



WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

10.A(1)
183rd CM

183rd Council Meeting

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Moku Pepa

Hawaii Vice Chair Ed Watamura

As we navigate through our daily lives, grappling with the realization that our lives have changed for the foreseeable future and hoping and praying that a vaccine will be developed to combat this deadly pandemic and allow our lives to be returned to what it once was. We struggle to bring ourselves snippets of joy and happiness by occupying our daily lives with fun activities and enjoying the simple pleasures like engaging with our loved ones and getting a glimpse of our friends lives through social media, all while living under the restrictions of a Stay at Home, Work at Home Order that allows only essential activities and solo hiking and beach park visits. Family outdoor fun time is not allowed until the end of September. In the meantime cocktail hour is getting earlier and we are enjoying too many gastronomic delights for the good of our health. We are coping with the realization that lack of compliance could mean the escalation of fatalities for our Kupuna as evidenced by the lethal infection rate at the Yukio Okutsu Veterans Home in Hilo, where 58 of the 74 residents tested positive and 10 have died. Meanwhile our economy is emphatically going down the tubes and recovery will be a long and hard road. So many people are without work and the struggle to just eat is evidenced in the long lines at the free food giveaway sites. Our life in Hawaii is sheltered from what is happening across the Nation as demonstrations for Racial Equality turn violent, fires rage in the Southwest, School's and College's COVID positive rates skyrocket from no social distancing, no masking, and partying their asses off. Politics escalate as the Elections draw near adding even more confusion that results in crippling the efforts to simply wear a mask and social distance.

As a way of adding a little more joy and fun back in to fishermen's lives, the Lokahi App has announced a Virtual Fishing Tournament where all the Small Boat fishermen in the State can participate for free. This Monthly and Annual Tournament is an anyone can win concept and is made possible by doing a randomized weight draw for each of the flag fish and awarding the winners with prizes donated by many of our Fishing Stores, statewide, and a some Restaurants. There are even Grand Prizes at the end

of the year from Naoki and fishing rods made by custom rod maker, Stevie Yuh. The sponsor list is growing as I give you this report. The plan is to expand the Tournament to include Deep 7 Bottomfish, as the trolling season wanes, and eventually to have a Shoreline Tournament. To enter, you simply register and report all your catch and effort. The Lokahi team that includes the owner, Jim Hori and Co-Administrators, Clay Tam, Dean Sensui, and myself brainstormed this idea as a way to engage fishermen and to give them a fun and enjoyable way to give us the needed catch and effort data, especially from the non-commercial sector.

The Facebook “Hawaii Fishers Feeding Families” Group page has been extremely successful with Matt Ramsey reporting that from April 15th till September 1st, fishers posted 10,485 pounds of fish that have helped to feed 11,493 people during the Pandemic. The success of the Hawaii Fishers Feeding Families Page exemplifies the willingness of fishermen to share their catches with family and friends and also the catch information with the community. One can surmise that the unwillingness to share data with “Government” entities such as ourselves is a trust issue and that is our uphill battle. We must do better, by focusing on this and establishing a better relationship with the fishing community. I am sorry to say that our last Fisher’s Forum and how we announced it, did not help the cause. Let’s do better and try to foresee the results of our actions.

Council Member McGrew Rice

The Hawaii charter fleet is still pretty much shut down because of the travel quarantine. We were able to hold our tournaments this year but with 1/3 of the entries. The summer is our busiest season so this has crushed the charter fleet. Hopefully the state will open travel this fall so that our winter will be better for those who have survived.

The harbors in Hawaii are the life blood of some of our communities the state needs to take more action to improve these communities. The consensus is a private- state partnership would work. A proposal for paid parking at Honokohau Harbor is a major issue with the harbor patrons. There are a lot of improvements that need to be done before we will accept any type of paid parking. A major one is having no security at the harbor. The state needs to talk to the users of the harbor before they make these kinds of decisions. They will spend more money trying to implement this before building proper infrastructure first with the sportfish restoration fund.

The homeless problem in the Harbor has gotten out of control since the COVID-19 pandemic. The homeless problem at Honokohau harbor has not gotten any better they are now sleeping in cars walking the docks breaking into boats looking for food and drinks and stealing anything that is not tied down. We have brought this issue up with DOCARE but no movement. This is a report from Jody Bright, Secretary of the Hawaii Big Game Fishing Club:

We’ve had some issues off and on for years, but now it is chronic. They are everywhere and have been caught stealing many times - even trying to walk off with a portable generator in broad daylight! During tournaments, we often have extra security when we are taking entry fees. This summer, I went to go home after a long and day and had to wait in the parking lot until my female assistant also left, to insure her safety because homeless males were loitering around. I had to do this a number of times this summer. This is a first!

At the Hawaii Big Game Fishing Club we have had to run off homeless squatting under our pavilion a number of times. They continue to break the locks off of power boxes to

steal power. They leave old suitcases with dirty clothes spilling out about the property. Some get belligerent when approached. I have taken to keeping my watch dog with me when approaching them. They don't like this, and usually move off - however - with COVID-19 ,the simple act of approaching them is more dangerous than ever, and could be life threatening.

We have contacted police on numerous occasions and even offered to work with the Community Interaction Liaison but that has gone nowhere. Calls to DOCARE have not been returned. The situation is bad and needs to be rectified, ASAP.

Council Member Roger Dang

Will provide a report on the Hawaii longline fishery as well as a fish dealer and market perspective.