

Environmental Justice in Fisheries Management: The Western Pacific

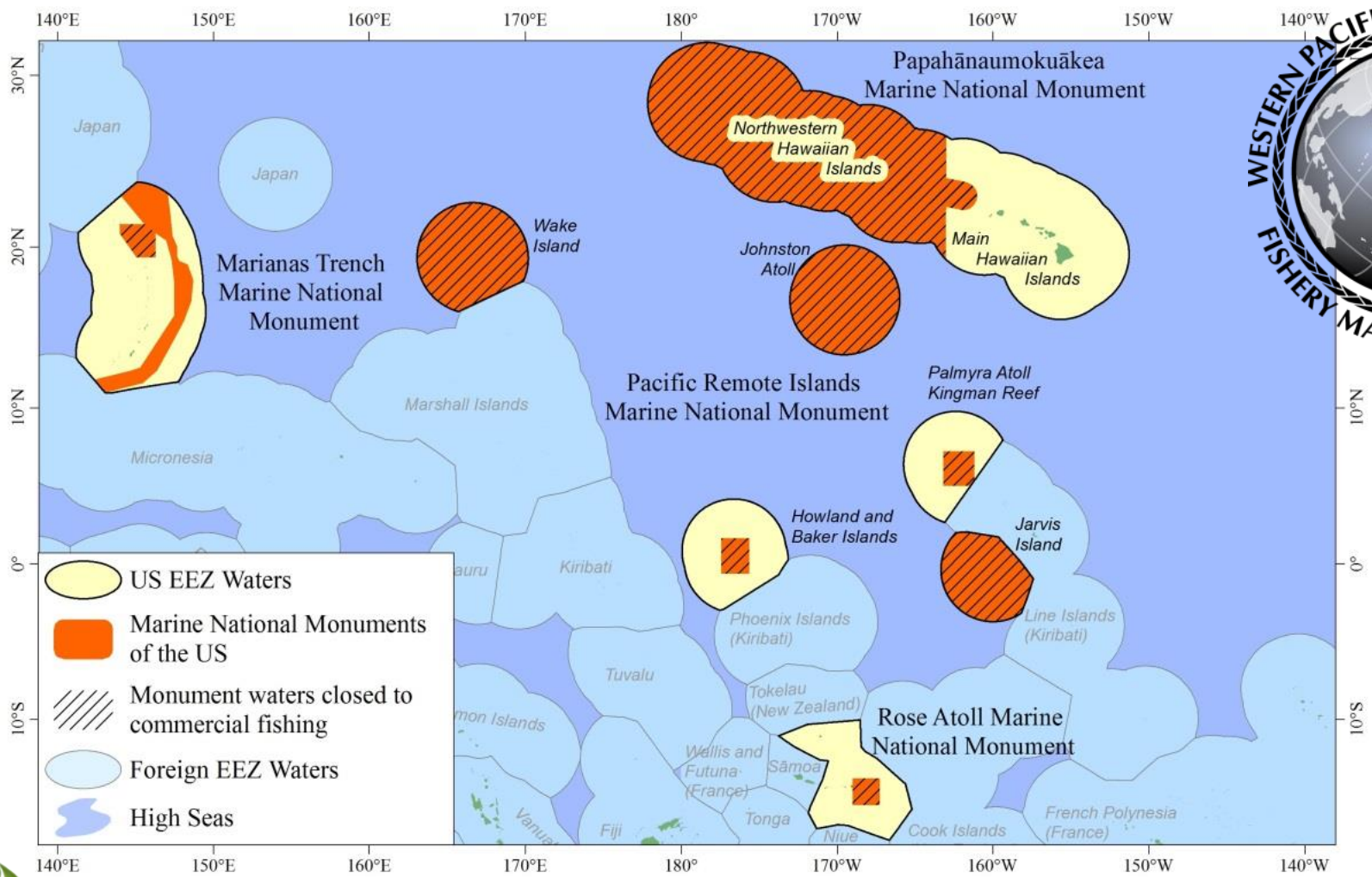


Kitty M. Simonds
October 21, 2021





- More than 75% of population identifies as Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI)
- Samoan, Chamorro, Refaluwasch, Hawaiian
- 1 State, 2 Territories, 1 Commonwealth
- 3 Time Zones and the International Dateline



- Monuments close off more than areas, they close off access to, and opportunities for – employment/economic opportunities, food security and cultural connections with the ocean and its resources
- Antiquities Act bypasses the public process, while MSA includes the public in a bottom-up process to manage fisheries within EEZ

FRAMEWORK AND PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT

Species-based to Archipelagic-based Fishery Ecosystem Plan

- Restructured Council family
AP, PT, REAC, SC

Council 5-Year Program

- Support community engagement - Guam and CNMI village mayors, Hawaii Aha Moku System, American Samoa Matai System

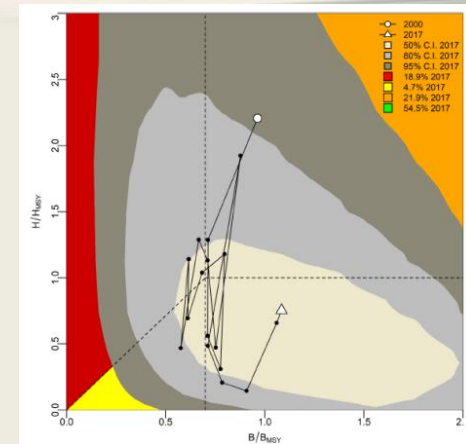
Indigenous Island Coordinators

- Develop Community-Based Fishery Management Plans – Village of Malesso (Guam); Northern Islands (CNMI); AS Enforcement
- Assist governments in developing fishery projects, disaster relief assessments (AS/Guam), facilitating user conflict issues between Guam and Federated States of Micronesian fishers
- Work with communities on amendments to their FEPs



DATA-POOR FISHERIES

- NS1 guidance for data-limited stocks doesn't work!
- WP data collection programs need to change to improve the current system to meet MSA requirements
- MSA should be tailored for regional flexibility to avoid unrealistic burdens on island communities.
- A. Samoa Bottomfish ACL - 106,000 lbs → 5,000 lbs
- Guam Bottomfish ACL - 66,000 lbs → 31,000 lbs
- CNMI Bottomfish stock status high uncertainty (Kobe plot) →
- Reduces communities' economic stability in the absence of clear data-driven management
- * 2019 NMFS PIFSC Territorial BF stock assessments



COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS & REPRESENTATION

Technical and Administrative Capacity

- WP communities lack technical/administrative capacity & resources to compete in national funding competitions - Saltonstall-Kennedy / Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program
- Regional solicitation, review and distribution of funds - Cooperative Research Program

Representation and Meaningful Engagement

- Memberships on federal/national advisory bodies ensure Pacific Island perspectives are considered - MAFAC
- Integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge into management – Document Fishermen Observations
- Work with traditional governance systems and communicate in indigenous/local language
 - Matai system in American Samoa
 - Village Mayor structure in Mariana Islands
 - Aha Moku system in Hawaii



MSA SUPPORTS AANHPI

Marine Education and Training

- US Pacific Territories Fishery Capacity-Building Scholarship
- Marine Science Course on Fishery and Resource Management

Pacific Insular Area Fishing Agreements

- US Participating Territory Specified Fishing Agreements - Hawaii Longline Limited-Access Permit and US Pacific Territories
- Projects funded - Guam Fishing Platform, American Samoa Longline Gear Diversification, CNMI Bottomfish Development and Training

Community Development Program

- Provides access to traditional fishing practices through regulatory relief - exemption of basket-style gear in longline closures

Community Demonstration Project Program

- Provides direct grants of \$500K annually (unfunded since 2011) for up to 5 community infrastructure and fishery development projects - Heeia Kea Fishpond Restoration and CNMI Fishermen's Cooperative



DISPROPORTIONATE BURDEN

US funds Pacific Island and East Asian Nations with \$1.4B for Economic Development, including fisheries, yet these nations remain adversarial to US Pacific Island fishing interests.



Level the Playing Field!

- Council-managed fisheries, including the HI longline fishery, do not enjoy any special privileges that are afforded to other island nations
- HI LL fishery has the lowest catch limit for bigeye tuna
- HI and AS fisheries are the international gold standard for monitoring and compliance
- Competing foreign fisheries are heavily subsidized - China provides \$7.3B in subsidies, 91-95% classified as “harmful”
- The US Freely Associated States receive \$262M in economic development annually



Biden Proclamation: Indigenous Peoples Day (10/8/21)

“The Federal Government has a solemn obligation to lift up and invest in the future of Indigenous people and empower Tribal Nations to govern their own communities and make their own decisions. ”

**"You must make difficult decisions,
but if you make those decisions with the counsel and
advice from traditional practitioners and those who are most
closely affected by, and connected to a particular resource
or area, your decisions will be sound."**

- Chief Justice William S. Richardson, Supreme Court Hawaii;
a local boy born in Honolulu who attended public high school,
University of Hawaii (Manoa) and University of Cincinnati College of Law