



Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee

Monday, June 22, 2020
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Via WebEx Conferencing
Honolulu Hawaii

Draft Meeting Report

1. Welcome Remarks and Introductions

Chelsa Muña-Brecht, Chair, welcomed participants of the Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee (FDCRC) Meeting, performed roll call, and described meeting protocols.

FDCRC members present via teleconference at the meeting were Michael Tenorio, Monica Guerrero, Domingo Ochavillo, Jason Helyer, Mike Seki, Ruth Utzurrum, and Kitty Simonds.

2. Update on previous FDCRC recommendations

Council staff presented the status of FDCRC recommendations from 2019. The first recommendation was for the Council work with the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) and local agencies on the implementation of electronic reporting for bottomfish fisheries, and the CatchitLogit application is now ready for launch. A training workshop was planned for the summer alongside extensive outreach. The second recommendation was in support of the Pacific Insular Fisheries Monitoring, Assessment and Planning Summit (PIFMAPS) recommendations, and to review meeting recommendations for implementation. The PIFMAPS meeting report was circulated to FDCRC members. The third recommendation involved the Council requesting the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) to include a time series of the number of commercial permit holders and the number of citations for non-compliance to the commercial permit in the Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report, but these data were not yet provided for inclusion in the 2019 report. Lastly, the FDCRC recommended that the Council direct staff to convene a strategic planning session with Technical Committee (TC) members to account for PIFMAPS recommendations, and while a strategic planning session was planned, it did not occur due to changes in priorities.

Regarding the training workshops for the electronic reporting application, Kitty Simonds (Council Executive Director) clarified that the trainings may be done virtually given uncertainties with the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions. The Council will draft a plan to hold virtual trainings and will communicate this plan with FDCRC members once it is complete.

3. Regulations for mandatory license and reporting
a. Guam

Muña-Brecht presented updates on the status of draft regulations for mandatory licensing and reporting in Guam. The Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources (DAWR) worked with Council staff to develop draft regulations developed a few years ago. Those regulations were updated within DAWR and shared with the Guam Advisory Panel (AP) for feedback. A final draft version of the regulations were shared with a Guam senator, who indicated that he would like to proceed with an open public hearing for members of the fishing community to provide comments on the regulations and other issues impacting the community. The regulations were discussed at a recent legislative budget hearing to a larger group of senators, and it was emphasized that the regulations could help enforce the recent SCUBA spearfishing ban. The senators were encouraged to work at a faster pace regarding the regulations for mandatory licensing and reporting on Guam.

b. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)

Michael Tenorio (CNMI Department of Fish and Wildlife [DFW] Fisheries Supervisor) presented updates on the implementation of regulations for mandatory licensing and reporting in CNMI. There has not been much new progress in reaching out to vendors and restaurants regarding the regulations. Data collection personnel from DFW are still getting information from certain vendors and working towards reaching out to others that are not currently in their data collection system. Once restaurants and other shops reopen, DFW staff will reinitiate communication with the vendors.

4. Budgets to support fishery data collection
a. Interjurisdiction Fisheries Act funding

Scott Bloom (Pacific Islands Regional Office [PIRO] Program Officer) presented updates on the status of the budget for the Interjurisdiction Fisheries Act (IFA). A memo was presented that showed the allocation for each of the Pacific Island areas in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. Hawaii received \$107,232 for their online data application, American Samoa received \$170,333 for continued monitoring of fishery-relevant species, Guam received \$17,047 to offset costs for the Western Pacific Fishery Information Network (WPacFIN) transshipment data, and CNMI received \$17,047 for tournament data collection. It was clarified that the IFA allocation was based on landings, with no one area taking more than 6% of the total amount available.

b. WPacFIN and Territory Science Initiative (TSI) funding

Beth Lumsden (PIFSC Fisheries Research and Monitoring Division Deputy Director) presented updates on the status of the budget for WPacFIN and TSI. PIFSC contributes much more to territory fisheries data collection than just the funding for WPacFIN and TSI, including federal and Joint Institute for marine and Atmospheric Research (JIMAR) staff to engage on data acquisition and management, research cruises, biosampling programs in the Mariana Archipelago, and shark research activities. Recent changes to WPacFIN funding included a shift from a three-year cycle to a four-year cycle for WPacFIN grants in FY 2020, a shift for Hawaii staff support from JIMAR to the grant for the Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) in FY 2020-23, and PIFMAPS agreements for WPacFIN to focus on supporting boat-based activities with a federal nexus. The initial FY 2020 funding total was \$771,730, which was

\$90,000 more than FY 2019. An additional \$78,672 was received for WPacFIN in May to create a new total of \$850,402 for FY 2020, though it is not clear if the increase will be permanent. American Samoa DMWR received \$140,000, CNMI DFW received \$140,000, Guam DAWR received \$128,000, Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans (BSP) received \$50,000, Hawaii DAR received \$275,101, and WPacFIN \$105,000. Tenorio asked if the funds to support the CNMI boat-based creel survey program are also inclusive of the commercial receipt system, and Lumsden replied that the funds do include efforts for the collection of vendor receipts.

TSI has not had many recent changes. PIFSC typically allocates \$500,000 annually to TSI, with half of that given to Council. Some of these funds are used to support staff, though several have recently resigned. There are no plans to replace these staff, as the hope is to shift responsibilities from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff to local agencies to maintain their own data collection as needed. There was \$50,000 allocated to scholarships, and the remaining funds were used for outreach efforts and the development of the electronic data reporting application. Bloom clarified that PIRO allocated \$189,000 for TSI, and there was \$25,000 assigned for scholarships and \$25,000 for internships from both PIRO and PIFSC (i.e., \$100,000 total).

Monica Guerrero (Guam BSP) asked when the WPacFIN funding would be released. Lumsden noted that Guam's funds have already been released, and she would be in contact as to when the funds will be transferred. Lumsden also mentioned that she reached out to American Samoa regarding the release of their funds but had not received a reply. Domingo Ochavillo (DMWR Chief Fisheries Biologist) stated that a meeting will be held later this week to discuss the funding, and he would send an email reply soon thereafter.

Mike Seki (PIFSC Director) reiterated that travel restrictions have inhibited the PIFSC's ability to work in the territories, and that local agencies will be further relied on to ensure data collection continues to operate properly. Especially regarding mandatory reporting requirements, it is critical for the local agencies to ensure that they are implemented correctly.

Simonds commented that she was pleased with the shift of responsibility back to local agencies for data collection, reminding her of the efforts to build capacity in the territories in the early 1980s. She noted that the shift back to local agencies is good and needs to be fully supported by the Council and the federal partners.

5. Data collection improvement updates

a. Implementation of the Electronic Reporting Suite

Council staff presented the framework for the CatchiLogit application suite and reviewed the associated implementation plan. The initial problem was that there have been concerns that current data collection does not capture the fisheries adequately, and fishermen expressed that the data does not represent the fisheries well. The proposed solution is the electronic reporting application developed by the Council, in which submitted data are transferred to the territory-owned cloud (that the Council and PIFSC have access to) and provided back to the fishers via the community dashboard and individual application. Advantages of the electronic reporting application include that data are summarized in near real time, sources of error are reduced, accuracy is based on fishermen honesty, fishers are provided with direct feedback, and access to the data is cloud based.

The application itself allows users to report the time and date of a fishing trip, vessel registration number, departure port, and separate fishing events. Reporting for fishing events includes the methods used, number of gears, target species, fishing hours, fishing area (optionally), species caught, number of individuals caught, estimated weight caught, and photos. Fishers can add multiple fishing events for a single trip, as well as identify bycatch. Sales information can also be reported, including the vendor making the purchase and the price per pound. Data are given back to the fishers through the community dashboard, which shows cumulative catch for each fishery, where effort is distributed, and the total catch relative to the catch limit. The market dashboard for vendors shows the top species sold, top vendors, and total pounds sold to date. The personal dashboard for each fisher shows individual fishing performance by month, quarter, or year, ranks fishermen across all reports, and shows an estimate of percentage of catch sold above/below market prices.

Next steps include launching the application, conducting a large outreach campaign, and holding a training workshop. Outreach materials have been developed that will be distributed to the fishing communities in each of the territories. It was originally planned to launch the application in July in American Samoa, but travel restrictions have made it so that the training will be held virtually or the launch will be delayed.

Tenorio asked when the training workshops have been planning for in the CNMI, and Council staff responded that the training was planned for August; however, the training will be virtual if travel restrictions persist. Tenorio also asked if DFW needs to work to get bottomfishers involved, and Council staff noted that it would be helpful to have a roster of fishermen that would likely register for mandatory license and reporting.

Muña-Brecht asked if the data confidentiality rules will be followed for the community dashboard, and Council staff replied that confidentiality and data sharing rules were adhered to in the development of the dashboard. Muña-Brecht also asked if different vendors (e.g., stores and restaurants) are considered together or separately, and Council staff noted that it depends on how the data are summarized. If the main interest is only overall purchases, as it is shown in the application, stores and restaurants would be combined. The administrative dashboard can split data between types of vendors, but it is not publicly accessible. Muña-Brecht asked if the timeline for the training in Guam is the same as CNMI, and Council staff verified. Muña-Brecht stated that outreach to fish markets and restaurants about the upcoming reporting regulations needs to begin so they will be more likely to participate with the data collection application.

b. Updates on the Data Collection Outreach Activities

Council staff presented on outreach efforts related to data collection in each of the Western Pacific areas. Regional initiatives in Hawaii include the Go Fish! radio show with Mike Buck, articles in Hawaii Fishing News and Lawai'a magazines, and developing uku and yellowfin facts sheets. Hawaii AP plans include fishing tournament outreach. The plan for small boat pelagic fisheries includes holding additional public meetings later in the year and the creation of a summary brochure for previous public scoping meetings. For the territories, outreach supporting the electronic reporting application has been prioritized, including a webpage, infographics, radio public service announcements (PSAs), and training workshops. In American Samoa, the AP Curriculum and Community Outreach Project includes the development of a 12 episode PSA series, holding teacher workshops and providing resource materials, an outreach strategy for fishing tournaments, and new fisheries brochures focused on

socioeconomic benefits. For CNMI, outreach initiatives are focusing on fishing tournaments and social media updates.

6. Discussion on addressing the PIFMAPS recommendations

a. Moving towards electronic self-reporting

Council staff led an open discussion on the implementation of the electronic reporting application. For the data collection system to work appropriately, the Council needs support from the local agencies on the day-to-day implementation of the application. Virtual trainings will be held if travel restrictions for the territories persist. Local agencies should support implementation of the application by facilitating the trainings and providing a list of fishermen to include. There needs to be continuity in implementation after the initial training is complete, so part of the training will be to educate local agency staffers on how to use the administrative dashboard. Council staff asked the FDCRC if there needs to be a full-time employee (FTE) hired in each of the territories to help implement the data collection application.

Tenorio and Muña-Brecht believed it will be important to have an FTE dedicated to the electronic reporting system. Ochavillo stated that he would have to discuss the idea with management, and that he looks forward to a more detailed description of the position. Guerrero asked if the individual hired should have a technical background, and Council staff responded that it would be preferred if the individual understands data collection and is tech savvy. Council staff will provide more detailed specifications for the position in the near future. Muña-Brecht asked if the territories would be responsible for funding the position, and Council staff replied that part of the consideration for the position is to identify where funding will be sourced; the Council will work with the territories on this decision. It may be possible to consolidate responsibilities and have the same individual working on data input and electronic reporting.

b. Moving shore-based creel to the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)

Council staff led an open discussion on the steps needed for territory shore-based creel surveys to be certified by MRIP as recommended at PIFMAPS. To move forward, the territories must supply documentation of their creel survey protocol, which will be reviewed by MRIP via a review workshop. Because CNMI already generated their creel-survey documentation, Guam and American Samoa were requested to produce documentation as well. The workshop would also include a review of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between NMFS and the territory agencies regarding their exemption from the National Salt Water Angler Registry due to the presence of the shore-based creel survey programs. Council staff requested that the territory agencies review the MOA and its conditions to ensure that each territory has met these provisions. It was also requested that the territory agencies review evaluation measures of the MOA and provide an individual point of contact for each agency. There have been some uncertainties as to whether the MOA conditions have been met over the past decade, including conducting the survey, reviewing the survey design, management, and operations, and submitting catch and effort data to WPacFIN. Council staff also noted that NMFS must be informed of any changes to the survey program that impact data collection (e.g., changes due to COVID, policies that affect staffing and funding, etc.). Council staff suggested that the FDCRC utilize existing framework resources, such as the MRIP Pacific Island Regional Implementation Team, to further examine these issues, and the FDCRC endorsed this suggestion.

c. Data governance for the electronic self-reporting system

Council staff led an open discussion regarding the data collection structure for the electronic reporting system. The Council consulted with NMFS and would like the territories maintain ownership of the cloud based data collection system. The Council can assist with technical support. The Council currently has a MOA with the territory agencies that specifies data sharing. Since the Council is interested in maintaining access to the data generated by this system, Council staff suggested that they could revisit the MOA to ensure that the electronic reporting system is covered by the data sharing agreement. Guerrero asked where funding would come from if the territories were to take ownership, and Council staff clarified that each of the agencies should have funds that can be used for these kinds of data collection purposes. The funding needed to maintain the system will be low, and the Council will further investigate funding sources as well.

7. Report on FDCRC-Technical Committee

Council staff presented the recommendations from the May 2020 FDCRC-TC Meeting. The TC discussed data collection improvements for each area, including electronic reporting. The TC had two recommendations: (1) request for documentation of creel survey protocols and (2) clarification on data governance, which was resolved at this FDCRC meeting. The FDCRC endorsed the TC's meeting report.

8. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9. Discussions and Recommendations

Regarding fishery data collection, the Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee recommends the Council:

1. Directs staff to work with the Territory agencies in establishing the AWS cloud account to initiate the electronic reporting data collection;
2. Requests DMWR, DFW, and DAWR for documentation of the boat and shore-based creel survey protocols and the agencies to work with MRIP to initiate the creel survey reviews for certification;
3. Work with PIFSC and Territory agencies in hiring 1 FTE for each territory to launch and maintain the system;
4. Request the MRIP Pacific Island Regional Implementation Team convene and address the review of the MOA and engage MRIP on the review process.