

AGENCY REPORT

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
Department of Land and Natural Resources,  
Division of Fish and Wildlife  
December 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
189<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting

This report describes the activities undertaken by the Department of Land and Natural Resources regarding fisheries and conservation during the periods of **October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021– November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021**. The report covers Fisheries Monitoring and Research, Resource Protection and Enforcement, and Other Fishery Activities.

**Fisheries Research and Monitoring (Fisheries Data Section)**

All fishery data collection programs are being performed as proposed. Staffing has improved during this reporting period. Two data technicians have been recruited and are being familiarized with the creel program. Programmatic support is provided through the efforts of the Data Officer. DFW is in the process of recruiting a Manager for the Fishery Data Section.

An update of the data collection programs activities are listed below.

## a. Boat-based Creel Survey

- Surveys for the Boat-based creel are back to normal. However, surveys will be modified based on covid restrictions.
- Between the months of July to September, 68 interviews were conducted. Of those interviews, 35 were trolling, 28 were bottomfishing, 4 were spearfishing and 1 was hook and line.

## b. Shore-based Creel Survey

- Surveys for the Shore-based creel are back to normal. However, surveys will be modified based on changes in covid restrictions.
- Between the months of July to September, 67 interviews were conducted. Of those interviews, 10 were cast net, 35 were hook and line fishing, 2 was spearfishing.

## c. Commercial Receipt System

- Receipts have been collected from participating vendors, hotels, and restaurants up to the month of September.
- Between the months of July to September, an estimated 14,397.35lbs of bottom fish, 16,249.90lbs of reef fish, 69,483.47lbs of pelagic fish, and 6,953.32lbs of miscellaneous fish were sold.

- The increase in pounds of fish sold can be attributed to the improved data collection and data entry by recently hired staff.
- Several vendors continue to list their sales as “assorted reef fish” due to the layout of the commercial receipt forms. Data Section staff have discussed this issue with vendors to improve species level reporting.

### **Rulemaking and Legislation**

- a. Updates on Mandatory data recording and reporting.
  - A meeting between the CNMI DFW Director and the NOAA PIFSC Fisheries Research & Monitoring Division Director was held on November 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss the transition of the electronic data reporting program to DFW.
  - DFW is continually working to finalize the Mandatory Data Reporting Implementation Plan.

### **CARES Act**

- a. Updates on the dissemination of CARES act funds.
  - The CNMI Office of Grants Management and State Clearing House announced that CARES act funds were to be mailed to fishermen and vendors on September 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - DFW is working with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission on revising the CNMI spend plan to be consistent with the Consolidated Appropriations Act, the CARES Act, and NOAA’s guidance.

### **Other Fishery Activities**

- a. Boating Access updates  
Saipan Marina and Docks
  - Operations and maintenance work continues for the Smiling Cove Marina.

#### Tinian Marina

- Ground maintenance services are ongoing for the Tinian marina facility.
- Continued collaboration with the Public Assistance Office on the proposed replacement of the Tinian Marina.

#### Rota Marina

- A Change Order is being processed to address additive costs in the amount of \$49,100 to cover the equipment rental and a 90-day extension.
- Rota Marina Materials were shipped out as scheduled, Materials are expected to arrive on Saipan by the end of November 2021.
- Three tasks that were accomplished before September 2021.
  - Repainting the existing marina railing,

- Installation of signages
  - Backfilling of the sinkhole near the walkway leading to the marina gangway.
- Rota West Harbor Marina Rules and Regulation is still being developed.
- Ground maintenance services are ongoing for the Rota marina facility.