



Report of the GUAM-Mariana Archipelago FEP Advisory Panel Meeting

Friday, September 27, 2019

Guam Hilton

Tumon Guam

1. Welcome and Introductions

Guam-Marianas FEP Advisory Panel (AP) Vice-Chair Ken Borja opened the meeting. AP members in attendance included: James Borja, Myles Driscoll, Matthew Orot, Jason Biggs, Tatiana Talavera and Jason Miller.

Also in attendance was: Joshua DeMello, Marlowe Sabater, Amy Vandehey and Felix Reyes (Council Staff); Chelsa Muna-Brecht (Council Member, Guam Department of Agriculture); Michael Duenas (Council Member); Justin Hospital and Mia Iwane (NMFS PIFSC); Scott Bloom (NMFS PIRO); Jay Gutierrez, Neil Martin (DAWR);

Public: Monica Salas

2. Review of the last AP meeting and recommendations

The Chairman reviewed the meeting recommendations from the last AP meeting, including a recommendation on the territorial allocation of tuna and recommendations on the bottomfish stock assessment.

3. 180th Council Meeting Action Items and Issues

a. Territorial Bottomfish Stock Assessment

Council staff presented on the Territorial Bottomfish Stock Assessment developed by NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center. He explained how the stock assessment was done and the results of the stock assessment. He noted that the bottomfish stocks in Guam is reported to be in trouble, as the assessment results notes that Guam's stock may be overfished. He explained that the result is an artifact of the data fed into the model and noted the need to provide better data.

Discussion by the AP centered on their previous recommendation for PIFSC to separate the shallow from the deep water complex in the assessment. AP members asked how the MUS complex was developed. Sabater said that the recent Ecosystem Component work reduced the amount of species. One AP member noted that the Lyre Tail grouper is ciguatoxic so no one is fishing for it, and the jacks are not commonly targeted as well. Another AP member noted that there was a recommendation made by a data workshop held by the Council in 1996 that said that fisheries scientists and managers should look at separating and analyzing bottomfish data by shallow and deep complexes. Sabater noted that he thought that if the stock was separated, there would probably be a different result, but there would probably be a need to use a different model, and the deep species would be more difficult to do on a species level. *The AP noted the need for the stock assessment to reflect these realities that there is a difference in the shallow and deep complexes.*

An AP member pointed out that they are grouped together because the model looks at it all together because they are caught using hook-and-line, but noted the difference in CPUE for the different bottomfish species in his own fishing. The model lumping everything together ignores that difference and may only be representative of one or two species that there is the most data for rather than the entire complex as a whole. He also pointed out the model doesn't incorporate other factors such as the loss of highliners, new fishing methods, newer fishermen, weather, etc.

The AP discussed what they could do to improve the data. They noted the efforts of the Hawaii bottomfish fishermen that were in a similar predicament a few years ago. The AP discussed the Hawaii activities to participate in fishery-independent data collection, life history, data review and CPUE standardization workshops. AP members noted that there was fishery-independent data collected in Guam in 2010, 2012 and 2014 and biosampling data is available and the AP said that it could have been used by the assessment but recognized NMFS PIFSC provided reasons why they didn't use the information. However, the AP did say that this same type of data was used for the coral reef fish stock assessment, and NMFS PIFSC provided excuses for bottomfish while they accepted it for coral reef fish. The AP said there probably is data sitting on someone's shelf that could be used that NMFS isn't using. *The AP encouraged the Council to request PIFSC to use the experience with the Hawaii fishery to do the same for Guam.*

Staff noted that the SSC will review the model and to determine if the Council should use the assessment as best available science for management. The AP's concern about using the CPUE for the entire complex assumes that the effort and ability to catch a shallow water bottomfish is the same as a deep water bottomfish (i.e. it takes the same effort to catch a mafute as an onaga). The AP adamantly disputed that idea and noted the different effort it takes for deep water than shallow water bottomfish. *The AP agreed that the assessment should not be used for management of Guam's bottomfish fishery.*

The AP discussed what it can do about this stock assessment and noted the need to provide recommendations to the Council and for bottomfish fishermen to communicate these concerns to the Council

b. PIFMAPS

Council staff presented on the Pacific Islands Fisheries Monitoring and Assessment Planning Summit (PIFMAPS) held in Honolulu, Hawaii in August, which was spurred by the preliminary results of the bottomfish assessment. The goal of the workshop was to improve the data with the eventual hope of getting near-real time data for the proper management of ACLs and utilized external reviewers to provide recommendations for improvements. The Summit discussed the data collection systems in each of the island areas, including creel surveys, commercial receipt books, and commercial biosampling programs. A result of the summit is that the review panel recommended a survey statistician provide guidance for optimizing the inshore creel survey design through the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). For the boat-based creel survey, the Federal Management Unit Species (MUS) stocks, particularly bottomfish, and consider mandatory self-reporting by fisher (through electronic reporting). The commercial receipt book was also recommended to utilize electronic reporting and improve species resolution and provide a trip ID to both vendor and fisher data.

4. Guam Reports

a. Coordinator Report

Council staff provided a report to the AP on the legislative, community, education and outreach activities that the Council is interested in and will be reported to the Council at its 180th meeting. Under the legislative report, it was reported that there is a potential ban on SCUBA fishing and potentially a two-year moratorium on night spearfishing as well and encouraged fishermen to provide comments if they are interested either way.

Council Member Muña-Brecht reported that there are meetings to update the Guam Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) scheduled for Guam. She said the first of the meetings was held and there was an interest in providing projects to encourage children to go fishing.

Staff noted that education and outreach activities included the summer high school program and work with the education committee, and talking on the radio recently about the Council and its efforts. Community report-he reported on the fishing derbies recently held, including the big derby, the Guam International Fishing Derby. There is also a new non-profit fishing organization being organized as well.

b. 2018 Mariana Archipelago Fisheries Economic Survey

NMFS PIFSC staff provided an update on a fisheries economic survey conducted in the CNMI and Guam. Preliminary results were presented for the AP's consideration, noting the final report is being worked on.

5. Island Fishery Issues & Activities

NMFS PIFSC staff provided a project proposal on the socio-economic impacts of shark depredation in the Marianas. The NMFS PIFSC is working in response to members of the fishing community's concerns about the loss of catch, gear, time, etc. She is asking for fishermen to provide their perspective on their experiences and knowledge, as well as those from the resource agencies on how they understand the issue. She solicited for participation from the AP.

Council staff provided a project proposal for the biological impacts of shark depredation in the Marianas. He noted that the Council is working with a UH researcher to determine the species of sharks that are depredating the fishermen's catch in order to determine which deterrent is the best one to use. He solicited volunteers to help provide swabs from depredated fish and to use "trollpro" cameras for species identification. He said that the researcher is soliciting participation and if anyone is interested to let the Council know.

Council staff provided a report on the Hawaii AP brochure being developed. This is a redesign of the previous brochure and a template based on the Hawaii AP input. She is looking to redesign the Guam AP brochure as well and asked if the Hawaii format was agreeable and solicited ideas for pictures and information. The Guam AP agreed with the template and to have members work with her on incorporating the Guam changes and discussed tailoring it to Guam like including their own social media contacts and something like ACLs to instruct the public.

An AP member discussed the need to address the AP's continuing FAD issue. He would like to know more about the Council's community FAD program and requested a workshop for the process of applying to developing and deploying community FADs. He noted that there was an already permitted FAD site and wondered if it was still valid as it might be good to get it done quicker. *The AP agreed to request the Council provide this type of assistance to the AP and Guam fishing community.* The AP also discussed potentially providing the community FADs into the Dept of Ag/DAWRs existing sites and use their permits and avoid the problems with procurement that the Department constantly faces. Neil said that there are some places that FADs aren't replaced because of the design and environmental effects. *The AP agreed that once they learn the full process, they will work with DAWR on potential collaborations on FADs.*

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Discussion and Recommendations

The GUAM Advisory Panel made the following recommendations:

1. Requested the Council provide the AP with a presentation/workshop on the (Community) FAD process in order for the AP to plan and develop their own FAD in Guam and potentially collaborate with DAWR on FADs.

2. Recommended the Council not use the Territory Bottomfish Stock Assessment for management of Guam's bottomfish fishery as the assessment is not a true reflection of bottomfish in Guam due to the inadequate data. Further, the Guam AP continued to recommend the Council request PIFSC to separate the shallow complex from the deep complex as recommended by the AP at its last meeting in June as well as by the Council's Data 2000 workshop back in 1996 that recommended "investigating methods for separating and analyzing data and information on the shallow and deep bottomfish complexes;" and the WPSAR report of the 2015 Territory Bottomfish Stock Assessment. The AP also recommended the Council request NMFS PIFSC to provide a presentation on Guam to explain the stock assessment to the Marianas Bottomfish community.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.