



PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERY NEWS

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The Hawaii Longline Association (HLA) recently collaborated with members of Hawai'i's fishing industry to donate 2,000 pounds of fresh seafood to the Hawaii Foodbank, providing around 7,000 healthy meals. This is the beginning of a new pilot program to meet the needs of Hawai'i residents facing hardship as a result of COVID-19 and also support Hawai'i's longline fishermen. Photos courtesy Eric Kingma, HLA.

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Message from the Chair and Executive Director

As we go to print, the Western Pacific Region is entering into the third month of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) disruptions to our fishing communities and the federal management of them.

Just as the pandemic has revealed weaknesses in our social and economic structures (for example, health care inequalities and dependence on foreign imports for essential products), it has also uncovered some glaring issues with the way the federal government perceives our nation's fisheries. Placed within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the purview of the Department of Commerce (DOC), the fish caught by America's fishing fleet are treated as if they are nonessential trade commodities, when in fact they are food for our people, with the majority of US-produced seafood consumed domestically.

While fisheries are as important as agriculture for the sustenance of our people, this is not evident when one compares the COVID-19 response by the DOC and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). The revenue of the US fishing industry in 2019 was \$10.7 billion, and the DOC through Section 12005 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act is providing \$300 million in appropriated funds to assist affected fishery participants. By comparison, America's farms generate \$132.8 billion in revenue for which

Fishery participants are urged to notify NMFS about how COVID-19 and ensuing regulations have affected their livelihoods and communities by sending a message to nmfs.covid-19@noaa.gov.

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is published by the
Western Pacific Regional Fishery
Management Council
1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400
Honolulu, HI 96813
WPCouncil.org

Telephone: (808) 522-8220

Fax: (808) 522-8226

info@wpcouncil.org

CHAIR

Archie Soliai - American Samoa

VICE CHAIRS

Michael Dueñas - Guam

Howard Dunham - American Samoa

John Gourley - CNMI

Ed Watamura - Hawai'i

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kitty M. Simonds

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Message

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Kitty M. Simonds



Archie Soliai

the USDA is providing \$19 billion for COVID-19 relief. The USDA package includes \$16 billion in direct payments to producers and \$3 billion in commodity purchases for distribution through food banks and faith-based organizations. In addition, USDA has up to an additional \$873.3 million available in Section 32 funding to

purchase a variety of agricultural products for distribution to food banks, and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the CARES Act provided at least \$850 million for food bank administrative costs and USDA food purchases.

Put simply, while both fisheries and agriculture feed our nation, the fisheries sector is receiving COVID-19 relief equal to about 3% of its revenue while the agriculture in receiving relief greater than 16% of its revenue.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is actively monitoring and adjusting to the COVID-19 national health crisis. The Council has remained fully operational with much of our workforce teleworking. Most of our meetings have been and will continue to be held via teleconference as we fulfill our mission while protecting the health of our Council members, advisors and staff and those whom we serve.

We have also included a COVID-19 related financial assistance information page on our website to help fishermen, fishing communities and seafood businesses that may be experiencing negative impacts from the pandemic and related government actions (www.wpcouncil.org/coronavirus). Some of these negative impacts are covered in this issue of *Pacific Islands Fishery News*. Fishery participants are urged to notify the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) about how COVID-19 and ensuing regulations have affected their livelihoods and communities by sending a message to nmfs.covid-19@noaa.gov.

Now that we have flattened the curve, our government should prepare for a second wave of the pandemic and the ongoing meat shortage due to COVID-19 related plant shutdowns and unlinking of the US food supply chain, which are predicted to last for months. In these novel and desperate times, our government needs to act creatively. One action that could help our people get the protein they need is to lift draconian measures placed on our fishermen that have no proven conservation benefit. We could allow our fishermen to fish in the US exclusive economic zone now designated as monument waters (which encompasses 51% of Western Pacific Region). We could also allow our fishermen to provide the US mainland with sustainably caught marlin.

We applaud President Trump for his Executive Orders on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth (May 7, 2020) and on Regulatory Relief to Support Economic Recovery (May 19, 2020), which could address these concerns. The Council will be acting on these orders at its June meeting.

Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director

Archie Soliai
Council Chair

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON REGION'S FISHERIES

Hawai'i

COMMERCIAL FISHING

In response to the decreased market demand for fresh fish and extreme fish price reductions in mid-March 2020, the Hawaii Longline Association (HLA) and the United Fishing Agency (UFA, Honolulu Auction) implemented measures to maximize economic efficiency in early April 2020. The organizations instituted a voluntary trip offload limit to 15,000 pounds per vessel and a daily auction volume cap of 60,000 pounds. Hawai'i's fresh fish market depends on restaurants being open to meet needs in the continental United States and locally in Hawai'i. As restaurants remain closed and it is unknown when they will operate at full capacity, the outlook for the Hawai'i commercial fishery is uncertain and disconcerting.

Within the first two weeks of the pandemic, 100 of Hawai'i's 145 active longliners were tied up at the pier and dockside values declined 80%. Then, in the first 10 days of April, *ahi* (yellowfin and bigeye tuna) prices increased to near pre-pandemic levels. This was short-lived as prices have since gradually declined. Auction prices for ancillary species that comprise 30% of total landings, *opah* (moonfish), *monchong* (sickle pomfret), billfish and *ono* (wahoo), remain at near-record lows. Unemployment and job security for Hawai'i pelagic fisheries mirrors the uncertainty in the Hawai'i job market as the state has had up to a 37% unemployment rate during the pandemic.

Source: HLA and UFA, personal communication.

NON-COMMERCIAL FISHING

Non-commercial boat fishing in Hawai'i was limited to two persons

(more if related or in the same household) and shoreline fishing has been allowed, even while beaches were closed.

Fishermen are providing food for their families, neighbors, friends and community members since they are not working. While most fish are given away, some fishermen are able to supplement their income, especially if they are not able to work.

Poseidon Fisheries Research, an independent contractor that collaborates with the Council, is donating the fish they receive from non-commercial fishermen for biosampling to feed the *kupuna* (elderly) and *keiki* (children) of the Waimanalo community.

There is an effort by Hawai'i non-commercial fishermen to quantify their production of sustainable seafood to the community during the closures and stay at home impacts of COVID-19 through the development of the Hawai'i Fishermen Feeding Families Facebook group. Fishermen can upload photos of their catch along with an estimate of total weight and how many people those fish will feed. Students from Mid-Pacific Institute's Exploratory Program gather the data, catalog the information and provide weekly updates to the group. From April 15 to May 6, 2020, more than 3,000 pounds of fish were caught and fed an estimated 7,000 people throughout Hawai'i.

CHARTER FISHING

Charter permits have been suspended since March 2020 and vessels have tied up to comply with the governor of Hawai'i's statewide proclamation that requests people to stay home.

The two unrelated person limit, combined with charter vessels that require at least two to three persons to operate, effectively limits charter companies from taking customers



Council family member Craig Severance provided 16 pounds of fish to three families after three hours of dunking—a type of shoreline fishing. Severance posted to the Hawai'i Fishers Feeding Families Facebook group, adding to the informal data collection effort on how much seafood is produced by non-commercial fishers and how that contributes to local food security. Photo courtesy of Craig Severance.

fishing, or even going *holoholo* (out to have fun).

No tourists means no business, although some vessel operators do not qualify for unemployment. Fishermen have requested a timeline from the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources for when they can reopen their businesses.

FISHING TOURNAMENTS

Most tournaments have been postponed or canceled entirely statewide, some of which were fundraisers for fishing clubs.

Several fishermen in Hawai'i have requested that the governor exempt fishing tournaments with plans for social distancing, online registration and canceling of mass gatherings like awards banquets.

American Samoa

Despite not having any confirmed COVID-19 cases (and no way to test for it), American Samoa was quick to enact an emergency declaration in anticipation of potential impacts from the coronavirus in early March 2020. The American Samoa Government (ASG) used the declaration to implement a number of measures to prevent the virus from entering the territory and limit its spread in the event cases were confirmed. ASG established three levels of emergency for the declaration—blue, yellow and red. American Samoa has been under code blue status for nearly two months.

Under the current restrictions, ASG departments are forced to reduce employees' hours to 20 per week. This has further limited the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources' capacity to collect catch data from fishermen at a time when data collection from our bottomfish fishermen is most needed. The recent bottomfish stock assessment has determined that this fishery is overfished and experiencing overfishing, when the problem appears to be the lack of complete and accurate data.

Due to the emergency declaration, businesses are allowed to open for

customers only from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the exception of takeout food establishments. Restaurants, bars and nightclubs, which make up a good percentage of the seafood vendor market, can serve only 10 or fewer customers at a time. As a result, some of these businesses have shut down entirely, unable to cover payroll, rent, utilities and other fixed costs. This has had a direct impact on the fishermen who supply those businesses on a regular basis. In the event of a confirmed case of coronavirus, the operating hours would decrease to 6 a.m. to 3 p.m., and, should a code red go into effect (denoting a widespread infection), businesses would be forced to close at noon each day.

StarKist Samoa was granted a waiver by the governor of American Samoa to operate under normal hours during the emergency declaration. However, the company has still felt some major impacts due to the coronavirus. Employee attendance has been unstable since the declaration, with absenteeism at a very high rate. The governor asked Hawaiian Airlines to suspend flights until at least June 1, 2020, which has



StarKist Samoa has felt the impact of COVID-19, experiencing issues with absenteeism and delays in airfreight to American Samoa.

increased the cost of airfreight for the cannery and its canning plant. Shipping has also been delayed due to the suspension of all but a single cargo flight per week.

While the US-flagged vessels that supply fish to the cannery under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission were granted an exemption from the federal fishery observer coverage requirement, there are questions about what will happen when that waiver expires at the end of May. There is also the issue of demand now that so many food production companies have had their operations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Companies like StarKist Samoa are vital for the American Samoa economy. Many countries are implementing social distancing and stay-at-home protocols, and with non-perishable foods at a premium, StarKist plays a very important part in the US food supply chain.

FEDERAL FISHERY OBSERVERS

In March, the US-flagged fishing fleet based in American Samoa was under increasing strain as pandemic-related restrictions imposed across the Pacific complicated putting fishing observers on boats and returning them to their homes once their trips were finished. Members of international fishery organizations asked for a temporary relaxation of observer coverage requirements on purse seine, longline and transshipment vessels. On March 27, 2020, the National Marine Fisheries Service enacted an emergency rule that granted the authority to waive specific observer requirements under certain circumstances.

Many island nations are hesitant to have foreign crews and observers interacting, much less being present in areas not widely exposed to the pandemic. To date, observer requirements have been suspended on US-flagged purse seine vessels through May 31, 2020, and observers have not been placed on Hawai'i-based longline vessels since the emergency rule took place. American Samoa remains the last US state or territory to not have COVID-19 and is a strategic port for US fisheries operating in the South Pacific.

Guam

The COVID-19 pandemic hit Guam hard and paralyzed the island of around 160,000 people. A strong fear of the unknown compelled most to heed Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero's executive orders of staying at home, business lockdown, social distancing, roadblocks and mandatory quarantine for those who traveled.

The military was not spared. The aircraft carrier *USS Theodore Roosevelt* had just left Guam when it was forced to return due to the virus. Of the carrier's more than 4,000 sailors, 1,150 tested positive and one person died as a result of the virus. The sailors who tested positive were either admitted to the island's naval hospital or sequestered on base. Those who tested negative were quarantined in several of Guam's empty hotels.

The pandemic affected the island's recreational and subsistence fishermen the most. Other than a few charter boats, commercial fishing vessels and a single tuna transshipper, the island's fishery is comprised of these non-commercial fishermen, some of whom are expense fishermen, selling a portion of their catch

to cover costs. Customers of locally caught fresh fish dried up. A few restaurants resorted to curbside sales pickup to sustain cash flow. Visitors to Guam, a major consumer of seafood products and fresh fish, peaked at more than 1.5 million people before dropping to near zero due to flight suspensions. Charter boats, like other businesses that rely almost solely on the visitor and military markets, initially all shut down operations. Employees were laid off or sought other work. Later, a few companies re-opened and have implemented their own social distancing measures by limiting the number of passengers on their boats.

The Easter season, typically the highest few weeks in the year for fish consumption in the Guam where 85% of the population is Catholic, was greatly impacted by the lack of fresh, locally caught fish. Manny Dueñas, president of the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association (GFCA), said his business saw up to an 80% decline in fish and retail sales. Community fish stores were shut most of the day and opened only when the few fishermen who supply them returned. Social media was full of comments from those sequestered at home who wanted to know where

they could get fresh local fish, but with few replies.

The long-standing annual Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources Kids' Fishing Derby scheduled for April and June 2020 at Masso Freshwater Reservoir and at the Asan War in the Pacific Beach Park, respectively, were canceled due to COVID-19. Plans for the 25th anniversary of the Guam Marianas International Fishing Derby and other summer events remain undecided.

Not seeing an end in sight, a few local fishing organizations penned a letter to Gov. Leon Guerrero pleading with her to designate fishing as an essential activity and to seek federal CARES Act funding to help the fishing community remain financially sustainable. Although fishing activity, sales of fish and tackle shops were not on the mandatory shut down list, dedicated funding was not immediately made available to help fishermen. Some applied for federal financial support, but, for many, the damage was already done. It is estimated that if the impacts of the pandemic continue, Guam's fisheries will experience an annual loss of more than \$6 million in 2020.



Left: Local restaurants turn to curbside sales combined with social media promotions while establishments are closed. Photo courtesy of Kin Cruz. **Right:** Fishing is allowed and considered an essential activity in Guam as long as social distancing is practiced. Some locations, such as Malesso Pier shown in the photo, have been temporarily closed to help enforce this rule. Photo courtesy of Tatiana Talavera.

CNMI

As with locations around the world, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) has been grappling with the effects of COVID-19. Since mid-March 2020 when President Trump declared a national emergency, the CNMI government has taken progressive actions to curb the virus's spread by implementing quarantine procedures; conducting a mass media announcement to stay home, practice proper hygiene and social distancing; mandating its employees to undergo a two-week administrative leave; closing public and private schools; implementing curfew hours for residents; and restricting public gatherings and business hours.

With the confirmation of two positive COVID-19 cases and the first COVID-related death at the end of March, the government enacted additional safety measures including suspending all international and inter-island passenger flights. As a result, the tourism industry came to a complete halt.

Prohibitions on pelagic trolling activities, bottomfish fishing outside of the Saipan Lagoon and nighttime spear fishing (which provides approximately 95% of the reef fish sold in the local markets), along with

ESTIMATED POTENTIAL 2020 REVENUE LOSSES FOR SAIPAN COMMERCIAL, SUBSISTENCE, AND RECREATIONAL FISHERIES				
	PELAGIC	BOTTOMFISH	REEF FISH	TOTAL
COMMERCIAL	\$388,575	\$17,105	\$263,549	\$669,229
SUBSISTENCE	\$0	\$0	\$448,033	\$448,033
RECREATIONAL CHARTER	\$450,000	\$200,000	\$0	\$650,000
RECREATIONAL FISHING DERBIES	\$80,000	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$140,000
FISHING RETAIL BUSINESS SALES	data combined			\$550,000
DIRECT COSTS FOR FISHING TRIPS	data combined			\$670,000
NON-TRIP RELATED EXPENDITURES	data combined			\$310,000
TOTALS	\$918,575	\$237,105	\$751,582	\$3,437,262

Source: CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources

the closure of all boat access points (reopened April 4) combined to severely restrict access to marine resources and caused the closure of retail fish markets due to lack of product. The CNMI resident curfew restricted early morning and late evening fishing, until it was relaxed by a couple of hours in the evening and the morning after a petition was sent by fishermen to the government. Many fishing tournaments have been either canceled or postponed.

Based on data from local and federal agencies and the Council's

annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation report, the CNMI government estimated that the potential financial impact that the COVID-19 pandemic may have on CNMI fishing communities if the current protective measures remain in force for one year would exceed \$3 million.

The impacts of the coronavirus pandemic are especially plaguing to the CNMI, which has yet to recover economically from Typhoon Yutu, a category 5 hurricane that hit Saipan in October 2018. 🐟

CNMI officials block entry to fishing access points.



Pelagic Stock of False Killer Whales More Abundant than Previously Thought

A new study by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) indicates that the pelagic stock of false killer whales around the Hawaiian Islands may be more abundant than previously known. The new abundance estimates used data collected during the 2017 Hawaiian Islands Cetacean Ecosystem Assessment Survey conducted within the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) around the Hawaiian Islands. The findings were presented at the 181st Council Meeting held March 10-12, 2020, in Honolulu.

The pelagic stock is a different population than the main Hawaiian Islands insular false killer whales, the latter comprising a small island-associated distinct population segment that is listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In contrast, the pelagic stock ranges throughout the EEZ around Hawai'i and into the high seas and is not listed under the ESA.

The first EEZ-wide survey conducted in 2002 estimated the pelagic false killer whale population at 484 animals, based on a single group sighting during the study. For the second survey conducted in 2010, NMFS scientists revised their methodology to focus on getting better data for these elusive oceanic dolphins, which resulted in a revised abundance estimate of 1,540 animals throughout the EEZ.

With the latest 2017 survey, NMFS scientists continued to refine their survey methodology for gathering false killer whale data. They also refined their analysis approach, and used two types of methods to analyze the data, incorp-

orating all available data from past surveys. The first of these methods used a design-based approach that was similar to the past surveys, resulting in an abundance estimate of 5,106 animals throughout the EEZ. The second model-based approach used habitat features to estimate the density of the animals from all available survey data. This second approach resulted in an abundance estimate of 2,102 animals. With both methods, NMFS also reanalyzed the abundance estimates for 2002 and 2010, which showed higher numbers than their respective original estimates.

COMPARISON OF PREVIOUS AND NEW ESTIMATES OF ABUNDANCE FOR THE PELAGIC STOCK OF FALSE KILLER WHALES AROUND HAWAII.

Survey Year	Previous Estimates	New Estimates	
		Design-based	Model-based
2002	484	613	2,127
2010	1,540	2,489	2,182
2017	N/A	5,106	2,102

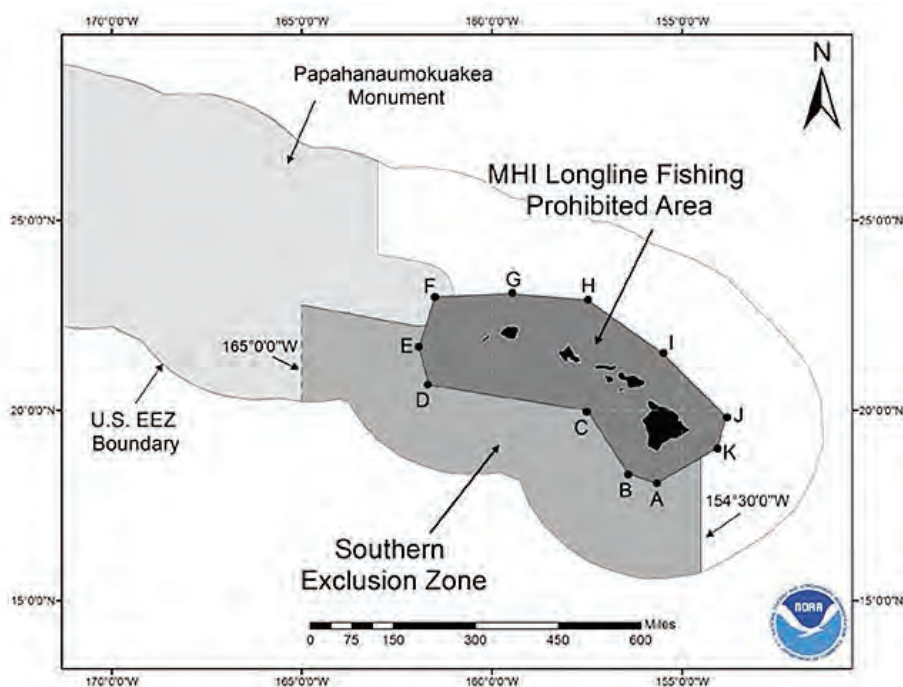
Source: NMFS

In light of the new population estimates, the Council asked NMFS to explore reopening the Southern Exclusion Zone (SEZ), a 132,000-square mile area spanning the entire EEZ south of the main Hawaiian Islands. The SEZ was created in 2012 under the False Killer Whale Take Reduction Plan and developed under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. It was intended to reduce impacts of the Hawai'i deep-set longline fishery on the pelagic stock of false killer whales. At the time the SEZ was implemented, the pelagic stock abundance estimate was less than 500 individuals based on the 2002 survey, which resulted in a SEZ closure trigger of two

observed mortalities or serious injuries in a year. The SEZ was closed for the second consecutive year in February 2019 after the deep-set fishery reached the closure trigger and currently remains closed.

The SEZ closure, combined with other areas that are off-limits to the Hawai'i longline fishery, leaves only 17% of the EEZ around Hawai'i available to Hawai'i longline vessels targeting bigeye tuna. With the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, these US EEZ waters closer to the port of Honolulu are important for longline vessels so they can take shorter trips and reduce operational costs. 🐟

Left: Map of the Southern Exclusion Zone established under the False Killer Whale Take Reduction Plan. Combined with other closures around Hawai'i, only 17% of the EEZ is currently open to the Hawai'i deep-set longline fishery. (Source: NMFS, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacific-islands/marine-mammal-protection/frequently-asked-questions-about-2019-southern-exclusion>)



Your Data Drives Your Fishery

"Everything connects to everything else"

~ Leonardo DaVinci

A fish is connected to the fisherman, a fisherman is connected to his fishing community, the fishing community is connected to the local fishery managers and the fishery managers are connected with federal management. The connection of information starts with every single fisherman participating in any fishery. Imagine the power of that information if everyone has the ability to provide his or her data to inform fishery management decisions that affect the entire fishing community. You have the power to determine the direction you want your fisheries to head.

The amount of fish in the ocean is driven by, among other things, how many of you are out there fishing, how hard you fish and the amount of catch you take home. Everybody fishes differently. Taken collectively, the most experienced fisherman along with the novice who can hardly catch anything, this dictates the performance of the fishery as a whole.



Catchit Logit app is an electronic catch log for fishermen that monitors and summarizes fishing performance.

are passionate about their trade. The Council invites all fishermen and fish retailers in American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) who care about their fisheries to participate in electronic fishery data collection.

It's easy—after registering at your respective local fishery management agency, you will receive a personal eReporting account. As more people register, the data gathered by the agency will become more representative of the entire fishery. Your account can be accessed through your Android or Apple smartphone or tablet. You can also log data through your computer if you have

If you were given the opportunity to have a direct way to contribute to the science that drives how you will be managed, would you take it? What if your fishery information has the potential to change the way your fishery is evaluated, would you share it?

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council encourages you to take responsibility for your fisheries by providing fishery information. This is your opportunity to make a difference!

Introducing Catchit Logit—a free, electronic reporting app for fishermen and fish vendors who

access to the internet. Google tablets will be provided to fishermen or fish retailers that do not have smart devices or computers.

What is the benefit of reporting your catch? Nobody knows more about your fishing performance than yourself. By self-reporting, you have control over the quality of data being submitted. With great power comes great responsibility. You are responsible for the accuracy of the data being submitted that will be used for science and management, and can dictate when you want to submit the data within the period that is required by local regulations. You can collect your data while on the boat, back on the docks, or once you're ready to sell your catch.

Why is it important for you to report your fishery information? Take the driver seat and control the destiny of your fishery. Fishery management will occur regardless and use whatever information is available. Instead of taking a back seat and watching as a fishery gets "wrecked" by inaccurate information, take the wheel and drive to avoid a collision. Inaccurate data leads to inaccurate fishery management decisions.

What's in it for you if you report your catch? Simple—you can continue to fish and pursue something you enjoy. Catchit Logit provides you with a track record of your fishery performance; a personal catch log. The dashboard is a virtual leaderboard, comparing your performance with others using the app. In addition, the Council will be conducting an incentive program for fishermen who regularly report through the app by including them in a quarterly raffle with a chance to win major prizes.

This is a game changer. This is the first eReporting app to be implemented in the three island territories of the Western Pacific region. If everyone starts to report, it will usher in a new age of collecting important fishery information for the betterment of fishery management in the region. You will feel more ownership over your marine resources by sharing information about them.

The Council will be launching the Catchit Logit app suite in summer 2020, with one designed for fishermen and one for vendors. The Council, in collaboration with your local fishery management agencies, will host a series of registration events in American Samoa, Guam and CNMI associated with fishing derbies and international fishing tournaments. The Council is also organizing training workshops to enable fishermen and fish retailers to master the art of eReporting. You can ask questions and give feedback on this new way of providing much needed fishery data to managers. Stay tuned for more details.

The Council encourages fishermen of all ages to participate in eReporting. Take hold of your fishing future. By making the right decision today, it will pay dividends in the near future. The time to take action is now so that generations to come can fish forever! 🐟

2019 Status of the Fisheries to be Released This Summer

The data from the fisheries and the markets are the blood that keeps fishery management alive. These data streams collect a wide range of information from catch and fishing effort to economic information such as cost of fishing and price per pound of fish sold. This information allows managers to evaluate the health and market performance of managed fisheries.

The 2019 annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Reports for the Hawai'i, American Samoa and Mariana Archipelagos, Pacific Pelagic and Pacific Remote Islands Areas will be released June 30, 2020. New this year, the SAFE Reports are now structured around management unit species fisheries, e.g., the bottomfish fisheries in American Samoa and the Mariana Archipelago, and the Hawai'i bottomfish, crustacean and precious coral fisheries. The reports also include the top 10 most-caught species and the 10 priority species that the state and territories identified as culturally, ecologically and recreationally important.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Socioeconomics Program provided information that compared fishing trip costs, pounds of fish sold, revenue and fish price between 2018 and 2019 (Table 1 shows select data from 2019). In American Samoa, the cost of bottomfish fishing increased in 2019 to \$151 per trip due to an increase in fuel and gear costs. Fishing trip costs in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) also increased, but compared to American Samoa, the cost is about half at \$64 per trip. In Guam, the cost of a bottomfishing trip decreased in 2019 compared to previous years to about \$50 per trip.

Table 1. Data from the socioeconomics module in the draft 2019 annual SAFE report.

Area	Bottomfish trip cost (\$)	Bottomfish fishery revenue (\$)
Hawai'i	not available	~1.3 million
American Samoa	151	>6,000
CNMI	64	~100,000
Guam	~50	not available due to confidentiality

Revenue from bottomfishing is highest in Hawai'i where the deep 7 bottomfish fishery (*onaga*, *ehu*, *gindai*, *kalekale*, *'opakapaka*, *lehi* and *hupu'upu'u*) brought in approximately \$1.3 million, followed by the Hawai'i *uku* fishery at more than \$400,000. CNMI bottomfish revenue came in third at approximately \$100,000 and American Samoa had less than \$6,000 in 2019. Guam revenue data is not available due to confidentiality (i.e.,

too few fishers in the industry).

Data is usually gathered in two ways—individual fishermen catch interviews called creel surveys and from commercial receipt books when fish are sold to a retailer. More detailed fish species information is collected through creel surveys because interviewers are skilled in identifying individual species. With the commercial receipt book system, fish retailers normally group species together in a general bin like “assorted reef fishes” because they all have the same price. In cases where there is a single species identification in the commercial system, each one is sold at a different price and normally the reported pounds sold is higher than the species level estimate from the creel survey. This is because the creel survey gathers catch rates (pound per trip) and total estimated activity (number of trips) which managers use to mathematically estimate the total estimated catch in pounds per gear type (for more explanation, see <https://apps-pifsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/wpacfin/data-collections.php>).

Table 2. Comparison of the top 10 coral reef ecosystem component species fisheries from commercial receipt books and boat-based creel surveys in 2019.

Area	Main species	Catch (pounds, estimated) -creel survey	Catch (pounds) -commercial receipt books	Coral reef fishery revenue (\$)
Hawai'i	<i>akule</i> (bigeye scad) <i>opelu</i> (mackerel scad) <i>uhu</i> (parrotfish)	N/A	520,096	1.8 million
American Samoa	<i>alogo</i> (surgeonfish) <i>fuga</i> (parrotfish) <i>poge</i> (surgeonfish) assorted reef fish	10,255	61,254	185,046
CNMI	<i>palakse</i> (parrotfish) assorted reef fish	15,265	25,160	89,314
Guam	<i>atulai</i> (bigeye scads) assorted reef fish	31,073	46,430	142,993

The 2019 SAFE report shows that catch data for the top 10 coral reef ecosystem component species collected from the estimated creel surveys and the commercial receipt books can be very different (Table 2). This only highlights that each data collection system has its limitations and alone don't meet the rigorous requirements of federal fisheries management. Due to the strong need to improve the data collection in the Territories, the Council is currently working on a new Catchit Logit electronic reporting app for fishermen, fish vendors and fishery managers (see “Your Data Drives Your Fishery” article on page 8). Once released, the reports will be available at www.wpcouncil.org/annual-reports. 🐟



Garapan Fishing Base parking lot—currently the main launching area for CNMI's commercial and non-commercial fishers.

CNMI

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) has a long history of collaborating with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council to effectively use the Western Pacific Sustainable Fisheries Fund (WPSFF). The Council works with local resource management agencies to increase capacity among local fishers and community members and build infrastructure to help commercial and non-commercial fishermen to meet their goals.

Garapan Fishing Base Improvements

The Garapan Fishing Base is one of three active launching areas on Saipan. The Council recently supported the paving of the boat trailer parking lot that can accommodate more than 30 trailers daily. Funds were also used to contract an engineering firm to design the seawall and shoreline revetment. The project is now in the permitting and construction phase. The CNMI plans to develop the location into Saipan's newest marina.

Increased Local Bottomfish Knowledge and Capacity

Over the past two years, the Council and the CNMI have joined to develop

the regional bottomfish fishing knowledge and capacity. The CNMI recognized the potential to develop local fisheries to support the local economy and visitor industry. Monies from the WPSFF were used to provide specialized training and hands-on experience in targeting deep slope bottomfish fishing, fresh fish handling and processing, and commercial fishing vessel maintenance.

The CNMI leased a commercially outfitted vessel configured to target bottomfish, the *Kirida*. The vessel is used to supplement and reinforce information provided through fishery training workshops and well as conduct needed data collection on bottomfish. Additional workshops are planned to provide more opportunities for local fishermen to participate.



CNMI's bottomfish research vessel, the *Kirida*, is used to develop and build capacity within bottomfish fisheries.

American Samoa

The Western Pacific Sustainable Fisheries Fund allows the Council to implement projects contained in the three-year American Samoa Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) developed by the governor. Two of the MCP objectives include fisheries development and education and outreach.

Longline Fresh Fish Pilot Project

Diversification of the American Samoa longline fleet operations by delivering fresh fish is the goal of this project. The fishery has experienced a decline due to a number of factors, including increased fuel and operating costs, lower fish prices and declining catch rates. US permit-holding longline owners in American Samoa decided that they would pilot jig fishing/trolling for the South Pacific albacore tuna that they deliver to the cannery.

The American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources is working with the fleet to assist in outfitting vessels with jig fishing equipment. This gear change adds another season of fishing for the fleet. The albacore longline season has historically been from mid-spring through December. The jig fishing season is from fall to spring.

Fishery Outreach Project to Spark Interest in Local Fisheries

The Curriculum and Community Outreach Project is an initiative developed by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's American Samoa Advisory Panel (AP) members with a targeted implementation date of fall 2020. The project aims to address priority areas in need of education and outreach. The project will have two major components—a curriculum integration tool to address the lack of fisheries learning in local schools and an outreach strategy

for providing fisheries information to the general public. The public service announcements (PSAs) and outreach are both designed to get more people interested and active in the local fisheries.

The curriculum portion of the project will involve the AP collaborating with a local video production company to develop a series of short video PSAs. The video series will be titled *Tele l'a O Le Sami*, which translates in Samoan to “many fish in the sea.” The American Samoa Visitors Bureau has agreed to support the project and provide the voice and on-camera talent. The talent role will go to the current Miss American Samoa, who works for the Visitors Bureau during the time she holds that title. The 12 PSAs will be interconnected and provide students with a deeper understanding of the economic and cultural importance of the various fisheries in American Samoa, vessel and gear types specific to those fisheries and the people involved:

1. Fishing in Samoa: Traditional Fishing Methods
2. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
3. American Samoa's Tuna Industry: The Backbone of the Economy
4. StarKist Samoa: More Than Just Jobs
5. Longline Fishing in American Samoa: The Only US Albacore Fishery
6. American Samoa's Women in the Fisheries
7. The Alia Fishery: Profit versus Communal Obligation
8. Recreational Fishing: Adventures on the Water in American Samoa
9. Ground Attack: American Samoa's Shore-based Fisheries
10. Pelagic trolling: Big Game Fishing
11. Bottomfish Fishing: What Lies Beneath
12. Youth Movement: American Samoa's Next Batch of Fishers



The American Samoa longline fleet will explore targeting albacore tuna by jig fishing, outfitting vessels with new fishing equipment in time for the season opening in fall 2020.

AP members and the American Samoa Department of Education will host two workshops with assistance from local and federal agencies that make up the Coral Reef Advisory Group. The workshops will introduce the PSAs to teachers from local public and private schools and provide the educators with resource materials they can utilize to integrate the videos into their classroom lesson plans.

The other major component of the project will be an outreach strategy to provide information to the general public about local fisheries and issues that affect American Samoa. The AP has chosen to prioritize educating the public on data collection and the bottomfish fishery. The members will host outreach booths at public events such as fishing tournaments and community festivals (e.g., Earth Day and Coast Weeks) using displays and materials focused on those themes.

The AP will develop several outreach materials in preparation for those events—the first is a display and accompanying brochure entitled “Know Your Fisheries.” The AP

members originally developed this theme in 2015 for a large public event at the Fagatogo main port dock. The first version of the material focused on the vessels and gear types of the fisheries as well as key regulations for each. This second version will focus on the socioeconomic benefits of the fisheries. Both the display and brochure will be printed in both English and Samoan. In addition, the AP will create a trivia game. Visitors to the booth will be invited to spin a prize wheel and answer trivia questions about topics such as identification of fish species (English and Samoan names), fish anatomy, fishing gear and vessel types. 🐟



Part of the Council Advisory Panel's education and outreach project will focus on teaching students in American Samoa about fisheries in their region and introducing careers in marine science.

FISH 101 Project Supports Sustainable Fisheries Through Education and Community Outreach

The Hawaii Seafood Council is completing a Saltonstall-Kennedy grant project aimed at improving territorial science and fishery management in US Pacific Islands. The project goal was to improve fishing community resilience by enhancing the process and building capacity for local fisheries development, management and

and fishery management sectors to participate in fisheries management, and continue effective outreach and education to expand participation in the management of local fishery resources.

Island teams from American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

training over an intensive 40-hour week in Honolulu May 14-18, 2019, and included informative tours and briefings at the Honolulu Fish Auction, NOAA Inouye Regional Center and Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council office. Training materials and resources were shared with the island teams to facilitate future education and outreach opportunities.

FISH 101 Island Team	Fisher/Seafood Industry	Educator	Resource Manager
American Samoa	Dustin Snow (Island Fisheries, Inc.)	Meagan Curtis (American Samoa Community College, ASCC)	Sean Felise (Dept. of Marine & Wildlife Resources, DMWR)
Guam	Myles Driscoll (commercial fisherman)	Frank Camacho (University of Guam, UOG)	Brent Tibbatts (Div. of Aquatic & Wildlife Resources, DAWR)
CNMI	Lino Tenorio (commercial fisherman)	Asapmar Ogumoro (CNMI Public Schools)	Carey Demapan (Dept. of Lands & Natural Resources, DLNR)

Kaneko continued the training by assisting the island team members to conduct a series of workshops for the fishing community and seminars for educators and students on fisheries and fishery management in their region. Examples include CNMI public schools curriculum developer and Council Education Committee member Asapmar Ogumoro engaging students and teachers in a discussion about sustainable fisheries at an educational seminar held at the multipurpose Civic Center in Saipan July 26, 2019, and Commercial fisherman Myles Driscoll, Frank Camacho (UOG) and Brett Tibbatts (DAWR) presenting at a Fishing Community Workshop held Aug. 3, 2019, at the Guam Museum. 🐟

science in the US Pacific Islands. The project strategy is applying the train-the-trainer approach to strengthen the capacity of members of the fishing community, education

(CNMI) were selected from three groups; fisher/seafood industry, educators and fishery/marine resource managers. John Kaneko, Hawaii Seafood Council, led the team

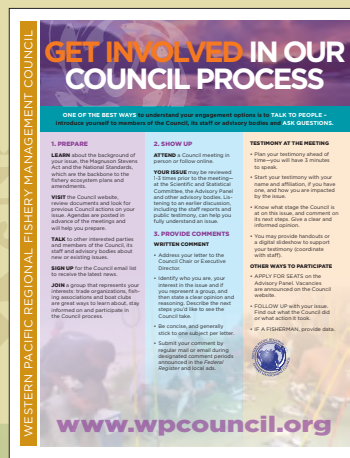


Left: FISH 101 island teams participated in an intensive fisheries course May 14-18, 2019, at the NOAA Pier 38 Training Center, Honolulu. From left: Carey Demapan, Asapmar Ogumoro, Sean Felise, Lino Tenorio, Dustin Snow, Meagan Curtis, Brent Tibbatts, Frank Camacho, Myles Driscoll and John Kaneko (lead trainer). **Right:** Teams visited the Honolulu Fish Auction to inspect the fish landings; learn how the fish auction operates; hear how the day's fish landings are identified and tracked using barcoded tags from the vessel to the buyer and beyond; and learn about quality and seafood safety control measures. Photos courtesy of John Kaneko.

FISH 101 Project



1) The FISH 101 island teams visited the Council office and were briefed by staff including fishery analyst/precious corals coordinator Josh DeMello, protected species coordinator Asuka Ishizaki, marine ecosystem scientist Marlowe Sabater and fishery analyst Thomas Remington. 2) Workshop participants visited a fish processing facility at Pier 38 to learn about quality grading, fish handling and packaging fresh tuna loins for distribution from Marcus Marrotte, plant manager, Fresh Island Fish Company. 3) Camryn Allen, turtle reproductive biologist, introduced the teams to the lab facilities and research being done at the NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center. 4) To close out the training session, course participants visited the Moanalua 99 Food Court for a practical exam on fresh tuna quality. 5) The American Samoa island team helped collect fish data during a fishing tournament sponsored by the National Marine Sanctuary and DMWR at Pago Pago Harbor. 6) ASCC marine science coordinator Meagan Curtis discussed educational pathways to marine sciences and fisheries careers with students and faculty during an educational seminar Nov. 8, 2019, at the ASCC multipurpose center. Photos courtesy of John Kaneko.

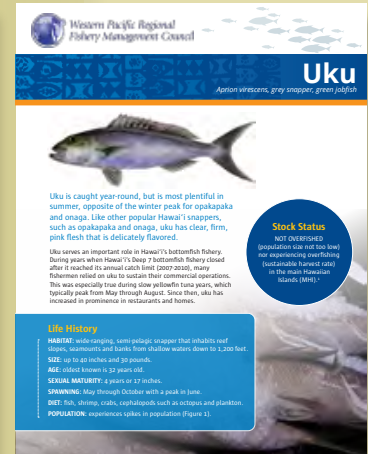


New Outreach Resources

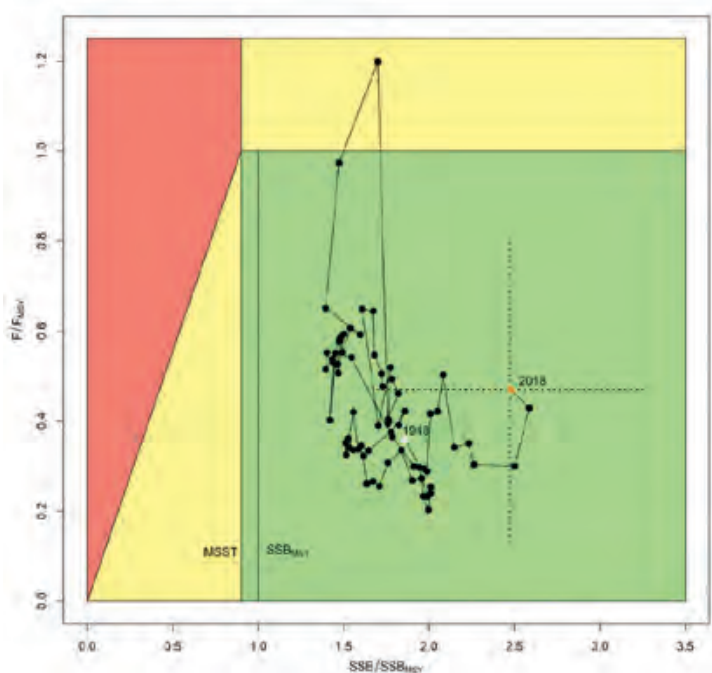
Council staff has been busy developing new outreach visuals:

- The first three in a series of five Council 101 handouts:
 - ~ What Does our Council Do?
 - ~ Get Involved in our Council Process
 - ~ Who Are the Decision Makers?
- Infographics on: how annual catch limits work (English and Samoan); fishery data flow from fishermen through scientists and managers and back to fishermen (English and Samoan); and the new Catchit Logit app suite that will debut in the Territories in summer 2020.
- A brochure that summarizes issues and concerns raised at the small-boat pelagic fisheries public scoping sessions, a handout that answers the question "How Does the Council Work with Fishermen to Collect Good Fishery Data?" and an *uku* fact sheet with its life history details, community value and catch history.

Outreach materials can be found on the Council website at www.wpcouncil.org/educational-resources/brochures. While you're there, visit our new COVID-19 website page, where we are posting helpful information for our fishing community: www.wpcouncil.org/coronavirus.



Science & Management 101: What is a Kobe Plot?



Above: This example Kobe plot is from a recent main Hawaiian Islands uku stock assessment and indicates that the stock is not currently overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

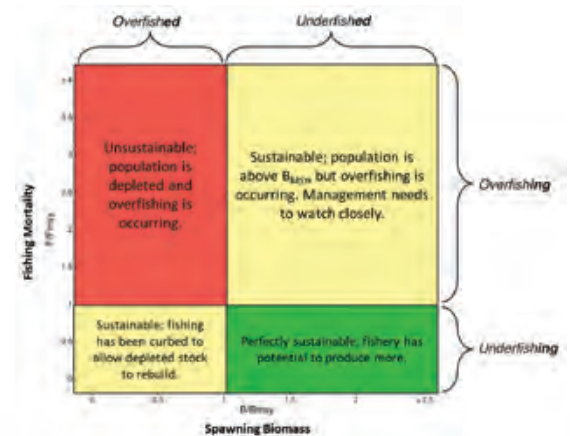
A "Kobe plot" (first used at a meeting in Kobe, Japan) is a visual way to show the status of a stock. The plot is divided into four panels which correspond to a particular condition of the stock (overfishing, underfishing, overfished and underfished). By developing a ratio of how much fishing is occurring (F) versus the estimated number of fish (B) for any particular fishery, a point can be plotted in one of those four panels, thus telling the status.

The Kobe plot can be broken down into two parts: amount of fish and the fishing effort.

The amount of fish is called biomass (B) and represents the population level. On the Kobe plot, a line is drawn vertically at the point where there is just enough bio-

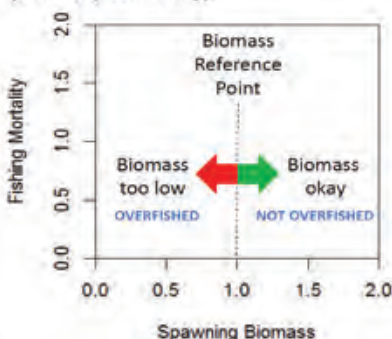
mass that the amount of fish taken doesn't affect future spawning (B/B_{MSY} , MSY = maximum sustainable yield). To the left of that line, too many fish are being removed from the ocean and the stock can't keep up with replacing itself (overfished). To the right, the amount of fish taken still allows for the stock to replenish itself (underfished).

Fishing mortality (F) is the amount of fish killed by fishing and can provide a reference for how much fishing can occur without affecting the sustainability of the stock. A horizontal line on the Kobe plot provides the point where the fishing effort (not the amount taken, or B) can impact the amount of fish available (F/F_{MSY}). Above the line, so much fishing is occurring that, if continued, the stock could become overfished (the definition of overfishing). Below the line, the amount of fishing will not affect the amount of fish in the population (underfishing).

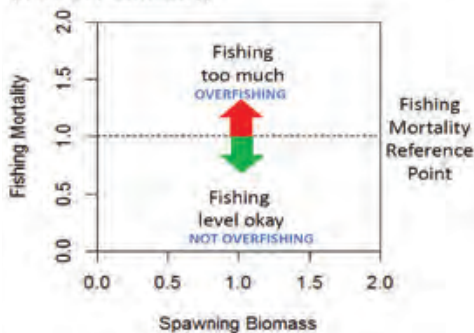


The Western Pacific Council assesses targeted fisheries like tunas, bottomfish and uku, but also manages incidentally caught fish like billfish (marlins) and bycatch such as sharks. If the Council finds that a fishery is overfished or overfishing is occurring, then it is required to take action by creating a stock rebuilding plan, which could include management measures such as reducing annual catch limits. 🐟

The Kobe Plot
(a fishery summary)



The Kobe Plot
(a fishery summary)



The goal of management is to get a fishery as close as possible to the intersection of the two lines.

Sources:
Victor Restrepo
<https://sustainablefisheries-uw.org/seafood-101/overfished-overfishing-rebuilding-stocks>

Get to Know Your Council Members: Howard Dunham



Howard Dunham

Learn about the people who balance competing interests while trying to make fishery management decisions for the overall benefit of the nation.

Howard Dunham was appointed to the Council as the vice chair for American Samoa in 2019. He has been a commercial fisherman, using an *alia* (traditional double hulled fishing catamaran), and certified diver for more than 20 years. He is the president of the American Samoa Alia Fishing Association and enjoys participating in regional tournaments.

Why did you want to be part of the Council?

I joined the Council to foster new relationships which could help revive the traditional *alia* fishing fleet in American Samoa and better preserve our significant marine resources for future generations.

What changes have you seen in the American Samoa fishing industry in the past 20 years?

I have noticed a decline in foreign longline vessels in our waters. Only a handful of local *alia* are now operating commercially; many remain tied-up and are only used for occasional family and cultural purposes. In the past 20 years, the local *alia* fleet has not been modernized with current technology/equipment and still requires lots of manual labor.

What are some challenges that American Samoa fisheries are facing?

American Samoa is currently facing a possible closure to bottomfish fishing due to overfishing. I feel this may be a premature closure because of a lack of accurate and current data collection locally. We are now working toward improving this data collection.

Access to new markets both on- and off-island is possible today with some modest improvements to infrastructure

onshore. We currently need a crushed ice machine and packing facility in Pago Pago to ship fish to more lucrative markets off-island.

What was your first impression after your first Council meeting?

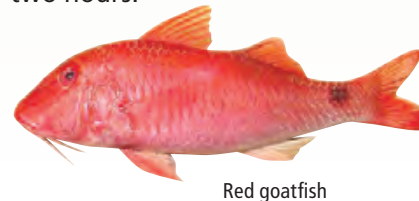
To be honest, I was a bit nervous at first but gradually became more confident each day. It is a new experience for me to be a part of the policymaking side of the industry. I have so many new acronyms to learn! I am excited to meet new people in the industry and look forward to strengthening those relationships in the future.

Tell me about one of your most exciting fishing experiences.

Every fishing experience is exciting. My greatest memories are those of being a teen and spearfishing from the reef or my *paopao* (canoe) in the mid-1970s. I still remember one time catching a tuna in the waters near the airport and having it pull me around in my canoe for two hours.



Dunham and his fishing friend, Abe Jemiah, proudly display their long-tail red snappers. Photo courtesy of Howard Dunham.



Red goatfish

Lastly, what is your favorite fish to eat and how do you prepare it?

My favorite fish to eat is the red

goatfish, or *veke'ula*. I prefer the fish cooked over an open-flame, but still enjoy it fried or steamed.

I prefer my sashimi to come from either yellowfin tuna or deep-sea barracuda. 🐟

Congressional Corner



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act that includes \$300

million in funding for fisheries and aquaculture with \$4,337,445 allocated for Hawai'i, \$2,553,194 for American

Samoa and \$1 million each for Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Section 12005 of the CARES Act stipulates that funds are authorized to aid tribal, subsistence, commercial and charter fishery participants affected by the novel coronavirus. This section of the bill is aimed at supporting independent operators who are not otherwise covered by agriculture di-

saster assistance programs. To be eligible for relief, participants must have "revenue losses greater than 35% as compared to the prior five-year average revenue, or any negative impacts to subsistence, cultural or ceremonial fisheries." Funds may be awarded on a rolling basis "and within a fishing season to ensure rapid delivery of funds," which will remain available

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until Sept. 30, 2021. More information can be found at the Council's website at www.wpcouncil.org/coronavirus.

A bill introduced in March 2020 would establish a regulatory system for sustainable offshore aquaculture in the US exclusive economic zone. H.R. 6191, also known as the Advancing the Quality and Understanding of American Aquaculture (AQUAA) Act, would provide national standards for sustainable offshore aquaculture; require the Secretary of Commerce to promulgate regulations for permitting and siting of aquaculture activities; and not consider offshore aquaculture as fishing for the purposes of the Magnuson Stevens Act. The Council is keeping an eye on this bill as it may have impacts on its actions to develop a permitting framework for aquaculture in the Western Pacific Region.

In addition, the White House issued an Executive Order (EO) on May 7, 2020 promoting American seafood competitiveness and economic growth. The EO specifically proposes to remove outdated and unnecessarily burdensome regulations; strengthen efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; and remove barriers to aquaculture permitting and project development.

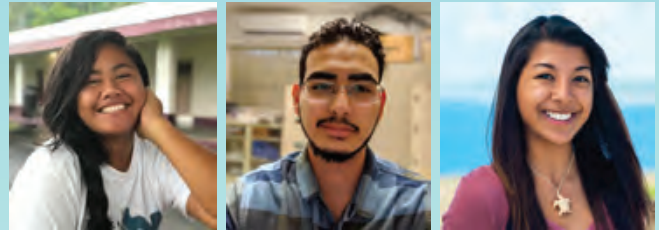


Council Family Updates

At the 181st Council meeting, the Council supported the following advisory body changes:

- **Nonu Tuisamoa** and **Joseph Fa'a'ita** are joining the American Samoa Advisory Panel.
- The Archipelagic Plan Team welcomes three new members: **Michael Quach**, NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC); **Bryan Ishida**, Hawai'i Dept. of Aquatic Resources; and **Marc Nadon**, NOAA PIFSC.
- The Pelagic Plan Team welcomes four new members: **Donald Kobayashi**, **Michael Quach** and **Michael Kinney**, NOAA PIFSC; and **Sean Felise**, American Samoa Dept. of Marine & Wildlife Resources (DMWR).
- The Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee-Technical Committee welcomes two new members: **Michael Quach** and **Joseph O'Malley**, NOAA PIFSC.
- The Education Committee welcomes two new members: **Alexandra Bayless**, NOAA PIFSC; and **Maria Mauga-Vaofanua**, American Samoa DMWR. 🐟

2020-2021 US Pacific Territories Fishery Capacity-Building Scholarship Winners Announced



From left: Aveipepa Fua, Jude Lizama and Leilani Sablan are the three recipients of the US Pacific Territories Fishery Capacity-Building Scholarship for 2020-2021.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2020-2021 US Pacific Territories Fishery Capacity-Building Scholarship. The scholarships are offered annually to college students with close connections to American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) who are pursuing degrees that will bolster the Territories' capacity to manage their fishery ecosystems. Students who accept a scholarship agree to work with their local fishery agency upon graduation for an equivalent amount of time that they receive the scholarship.

The 2020-2021 recipients include Aveipepa Fua (American Samoa) who will be pursuing a bachelor's degree in marine science at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo; Jude Lizama (CNMI) who will be pursuing a bachelor's degree in oceanography with a concentration in fisheries science at Hawai'i Pacific University; and Leilani Sablan (Guam) who will be pursuing a master's degree in biology at the University of Guam.

Since the scholarship program began in 2016, five recipients have graduated, with three having fulfilled their work requirements in American Samoa and the CNMI and two beginning their work commitment in 2019; and six recipients are poised to graduate in 2020 (two students) and 2021 (four students).

The scholarship program was established through a memorandum of understanding involving several federal agencies, the local fishery agencies in the Territories and several colleges and universities in Hawai'i and the Territories. It is funded by the Council, NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and NOAA Pacific Islands Regional Office. 🐟

NOAA Awards Nearly \$1 Million for Fisheries Projects in the Western Pacific Region

In May 2020, the Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) Grant Program announced the awarding of more than \$8 million to fund projects that address the needs of fishing communities, optimize economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries and increase other opportunities to keep working waterfronts viable. Program priorities focused on promotion, development and marketing, and science or technology that promotes sustainable US seafood production and harvesting. Of the 146 proposals that were submitted, four were selected for funding from the Western Pacific Region totaling \$915,563. These projects were funded:

- *Community Ideas and Projects for Ahi, Yellowfin Tuna, Landed on Kaua'i.* Pacific Islands Fisheries Group.

Yellowfin tuna ('ahi) is a key species in the Hawaiian diet, the local economy and visitor culinary experience. Kaua'i is dominated by part-time anglers, most of them trollers, whose catch generally supplies the local Kaua'i market. The objective of this proposed work is to identify and evaluate a range of possible approaches to diversify or increase market share and business opportunities for the Kaua'i small boat 'ahi (and other species) fleet and the community's goals and preferences related to diversification.

- *Advancing the Promotion, Development and Marketing for Hawai'i's Local Sustainable Fisheries.* Conservation International Foundation.

The goal of this project is to strengthen the viability of Hawai'i's local seafood industry by creating a scalable market-based model that promotes better business practices and marketing strategies to increase production and market demand for local and sustainable fish species. To do this, the project proposes to develop a "Pacific Chef Network" pilot initiative targeted at increasing the market demand for bluestripe snapper, or *ta'ape*.

- *Building Resiliency in Hawaiian Fishing Communities: A Pilot Project Assessing the Feasibility of Developing a Local Fishmeal Plant.* Hawaii Feed & Fertilizer, LLC.

One of the biggest barriers to the growth of aquaculture in Hawai'i is the high cost of imported aquafeed. Producing aquafeed locally would remove that barrier and help aquaculture to be sustainable and grow throughout Hawai'i. This project proposes to create and test fishmeal made from Hawaiian fish processing waste to produce locally sourced aquafeed that can be used for local aquaculture farms as well as pet feed, fish bait and fertilizer.

- *Determining Patterns and Drivers of Life-History Variation to Inform Present and Future Fishery Management in the US Pacific.* University of Guam.

Knowing the life-history traits of coral reef species can help scientists and managers predict and interpret population dynamics used in stock assessments and management. This project proposes to determine life history traits for commercially important fish species in the Mariana Archipelago to determine the relationships between the environment and fish biological traits. This will help to project and forecast fishery yield under future climate variability and better inform management of those species.

The Saltonstall-Kennedy Act of 1954 established a program to provide financial support for research and development of commercial fisheries. A portion of import duties on fish and fish products is provided to a fund that finances this research and development. Some of these funds are used to support the annual competitive S-K Grant Program. For more information, visit www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/saltonstall-kennedy-grant-program. 🐟



Recipes

Whether you enjoy it on crackers washed down with a cold beer, or sautéed with onions and served over hot rice, tuna in cans or pouches has made a regular appearance in quarantine cooking across the US. Please enjoy these recipes recommended by Council staff.



Sylvia – Tuna, Spinach and Artichoke Casserole

Courtesy of starkist.com/recipes

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 2 2.6-oz pouches StarKist Low Sodium Albacore White Tuna in Water
- 2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1 9-oz package frozen artichokes, thawed and drained
- 1 tsp canola oil
- ½ sweet onion, diced
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 4 oz sliced mushrooms
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp flour
- 1½ cups skim milk
- ¼ cup grated Swiss cheese plus 2 tbsp
- ¼-½ tsp ground nutmeg
- ground black pepper, to taste

Directions

- Preheat oven to 375°F.
- Mix tuna, rice, spinach and artichokes together in medium bowl.

- Heat canola oil in medium non-stick frying pan. Add onion and garlic and cook until onion is just soft. Add mushrooms and cook until tender. Add to tuna and rice mixture.
- In same frying pan, melt butter. Whisk in flour and cook on low heat for a minute. Gradually whisk in milk and stir until thickened. Whisk in cheese and stir until melted. Add nutmeg and pepper and mix well.
- Stir milk mixture into tuna mixture and combine well. Pour into a 1½ qt casserole dish and bake for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with the remaining 2 tbsp cheese and broil until cheese browns.

Nate – Tuna Cream Cheese Spread (This one is great for movie nights! It goes well with pale ales, especially IPA or light lagers.)

Ingredients

- 4 2.6-oz StarKist extra-virgin olive oil yellowfin tuna pouches
- 4 oz cream cheese (let it soften before mixing)
- 3 oz sour cream
- 4 oz Kewpie mayo
- 4 cloves finely minced garlic
- 1 bunch finely chopped cilantro
- 2-3 tbsp Sriracha sauce
- 3 stalks of green onions (mix white part in the dip and garnish with the green part)
- a few heavy-handed shakes of smoked paprika
- ½ tsp lemon zest

Directions

- Combine all ingredients in a large non-metal bowl.
- Lay some plastic wrap over the top, pushing out all the air pockets.
- Refrigerate at least 30 minutes.
- Serve with your favorite crackers, chips and toasted breads.



Amy – Baja Tuna Tacos

Courtesy of starkist.com/recipes

Serves 2

Ingredients

- 1 6.4-oz pouch StarKist Chunk Light Tuna in Oil
- 4 flour tortillas
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- ½ cup sliced red cabbage
- ½ cup sliced green cabbage
- ¼ cup sliced red onion
- 2 green onions, sliced
- ½ avocado, sliced
- cilantro, to taste

Directions

- Grill the tortillas on a grill pan or grill, just long enough to get the grill marks.
- Place the tuna in a medium bowl and toss with lime juice.
- Mix the cabbage and red onion in a small bowl.
- Place 2 tortillas on each plate (you will need 2 large plates).
- Top each tortilla with ~¼ cup of the cabbage and onion mixture. Place ¼ of the tuna mixture on each tortilla, and top with a few scallions and some cilantro.
- Serve ¼ of an avocado on the side of each plate.





2020 Council Calendar

All meetings will be held virtually, unless otherwise noted.

JUNE

2

11th meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Scientific Advisory Committee, La Jolla, CA*

6

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Advisory Panel meeting, Saipan (ChST)

8

United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development's Virtual Ocean Literacy Summit

9-11

136th Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) meeting

9-11

Capitol Hill Ocean Week*

17-18

General Advisory Committee to the US Section of the IATTC and Scientific Advisory Subcommittee*

22-25

182nd Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council meeting, Honolulu

JULY

13-17

34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries, Rome, Italy*

15-20

20th International Scientific Committee Plenary meeting*

28-31

5th Joint IATTC-Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna Management meeting, Fukuoka, Japan

AUGUST

10

South Pacific Albacore Roadmap Intersessional Working Group (in person meeting) (WCPFC), Apia, Samoa*

13-14

IATTC and Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program Annual meetings, La Jolla, CA

SEPTEMBER

9-11

137th SSC, (in person meeting) TBD

15-18

183rd Council meeting, (in person meeting) (TBD: Mariana Archipelago)

*Not Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council meetings.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development's Virtual Ocean Literacy Summit will be held June 8, 2020. Council staff will be on a panel to discuss the role of ocean literacy in transforming ocean knowledge into action. For more information and to register for the virtual meeting, go to <https://education.ocean.org/olsummit>.

136th Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting will be held June 9 to 11, 2020, via web conference. Visit www.wpcouncil.org/meetings-calendars for more information on the web conference connection and agendas. Major agenda items include the 2019 annual SAFE report; main Hawaiian Island uku fishery review; American Samoa bottomfish fishery status and rebuilding plan; Endangered Species Act consultations; COVID-19 impacts on pelagic fisheries; and status determination of oceanic white tip sharks and striped marlin.

The 182nd meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will convene June 23 to 25, 2020, via web conference. Major agenda items include COVID-19 regional impacts; community engagement and public relations efforts; review of Guam and PRIA MCPs (action items); stock status determination for oceanic whitetip shark and striped marlin; and 2021 US and Territorial bigeye tuna specifications (final action).

Action Items at the June 2020 Council Meeting

The 182nd meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will convene June 23-25, 2020. The meeting will be held by web conference. For the web conference connection and agenda, go to www.wpcouncil.org/meetings-calendars. The Council will consider and may take action on the issues summarized below.

2021 Longline-Caught Bigeye Tuna Catch and Allocation Limits for American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI): The US Pacific territories are Participating Territories of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), which develops longline-caught, bigeye tuna quotas for member countries, such as the United States, operating in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). Participating Territories and Small Island Developing States, however, are not subject to limits in recognition of their aspirations to develop their fisheries. Nonetheless, at a time when bigeye tuna in the WCPO was considered subject to overfishing, the Council recommended and the Secretary of Commerce approved the setting of annual catch limits for longline-caught, bigeye tuna for the US Pacific Territories as well as the authority for the Territories to transfer a portion of their limit to US vessels permitted under the Council's Pacific Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) for the Western Pacific Region. At its 182nd meeting, the Council will consider the catch and allocation limits for the Territories for 2021. The bigeye stock is currently considered to be neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing based on the 2017 stock assessment and its 2018 update.

Guam and Pacific Remote Island Areas Marine Conservation Plans: The Marine Conservation Plans (MCPs) for Guam and the Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIAs) expire in 2020. At its 182nd meeting, the Council will review the new draft MCPs for their consistency with the Council's Mariana Archipelago and PRIA FEPs. After review by the Council, the MCPs are transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for approval. The Guam MCP is developed by the governor of Guam and outlines projects that can be funded by forfeitures from illegal foreign fishing in the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters around Guam or by funds deposited in the Western Pacific Sustainable Fisheries Fund (WPSFF) as a result of Guam's allocation of a portion of its longline-caught bigeye tuna annual limit to US vessels that are federally permitted and other sources. The PRIA MCP is developed by the Council and outlines projects that can be funded through the WPSFF from forfeitures from illegal foreign fishing in the US EEZ around the PRIAs and other sources. The PRIAs include Howland and Baker Islands, Jarvis Island, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Midway Atoll, Palmyra Atoll and Wake Island. Approved MCPs are valid for a period of three years and can be modified at any time and resubmitted for approval. 🐟