. 11, 2019**, the Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) voted to open four main Hawaiian Island (MHI) Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas (BRFAs): C (Poipu, Kaua'i), F (Penguin Banks), J (Hana, Maui), and L (Leleiwi, Hawai'i Island) and delegated authority to the BLNR chairperson to implement the decision. In three years, the BLNR will review the effectiveness of the action as well as records of the remaining eight BRFAs. Members of the Board who were not opposed to the idea of opening all of the BRFA were constrained in their actions as the proposal before the board was for opening only four BRFAs.

During the public testimony period of the BLNR meeting, commercial and recreational bottomfish fishermen, non-bottomfish fishermen and scientists were in agreement that all of the State's BRFAs should be opened. They said it was unreasonable to have the fishery managed under both BRFAs and annual catch limits (ACLs). They argued for removal of the BRFAs and keeping the ACLs. The latter are required by federal law for fisheries operating seaward of state waters, i.e., seaward of 3 miles from shore. Fishermen and other members of the public acknowledged concerns about overexploitation, enforcement and the contribution of the BRFAs to the Deep-7 biomass. However, they made clear their care for these areas and said they don't intend to ruin them. When asked by the Board to provide expert comments, Marlowe Sabater, marine ecosystem scientist for the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, reiterated the Council's longstanding recommendation, based on the review of its Scientific and Statistical Committee, that there is no scientific justification for retaining any of the BRFAs because the fishery is managed under an ACL and the results of an evaluation on the effectiveness of the BRFAs are inconclusive.



State of Hawai'i Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas. The Hawai'i BLNR voted to open areas C, F, J and L. Source: <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/fishing/bottom-fishing/>.

The Deep 7 bottomfish species consist of 'ula'ula koa'e or onaga (*Etelis coruscans*), 'ula'ula or ehu (*E. carbunculus*), kalekale (*Pristipomoides sieboldii*), 'ōpakapaka (*P. filamentosus*), 'ūkikiki or gindai (*P. zonatus*), hāpu'upu'u (*Epinephelus quernus*) and lehi (*Aphareus rutilans*).

In 1998, the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources, established 19 BRFAs to provide refuge and conserve spawning populations for these deep-water species. This was in response to a federal assessment that suggested certain species were experiencing overfishing. In 2007, the 19 BRFAs were reduced to 12, but the total area of quality bottomfish habitat within the remaining BRFAs was expanded.

In February 2018, the Pacific Island Fishery Science Center (PIFSC) completed a stock assessment for the MHI Deep-7 bottomfish. The stock assessment integrated input from fishermen to produce one of the most comprehensive assessments completed for this fishery to date. It indicated that the stock is not overfished or experiencing overfishing. The recommended ACL for the MHI Deep 7 is 492,000 pounds for fishing year 2018-2019. The average commercial take for the past 10 years has been around 251,000 pounds.



# Hundreds Attend Hawai'i Noncommercial Fisheries Meetings



Study group members provide background on the RPL.

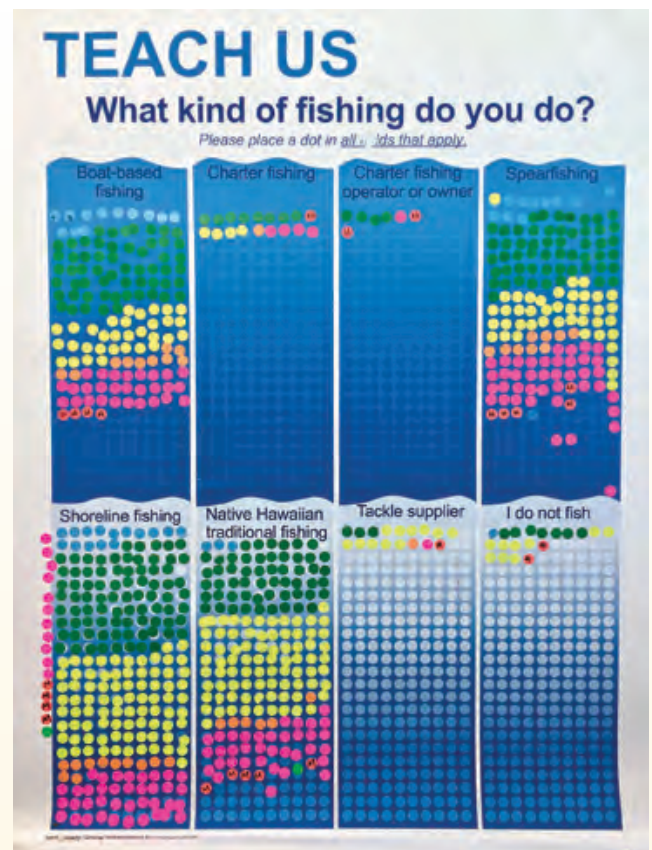


In 2016, Conservation International Hawaii and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council convened a study group of individuals from different fishing organizations and interest groups to determine the feasibility of a noncommercial marine fishing registry, permit or license (RPL) system for Hawai'i. The group wanted to determine if an RPL system would provide additional and more robust data to support fishery management, foster two-way dialogue between fishers and managers, and create a source of independent and continuous funding to support effective fisheries management. While no preferred alternative was identified, the study group concluded that no legal or constitutional barriers in Hawai'i would prohibit the implementation of an RPL system and that a fee-based license or permit would address all three objectives. The final report was made publicly available in December 2017 and is available at the Council's website at [www.wpcouncil.org/rpl-report/](http://www.wpcouncil.org/rpl-report/).

More than a year after release of the report, the State of Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) contacted the study group in 2018 thanking the members for the report and recognizing that statewide outreach on the issue was still needed. DAR asked the study group to share its report findings with stakeholders. The group agreed that, while the report was publicly available, it was not shared as broadly as hoped and that DAR's outreach capacity was limited. Therefore, the study group conducted statewide outreach between June and December 2018, inviting noncommercial fishermen and other interested stakeholders to share their thoughts, concerns, questions and suggestions on the report's findings.

Eight statewide meetings were held as "information exchanges," with both sharing of the report information and collecting of direct input from attendees. Held on six islands, the meetings were attended by nearly 400 community members in total.

The study group hopes that, by making their 2016 report more accessible to fishermen and providing a forum for thoughtful discussions, they have empowered more people across the state to participate in an informed way in any future discussions or decision-making processes on a noncommercial fishery RPL system. For a report of the community meetings, visit [www.conservation.org/where/pages/hawaii.aspx#Community-Input-Report](http://www.conservation.org/where/pages/hawaii.aspx#Community-Input-Report).



Information exchange attendees walked through a gallery of posters and put sticky dots on the posters to share information about what they were most interested in learning about, the RPL systems that they already participate in, and the type of fishing experience they brought with them.





**Left:** Recreational fishermen have continually had a strong presence on the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. Pictured is the original Council members, including recreational fishermen and former Hawaii Senator Wadsworth Yee (Council chair, seated in middle front row) and Peter Fithian (standing, far left), founder of the Hawaiian International Billfish Tournament. **Bottom right:** Among the 13 voting members on the Council today are recreational fishermen Edwin Watamura, president of the Wailua Boat Club; McGrew Rice, captain of Ihu Nui Kona Sportfishing; and Dean Sensui (vice chair, Hawai'i), producer of *Hawaii Goes Fishing*.

## Modern Fish Act Implications in the Western Pacific Region

On the last day of 2018, President Trump signed into law the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act (S. 1520), also known as the Modern Fish Act. The bill, which had been stagnant in Congress since its introduction in 2017, was pushed through by the efforts of the same coalition of sports fishing organizations that earlier in the year supported the amended Billfish Conservation Act of 2012. The amended Billfish Act had major negative consequences for commercial fisheries in Hawai'i and the US Pacific Islands by prohibiting transfer of billfish from the state and territories to the US mainland. The billfish fishery is a sustainable, traditional fishery in the islands. The Modern Fish Act, on the other hand, is more targeted toward the management of recreational fisheries in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, but it may have implications for fisheries management in the Western Pacific Region, i.e., the US Pacific Islands.

The new law urges the nation's eight Regional Fishery Management Councils to consider fishing mortality targets, extraction rates and other alternative means for evaluating recreational fishery catch limits rather than tonnage. Provisions of the Act require the "Secretary to work with SSCs [Scientific and Statistical Committees] and Commissions (not later than 1 year after enactment) on a report on facilitating greater incorporation of data, analysis, stock assessments and surveys from state agencies and nongovernmental sources into fisheries management decisions." The SSC of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will discuss how to incorporate non-traditional sources of scientific information into fishery management when it meets March 12 to 14, 2019, in Honolulu.

The law also requires the National Academy of Sciences to review limited access privilege programs to ensure recreational fishing interests are treated fairly.

"Recreational fishing has been strongly represented in the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council since its inception forty years ago," notes the Council's executive director, Kitty M. Simonds. The Council's first chair was a recreational fisherman, Wadsworth Yee, a former Hawaii state senator. Peter Fithian, founder of the Hawaiian International Billfish Tournament in Kona, was another inaugural member. Today, recreational fisherman Dean Sensui, producer of *Hawaii Goes Fishing*, is the vice chair on the Council representing Hawaii, and Edwin Watamura, president of the Wailua Boat Club, is another of the Council's 13 voting members.

"The cultural history of fishing in the islands for subsistence, pleasure and cultural exchange spans millennia prior to Hawai'i becoming a state and American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands becoming US territories," Simonds added. "Due to this, our fisheries tend to be commercial and noncommercial fisheries, rather than recreational, with the latter often engaged in cultural exchange of fish or bartering/selling enough fish to cover expenses of a fishing trip. Other than the Hawai'i bottomfish fishery, management of the noncommercial sector has largely been left to the state and territories. Recently, however, the Council has worked with the state and territories to explore permit and reporting requirements for the recreational sector."





Measuring the length and weight of bottomfish in CNMI. Photo courtesy of John Gourley

## Give or Not to Give, That is the Question

**How generous are you with your information?** People tend to participate in the US census, respond to service satisfaction surveys and give medical information to their doctors and consent to share it with other doctors. Why then are many fishermen reluctant to provide information about their fishing? Just as data on one's vital statistics are needed for a doctor to determine a fisherman's overall health, information on fishing activities is needed for fishery managers and scientists to determine the health of the stocks.

For decades, fishery managers struggled to get accurate information on catch, fishing effort, bycatch and fishing participation from the fishing community because most of the data collection systems are voluntary. Voluntary surveys and data submissions do not allow consistency in the fishery information over time. Typically voluntary submissions are short-lived, and it is difficult for fishery managers and scientists to determine if a fisherman fished but did not submit the data or if he/she did not fish at all. It is also difficult to determine the total number of persons who are fishing, which managers need know so they can determine the impact of a management action. It is difficult to get cooperation in data submission if it's merely voluntary. A common statement is "What's in it for me?"

In the Western Pacific Region, a mandatory fishing license and reporting requirement with a proper level of enforcement, rather than voluntary submission, may be a better approach to secure much needed data. A mandatory approach is equitable because everyone engaged in harvest of fish would be required to participate. Rather than putting the burden on a few dedicated fishermen, providing information becomes every fisherman's

responsibility. The marine resources are being harvested by all; therefore, all should share in the reporting.

Everyone who shares accurate and timely fisheries data is contributing to the science that is the backbone of fisheries management. Just as registered voters contribute to the future of the country compared to those who complain but abstain from voting, fishermen who carry fishing licenses and report have a direct say in the fishery policies that affect their livelihoods and quality of fishing life. By requiring a fishing license and receiving catch and effort information from all fishermen, managers can more promptly respond to changing fishery situations.

So far Hawai'i has a mandatory license and reporting requirement for the commercial fisheries, but the noncommercial fisheries remain voluntary. Guam and CNMI are providing information on a voluntary basis for both commercial and noncommercial fisheries. However, there are current efforts to implement mandatory commercial license and reporting through existing systems that require a business license. American Samoa has a mandatory commercial fishing permit, but reporting is still voluntary. The Council is encouraging the local fishery management agency to close that gap.

If "to give or not to give fishery data" is the question, then the answer is "it is better to give and make your information count, rather than have managers develop restrictive measures to compensate for inaccurate and/or incomplete information and resultant science and management uncertainty." So do your part. Share your data.

# Online Portal Allows Quick Access to Annual Reports on Region's Fisheries

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council produces annual reports for the fisheries of the Western Pacific Region. The reports summarize fishery performance based on trends in catch, effort and abundance relative to annual catch limits. They monitor the status of the fisheries and ecosystems over time to assess the effectiveness of the Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs) developed by the Council to manage these fisheries. As part of its recent five-year FEP review, the Council identified the annual reports as a priority for improvement. One issue was that the immense size of the reports impeded their timely dissemination and accessibility to the data within them. Additionally, retrieving data in the reports as a PDF (portable document format) could be difficult.

In the past year, significant strides have been made to increase the ease of access to the annual reports on the fisheries

managed under the Archipelagic FEPs. An online data portal for the annual reports was created from which information from these reports can be rapidly viewed and downloaded. The fishery performance sections of the Archipelagic Annual Report for each region are easily accessible at <https://wpcouncildata.org/>. The PDF versions are available at [www.wpcouncil.org](http://www.wpcouncil.org).

In the coming months, information available at the online portal for the Archipelagic Annual Reports will be updated to reflect data from the 2018 fishing year. Additionally, an online portal displaying the fishery performance module of the 2018 Pelagic Annual Report will be developed and made available for access in the same way as the Archipelagic Annual Reports.

Many different groups have contributed their resources to improve the reports. The collaborative effort involves the Council, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center and Pacific Islands Regional Office, Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife.



Above: The online portal allows viewers to easily access data on which the report narrative is based.

Right: In the online portal for the Archipelagic FEP Annual Reports, the viewer can select from among four regions.





# Fishermen: Get in on the Action!



*An SK-funded project in the Western Pacific Region researched conversion of fish waste into fish silage. Pictured is a grinder to macerate the fish discards.*

Some of the best ideas to fix fishery problems originate with fishermen. Without their participation, much of the science behind fisheries management would be theoretical. While the government works on many fishery issues, it does not have the capacity or resources to solve all the problems at the same time. This is where outside organizations and individuals can assist through funding provided through various federal grant programs. These grants support public service projects such as research, environmental recovery, innovations, and education and outreach. Fishing communities have many ways to take advantage of these grants to benefit their fisheries.

*In recent years, the SK program has accepted project proposals for up to \$300,000, with over \$1.2 million being awarded for projects in the Western Pacific Region.*

**Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program (SK)** is one of the larger grant programs. The SK grant funds “projects that address the needs of fishing communities, optimize economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries, and increase other opportunities to keep working waterfronts viable.” The program is funded by a percentage of the duties collected under customs laws on fishery products, a process established in 1939 through the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act. In recent years, the SK program has accepted project proposals for up to \$300,000, with over \$1.2 million being awarded for projects in the Western Pacific Region.

**Marine Education and Training Program** funds projects that look at training for Pacific Island communities.

**Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program** provides monies to reduce interactions with protected species.

Other funding opportunities, as well as training on how to write a grant proposal can be found on the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Region website at [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacific-islands/careers-and-opportunities/pacific-islands-funding-opportunities](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacific-islands/careers-and-opportunities/pacific-islands-funding-opportunities).

If you want to see your fisheries improve, grants are a way for you to get involved in finding a solution and helping your community. For more information, go to [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/funding-opportunities) or go to [www.grants.gov/](http://www.grants.gov/) to apply today!

## CNMI to Employ Latest Fishery Capacity-Building Scholarship Graduate

**Carey Demapan**, a recipient of a US Pacific Territories Fishery Capacity-Building Scholarship, received her bachelor’s degree in marine science from the University of Hawai’i at Hilo (UHH) in December. Demapan is part of the second cohort of students in the scholarship program, which aims to increase the number of local people who become managers and scientists of the fisheries in American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

Scholarship recipients are required to be employed by their local fishery agency for one year for each year they receive the scholarship. Demapan, who hails from Saipan, will begin her employment at the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) in March as a public outreach specialist to reduce poaching of sea turtles through education.

Demapan is the third scholarship recipient to complete the program. Keena Leon Guerrero and Faasalafa Kitiona were graduates from the inaugural 2015 cohort. Guerrero completed her degree from Hawaii Pacific University and is employed at the DFW as an inshore creel fishery biologist. Kitiona graduated from UHH and is employed at American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources as a priority watershed coordinator.

Students who are interested in the scholarship are invited to apply for the 2019-2020 academic year. The scholarship is open to those with close ties to American Samoa, Guam or the CNMI, who are pursuing fisheries-related undergraduate or graduate degrees at UHH, UH Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, Hawaii Pacific University or University of Guam. Undergraduate students must have completed their freshman and sophomore years of college with a grade point average of 3.0 or higher. **The application deadline is March 1, 2019. For more information, please go to [wpcouncil.org](http://wpcouncil.org), email [info@wpcouncil.org](mailto:info@wpcouncil.org) or phone (808) 522-8220.**



*Carey Demapan, the scholarship program’s third graduate, will begin work as a public outreach specialist to reduce sea turtle poaching in the CNMI.*

## Marine Educators Invited to Apply for Traditional Knowledge Scholarship

**Applications are now being accepted** for the Traditional Knowledge Scholarship to attend the 2019 National Marine Educators Association (NMEA). Applicants should be cultural practitioners or experts of indigenous traditional knowledge who are willing to share their expertise to help promote the recognition, understanding and respect of traditional knowledge and rights as it relates to marine resources, science and ecosystems (fresh and salt water). The \$1,500 scholarship is available to help cover the costs of the conference registration, travel, accommodation and other expenses. Applications should be received by March 15, 2019.

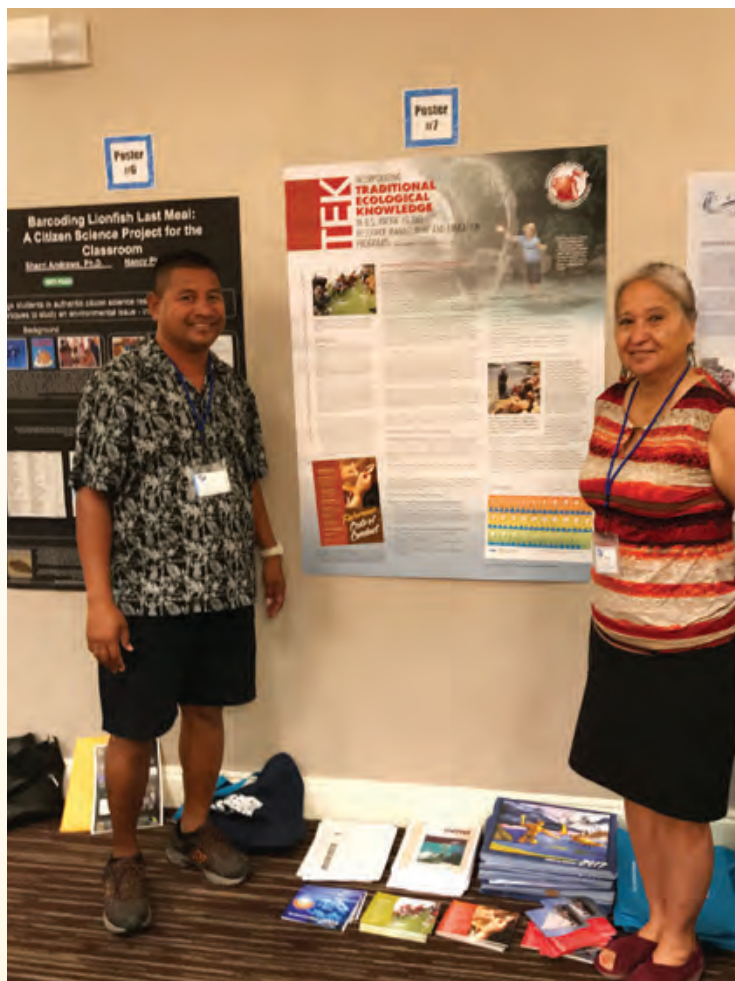
The 2019 NMEA conference is being held at the University of New Hampshire from July 21-25. The winner of the scholarship will be given the opportunity to present at the conference and should be prepared to do so. The call for proposals to present during regular session strands closes on March 15. If the

scholarship recipient has not submitted an accepted proposal by the deadline, he/she will have an opportunity to present during the Traditional Knowledge Committee meeting.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council was instrumental in the formation of the NMEA Traditional Committee in 2007 and the scholarship in 2009. Past NMEA Traditional Knowledge scholarship recipients from Hawai'i and the US Pacific Islands include Terry Riveria (2009), Kamealoha Hanohano Smith (2013), Ui and Keaumoku Kapu (2014), Cecilio Raiukiupiyi (2016) and Chandra Marie Legdesog (2018).

For more information on the conference, go to <https://www.marine-ed.org/page/NMEA2019>. For more information on the Traditional Knowledge Committee and this scholarship, contact one of the committee's co-chairs: Linda Chilton at [lichilton@usc.edu](mailto:lichilton@usc.edu); George Matsumoto: at [mage@mbari.org](mailto:mage@mbari.org) or Sylvia Spalding at (808) 522-8220 or [sylvia.spalding@wpcouncil.org](mailto:sylvia.spalding@wpcouncil.org).

*Below: Among the past NMEA Traditional Knowledge scholarship recipients from Hawai'i and the US Pacific Islands are (counter clockwise) Terry Riveria (with California tribal members), Ui and Keaumoku Kapu, and Cecilio Raiukiupiyi (with Committee co-chair Sylvia Spalding).*





## New Outreach Materials

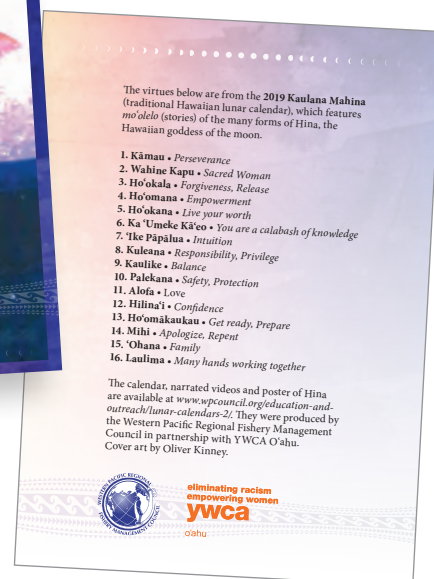
**Outreach materials can be downloaded from the Council's website at [www.wpcouncil.org/education-and-outreach/](http://www.wpcouncil.org/education-and-outreach/). To request a hard copy, send an email to [info@wpcouncil.org](mailto:info@wpcouncil.org) or phone (808) 522-8220.**

The Hawaiian virtues featured in the 2019 *Kaulana Mahina* (Hawaiian lunar calendar), produced by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council in partnership with YWCA O'ahu, are now available on a postcard. Also featured on the 5- by 7-inch card is the Oliver Kinney illustration of Hinahānaiakamalama from the calendar's cover.

The Hina virtues card is a great companion piece to the Fishermen Code of Conduct card, which is offered in a Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Replauwasch, Chuukese and several other languages.

Among the new materials on the Council website are the 2018 interviews with Mike Buck on his radio program *Go Fish!* You can hear them by going to [www.wpcouncil.org/education-and-outreach/radio/](http://www.wpcouncil.org/education-and-outreach/radio/). The Council continues to co-sponsor the show through 2019. Recent topics include the Modern Fish Act passed by Congress in late December, bigeye tuna stock structure research, striped marlin age and growth by region, the biology and importance of spearfish, and the latest in fishing apps. The show airs 4 p.m. on Saturdays and 7 a.m. on Sundays on AM 690 and streams at [www.KHNR.com](http://www.KHNR.com).

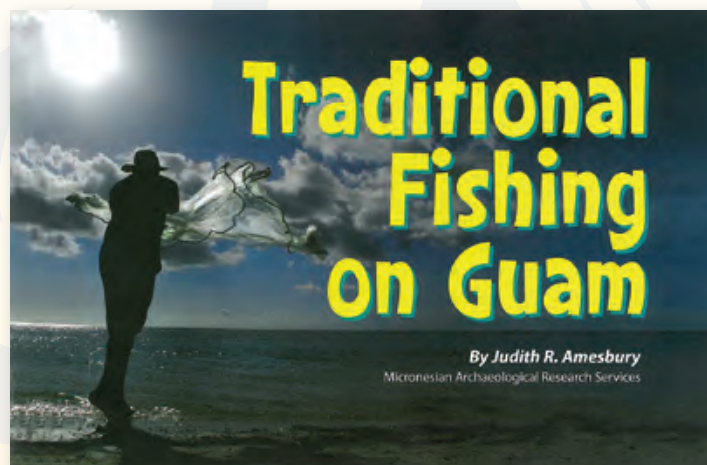
Also new online are video interviews with Ray Topasna, John Ray Aguon and Bobby Alvarez about chenchulu (traditional Chamorro surround net) fishing on Guam. The video was produced by Judy Amesbury as part of the Traditional Fishing on Guam project, which was co-sponsored by the Council. Amesbury has served in various capacities for the Council as a scientist and advisor. While the project was completed in 2012, the video's availability online has been recent. It can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/Aq6XvrYh3QY>. A companion booklet by the same name is also available.



*Above: The postcard featuring Hina, the Hawaiian moon goddess, includes the values from the 2019 Mahina Kaulana (traditional lunar calendar).*

*Below, left: Among the many guests featured on the weekly *Go Fish!* radio show with host Mike Buck (left) were Council vice chair Dean Sensui and Stan Wright, current producer and former co-host, respectively, for the Hawaii Goes Fishing television show.*

*Below: Copies of Traditional Fishing on Guam are available by contacting the Council, while supplies last.*



# Council Family Update



**Chelsa Muña-Brecht**, the new director of the Guam Department of Agriculture, joins the Council as the designated state official from Guam. She is also president of PUNGCo Farms, a farming company she operates with family. Through her farm, she has successfully written and been awarded federally funded grants to aide in farm development. She recently served as project director for

the Guam Department of Education managing a multimillion-dollar curriculum project and as a program specialist in workforce development at Guam Community College. She is the founder and chairperson of Breaking the Cycle, a Guam nonprofit corporation, and formerly worked as the chief of staff for the Guam legislature office of Sen. Tina Rose Muña Barnes and a guidance counselor with the Guam Department of Education.



**Floyd Masga** joined the Council family in February as the island coordinator for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Masga, an active member of the Saipan Fishermen's Association and the Council's Advisory Panel, was raised on the islands of Saipan and Rota and has strong family ties on Tinian. He holds associate degrees in liberal arts and in criminal justice from the

Northern Marianas College (NMC); an undergraduate degree in criminology and criminal justice, obtained in Arlington, Texas; and a master's degree in education from Framingham State University, Mass. His past employments include NMC adjunct instructor for workforce development and criminal justice; director for the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities; and program manager for the NMC Community Development Institute.



**Thomas Remington** has joined the Council staff as a fisheries analyst. Remington has been involved in fisheries management since 2014, having completed four contracts with the Council ranging from data-limited coral reef fisheries to coordination of the Council's annual reports for its Fishery Ecosystem Plans. His duties with the Council include continuing to manage

the development of the annual reports and coordinating activities associated with habitat and ecosystems. Originally from California, Remington holds a master's degree in marine science from Hawaii Pacific University and a bachelor's degree in marine biology from the University of San Diego.



**Felixberto Sablan Reyes**, the Council's Guam Advisory Panel chair for nearly two years, will join the Council staff as the island coordinator for Guam in March. He will continue to serve as the Guam AP chair until then. Reyes is stepping down from his position as executive director of the Father Dueñas Memorial School Endowment Foundation, an all-boys

college preparatory high school and his alma mater. Other past employment positions include 11 years as a marketing officer for the Guam Visitors Bureau and manager for a variety of stores and hotels. He holds a degree from the University of Guam in management with a minor in marketing.

**The Marine Planning and Climate Change Committee (MPCCC)**, in its five years of existence, drafted the Council's MPCC policy and action plan, reviewed the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plan annual reports, provided research recommendations, and



Oceans, Fisheries & Us

set the foundation for climate change outreach to fishing communities in American Samoa, Hawai'i, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A logo and slogan for community outreach on climate and fisheries was one of the products developed by the MPCCC. Based on the strong foundation that has been established through the assistance of the MPCCC, it was determined that future review of the annual reports and advice on fishery adaptation to a changing climate can be handled by the Council's Plan Teams, Advisory Panels and Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committees. Some of the members of the MPCCC are also on these other advisory bodies. Letters of appreciation notifying MPCCC members that the committee is being disbanded were sent in January.

## PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERY NEWS

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Kitty M. Simonds



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# In Memoriam



Frank McCoy (2007).

**Frank W. McCoy**, Council member 1997-2007 from American Samoa, passed away on Feb. 5, 2019. McCoy served as the Council chair in 2006 and Council

vice chair (American Samoa) in 2004 and 2005. He also served as a member of the Council's Advisory Panel (AP) beginning in 1978 and as the AP vice chair and Pelagic AP chair in 2008.

McCoy was born one of 12 children. He was one of the first large longline owners in the Territory, thus his longline permit was grandfathered, allowing him to fish within the American Samoa Large Vessel Prohibited Area. McCoy was also a leading bottomfish and trolling fisherman.

His family owned McCoy's ice factory in Tafuna and, at critical times after hurricanes, provided household ice when the community was plagued by weeks of power outages. In addition to the icehouse, McCoy owned Harbor Refuse and Environment Services and also supplied fishing equipment, such as gear from Honolulu-based POP Fishing and Marine, to local fishing vessels. He contributed to local fisheries

management programs, including the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources training program, as well as the Sea Grant program. He also was a leader in community efforts to clean the Pago Pago harbor special management area.

He is survived by his wife Edith Iliganoa McCoy; daughter Judith Lynn McCoy-Atonio and her husband Uipa Atonio; daughter Jessica Liz McCoy-Lafaele and her husband Mata Lafaele; daughter Janice Laumata McCoy-Pele and her husband Vaeao Pele; son Frank Wilfred McCoy Jr.; son Douglas Aloysious McCoy and his wife Chalei McCoy; and 19 grandchildren. His surviving siblings are Ernest Joseph Bernard, Grace Laumata Allen and Mary Horne. His daughter Judith, like her father, had served as a member of the Council's AP; she chaired the American Samoa AP in 2009-2010 and the Pelagic AP in 2011-2014.

## RECIPE

### PANKO-CRUSTED 'AHI SASHIMI WITH SOY-WASABI BUTTER SAUCE

*Courtesy of Chef Dave Kodama*

**Serves 4**

#### Ingredients

½ lb 'ahi, sashimi grade, cut into 1-inch strips  
2 sheets nori (dried seaweed), cut in half lengthwise  
2 cups baby spinach, loosely packed  
2 cups baby arugula, loosely packed  
Kosher salt, to taste  
Black pepper, freshly ground, to taste  
Cottonseed, peanut or canola oil  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1½ cup tempura batter  
2 cups panko (Japanese breadcrumbs)  
¾ cup Soy-Wasabi Butter Sauce  
1 tsp black sesame seeds  
1 tsp fresh chives, chopped

#### Soy-Wasabi Butter Sauce

1 tbsp cottonseed, peanut or canola oil  
1 tsp shallot, minced  
1 tsp fresh ginger, peeled and minced

1 tsp lime juice, freshly squeezed  
¼ cup heavy cream  
½ cup unsalted butter  
3 tbsp sweet Thai chili sauce  
1 tbsp wasabi paste  
6 tbsp shoyu (Japanese soy sauce)

In sauce pan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add shallots and sauté until translucent, 1 to 2 minutes. Add wine, ginger and lime juice and cook until reduced by half, about 12 minutes. Add cream and cook to reduce by one-third, about 10 minutes. Whisk in butter until smooth. Remove from heat and strain through a fine-mesh sieve. Stir in chili sauce. In small bowl, combine wasabi and shoyu. Whisk wasabi mixture into butter sauce until smooth. Keep warm until ready to use.

#### Preparation

Lay a nori, shiny side down with long side closest to you. Cover with a quarter of the spinach and arugula. Leave a 1/4-inch border at the top for sealing. Lay a quarter of the 'ahi strips across the center. Season, and roll tightly. Wet inside edge with water, and seal the roll. Repeat with other nori.

In a heavy saucepan, pour oil to depth of 4 inches and heat to 375 degrees. Coat rolls



with flour, then dip in tempura batter and then coat with panko. Add rolls to oil and fry. Turn with tongs to coat evenly, until golden brown, no more than 3 minutes. Do not overcook. 'Ahi in center should be bright red and uncooked. Using a slotted spoon, immediately remove from oil. Handling each roll carefully, slice in 6 pieces. Transfer to paper towels to drain.

#### Plating

To plate, spoon 3 tbsp of Soy-Wasabi Butter Sauce onto each of 4 plates. Place 6 'ahi roll pieces on sauce. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and chives. Serve immediately.

*(Featured at the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council booth at the 2005 NOAA Fish Fry)*



# 2019 Council Calendar

Connect  
with the  
Council  
on Social  
Media



Like us on Facebook  
(facebook.com/wprfmc)



Follow us on Twitter  
(@wpcouncil)



Check us out on YouTube  
(youtube.com/wpcouncil) and  
Vimeo (vimeo.com/wprfmc)



View us on Instagram  
(wpcouncil)

## March

**5-7**

Pacific Science  
Review Group,  
Double Tree Hotel,  
Olympia, Wash.

**11-15**

External Review  
of Inter-American  
Tropical Tuna  
Commission Stock  
Assessment of Bigeye  
Tuna in the Eastern  
Pacific Ocean, La  
Jolla, Calif.

**12-14**

131st Scientific and  
Statistical Committee,  
Honolulu\*

**15-16**

Advisory Panel,  
Honolulu\*

**18-21**

176th Western Pacific  
Regional Fishery  
Management Council  
Meeting, Honolulu\*

**30**

Mahi-Mahi Derby,  
Saipan, Northern  
Mariana Islands

## April

**15-19**

Western Pacific Stock  
Assessment Review  
of US Territory  
Bottomfish Stock  
Assessment, Honolulu

**15-26**

North Pacific Fisheries  
Commission Science  
Committee, Jeju,  
Republic of Korea

## May

**1-2**

Protected Species  
Advisory Committee,  
Honolulu (tentative)\*

**6-7**

Archipelagic Plan  
Team, Honolulu\*

**8-9**

Pelagic Plan Team,  
Honolulu\*

**13-16**

Council Coordination  
Committee Meeting,  
Charleston, SC

\* Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council meeting

## Upcoming Events

**131st Scientific and Statistical Committee** meets March 12-14 at the Council office, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu. Major agenda items include main Hawaiian Islands Kona crab stock assessment and projections, managing sea turtle interactions in the Hawai'i longline fishery, longline bigeye tuna limits for US Territories in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Convention Area, fishery spatial management and Modern Fish Act provisions.

**176th meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council** convenes March 18-21 in Honolulu. The Executive and Budget, Legislative, and Pelagic and International Standing Committees will meet on March 18 at the Council office, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400. The full Council will meet March 19-21 at the Laniakea YWCA, Fuller Hall, 1040 Richards St. Major agenda items include managing loggerhead and leatherback sea turtle interactions in the Hawai'i-based shallow-set longline fishery and longline bigeye tuna limits for US Territories in the WCPFC Convention Area.



**Fishers Forum "Food, Sex & Death: Using life history in stock assessments"** takes place from 6 to 9 p.m. on March 19 at the Ala Moana Hotel, 410 Atkinson Dr., Honolulu. This free, family friendly event includes information booths, a panel discussion, refreshments, door prizes, complimentary parking and more. Come

meet and talk story with fellow fishermen, and share your thoughts with fishery managers and scientists to keep local fish on island tables.

For more information on these events, go to [www.wpcouncil.org/category/upcoming-council-and-advisory-body-meetings/](http://www.wpcouncil.org/category/upcoming-council-and-advisory-body-meetings/) or contact the Council at [info@wpcouncil.org](mailto:info@wpcouncil.org) or (808) 522-8220.