Pacific Islands Fishery News

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Dedicated to ecosystem-based fisheries management in the US Pacific Islands

F/V Lady Luck's owner Calvin Huynh with part of his vessel's 35,000 pound swordfish catch—the first of Hawai'i's swordfish fleet to offload in nine months.

Hawai'i Swordfish Harvest Returns after Nine-Month Hiatus

The Hawai'i swordfish fishery landed its first catch in nine months on Jan. 17, 2020. This healthy fishery produces approximately 55 percent of America's domestic swordfish and supplies 14 percent of the total US swordfish market. The fishery is managed under the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's Pacific Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). It seasonally targets swordfish during the winter months and comprises less than 20 vessels out of the 145-vessel Hawai'i longline fleet.

"Without Hawai'i swordfish, US markets will increase their dependence on foreign suppliers," said Kitty M. Simonds, the Council's executive director. "Our pelagic longline fisheries are well managed and rigorously monitored, and regulations are enforced. International fishery management organizations consider them model fisheries and have adopted many of the measures we developed. Our fishery targets the North Pacific stock, which is healthy (not overfished or subject to overfishing), and avoids the troubled Eastern Pacific and South Atlantic stocks."

Some of these rigorous conservation measures include rules protecting sea turtles, gear restrictions and a cap on the number of sea turtles with which the fishery may interact. The fishery currently operates under an annual cap of 17 loggerhead and 16 leatherback turtle interactions, which are monitored by NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) observers who are on board

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Hawai‘i Swordfish Harvest Returns

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every single swordfish longline trip. An interaction occurs whenever a sea turtle becomes hooked or entangled in longline gear. Over 99 percent of these sea turtles accidentally caught in the swordfish fishery have been released alive, following required handling procedures that maximizes their chance of survival after their release.

The North Pacific loggerhead population is growing annually at 2.4 percent, but a court settlement in May 2018 reduced the fishery's allowable interaction with the species from 34 to 17. In 2019, the fishery closed on March 19 after reaching the loggerhead cap and reopened on Jan. 1, 2020.

According to a new biological opinion issued in June 2019 by NMFS, the Hawai‘i shallow-set longline fishery for swordfish does not jeopardize the continued existence of loggerhead and leatherback sea turtle populations.

In light of the growing North Pacific loggerhead turtle population, the Council recommended amended sea turtle measures in August 2019 (see article in the summer 2019 issue of *Pacific Islands Fishery News*), which were transmitted to the US Secretary of Commerce on Jan. 15, 2020, for review and approval. Pelagic FEP amendment 10 would remove the loggerhead cap and have a leatherback cap of 16. The amendment also establishes an individual trip interaction limit of five loggerhead and two leatherback turtles per trip, which would require vessels to immediately stop fishing and return to port if either of the trip limits is reached. Additionally, consistent with NMFS' June 2019 biological opinion, vessels that reach the trip limit for either the loggerhead or leatherback turtles twice in a calendar year would be prohibited from shallow-set fishing for the remainder of the year, and in the subsequent calendar year, these vessels would be subject to an annual vessel interaction limit of 5 loggerhead or 2 leatherback turtles for the species for which the trip limit was reached twice. Amendment 10 is now in the rulemaking process, with public comment on the proposed regulations implementing the new measures due on March 20, 2020, and the Notice of Availability for the Pelagic FEP amendment 10 due on March 23, 2020. For more information on the proposed new measures and to submit public comments, visit the Council's website at www.wpcouncil.org/news-announcements.

Swordfish landed by the Hawai‘i longline fleet being prepared for auction in Honolulu.

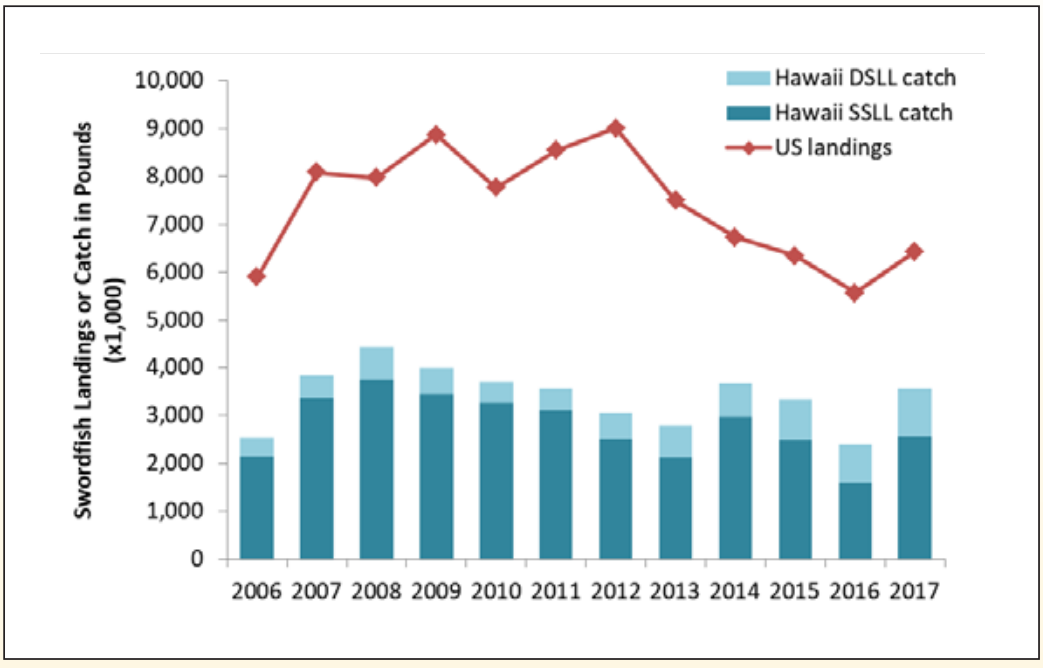


Figure 1. Hawai‘i shallow-set and deep-set longline fishery swordfish catch and total US domestic swordfish landings, 2006-2017. Source: WPRFMC 2017, NMFS Commercial Fisheries Statistics.

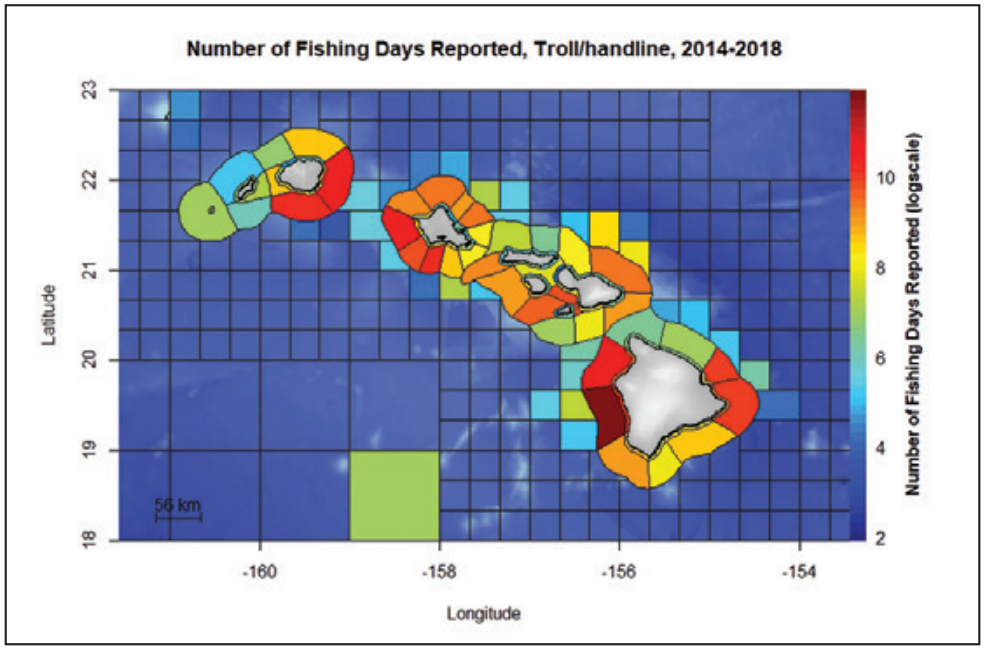
Council Seeks to Improve Knowledge about Small-Boat Fisheries in Hawai‘i

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council held meetings around the main Hawaiian Islands from Feb. 4 to 13, 2020, to gather the public's thoughts on what to do to ensure small-boat offshore fisheries (commercial and non-commercial) in Hawai'i can fish at optimum sustainable levels. Whether fishermen troll or handline, if they fish on a non-longline vessel, they are part of Hawai'i's small-boat fisheries.

A number of concerns were discussed at the meetings that drew more than 100 interested community members on O'ahu, Kaua'i, Maui and the Big Island. The primary concern was the need for better data from different sectors of the fishery, from non-commercial and sustenance fishermen to fish brokers and dealers. Other common issues that surfaced were enforcement inconsistencies and the minimum size of yellowfin tuna.

Hawai'i's small-boat fisheries are comprised mostly of people who are employed elsewhere full-time according to the NOAA Pacific Islands Fishery Science Center. This suggests that small-boat fishermen have a moderate reliance on fishing as a livelihood.[1] Data from the State of Hawai'i's commercial marine license (CML) show the number of small-boat fishermen and days they fished have declined in the last decade. While the Hawai'i commercial longline fishery catches a larger volume of fish, the small-boat commercial sector catches a significant volume of tuna (10-15 percent of the reported bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack and albacore catch) and operates primarily seaward of state waters.

Information is lacking about the small-boat non-commercial fishermen who fish on the weekends for fun or to feed their families. Some data is available from fishermen interviewed through the Hawai'i Marine Recreational Fishing Survey. In 2017, that data was used to estimate that 1.3 million non-commercial trips caught more than 3.4 million fish,



Reported fishing days for the Hawai'i commercial troll/handline fisheries by Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) reporting grid, combined from 2014 to 2018. The narrow bands around the main Hawaiian Islands represent the State waters from 0-3 miles offshore and the wider bands represent the federal waters from 3-200 miles offshore. Source: Hawai'i DAR, 2019.

Council staff and family discuss Hawai'i small-boat fisheries issues with interested community members at public scoping sessions held on O'ahu, the Big Island, Maui and Kaua'i in February 2020.

with pelagic fish being the largest harvests by weight.[2] However, the Council's Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report for US Pacific Island Pelagic Fisheries shows a high variability in the non-commercial small-boat pelagic fish catch, ranging from 6.4 million pounds in 2017 to 15.3 million in 2018 from data between 2014 and 2018.[3] While the data collected voluntarily from these fishermen are good, the difficulty lies in expanding the numbers to get an accurate estimated total catch by non-commercial fishermen.

Catch and effort information (along with abundance and biology data) is used to develop stock assessments, which in turn guide managers on which management tools to use. Accounting for all catch and effort would allow managers to more accurately estimate the biomass of the stock and, therefore, how much fishermen can catch in the future without overfishing. Information on what is supporting and what is hindering fishing can also help managers address these issues.

[1] Hospital J, Bruce S S, and Pan M. 2011. Economic and social characteristics of the Hawaii small boat pelagic fishery. Pacific Islands Fish. Sci. Cent., Natl. Mar. Fish. Serv., NOAA, Honolulu, HI 96822-2396. Pacific Islands Fish. Sci. Cent. Admin. Rep. H-11-01.

[2] National Marine Fisheries Service (2018) Fisheries of the United States, 2017. U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA Current Fishery Statistics No. 2017 Available at: www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/fisheries-united-states-2017

[3] WPRFMC, 2019. Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report Pacific Island Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan 2018. Remington T, Fitchett M, Ishizaki A (Eds.), Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 USA.

How Are Our "Other" Pelagic Species Doing?

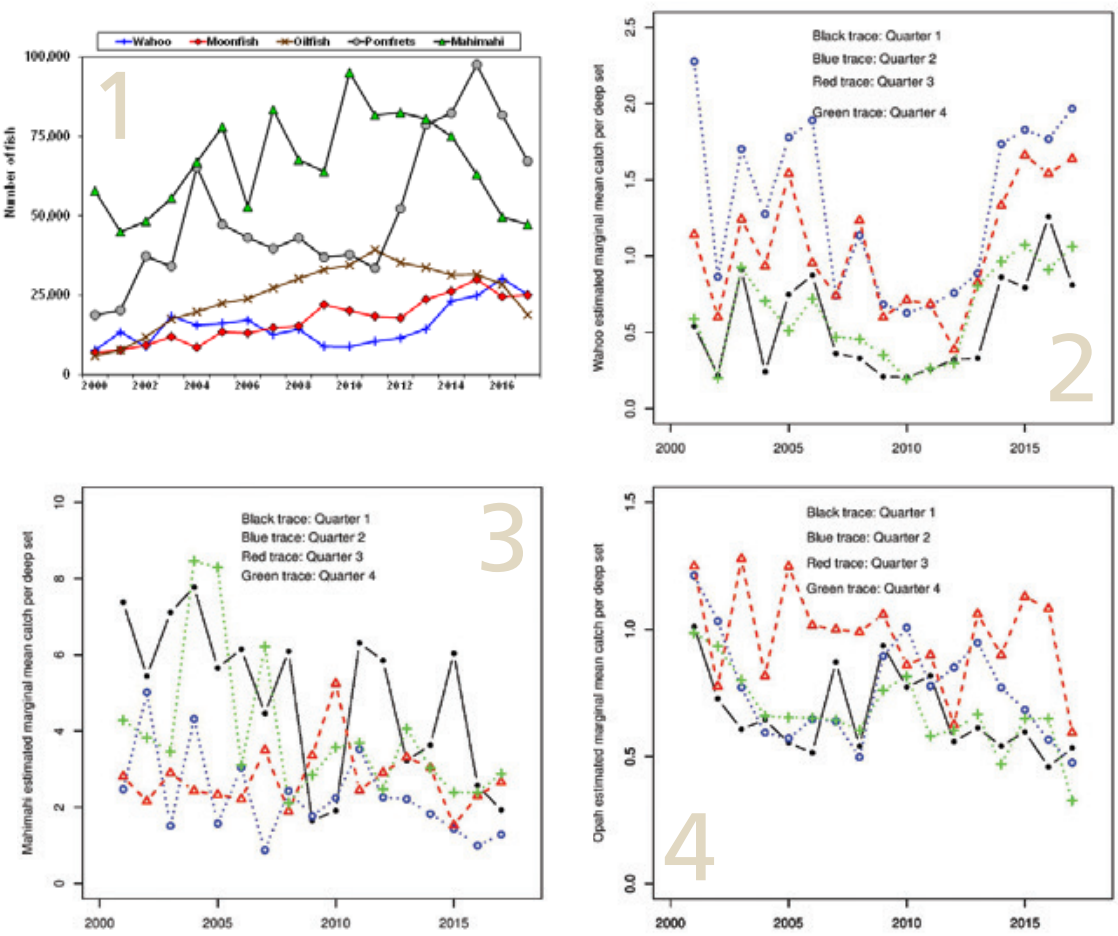


Figure 1. Hawai'i longline fishery catches of ono (wahoo), opah (moonfish), oilfish, monchong (pomfret) and mahimahi (dolphinfish) (2000-2017). Source: R. Ito, NOAA PIFSC. **Figure 2.** Availability indicators of ono (wahoo) from deep-set longline CPUE by season (2001-2018). **Figure 3.** Availability indicators of mahimahi (dolphinfish) from deep-set longline CPUE by season (2001-2018). **Figure 4.** Availability indicators of opah (moonfish) from deep-set longline CPUE by season (2001-2018).

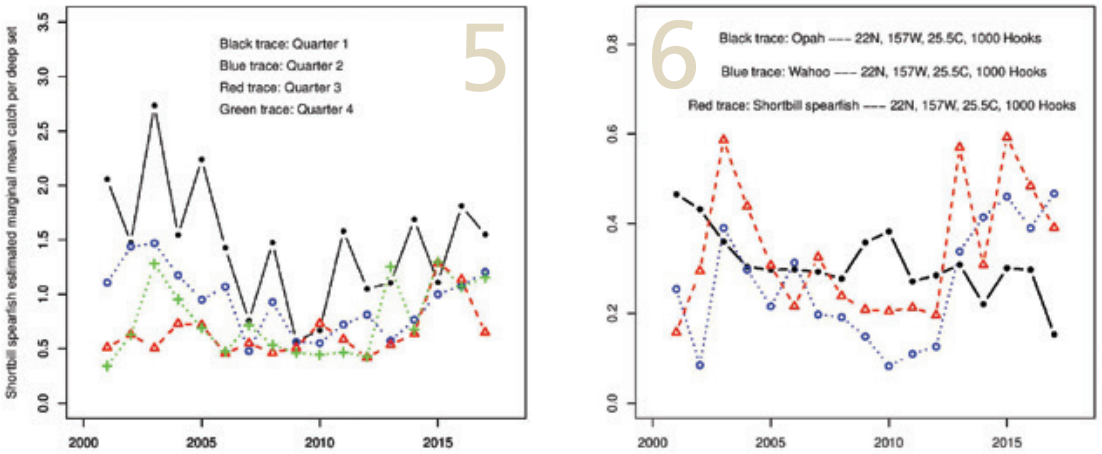


Figure 5. Hebi (shortbill spearfish) standardized catch rate as indicators of regional abundance by season (2001-2018). **Figure 6.** Standardized catch rates for opah (moonfish), ono (wahoo) and hebi (shortbill spearfish) during the location and time period with the greatest fishing effort (22 °N, 157 °W, 25.5 °C, Quarter 4, 1000 hooks) (2001-2018).

More than 50 percent of the landings (by weight) of the Hawai'i longline fishery is comprised of bigeye tuna, followed by swordfish (13 percent), opah (moonfish) (8 percent) and yellowfin tuna (6 percent). When considering the number of fish, however, monchong (pomfret), mahimahi (dolphinfish), ono (wahoo) and hebi (spearfish) comprise significant percentages (fig. 1). Stock assessments and stock indicators are lacking for other important species retained and marketed by the Hawai'i longline fishery, such as opah, monchong, ono, mahimahi and spearfish. These pelagic management unit species may be significantly harvested by international fisheries in addition to those from Hawai'i, but data from international sources is not readily available and the stock structure is unknown. Fortunately, detailed fishing effort, catches and size composition information from the Hawai'i longline fishery in both the shallow-set and deep-set longline sectors is well documented and available for analyses. For this purpose, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council contracted William Walsh, PhD, a former NOAA Pacific Islands Fishery Science Center (PIFSC) scientist, to conduct catch per unit effort (CPUE) analyses. The Council prioritized the development of indicators for ono, mahimahi, opah and shortbill spearfish.

Walsh employed statistical methods to account for "zero catches" in longline effort as well as "boom catches" in longline sets to develop robust statistical indicators for these secondary pelagic fishes. Catch composition, gear characteristics, sea surface temperature (SST), areas fished, seasons and other characteristics were used to explain CPUE rates. This information standardizes CPUE and helps to develop indicators of regional abundance. The analyses revealed that ono, mahimahi, opah and shortbill spearfish stocks were quite dependent on fishing area, seasons and SST. These four species have indicators that show stable regional availability and abundance. Ono has high levels of interannual variability in CPUE (rates have increased in recent years), which are dependent on the number of hooks per float, SST and season (fig. 2). Longline sets in the deep-set sector with fewer hooks per float display higher catch rates for ono.

Mahimahi availability indicators showed a slight overall decline since 2001 for the first quarter of the year (fig. 3). Opah's interannual variability depends on the geographical area, season and albacore availability–but mainly the season (fig. 4), similar to mahimahi. Opah was more abundant in waters fished relatively further east in the third quarter of the year, when albacore were more prominent in longline catches. Both mahimahi and opah abundances are likely driven by large scale environmental factors.

Shortbill spearfish have shown increased availability for all seasons since 2009 (fig. 5). Under standardized conditions corresponding to the quarter and region with the greatest fishing effort (22 °N, 157 °W, 25.5 °C, Quarter 4, 1000 hooks), the indicators for shortbill spearfish and ono show increases, while opah is relatively stable over time (fig. 6).

The results from this study show that secondary pelagic fish stocks are relatively stable in the region.

This project is funded by NOAA grant #NA15NMF4410008.

Council to Set Marianas Bottomfish Annual Catch Limits

In October 2019, the NOAA Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center delivered a benchmark stock assessment for the bottomfish fisheries of the US Pacific Territories to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council at its 180th meeting in American Samoa. The Council accepted the new scientific information as the basis for setting the federal annual catch limits (ACLs).

Specifying the ACLs is a requirement of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to prevent overfishing. The Council is required, in consultation with its Science and Statistical Committee (SSC), to specify the maximum harvest level allowed in the fishery accounting for scientific and management uncertainties.

Working groups in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Guam met on Jan. 29 and 31, 2020, respectively, to conduct the risk of overfishing (P*) analysis and the social, economic, ecological and management uncertainties (SEEM) analysis. P* accounts for the uncertainty in the science used for the specification while SEEM accounts for management uncertainty.

The P* working groups evaluated four dimensions or sources of uncertainties: 1) assessment information; 2) uncertainty characterization; 3) stock status; and 4) productivity and susceptibility.

The SEEM working groups deemed both the Guam and CNMI bottomfish fisheries as socially important particularly for fiestas (parties) and Holy Week (week before Easter) and not as important for the Christmas and New Year holidays, compared to Hawai'i.

The primary small-boat fisheries in these territories are the pelagic fisheries for skipjack, mahimahi and wahoo. The bottomfish fishery does not comprise a large portion of the territories' economy, but it is important for subsistence-level food security. Most fish caught are landed directly to hotels and restaurants to meet the tourism demand. Much of the ACL uncertainties originate from the fishery management and catch monitoring. Currently, there is no near-real time catch accounting and no ability to close the fishery before the limit is reached.

The current monitoring includes fishery participation and catch interview surveys, data that cannot be broken down into time frames shorter than one year; a four-month delay in finalizing the annual catch numbers after the fishing year has ended; and inability of the local fishery management agencies to close the territorial waters in a timely manner.

ACLs apply to both local and federal waters, but the application of the fishery action affects only the federal side. If no parallel mechanism exists, fishing effort can continue in the territorial waters (generally from shoreline to 3 nm offshore) if the federal waters are closed. For ACLs to be an effective management tool, cooperation between the territorial and federal fishery management agencies for monitoring, management and enforcement is needed.

Top: A typical catch of onaga in a deep bottomfishing trip in Guam. Photo courtesy James Borja.

What's Happening with Sharks in the Marianas?

For many years, Mariana Archipelago fishermen have reported interactions with sharks at their fishing grounds, which have increased recently and affected their livelihood and main source of income. Bottomfish fishermen have reported shark depredation in 70 percent of their sets, leading to decreased profits and lost gear. Bottomfish and pelagic fishermen have asked local fishery management agencies and the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council to study and help mitigate these shark interactions.

In response, the Council held workshops on Saipan Jan. 28-29 and on Guam Jan. 30-31 that focused on shark depredation. More than 40 participants on Saipan and nearly 80 on Guam attended the workshops with presentations provided by Carl Meyer, PhD, and Derek Kraft, PhD candidate, from the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology. The audience ranged from fish vendors and agency representatives to commercial and non-commercial bottomfish and pelagic fishermen.

The workshop began with Council staff sharing information on bottomfish, data collection and annual catch limits, followed by Meyer's presentations on the ecology, management, movement patterns and trophic ecology of sharks and fishes. He also presented on the navigational abilities of sharks as well as impacts on recreational and commercial activities. Meyer showed video footage on how electricity is used to deter sharks.

Kraft described a citizen science research project that allows fishermen to collect forensic DNA swab samples from shark bites on their fish. These swabs are used to characterize which shark species are interacting with fishermen's catches. By identifying these species, scientists (and managers) can better understand how to develop tangible solutions to reduce shark depredation. This method has a nearly 100 percent success rate of determining the species of sharks in depredation events, even without visual identification. The information gathered from this study can help develop methods and gear to repel sharks during fishing, thus reducing costs and increasing fish landed by Mariana Archipelago fishermen.

Presenters (l-r) Carl Meyer and Derek Kraft from the University of Hawai'i discuss shark ecology and management at the shark depredation workshop held on Saipan in January 2020.

The scientists plan to return to Saipan and Guam in spring and summer 2020 to continue their research by collecting forensic DNA samples with the help of local fishermen and to share preliminary results. They hope to get a report of their findings published by October 2020.

The next step of Kraft's project is using GPS tags to track sharks around Saipan, which could identify "safe zones" where fishermen would encounter fewer sharks. The ultimate goal is to develop electrical repellant devices that do not affect hooking the fish and are small and cheap enough for fishermen to purchase and attach to their gear.

For more information on this project and how you can get involved, contact Council staff – Floyd Masga, floyd.masga@wpcouncil.org (Saipan) and Felix Reyes, felix.reyes@wpcouncil.org (Guam).

This project is funded by NOAA grant #NA20NMF4410015.

The American Samoa longline fleet (pictured here at the Malaloa Marina dock) requested relief due to poor economic conditions, which led to the amendment of the Large Vessel Prohibited Area. Inset: *Alia* boat.

Oral Arguments Heard in American Samoa Large Vessel Prohibited Area Lawsuit

In 2015, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council recommended that NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) allow vessels greater than 50 feet in length and holding an American Samoa longline limited entry permit to fish within portions of the Large Vessel Prohibited Area (LVPA). NMFS subsequently allowed those vessels to fish inside the 50-nautical-mile LVPA around Tutuila, the Manu'a Islands and Swains Island, but seaward of the 12 nm line. The Council made this recommendation to provide regulatory relief to the American Samoa longline fleet, which faced harsh economic conditions that threatened the fishery's future. The amendment adopted in 2016 allowed the vessels extra space to operate and promoted the economic viability of the fishery. The new rule to the LVPA included a provision to conduct an annual review of the amendment.

Disagreeing with the LVPA amendment, the American Samoa Government (ASG) filed a lawsuit against the federal government, contending that the amendment did not consider the Deeds of Cession or cultural fishing. The Deed of Cession of Tutuila was an agreement signed by the United States and the ranking chiefs of the territory in 1900. The deed allowed American Samoa to maintain its traditional land tenure system, but it is vague regarding ocean areas. The document merely states that the United States will protect the waters around American Samoa. In 1904, the Manu'a Islands signed a similar Deed of Cession.

A federal district court judge ruled in favor of the ASG in March 2017, and the LVPA amendment was vacated. The federal government appealed the ruling, reiterating its stance that the ASG lacked the standing to bring a lawsuit against the federal government. Oral arguments were heard on the federal government's appeal on Feb. 5, 2020, before a panel of three judges at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The defendants argued that ASG, like any state, does not have the standing to bring action against the federal government. Additionally, the federal government argued that the *alia* fishermen could challenge the federal government themselves and that the longline owners who benefit from the LVPA ruling are also American Samoans. The federal government also made the point that ASG failed to support its claims of negative impacts that the LVPA had on cultural fishing or on the ability of the local government to protect the *fa'a Samoa* (cultural Samoan way of life). Another key argument made by the federal government was that the Deeds of Cession do not preserve fishing rights as they are not mentioned, and, in any case, the territory already ceded sovereign rights to land and water when it signed the Deeds.

The ASG countered that it had standing to sue the federal government to protect the *fa'a Samoa*. It also argued that the Deeds provide broad protection over the culture of the territory's people, including *alia* fishing. ASG argued that NMFS acted arbitrarily and capriciously by not ensuring that the original amendment in 2016 complied with the Deeds.

The *MV Manu'atele* and the Ofu dock sustained damages in January 2020 due to severe weather caused by Cyclone Tino.

Cyclone Tino Damages *MV Manu'atele* and Ofu Dock

In January 2020, Cyclone Tino brought strong winds, heavy rain and rough seas to American Samoa. On Jan. 19, stormy conditions and rough surf caused the *MV Manu'atele*, docked at the Ofu Harbor on Manu'a, to collide with the cement dock. The vessel serves as the American Samoa government's inter-island ferry, transporting passengers and cargo between Tutuila and the Manu'a Islands of Ofu and Ta'u. Village residents and a local company joined the government employees to secure mooring lines and rig used tires to create a makeshift buffer between the vessel and the dock. The vessel sustained damages along its starboard bow and the dock was cracked with a portion of the cement breaking away into the harbor water.

An inspection and sea trial were conducted on-site before the vessel returned to port in Pago Pago Harbor on Jan. 21. The estimated damages were $200,000. The US Coast Guard also inspected the vessel and will monitor the repairs to the hull. The American Samoa government is weighing its options for the repair of the vessel as the Satala Shipyard is closed and has been unable to conduct repairs since a derailment last year. The vessel was commissioned by the local government and has been in use since its arrival in early 2017.

Congressional Corner

Follow the bills that impact your fisheries at www.congress.gov.

Recently, the House Natural Resources Committee marked up several fishery-related bills. H.R. 4679 would require a report on efforts by regional fishery management councils and NOAA Fisheries to adapt fishery management for the impacts of climate change. H.R. 1240 would establish a national program to preserve US fishing heritage through training and assisting the next generation of commercial fishermen. The Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife also held a hearing on prohibiting the use of certain sunscreens in a National Marine Sanctuary (H.R. 1834), improving the management of forage fish (H.R. 2236) and improving fishery resource disaster relief (H.R. 5548).

National Listening Session on Fisheries Management Held in Honolulu

No Reauthorization of Fisheries Management Act Expected This Year
Branding of US Produced Seafood Discussed

The seventh stop of a nationwide listening tour on fisheries management issues was held Feb. 21, 2020, in Honolulu. Initiated by Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.), chair of the House Subcommittee on Waters, Ocean and Wildlife, the session was hosted by Rep. Ed Case (D-Hawai'i) with Huffman participating by Skype. Members of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and the Hawai'i seafood industry were among the invited panelists. Their statements echoed the general consensus nationally that America's primary fishing law, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, is overall doing its job and doing it well.

"Hawai'i seafood is globally recognized for its high quality and comprehensive management regime, built largely using the MSA framework," noted Michael Goto, a member of the Council and the auction manager and assistant vice president of United Fishing Agency, the nation's only daily tuna auction. "Every fish that is sold through the auction can be traced back to the vessel, contributing to the traceability of our seafood. We are confident when we say 'every pound can be found,' which I know for a fact can't be said for foreign vessels supplying our same market."

"The Hawai'i longline fleet is globally considered a golden standard in pelagic fisheries," said Ed Watamura, Council vice chair (Hawai'i). "Through the MSA process, the Council has developed and implemented measures that have formed the basis of international standards for regional fishery management organizations, such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission."

Watamura also noted the success of the MSA requirement for annual catch limits in the Hawai'i bottomfish fishery. "The MSA manages fish stocks throughout their range. Thus, the fishery is jointly managed by the State of Hawai'i and the Council through an annual catch limit (ACL) as prescribed in the MSA. … Because ACL management is working, the State has opened several bottomfish restricted fishing areas, a move supported by fishermen and scientists alike."

"While being a major contributing industry to Hawai'i, the [longline] fishery is minor compared to international fisheries for tuna operating in the Pacific; for example, the fishery lands less than 2 percent of the total Pacific tuna catch," said Eric Kingma, executive director, Hawaii Longline Association. "International tuna management is a highly politicized arena and the US needs to be doing more to protect its tuna fisheries," he added.

Council Member Anthony Benavente, who serves as the secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, said the territory is "very supportive of the bottom-up approach in managing fisheries as all stakeholders and interested residents have a chance to participate." He added, "Despite the success of the MSA in the Western Pacific, the Council has had to deal with extraneous conservation efforts that complicate the management decision-making process, as well as hurt US fishing communities and fishers." Examples provided include "the unilateral designation of numerous National Marine Monuments throughout the Western Pacific Region," recent legislation that prohibits Hawai'i and the US Pacific territories from marketing their sustainably caught US billfish off island, and current legislation passed by the House that would prohibit the sale of fins from sustainably and legally caught sharks.

During the discussion period, Case said MSA reauthorization would likely not occur this year, but he heard the common thread that our fisheries are better managed than other fisheries and asked what could be done. Kingma noted the Country of Origin Label is already required but hard to find and not required for US domestic seafood. He suggested that something easily recognizable like a US flag on US seafood could be an indicator of sustainably managed seafood.

For the full statements of the Council and industry members, go to www.wpcouncil.org/msa-testimony. For comments from members of other Regional Fishery Management Councils during earlier listening sessions, go to www.fisherycouncils.org/msa-reauthorization.

FAST FACTS ABOUT THE HAWAI'I FISHERIES

- **Honolulu Harbor** consistently ranks among the nation's top 10 ports in landed seafood value, bringing in fresh (not frozen) wild-caught fish worth approximately $120 million at the dock.
- **Hawai'i's fisheries** overall generate $1 billion in sales and 11,000 jobs.
- **The Hawai'i longline fleet** lands the vast majority of the fish in Honolulu, including nearly all of the nation's domestic production of bigeye and yellowfin tuna and half of its domestic production of swordfish.
- **Hawai'i wild-caught fish** is the number one food producer in the State, with 80 percent of the commercial landings staying on island. Even so, only 51 percent of the seafood consumed in the State comes from local fisheries, both commercial and noncommercial.
- **Hawai'i longline management** includes daily logbooks, satellite-based vessel monitoring systems, vessel and gear marking, protected species mitigation and handling, high levels of observer coverage (100 percent in shallow-set; 20 percent in deep-set), and spatial management areas and prohibited zones, among others.

Get to know your Council members: Monique Genereux Amani

Monique Genereux Amani was recently appointed to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council as an at-large voting member in 2019 representing Guam. Born and raised on Guam, Amani has been an active recreational fisherman for many years, participating in national and international spearfishing tournaments. She currently owns and manages Mosa's Joint restaurant.

Why did you want to be part of the Council?

I wanted to be a Council member so that I can help ensure that there are still fish in not only Guam's waters but all of the Western Pacific's waters so the future generations, like my nieces and other kids, can still fish. The ocean provides for all living creatures, and I have always been able to either earn a paycheck or at least feed myself and my family through our oceans. I want to be able to do something to ensure it is safe, clean, sustainable and plentiful for all of the youth growing up in Guam. People should be able to make a living from our ocean, and our community should all be involved.

Amani loves to spearfish with her family. Can you spot her favorite fish (hangon, or orangespine unicornfish)? Photo courtesy Monique Amani.

How long have you been involved with fisheries in Guam? What changes have you seen since you started?

I started trolling with my dad at the age of eight, started spearfishing at 13, so about 30 years now, recreationally. I joined the US Coast Guard in 2003 and for eight years I did search and rescue and general and fisheries boardings to check for violations. I also have been a commercial boat captain for more than 10 years, taking customers SCUBA diving as well as fishing/trolling and helping with crew transfers for fishing vessels. Since I started, I have noticed a lot more fishermen fishing, a lot more boats and a lot less reef fish. Due to the lack of enforcement, Guam's reef fish are being overfished—I have definitely seen a decline.

What are some challenges that Guam fisheries are facing?

The biggest problem is the lack of enforcement—we have seven conser-vation officers for the whole island. We barely have any rules or laws in place to begin with, but the ones we do have aren't being followed because of a lack of enforcement.

Amani (second from right) inspires other women to go fishing and get involved in local fishing competitions. Photo courtesy Monique Amani.

What was your first impression after your first Council meeting in American Samoa in October?

I was a little overwhelmed, to say the least. I literally went from a Council training in Maryland for three days straight to the Council meeting in American Samoa for three more days. It was a lot of information to take in, but, by the last day, I felt I was getting a slight grasp on all of the information.

If you could share one interesting fact about the Council, what would it be?

There is a very wide range of Council member experience. I feel everyone in the Council brings something valuable to the table in either personal or educational experience. I feel we all get along well and all have common goals to sustain fisheries and the fishing industries on our islands.

As a restaurant owner, do you work with local fishermen to purchase and serve fish?

Yes, we buy as many local products as we can—this includes vegetables, fruit and fish as well as promoting other local businesses.

Lastly, what is your favorite fish to eat?

Hangon, or orangespine unicornfish.

Recipe

Roy's Lime Grilled Shutome (Swordfish) with a Goat Cheese Relleno

Courtesy of Foodland

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 7-oz Hawaiian shutome (swordfish) steaks

Marinade

10 lime juice and zest
½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
2 lemongrass, finely minced, white part only
¼ cup water
2 tbsp sesame oil
1 tbsp garlic, chopped
2 tbsp shallots, chopped
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
1 tbsp toasted cumin seeds
1 tbsp honey
1 tbsp soy
2 tomatoes, diced
¼ cup Maui onions, diced
¼ cup green onions, diced

Goat Cheese Relleno

4 fresh Poblano or Anaheim peppers

Goat Cheese Filling

½ lb goat cheese
1 cup spinach, cooked with all liquid removed
1 tbsp garlic
1 tsp cumin powder
2 tbsp smoked chipotle chilies in adobo sauce, minced
salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

Marinade

Combine all of the marinade ingredients except the tomatoes and onions. Pour marinade over fish 20 minutes prior to grilling. Grill swordfish over a medium flame, season with salt and pepper, and cook until desired doneness. Brush fish with marinade while cooking. Heat remaining marinade until it comes to a boil. Add tomatoes, Maui and green onions. Remove from heat after 2 minutes and use as a sauce.

Goat Cheese Relleno

Roast the peppers over an open flame or in your oven using the broil setting until skin on all sides are blackened. Place peppers in a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. After peppers are cool, remove from bowl and remove black skin. Make a slit on side of the pepper, careful to keep the peppers intact. Remove the seeds. Stuff peppers with goat cheese filling.

Goat Cheese Filling

Using a mixer, place all ingredients in bowl and combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Rub rellenos with a small amount of oil and place on the grill while you are grilling your fish. Turn so all sides are heated, about 6 minutes.

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2020 Council Calendar

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March

3-5
135th Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) meeting, Honolulu

5
Social Science Planning Committee meeting, Honolulu

9-12
181st Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council meeting, Honolulu

10
Fishers Forum-The "State" of Hawai'i Pelagic Fisheries, Honolulu

15-19
12th Pacific Community (SPC) Heads of Fisheries meeting, Noumea, New Calendonia*

25-Apr 3
4th Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, New York, NY*

April

13-14
Archipelagic Plan Team meeting, Honolulu

20-24
10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, Noumea, New Calendonia*

21-24
SPC Bigeye Tuna Stock Assessment meeting, Noumea, New Caledonia*

21-24
Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee—Technical Committee meeting, Honolulu

May

7-8
Pacific Pelagic Plan Team meeting, Honolulu

11-15
11th Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Science Advisory Committee meeting, La Jolla, CA*

25-29
Council Coordination Committee meeting, Hawai'i

25-29
2020 Marine Socio-Ecological Systems Conference, Yokohama, Japan*

June

9-11
136th SSC meeting, Honolulu

15-18
182nd Council meeting, Honolulu

Upcoming Events

135th Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting will be held March 3 to 5, 2020, at the Council office, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu. Major agenda items include options for acceptable biological catches in the Mariana Archipelago bottomfish fisheries; an options paper to amend the bottomfish management unit species (BMUS) in American Samoa and the Mariana Archipelago; and Territory bigeye tuna catch and allocation limits.

The 181st meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will convene March 10 to12, 2020, at the Laniakea YWCA, Fuller Hall, 1040 Richards St., Honolulu. Major agenda items include specifying annual catch limits for the Mariana Archipelago bottomfish fisheries; options to amend the BMUS in American Samoa and the Mariana Archipelago; Territory bigeye tuna catch and allocation limits; and marine conservation plans for Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Pacific Remote Island Areas/Hawai'i.

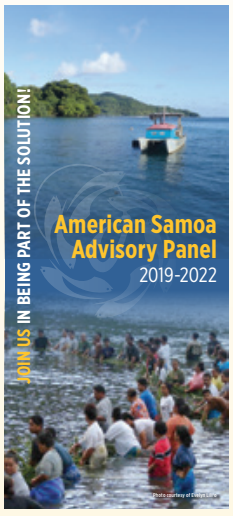
The Fishers Forum on "The Status of Hawai'i Pelagic Fisheries" will take place from 6 to 9 p.m. on March 10, 2020, at the Aloha Tower Marketplace Ballroom (2nd floor), 1 Aloha Tower Dr., Honolulu. This free, family friendly event includes information booths, presentations, refreshments, door prizes and more. Come learn about different fishing gears and methods and data collection efforts to better manage Hawai'i's fisheries.

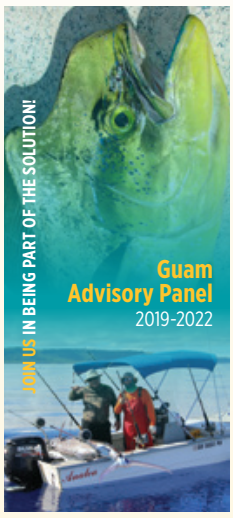
For more information on these events, go to www.wpcouncil.org or contact the Council at info@wpcouncil.org or (808) 522-8220.

** Not Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council meetings.*

New Outreach Resources

New brochures are now available to support the Hawai'i, American Samoa, Guam and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Advisory Panels (APs). The colorful brochures will be given out at fishing tournaments and other outreach events. They encourage fishermen and other members of the public to get involved in each region's fishery management activities and give examples of past successful AP initiatives or desired areas of future focused efforts. The back page shares the Fishermen Code of Conduct in both English and the regional native language.





The brochures can be found on the Council website at www.wpcouncil.org/educational-resources/brochures or by contacting your local AP chair, who is identified in the brochures.