



WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

DRAFT

(version 2021.0.9.16)

Fishing Industry Advisory Committee Meeting Report

Thursday, September 9, 2021

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Michael Goto, FIAC Chair, opened the meeting at 1 pm. Members present were Johnathan Hurd, John Kaneko, Baron Miho-Anasia, Kerry Umamoto, Eric Kingma, Sean Martin, and Lino Tenorio.

Council staff present: Kitty Simonds, Mark Mitsuyasu, Asuka Ishizaki, Joshua DeMello, Marlowe Sabater, Mark Fitchett, Zach Yamada, Maria Carnevale, Floyd Masga, and Felix Reyes.

Public participants in attendance: Justin Hospital, Jonathan Sweeny, Mark Ladao, Mike Tenorio, Steve Kostelnik, Thomas Remington.

2. Status Report on June 2021 FIAC Recommendations

Council staff directed members to the June 10, 2021 FIAC Report for the summary of discussions and recommendations. Staff added that documents and presentations for upcoming agenda items are included as links as provided.

3. MSA Reauthorization

Council staff reviewed the major provisions of the MSA Huffman Bill and other current legislation. Staff provided a matrix of proposed provisions in the bills that may impact the fisheries and management in the Pacific Islands Region. These bills provide for addressing climate change impacts to fisheries, reinforcing protecting essential fish habitat, and directed changes at the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) and its responsibilities. Requests have been made for Council comments and therefore staff is soliciting input from the FIAC on its concerns on the proposed legislation.

The FIAC discussed the Congressional process for passing the proposed MSA related bills and confirmed it could carry through the end of the next year and if not passed over to 2022. The Huffman bill is very comprehensive as it carries forward many of the topics from prior proposed amendments to the MSA. Changes included in the Huffman bill will require significant increase in funding to support the data elements related to forage fish and climate change. It was also noted that NMFS and Councils are already working on many of the research and monitoring elements included in the bill. Having Congress tell NMFS and Council to do work already being done is redundant.

FIAC noted opposition to proposed changes to the WP SSF that seeks to establish an

independent committee to review MCPs and remove the Council from the process. The FIAC expressed particular concern about prohibiting Councils from advising the Administration on national administrative and executive initiatives. The Congress established the policy deliberation and decision making process to allow for regional, community and political differences. Prohibiting Councils to weigh in on administrative and executive issues directly counters the purpose of the MSA. In addition, converting Council staff status to Federal employees also prevents the Council from completing its mission to fulfill their responsibilities as called for in the MSA.

4. Mariana Archipelago

A. Military impacts on Guam Fisheries

Council staff reported on the status of the planned Marine Corps live-fire training ranges and potential community impacts. The new Marine Corps Camp Blaz realignment of Marines from Okinawa and elsewhere to Guam is expected to be completed by 2025. The project includes a large caliber firing range of about 3,660 acres extending 2.8 miles out in to the ocean. The footprint overlaps the travel lane for small boats transiting to Rota Banks and other fishing grounds to the north. The US military is conducting increased joint exercises with Asian allies during 2021. Military vessels were observed in or near fishing lanes and in the way of local small boat fishermen during these events.

FIAC members also noted increased military activities around the island of Kauai, especially on the southwest part of Kauai. The prevalence of training off Kauai (pacific missile range) has also impacted the Hawaii longline fleet by forcing them to leave the area. While the exercises are well noticed, occasionally those can change at short notice. The FIAC suggested the Council to write to DoD to take into consideration ocean users in planning their exercises that may affect large areas.

B. FSM citizen fishing activities in Guam EEZ

Council staff provided a report on the Compact of Free Association (COFA) which is scheduled to expire in 2023, its ramifications to Guam, and the continuing FSM migrant fishing in Guam's EEZ. FSM manned small boats operate on a 24-hour rotation cycle with the day crew trolling and the night crew spearfishing. Most fish are sold to FSM owned fish retailers and roadside. Ongoing issues of concern include lack of fishing etiquette and violation of vessel safety requirements, e.g. absence of navigational lights.

FIAC noted that similar operations also occur in Hawaii. Issues have been raised with Micronesian fishermen fishing extensively at night. The practice may not be illegal, unless they are taking undersized fish or out of season, but scale of their operations is concerning.

5. Impacts of Imports on Hawaii Seafood Markets

Jonathan Sweeney, PIFSC, presented on a conceptual frame for investigating the impact of imports on the Hawaii market. The Hawaii market in 2021 had an extreme shortage of foreign-sourced pelagic fish product due to ongoing COVID impacts. Overall, there has been a decreased supply in the local market – with locally-sourced product being dominant. A demand model has been developed, conceptualized as price as a function of quantity landed in Hawaii, the

sensitivity of Hawaii demand on imports, and the quantity of imports realized at a given time. Data inputs include imports coming and going from other markets. Import sensitivity for Hawaii is based on 11 pelagic management unit species products and 6 regions. Anticipated output for this project will be an online user interface to predict price and supply/demand metrics. A final review is expected August of 2022. Sweeney asked for FIAC input on whether the framework is appropriate.

The FIAC discussed the proposal providing the following comments.

- Questioned the purpose of the study in the context that Hawaii is the most expensive market in the world for these species. They questioned how different Hawaii fish is from other locations and if there exist separation to maintain differentiation in the markets.
- It was suggested to remove marlin from the study as its illegal to ship billfish to the US mainland.
- Project should start with looking at other countries that are selling to markets in the mainland. There are regional differences in marketing and pricing.
- Members expressed particular interest in looking specifically at where the fresh fish is coming from. This summer the mainland was wide open, restaurants/hotels in Hawaii were open, catch rates in Hawaii was low and there were very low imports. Does this represent the “true” value of Hawaii’s pelagic fish given the low level of imports?
- Market is almost impossible to figure out as it changes so rapidly. For example, tuna was \$12/lb on the east coast, but a week later they could not sell it at \$8/lb. The reason for the drop was explained as the schools in the east coast started and not as much fish was being eaten by the Jewish community.
- Study should look at the future of seafood under ongoing and increasing restrictions/regulations due to COVID (reduced airline flights, cargo). COVID has changed every industry and the seafood industry is no different. The very act of dining out has trickled down to the seafood industry and fishing fleet. FIAC members predicted that prices will remain strong.
- HLA supports and encourages continued work on the project.
- Suggested focusing the project on YFT, BET and Swordfish. Too many different aspects of the market - domestic/American fresh market, frozen/fresh imports, farm raised, future of plant-based seafood, etc.
- Also consider impacts from consignments (how this affects price)

The FIAC supports the effort and suggested the Council request PIFSC study the effects of fresh imports into the US market on the price of Hawaii landed seafood.

6. Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

A. Impacts on HI LL fishery

Council staff reported on a compendium of studies estimating impacts of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Expansion and the Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIAS) through an intervention in 2016 under the Antiquities Act. These studies include analyses from the Council in 2014 and more recently published peer-reviewed papers. One paper, Lynham et al (2020), contends “monument expansions had little, if any, negative impacts on the fishing industry, corroborating ecological models that have predicted minimal impacts from

closing large parts of the Pacific Ocean to fishing.” Chan (2020) used a measure of aggregate commercial catch rate and revenue to determine there were deleterious impacts to the Hawaii-based fishery after the intervention in 2016. Sweeney (2021) analysis suggests an aggregate commercial catch rate is a more robust measure of catch per unit effort (CPUE) for Hawaii’s deep-set longline fishery than the one provided by Lynham et al (2020) and factors beyond monument expansion have a large influence on CPUE and revenue per unit of effort trends. By examining outputs from the 2020 stock assessment diagnostic model, increases in biomass of yellowfin and bigeye tuna accessible to longline fisheries also correspond to catch rate increases of the two combined species.

FIAC noted the latest Lyman paper warrants a response from PIFSC and will recommend the Council request PIFSC to consider reviewing and publishing such a response.

B. Sanctuary Designation

Council staff presented a summary on the Council’s preliminary steps for anticipating the NWHI National Marine Sanctuary designation process including NOAA’s NOI scoping questions as well as Council policy agenda points.

FIAC requested clarification and discussed the Council’s policy agenda and associated goals and objectives as presented by staff. Members expressed concern locally as the Sanctuary has taken areas away which was followed by closures of the NWHI. Members questioned, hypothetically, if they can expect to return to bottomfishing in the NWHI. In reality, the cost for transiting all the way up to the NWHI, fishing and coming home makes it difficult for anyone who does not sell fish.

Staff added that it is early in the designation process but the Council has been working with NOAA to agree on understanding the regulatory framework to minimize additional burden to fishers - not extending boundaries – and allow subsistence fishermen to retain and bring fish home.

7. Council Actions for 187th Meeting

A. AS BMUS rebuilding plan ((Final Action)

Council staff presented the summary of the American Samoa BMUS rebuilding plan action that the Council will consider for final action at its next meeting. The BMUS stock in American Samoa is overfished and the fishery subject to overfishing based on the 2019 benchmark stock assessment by PIFSC. This was deemed to be the best scientific information available.

Alternatives include: 1) status quo - continue with the Interim Catch Limit of 13,000 lb which does not comply with the NS1 and NS2 guidelines; 2) ACL of 1,500 lb with in-season AM and higher performance standard; 3) moratorium of bottomfishing in federal waters; and 4) ACL of 5,000 lb with in-season AM and higher performance standard. The analysis of impact includes assumptions of whether or not the territory will implement a complementary management measure to control the catch in territorial waters.

FIAC discussed the status of the fishery noting the ridiculous requirement of having to select unreasonable quotas based on flawed information. The group agreed that would support

the highest level of catch that would be legally allowable, which is 5,000 pounds.

B. MHI Uku ACL (Final Action)

Council staff presented the alternatives to specify Annual Catch Limits (ACL) for the Hawaii uku fishery for fishing year 2022-25). The recent stock assessment shows the stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The Council previously considered splitting the ACL between commercial and non-commercial sectors but recommended a combined ACL and identified a preliminarily preferred alternative with an ACL of 295,419 lbs. and an Annual Catch Target of 291,000 lbs. Accountability Measures for the ACL would include in-season monitoring with a projection of when catch would be reached and the fishery would close. Staff provided the expected fishery outcome of alternatives for the FIAC's consideration and discussion.

FIAC discussed monitoring of the non-commercial component of the fishery in comparison to monitoring of the commercial component. The data on the non-commercial sector would come from the HMRFS survey as well as the mail survey as well. In general, the non-commercial component is believed to higher or equal to the commercial catch. However, staff added that the data from the survey is highly uncertain and thus that will be factored in when producing monthly projections. The FIAC supported the preliminary preferred alternative as presented.

C. Seabird Mitigation in HI DSLL (Initial Action)

Council staff provided an overview of the options for a regulatory amendment for modifying seabird mitigation measures in the Hawaii DSLL fishery. The Council will consider initial action at its September meeting which include the replacement of blue-dyed bait with tori lines (under options 2 and 3) and modifications to the strategic offal discard measure (two sub-options under option 4 - either to remove the requirement, or to refine it). FIAC was asked to provide input to the Council on the options for their consideration in selecting a preliminary preferred alternative.

FIAC raised concerns regarding breakage of the pole that could result in non-compliance. Prior suggestion has been made to have boats carry backup lines/poles which can be addressed in compliance. The other option would be for boats to carry blue-dye bait in case of tori pole breakage. The FIAC supported initial action to allow tori lines in lieu of blue dyed bait as well as remove requirements for offal discard.

D. Cooperative Research Priorities

Council staff presented the current research priorities for the island and pelagic fisheries, and protected species. These research priorities are updated as necessary and are used for the annual regional Cooperative Research solicitation. The priorities are solicited from the different advisory groups and reviewed by the Council for approval.

FIAC discussed the context of the report and how the Council and NMFS use these pelagic priorities. Members noted that priorities should not be limited to potential projects on billfish only. Other pelagic species, such as mahi mahi, must also be included in the priorities

which staff agreed to include.

FIAC member representing Hawaii Longline Association (HLA) noted that NMFS is not coordinating with HLA or Take Reduction Team (TRT) on False Killer Whale research projects (re: recent \$1M appropriation). The FIAC should be another opportunity to further understand what is happening with the ongoing acoustic study and to create greater engagement of the FIAC/Council on TRT research priorities.

The FIAC suggested the Council include FKW avoidance and deterrence in HI LL fishery as a coop priority and to receive an update from PIFSC regarding FKW acoustic study and review of TRT research priorities.

8. Review of US Support to Pacific Island Nations

Council staff provided an overview of funding provided from the United States to East Asia and Oceania nations. The FIAC did not have any comments or questions.

9. Other Issues

A. Community Funding Opportunities and Unfunded Projects

On March 11, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. This is a \$1.9 trillion economic relief stimulus package that allocated \$3 billion to the Economic Development Administration to invest in infrastructure innovation and workforce training to create good-paying American jobs and strengthen the nation's global economic competitiveness. This investment will include commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, and the businesses and communities that depend on them. Similar to the EDA's program, the Council expects that there will be more funding opportunities that will come down the line. No discussion from FIAC members.

B. FIAC Membership

Staff reported that Guam FIAC member, Manny Duenas, has been appointed to the Council and is no longer a FIAC member. Members were asked share opportunities for potential FIAC membership with other community members. A current C/V would be needed if anyone is interested.

10. Public Comment

No public comment.

11. Discussion and Recommendations

The FIAC discussed and supported the following recommendations. The FIAC:

- 1) Regarding military training exercises and activities, requests the Council send a letter to the Department of Defense noting fishery related impacts from increased military exercises and associated offshore area closures on the Pacific Island fisheries and other user groups.
- 2) Supports the PIFSC study on the role of fresh and frozen domestic/foreign seafood imports/exports on the Hawaii fishing industry and seafood market and requests a

presentation of the results be made to the FIAC once the study is completed.

- 3) Regarding the paper by Lynham, J., Nikolaev, A., Raynor, J. et al., “Impacts of the two largest marine protected area on longline catch rates,” recommends the Council direct staff to work with PIFSC Socioeconomic Program and members of the SSC to provide a peer-reviewed response to Lynham et al (2020).
- 4) Regarding the main Hawaiian island uku ACL, recommends the Council select Alternative 5 setting the ACT for the commercial and non-commercial fisheries at a 36 percent risk of overfishing with an associated annual catch of 291,010 lb with in-season and post-season accountability measures.
- 5) Regarding seabird mitigation in the HI deep-set longline fishery, recommends the Council support the initial action to allow the use of tori lines in lieu of blue dyed bait and supports the removal of requirements for offal discard.
- 6) Regarding cooperative research priorities, recommends the Council include FKW avoidance and deterrence in HI LL fishery as a priority.
- 7) Requests an update from PIFSC regarding FKW acoustic study and review of TRT research priorities.
- 8) Regarding MSA proposed amendments, recommend the Council request the Administration to determine the costs that will be incurred to implement many of the new provisions requiring new research and studies. In addition, the analysis should include costs to support associated reviews and outreach that will be needed to accompany public review and, in turn, implementation of regulations by the NMFS and the Council. The FIAC further notes opposition to removing the Council from the Sustainable Fisheries Fund, converting Council staff status to Federal employees and prohibiting the Council from advising the Administration on what works and what doesn’t work in completing the mission of the MSA.
- 9) Regarding the NWHI proposed sanctuary, recommends the Council send a letter to NOAA recommending the policies presented to the FIAC be incorporated into the draft NOAA Goals and Objectives of the NWHI Proposed National Marine Sanctuary.
- 10) Regarding the American Samoa Bottomfish Management Unit Species Rebuilding Plan, recommends the Council select Alternative 4 with an ACL of 5,000 lb that will rebuild the BMUS stock within 10 years and allows the maximum level of catch accounting for cultural needs.



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AGENDA

Fishing Industry Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, September 9, 2021

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Webex:

<https://wprfmc.webex.com/wprfmc/onstage/g.php?MTID=eb3b4a7f2ac2d1df17d9577080b30ae4a>

Event number (if prompted): 2453 736 0157

Event password (if prompted): FIAC0909mtg

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- 2) Status Report on June 2021 FIAC Recommendations
- 3) MSA Reauthorization
- 4) Mariana Archipelago
 - a. Military impacts on Guam Fisheries
 - b. FSM citizen fishing activities in Guam EEZ
- 5) Impacts of Imports on Hawaii Seafood Markets
- 6) Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
 - a. Impacts on HI LL fishery
 - b. Sanctuary Designation
- 7) Council Actions for 187th Meeting
 - a. AS BMUS rebuilding plan ((Final Action)
 - b. MHI Uku ACL (Final Action)
 - c. Seabird Mitigation in HI DSLL (Initial Action)
 - d. Cooperative Research Priorities
- 8) Review of US Support to Pacific Island Nations
- 9) Other Issues
 - a. Community Funding Opportunities and Unfunded Projects
 - b. FIAC Membership
- 10) Public Comment
- 11) Discussion and Recommendations