

AGENCY REPORT
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Land and Natural Resources,
Division of Fish and Wildlife
June 21nd. – 24th, 2022
191st Council Meeting

This report describes the activities undertaken by the Department of Land and Natural Resources regarding fisheries and conservation during the periods of **March 22nd, 2022 and June 15th, 2022**. 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. One data technician has been recruited and is being familiarized with the creel program. Programmatic support is provided through the efforts of the Data Officer who has been the Acting Manager for a year now. DFW is in the process of recruiting a Data Analyst for the Fishery Data Section.

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

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 March to May, 42 interviews were conducted. Of those interviews, 18 were trolling, 16 were bottomfishing, 4 were spearfishing and 4 were hook and line.

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 March to May, 20 interviews were conducted. Of those interviews, 1 were cast net, 17 were hook and line fishing, and 2 were spearfishing.

Commercial Receipt System

- Receipts have been collected from participating vendors, hotels, and restaurants up to the month of May.
- Between March 1st to May 15st, an estimated 8,443.57 lbs of bottom fish, 7,391.97 lbs of reef fish, 40,240.18 lbs of pelagic fish, 229.75 lbs of invertebrates and 156.50 lbs of miscellaneous fish were sold.

Marine Resource Assessment

- Technical Assistance was provided to the boating access program. An assessment of resources within the Tinian Marina was conducted.
- An assessment of resources within the Sasanhaya Bay Fish Reserve was conducted in April. Salinity, conductivity, and pH data were also collected for each survey site.

Fish Life History Program

- Gonads collected from the Blue-Barred Parrotfish (*Scarus ghobban*) and the Tripletail Wrasse (*Cheilinus trilobatus*) were sent to Hawaii for histology. Sectioned gonads will be analyzed at CNMI DFW.

CNMI CARES Act

Updates on the 2nd NMI Fisheries relief program

- Disbursement of applications began on May 18th
- Last day to submit applications is on June 16th
- Applications are currently being received by the CNMI Office of Grant Management.

Boating Access

Saipan Marina and Docks

- Operations and maintenance work continues for the Smiling Cove Marina.
- Entrance Gate #1 and #2 Canopy Project is completed, as per Gate #3, the Purchase Order is in process. Total project cost is approximately 25k.
- Continue to work closely with the Public Assistance Office (PAO) on Project Worksheet #88. Purchase Order is in process for the replacement of the fence line project.
- Installed a Convenience Dock Regulation Signage.
- The transient dock operations have been re-activated, given the increased marine sports activities.

Tinian Marina

- Continued the ground maintenance services for the Tinian marina facility.
- The BA project manager is working with the PAO on PW #104 (Replacement of the entire Floating Dock system, Main and the Convenience Dock). Traveled to Tinian with a surveyors and engineers to work on the as-built plan for the proposed Marina.
- The As Built Plan and the Scope-of-Work has been completed, pending review by the management before forwarding it to Public Assistance Office for bidding announcement.

DFW FAD Program

- DFW participated in a meeting with fishermen to discuss the DFW FAD program and consider options to reconfigure site locations around the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota.

- DFW plans to meet with fishermen from each island to gather information on potential sites for relocation.
- A questionnaire on FAD usage was developed and shared with fishermen.