

F I S H E R I E S F A C T S H E E T

COMMON WEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS



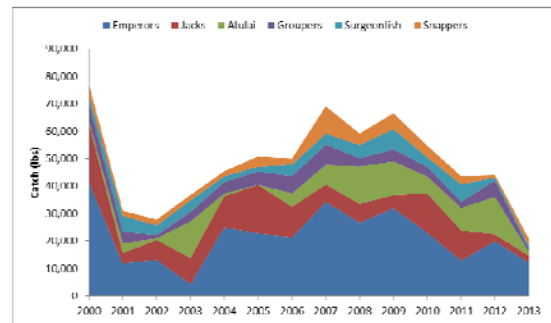
Fisheries in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) consist of shore-based and boat-based catches of coral reef and bottomfish species.

Coral Reef Fisheries

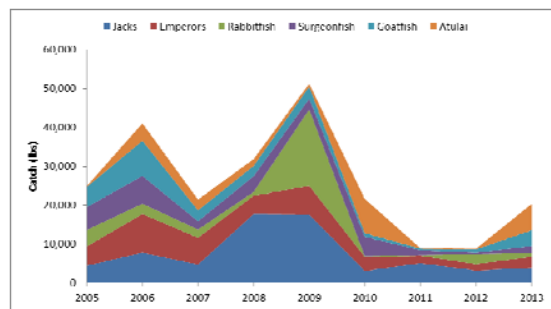
- Small-scale and important for subsistence, social and cultural purposes for food, trade and recreation
- Common shore-based fishing techniques include spearfishing, cast netting, hook and line, and gleaning
- Common boat-based fishing techniques include trolling, bottom-fishing, spearfishing, octopus hooking, cast netting
- Common shore-based reef fish caught: Surgeonfish, parrotfish, goatfish, groupers, wrasse
- Common shore-based techniques: hook and line, spearfishing, cast netting

Bottomfish

- Occurs primarily around the islands and banks from Rota to Zealandia Bank north of Sarigan
- Primarily consists of small-scale local boats engaged in local commercial and subsistence fishing (a few larger vessels do participate in the fishery)
- Two sectors: Deep water (>500 ft) and shallow water (100-500 ft)
- Deep water: commercial, targeting snappers and groupers
- Shallow water: commercial and subsistence, targeting the redgill emperor
- Gears: hand lines, home fabricated hand reels, electric reels (more common with the larger vessels)

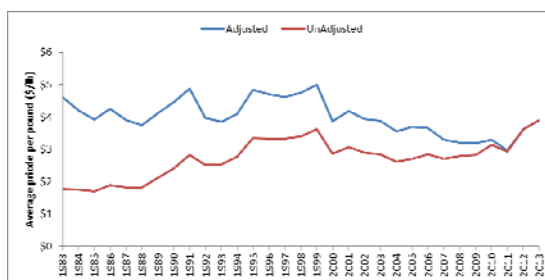
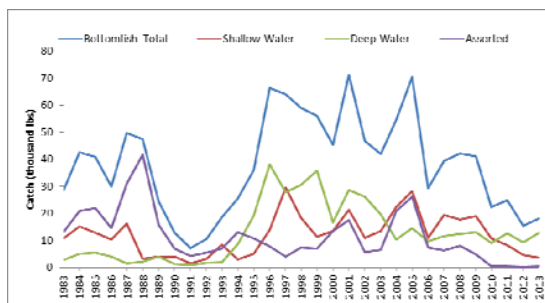


Catch composition of shore-based coral reef fisheries



Catch composition of boat-based coral reef fisheries

Catch composition (top) and average prices (bottom) of bottomfish fisheries



- Number of bottomfish fishermen has varied widely over the last 26 years but has ranged from a high of 100 fishermen in 1983 to a low of 21 fishermen in 2012.

Data Source: Draft WPRFMC 2014 Annual Archipelagic Fishery Ecosystem Report (in press)



Management

FEDERAL

- Bottomfish permit, logbooks and reporting
- Closed areas for bottomfish by vessel size
- Annual Catch Limits
- Essential Fish Habitat and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
- Special Coral Reef Ecosystem Permits
- Mariana Trench Marine National Monument

TERRITORIAL

- Five Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) around Saipan (three of which are no-take conservation areas and two species-based reserves) and one each on Tinian and Rota
- Prohibitions include: gillnet (unless with permit on Rota and Tinian), scuba spearfishing, moratorium on trochus and sea cucumber
- Limits placed on lobster size, cast nets



Current Fishery Issues

- Effects of Typhoon Souledour
- U.S. Military Training
- Marianas Trench Marine National Monument



Annual Catch Limits: The reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 2006 required the Regional Fishery Management Councils to specify annual catch limits (ACLs) for species described in the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plans. ACL is a quota-based management to regulate catches to sustainable levels estimated by stock assessments conducted on various stock under Council management. There are 115 species and species complexes specified for the Western Pacific Region. For more information, browse the Council website (www.wpcouncil.org)

Management Unit Species	2015 ACL	2016 ACL	2017 ACL	2018 ACL
Bottomfish	228,000	228,000	228,000	TBD
Coral Reef Species Complex				
Selar crumenophthalmus – atulai or bigeye scad	77,400	77,400	77,400	77,400
Acanthuridae – surgeonfish	302,600	302,600	302,600	302,600
Carangidae – jacks	44,900	44,900	44,900	44,900
Crustacean – crabs	4,400	4,400	4,400	4,400
Holocentridae – squirrelfish	66,100	66,100	66,100	66,100
Kyphosidae – chubs/rudderfish	22,700	22,700	22,700	22,700
Labridae – wrasses ¹	55,100	55,100	55,100	55,100
Lethrinidae – emperors	53,700	53,700	53,700	53,700
Lutjanidae – snappers	190,400	190,400	190,400	190,400
Mollusks – turbo snail, octopus, giant clams	9,800	9,800	9,800	9,800
Mugilidae – mullets	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500
Mullidae – goatfish	28,400	28,400	28,400	28,400
Scaridae – parrotfish ²	144,000	144,000	144,000	144,000
Serranidae – groupers	86,900	86,900	86,900	86,900
Siganidae – rabbitfish	10,200	10,200	10,200	10,200
All Other CREMUS Combined	7,300	7,300	7,300	7,300
Chaelinus undulatus – humphead (Napoleon) wrasse	2,009	2,009	2,009	2,009
Bombometopon muricatum – bumphead parrotfish	797 (CNMI & GU combined)	797 (CNMI & GU combined)	797 (CNMI & GU combined)	797 (CNMI & GU combined)
Carcharhinidae – reef sharks	5,600	5,600	5,600	5,600
Crustacean complex				
Deepwater shrimp	275,570	275,570	275,570	275,570
Spiny lobsters	7,410	7,410	7,410	7,410
Slipper lobsters	60	60	60	60
Kona crab	6,300	6,300	6,300	6,300
Precious coral complex				
Black corals	2,100	2,100	2,100	2,100
Precious corals in the exploratory beds	2,205	2,205	2,205	2,205

Council's Fishery Development

- Co-hosted an aquaculture workshop in Saipan to assist the CNMI in developing a sustainable aquaculture fishery
- Provided funding to start up a fishermen's cooperative and fish market
- Conducted projects to improve fishery data collection through creel surveys and biosampling
- Developed a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a longline dock in Saipan
- Provided master fishermen workshop training to CNMI fishermen

Future Priorities for CNMI Fisheries

- Develop the infrastructure needed for fisheries
- Improve the aids to navigation at harbors and waterways
- Develop a sustainable aquaculture fishery in the CNMI

