



WESTERN  
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MANAGEMENT  
COUNCIL

## **FINAL Report of the Hawaii Archipelago FEP Advisory Panel Meeting**

Friday, February 21, 2020

Council Office  
Honolulu, Hawaii

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

Gil Kualii, Hawaii Advisory Panel (AP) Vice Chair, opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m. Hawaii AP members in attendance included Basil Oshiro, Nathan Abe, Kahng Dang, Carrie Johnston and Clay Tam (AP Chair). Members not in attendance included Eddie Ebisui III (excused), Chad Pacheco (excused) and Michael Lee.

Council staff in attendance included Joshua DeMello, Zachary Yamada, Amy Vandehey, and Mark Fitchett.

Others in attendance included: Leia DeMello, Bryan Ishida (DAR) , Sally Oshiro and Eric Kingma (HLA) .

### **2. Review of Last AP Meeting and Recommendations**

Council staff presented on the AP's last meeting and recommendations noting the AP made one recommendation on including uku fishermen in the uku stock assessment. The Council took up this recommendation at its 180<sup>th</sup> meeting and staff wrote to NMFS PIFSC requesting fishermen inclusion. PIFSC replied that they have included fishermen in their stock assessment process and that at this point, because the stock assessment is currently undergoing the Western Pacific Stock Assessment Review (WPSAR) process, they are unable to incorporate more fishermen information. However, the PIFSC stock assessment program plans to continue to include fishermen as future assessments are worked on.

### **3. Council Issues**

#### **A. Hawaii Pelagic Small-boat Scoping Meetings Report**

Council staff presented on pelagic small-boat scoping meetings held around Hawaii in the early part of February 2020. The staff and AP held meetings in Honolulu, Kona, Hilo, Maui, Kauai, and Kaneohe. A summary of the meeting results will be presented to the Council at its 181<sup>st</sup> meeting.

The Vice Chair thanked the AP for participating in the meetings and said that each one was unique. Some takeaways included: non-commercial fishermen selling fish on the side of the road, ahi minimum size for sale and the impact of purse seine and longline on the small-boat fishery. He also said it was a good thing to get out and talk to the fishermen and the AP should do that more often.

The AP Chair said that the changeup between islands and adjusting as the meetings go along helped to improve both the presentations and the audience reaction as the meetings progressed. When fishermen come to the meeting, it doesn't matter who is in the front, you represent all the

agencies, so it's a good way for the AP to get that face time and exchange with the community. The AP should fold some of the concerns into its plan and provide feedback after the meetings.

An AP member said that the fishermen liked the graphs but they aren't aware of the larger picture, in regards to longline fishing. The small-boat fishermen don't understand how hard longline fishing is and they need to take some responsibility as well. He said there needs to be more research on the pelagic fisheries that the small-boat fishery utilizes, such as FADs, yellowfin, etc.

Another AP member said that the longline fishery is the most, well-regulated fishery in the world and they have many regulations they have to adhere by when they go fishing. Many regulations are tied to MMPA and ESA mitigation to conserve and protect certain species.

One AP member added that there is a lack of local captains, who can make \$80-100K per year, and he has boats that he would welcome locals to work on and train to become captains. He said that the hard part is that not everyone has a hold of the entire picture when it comes to fishing. He said that he is working on getting a clearer picture by getting into different areas of the fishery, but even he still doesn't have a grasp on the whole thing. He said that Hawaii has relatively a small amount of landings compared to the demand and the rest is supplemented by imports.

The Vice Chair said that the AP, as representatives of both the community and the Council, need to get back out there to provide information and feedback. An AP member added that the AP needs to tell people that we are on their side and getting people out to the meetings. Another added that the AP should look at doing future meetings with different models beyond presentation and questions, like having breakout groups for certain issues. This provides more round-robin partnership at the meetings, and we can do better to host meetings in collaboration with the fishermen. AP members also noted the need to have greater engagement with the State of Hawaii by inviting them to come out as partners in future meetings.

*The AP recommended the Council request NMFS PIFSC include an AP representative at future WPSAR meetings.*

## **B. Designating New Precious Coral Beds**

Council staff discussed the current issue regarding the Precious Coral beds stemming from an action to revise the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Hawaii precious corals. He said that the Council passed an action in 2019 to revise EFH but since then, the amendment has stalled due to concerns about the existing "exploratory area" rules and the potential for over-harvest at these identified sites. Staff noted that options to address these concerns includes no action, additional environmental review, or to designate these new EFH areas as conditional or established beds under existing processes. Designating beds would require additional work to develop quotas and regulations for each of the 14 new EFH areas. Council staff noted these options will be provided to the Council for guidance on how they would like to see the precious corals EFH amendment move forward.

### **C. Hawaii/PRIA Marine Conservation Plan**

Council staff reviewed the objectives and projects identified in the current Hawaii/PRIA Marine Conservation Plan (MCP). He noted that much of the concerns discussed by the AP are addressed in the MCP and requested input by the AP for potential additions, removals, or edits.

The AP agreed that the objectives and projects met the needs of the AP but *requested that the MCP include the addition of including ecosystem monitoring on community FADs under Hawaii projects objective 5, project 1.*

### **D. Territory Longline Specifications**

Council staff presented on the purpose and need of the specifications, what they are, and why we are continuing to talk about specifications. He explained that the action is tied to the framework from the Pelagic FEP amendment 7, which allows the Council to set longline bigeye catch limits for American Samoa, Guam and CNMI (which do not need quotas based on its designation as a small island developing state under the WCPFC). The Council sets a quota in order to be able for the territories to use, assign, allocate, and manage the catch and effort limits through specified fishing agreements with US vessels permitted under the Pelagic FEP. He reviewed the action being presented the Council with options including no action (no allocation limit), a 2,000 mt limit with up to 1,000 mt transfer limits, and 2,000 mt limit with transfer limits of 2,000 mt, 1,500 mt per US territory, and/or a total transfer limit of 3,000 mt. The goal is to keep the fishery open throughout the calendar year without breaching any conservation goals for the bigeye tuna stock in the Pacific.

The AP Chair was concerned with how an individual group could negotiate for the entire transferable quota to stop the fishery by making a singular arrangement with a government for their quota. Staff replied that it was unlikely but not impossible. The AP Chair said that moving the fishing year to make sure that there was fish for the holidays and if it ended during the summer, the small-boat fishery could capitalize on this as well. He was concerned that if the fishery continues to take a hit in the quota allocation, the bigger issue is that the value will be affected and may cause the fishery disappear. Staff replied that they are looking at this option as well.

An AP member was concerned that the US is doing all this management but the world isn't doing the same thing. He noted how it was unfair to US fishermen and the US should push globally for more compliance by the other countries "to level the playing field". US can't be the only one taking the hits. Other AP members agreed.

*AP members requested a summary list of longline regulations of what they are required to do in order to fish (i.e. observers, protected species workshops, circle hooks, blue-dyed bait, etc). They said they would be able to more effectively describe the fishery to those that are against the longline fisheries with this information and facts in hand.*

*AP members recommended the Council select the more flexible option, 3, with up to 1,500 transferrable with a maximum of 3,000 mt be transferrable.*

#### **E. Pelagic Fishery Monitoring**

Council staff discussed regional electronic technologies and an effort to provide electronic reporting for the Hawaii longline fishery. He said NMFS PIFSC will report to the Council on the longline fishery electronic reporting and by 2021 the longline fishery will have electronic reporting using tablets to report their catch and effort. The Council may discuss how to implement electronic reporting in the fishery in the future.

#### **4. Hawaii Reports**

Council staff reported that at the Council meeting, Hawaii issues will be discussed from the Council members, including the State of Hawaii. He noted that some of the legislation being considered included changes to Kona Crab rules and developing a vessel-based commercial marine license. He also noted the Council continues to look at providing assistance to the Hawaii fishing communities such as working with HFACT on electronic reporting.

#### **5. Report on Hawaii Archipelago FEP AP Plan Activities**

The AP Vice Chair reported on the AP Plan and activities that include the tournament outreach plan and uku tournament category plan. He noted that for the tournament outreach, this year the AP is looking at whittling down their tournaments list to just four tournaments. The AP narrowed down the list to a tournament in Kona, Hilo, Oahu and Maui for 2020. *The AP will continue to work on the message for the outreach at these tournaments, including the Council process and the need for data.*

For the uku tournament plan, the AP's committee agreed to request tournaments to include uku as a category in their tournament. The AP agreed to look at focusing on boat, kayak, and spearfishing tournament to cover most of the fishermen that catch uku. The committee agreed that a prize can be contributed for the category and to get a prize you have to report, catch or no catch, and the winner will be chosen from all eligible fishermen. *The AP will continue to work on getting agreements with the tournaments.*

AP members are working with staff on developing a budget and outreach materials for these activities.

#### **6. Island Fishery Issues and Activities**

One AP member wanted to learn more about the small-boat fishery issues in order to better address and provide outreach on his own fishery. He said that its not small-boat vs longline, but its Hawaii vs the world, as the imports are the real thing affecting fisheries and prices.

A second member reported that he is meeting with fishermen and NMFS regarding the recreational fishing grant opportunity and will report back after that meeting

Other AP members were concerned about fishing infrastructure at Hawaii Kai and Pohoiki and continue to monitor any progress on fixing boat ramps.

## **7. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **8. Discussion and Recommendations**

The Hawaii Advisory Panel made the following recommendations:

- **The Hawaii AP recommended the Council request NMFS PIFSC include an AP representative at all WPSAR reviews.**
- **The Hawaii AP recommended the Council provide greater engagement and transparency with the fishing community through public meetings across the State and collaborate with DAR, PIFSC and others in order to provide for increased collaboration and participation.**
- **Regarding territorial bigeye quota allocation, the AP recommended the Council select the more flexible option, 3, with up to 1,500 mt transferrable with a maximum of 3,000 mt be transferrable.**
- **The AP recommended the Council ensure that the Hawaii/PRIA MCP include community FADs as a priority project.**

## **9. Other Business**

Council staff noted that the SSC meets March 3-5, 2020 and the Council meets on March 9-12, 2020 at the Laniākea YWCA. The Vice Chair will be there to represent the AP and provide the report. Council staff also noted that the Fishers Forum on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 will focus on the state of Hawaii pelagic fisheries. It will be held at the Aloha Tower Marketplace Ballroom. She inquired with the AP on what type of involvement they would have. One AP member said that he wasn't for having a separate AP table but would rather provide support to the Council table. Another AP member said that it's important to include the other AP Vice-Chairs to be able for them to share their concerns as well. The AP agreed to have a table within the Council booth. Council staff was also requesting other types of fishing that can be demonstrated and the AP volunteered to help find people to help demo such things as handline, palu-ahi, etc.