



# **187<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council**

## **AMERICAN SAMOA ISLAND REPORT**

### **1. Tuna Industry and COVID-19 Impacts Update**

StarKist Samoa has brought over 93 workers since the Governor of American Samoa (AS), Lolo Moliga, approved the hiring of guest workers from Samoa in June. StarKist Samoa has experienced workforce shortages in the last quarter since the release of Economic Impact Payments earlier in the year. The company is aiming to bring in more than 200 workers to fill labor shortages at the tuna processing plant. Due to the scheduled commercial flights between Pago Pago and Honolulu in September, flights between Western Samoa and AS have been suspended. Starkist Samoa is working closely with the American Samoa Government to bring over the remaining workers needed to fill vacancies.

### **2. Island Fisheries Update**

Two aliases who have been fishing in July and August have reported catching albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack, although sparse. There have been reports of an abundance of skipjack in Western Samoa, but there are very few catches of skipjack in the territory. Also small vessel fishermen have reported that there are no catches of masimasi, wahoo, and rainbow runners.

Weather has also been an issue since the last Council Meeting was held this past March. Rough seas and high winds have limited fishing trips for many fishermen. The National Weather Service has issued small craft advisories due to these recent strong winds, high surf and heavy rainfall conditions.