

## **2019 Regular Meeting Archipelagic Plan Team Recommendations**

Regarding the Kona Crab ACL, the Archipelagic Plan Team recommends alternative 3 that specifies the ACL equals to ABC at 30,802 lbs. and sets an Annual Catch Target of 28,324 lbs at risk of overfishing level of 30 percent. As an accountability measure, the catch of Kona crab be monitored in-season using the monthly Fisher Reporting System and will close the federal waters once the ACT is projected to be reached. Further, the Archipelagic Plan Team recommends the Council request the State of Hawaii to establish a process through Chapter 91 to close the State waters once the ACL of Kona crab and *Aprion virescens* is projected to be reached.

*Status: Cover letter and EA sent to Tosatto on July 23, 2019. Forwarded email to Jarad Makaiau and Brett Schumacher of SFD. Staff followed up with Jarad Makaiau on August 13, 2019 and the Kona crab EA review is put on hold until the other ACL packages in 2018 have been completed. The draft CE, SIR, and FONSI for the precious corals, Kona crab and deep water shrimp have been reviewed for NEPA and the uku draft EA has been reviewed by the NEPA coordinator. The package is being compiled for NOAA GC review as of 09/03/2019. The proposed rule for the 2019-2021 ACL package was published on 2/10/2020. Deadline for comments is on 03/02/2020. The uku EA for the 2019-2021 ACLs, and the SIR/FONSI for 2019 Kona crab, are making their way through review at HQ.*

*The new Kona crab EA was assigned to Kate Taylor for processing.*

Regarding monitoring of MUS catch and annual catch limits, the Archipelagic Plan Team recommends the Council request Division and Aquatic Resources and NMFS-PIFSC provide the Council and PIRO with monthly summaries of the *Aprion virescens* and *Ranina ranina* pounds caught, pounds sold, number of license, and number of trips to track fishery performance relative to ACLs.

*Status: Letter dated July 5, 2019 sent from K. Simonds to B. Neilson (DAR). Staff discussed this recommendation during the follow up meeting on August 1, 2019 12-3pm at DAR office (Neilson, Okano, Kokubun, Fujimoto, and Sakoda). The formal response letter was received on September 12, 2019. DAR is interested in pursuing the rule change for both the closure in the State waters as well as the change in the monitoring for both Kona crab and uku. DAR is exploring the possibility for the non-commercial fishery to continue and the commercial fishery will close once the ACT is projected to be reached. There needs to be sector allocation if this is the direction DAR intends to pursue. It would also require improvements in the non-commercial fishery data collection. DAR will be providing the Council and NMFS PIRO monthly reports of Kona crab and uku catches. DAR is looking at getting this done in 2020 to 2021.*

Regarding the revisions to the Annual SAFE Report, the Archipelagic Plan Team recommends the Council

- Direct staff to work with NMFS to convene the Plan Team working group for American Samoa, Guam, CNMI and Hawaii to define the **ecosystem component species** that will be monitored as species that comprise the functional groups ('parrotfish', 'browsing surgeon', 'mid-size targeted surgeon', 'medium large snappers', 'non-planktivorous

butterflyfishes'), and those that comprise key species in the fisheries (top 5 consistently monitored important species and the 10 annual catch landings)

*Status: Included in PIFSC Omnibus letter. PIFSC Omnibus Letter dated July 18, 2019 sent from K. Simonds to M. Seki. PIFSC responded on August 15, 2019. PIFSC will work with council staff and the Archipelagic Plan Team members from the State and Territories to continue to discuss ways to effectively monitor ecosystem component species. At PIFMAPS, territory agency representatives provided updated species lists. The working group met on September 18, 2019. The working group developed a preliminary product summarizing the data holdings for the trophic groups as well as the species identified by the territory agency staff. Council staff will continue to work with the group to finalize the incorporation of this product in the SAFE report. This is reflected in the current annual SAFE report for APT review at its April 2020 meeting.*

- direct staff to work with NMFS and AS-DMWR, CNMI-DFW, Guam-DAWR, Hawaii-DAR on the revisions to the fisheries modules of the Archipelagic SAFE Reports due to the changes in the Management Unit Species brought about by the Ecosystem Component designation;

*Status: Council staff met with the Archipelagic Plan Team Chair S. Dukes on September 4, 2019 to lay out the work plan for addressing the changes to the Annual SAFE reports. A meeting will be held on September 18, 2019 at IRC to review content changes, and a second meeting will be held on October 3, 2019 at the IRC to discuss BMUS complex changes that would be reflected in the SAFE reports. A Plan Team Intersessional Meeting was held on January 16, 2020. The new sections are reflected in the current Annual SAFE report structure.*

- direct staff to work with NMFS-PIFSC-Ecosystem Science Division and Division of Aquatic Resources on applying the GLM framework to the survey data in order to validate the modeling results;

*Status: Included in PIFSC Omnibus letter. PIFSC Omnibus Letter dated July 18, 2019 sent from K. Simonds to M. Seki. PIFSC responded on August 15, 2019. PIFSC stated that members of the Archipelagic Plan Team did not review the GLM used to examine the relationship between uku catches and summertime zonal flow. It is more accurate to state that the research was presented and there was limited discussion between the authors and the Plan Team. PIFSC is amenable to council staff working with members of the Ecosystem Sciences Division. PIFSC recommends the Council staff contact the ESD Director to identify the next steps and the point of contact to work with.*

*A letter dated July 5, 2019 was sent from K. Simonds to B. Neilson (DAR). Staff discussed this recommendation during the follow up meeting on August 1, 2019 from 12-3pm at the DAR office (Neilson, Okano, Kokubun, Fujimoto, and Sakoda). DAR recommended for Council staff to request the underwater census data for uku from HIMARC (c/o Mary Donovan). The products from the data request were received on September 6, 2019.*

*At the meeting with Archipelagic Plan Team chair S. Dukes on September 5, 2019, it was discussed simply amending to the data integration section abstracts from relevant publications that year. This will be further discussed at the Intersessional Plan Team meeting on January 16, 2020.*

Regarding the bottomfish management unit species list, the Archipelagic Plan Team recommends the Council direct staff to work with NMFS-PIFSC and American Samoa DMWR to evaluate the representativeness of the BMUS list relative to the all species caught using the bottomfishing gear.

*Status: Included in PIFSC Omnibus letter. PIFSC Omnibus Letter dated July 18, 2019 sent from K. Simonds to M. Seki. PIFSC responded on August 15, 2019. PIFSC, in collaboration with the Council and PIRO, are planning and will convene the Pacific Insular Fisheries Monitoring and Assessment Planning Summit (PIFMAPS) on 19-23 August 2019. The goals of the summit will be to conduct a review of the U.S. Pacific Territorial fisheries information collection elements and data streams to assess their utility in the fisheries management process. The data streams being examined include those of the bottomfish fisheries in the respective jurisdictions and the results of the workshop will be reported to the Council and the SSC at its next meeting in October, 2019. PIFSC agrees that outreach in Guam and the other territories needs to occur and engage stakeholders to explain the Territorial bottomfish assessments, the outcomes, and considerations for the future. PIFSC will request a strong presence by fisheries managers at any public outreach effort. However, PIFSC suggests waiting until the assessments are finalized and fully vetted at the October SSC meeting.*

*The assessment was presented at the October SSC and Council meeting. A public outreach was conducted in American Samoa on October 2019 and in the Marianas on January 2020. Scientists and managers received numerous feedback from the fishing community.*

Regarding the Management Unit Species, the Archipelagic Plan Team recommends the Council direct staff to work with NMFS-PIFSC to conduct a data exploration on the feasibility to split the Territory BMUS stock complex using ecological rational (e.g. shallow deep or by life history trait etc.).

*Status: Included in PIFSC Omnibus letter. PIFSC Omnibus Letter dated July 18, 2019 sent from K. Simonds to M. Seki. PIFSC responded on August 15, 2019. PIFSC suggests a working group be convened to Council staff will conduct analysis with PIFSC POCs and work with the Territory agencies on the changes in the species composition of the BMUS complex. This work will be conducted in November 2019. A preliminary meeting will be held between Council staff, PIFSC staff, and PIRO staff on October 3, 2019. PIFSC conducted the analysis looking at the available data to support stock assessments at various species resolution. An options paper was developed by Council staff using the information from PIFSC to determine the best approach moving forward. This was presented at the APT Intersessional Meeting on January 26, 2020 as well as at the March 2020 SSC and Council meetings. The Council opted for option 2 to retain the current flexibility in the FEP that allows the application of the control rules at different species resolution and initiate the development of the next benchmark assessment.*

### **2020 Interseasonal Meeting Archipelagic Plan Team Recommendations**

Regarding the Interim Measure for American Samoa bottomfish fishery, the Archipelagic Plan team

1. recommends the Council request NMFS to immediately communicate the potential management options with DMWR to address the overfishing and overfished issues in the bottomfish fishery;

*Status: Tosatto already sent the letter to Henry Seseapasara in January 2020*

2. to meet the federal mandates, requests the Council to recommend a prohibition on fishing for BMUS in Federal waters to provide time for NMFS and the Council to work with DMWR to develop a rebuilding plan that can effectively end overfishing and rebuild the stock. The Archipelagic Plan Team recognizes that a unilateral closure of federal waters would be unlikely to reduce fishing mortality to a level that would ensure biomass increases during the interim measure.

*Status: This was discussed at the 181<sup>st</sup> Council meeting. The Council position is not to do an outright closure of federal waters. The Council did not make any recommendations since this is a secretarial action.*

Regarding longer term management of the American Samoa Bottomfish Fishery, the APT

3. recognizes that majority of the bottomfish fishery likely occurs in Territorial water. The Archipelagic Plan Team recommends the Council work with PIRO and DMWR to develop a plan for collaborative management of the bottomfish fishery.

*Status: Omnibus letter to PIRO from Simonds was sent on 03/19/2020. Omnibus letter to Seseapasara dated 03/19/2020 was sent on 03/19/2020.*

4. recommends the Council, in collaboration with NMFS and DMWR, explore the feasibility using a temporal-spatial closure approach as a longer term measure to reduce the fishing effort and catch to prevent overfishing and rebuild the stock;

*Status: Omnibus letter to PIRO from Simonds was sent on 03/19/2020. Omnibus letter to Seseapasara dated 03/19/2020 was sent on 03/19/2020.*

Regarding the groupings of the existing Bottomfish Management Unit Species, the Archipelagic Plan Team recommends the Council select option 2 that retains the flexibility in the application of the control rules to the management unit species. Further, the Archipelagic Plan Team recommends the Council request NMFS-PIFSC to initiate the development of a new benchmark assessment on a species resolution that is deemed appropriate during the data preparation workshop and apply the appropriate status determination criteria for the assessment to be WPSAR reviewed the soonest time practicable.

*Status: Omnibus letter to Seki from Simonds dated 03/19/2020 was sent on 03/19/2020. Letter to Rauch cc'ing Oliver, Werner, Seki, Tosatto from Simonds dated 03/23/2020 was sent on 03/24/2020.*

Regarding education and outreach, the Archipelagic Plan Team recommends the Council work with NMFS and Territory agencies on conducting outreach efforts on data collection and management of the bottomfish fishery.

*Status: Omnibus letter to Seki from Simonds dated 03/19/2020 was sent on 03/19/2020. Omnibus letter to Sesepasara dated 03/19/2020 was sent on 03/19/2020. Letter to Pangelinan from Simonds was sent on 03/23/2020. Council staff received an email from Pangelinan on 03/23/2020 confirming receiving the letter and is looking forward to working with the Council on the outreach. Letter to Muna-Brecht from Simonds was sent on 03/23/2020. Council staff received an email from Muna-Brecht on 03/25/2020 confirming receiving the letter and is willing to work with staff on the outreach and rebuilding work during the summer months. Staff coordination meeting was held at 10:00 am on 03/26/2020. Staff discussed the different approaches to conduct outreach in each area. MS is incorporating the outreach section in the app implementation plan.*

Regarding the review of the Bottomfish Management Unit Species list, the Archipelagic Plan Team recommends the Council work with NMFS and Territory agencies to review the BMUS list and to discuss the available options and the regulatory consequences of add and removing species from the list.

*Status: Added to the PT agenda on 03/16/2020. Email exchange with NOAA GC (Tucher, Onaga, and Johns) dated 03/16/2020 indicated that NSI guidelines lays out a clear instruction on how to add or remove species in the FMPs/FEPs. This was already done through the EC Amendment. Moreover, there are no rules against removing or adding species in the complex but it must follow the NSI guideline where when removing species it must not be in an overfished/overfishing state.*