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144th SSC



**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**

December 17, 2021

Professor Aloysius Helminck, PhD
Dean of the College of Natural Sciences
2565 McCarthy Mall, Keller 201
Honolulu, HI 96822

Dear Dr. Helminck:

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) asks that the University of Hawaii develop a formal Fisheries Program to address specific scientific needs with respect to sustaining fisheries in the Pacific Islands, foster interdisciplinary collaboration to promote ecosystem-based management, and to develop professional capacity in fisheries for Hawaii and the Pacific Islands. The Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). Our Western Pacific Region has the largest marine jurisdiction expanding 1.5 million square miles and includes one state (Hawaii), two territories (American Samoa and Guam), one commonwealth (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, CNMI), and several Pacific Remote Island Areas.

Fisheries provide the most valuable natural resources for Hawaii and the US Pacific Islands. For example, tuna is the most valuable agricultural food product for the State Hawaii and fisheries sustain the largest source of employment in American Samoa. In all the US Pacific Islands, fisheries ensure food security for underrepresented peoples and are of major cultural importance. Presently, there is no formal fisheries academic program in Hawaii like there are for university systems in states that also have similar socioeconomic reliance on fisheries or Sea Grant programs. This was noted by the Council's Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee (FDCRC), which recommended the Council to contact UH and follow-up on the effort that was initiated several years ago to establish a Fisheries Program.

The Council had previously helped establish the Pelagic Fisheries Research Program (PFRP) with UH in 1992, which unfortunately ended in 2012 after two decades of addressing regional fisheries research needs. Several members of the Council's Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) were major contributors to PFRP and several others are involved in fisheries programs at other major academic institutions. Enclosed with this letter is a Council monograph on PFRP, also found here: <https://www.wpcouncil.org/educational-resources/education-library/>

The Council kindly asks that you consider developing a formal Fisheries Program at UH in order to address regional needs and build much-needed capacity. The Council offers expertise from its SSC and FDCRC to develop such a program. Please feel free to contact me at kitty.simonds@noaa.gov or via telephone at +1 (808) 522-8220 if you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Kitty M. Simonds". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kitty" being the most prominent part.

Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director

CC: Dr. Brian Taylor, Dean, UH School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology
Archie Soliai, Chair, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
Council Members & Advisory Bodies