

193RD WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING

DECEMBER 5-8, 2022

STATE OF HAWAII, DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES

REPORTING PERIOD: AUGUST 2022 – OCTOBER 2022

1. FISHERIES

DEEP-7 (Fishing Year 2022)

Fishing Year (FY) 2022 of the Main Hawaii Island Deep-7 bottomfish fishery ended on August 31, 2022. In total, 379 commercial fishers reported 3,120 trips and caught a total of 189,493 pounds of mixed Deep-7 species (Figure 1). Despite a relatively slow start, FY 2022 concluded with landings greater than FY 2019-2021.

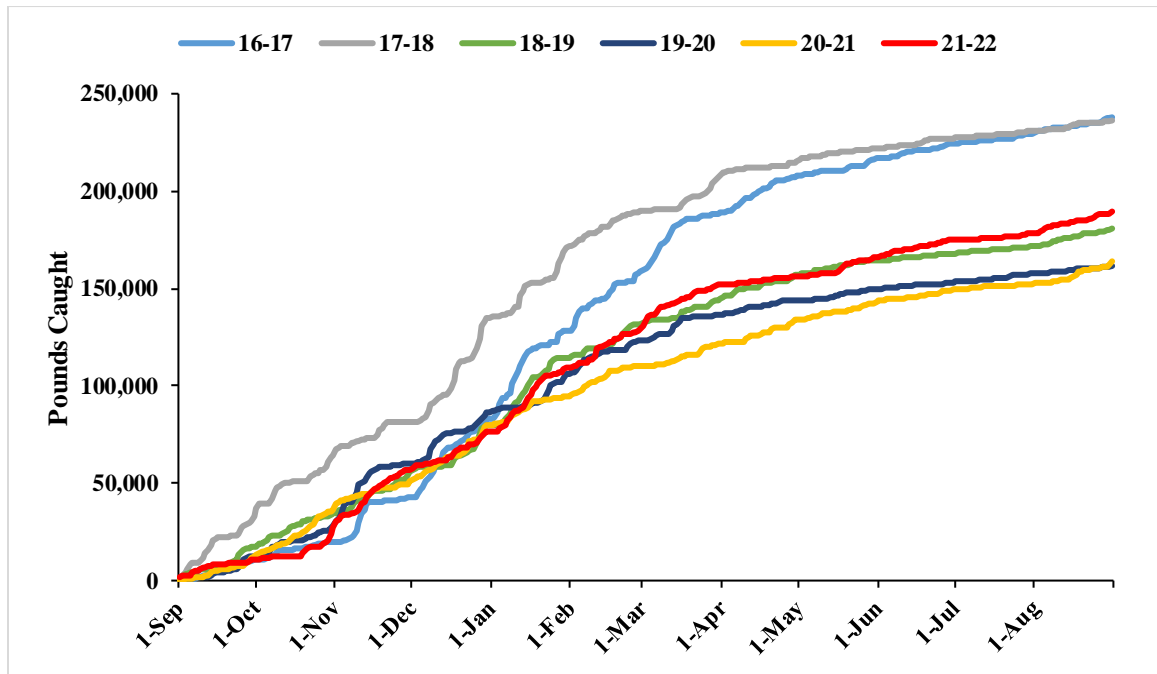


Figure 1. Cumulative Deep-7 catch, Fishing Years 2017-2022.

‘Ōpakapaka catch contribution in FY 2021 was noticeably lower than normal at just 36% of the total Deep-7 landings. In FY 2022, ‘ōpakapaka catch made up 43% of the total Deep-7 landings falling closer to, yet still below the 10-year average of 48% (Figures 2 & 3). Onaga, the second most targeted Deep-7 species, was about average in terms of catch contribution yet like ‘ōpakapaka below average in terms of total pounds landed (Figure 4). Whereas ‘ōpakapaka, onaga, kalekale, lehi and hāpu‘upu‘u all showed below-average catch, ehu and gindai were above-average in both total landings and their percent contribution by species.

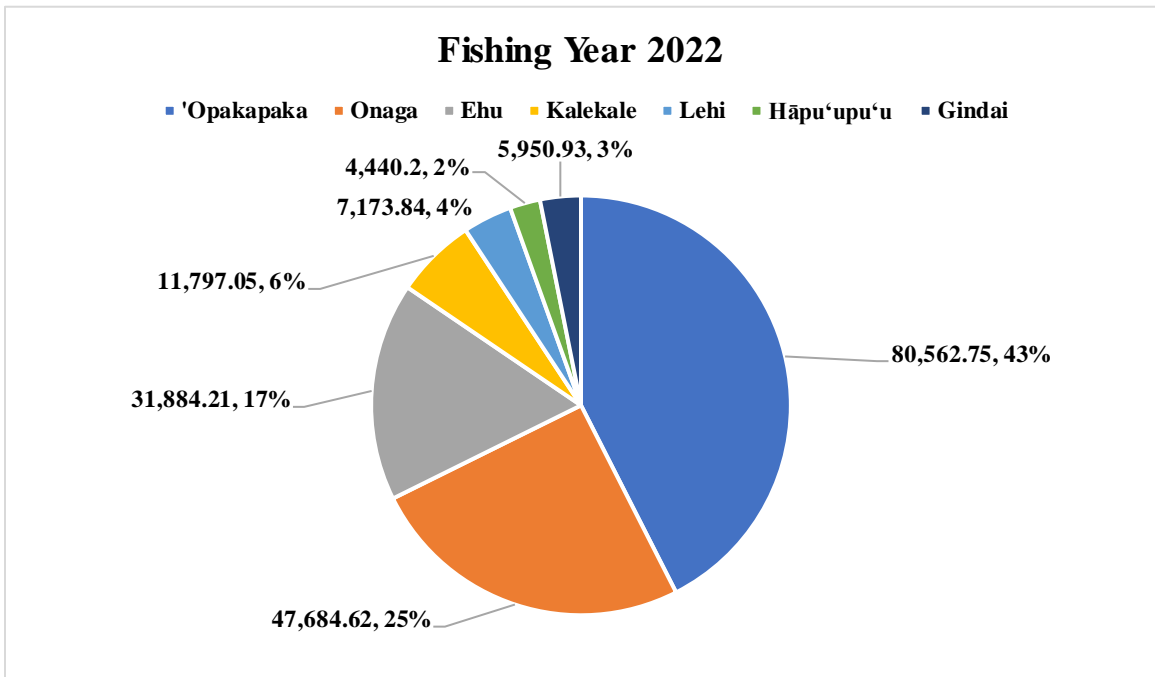


Figure 2. Species composition of Deep-7 catch during Fishing Year 2022.

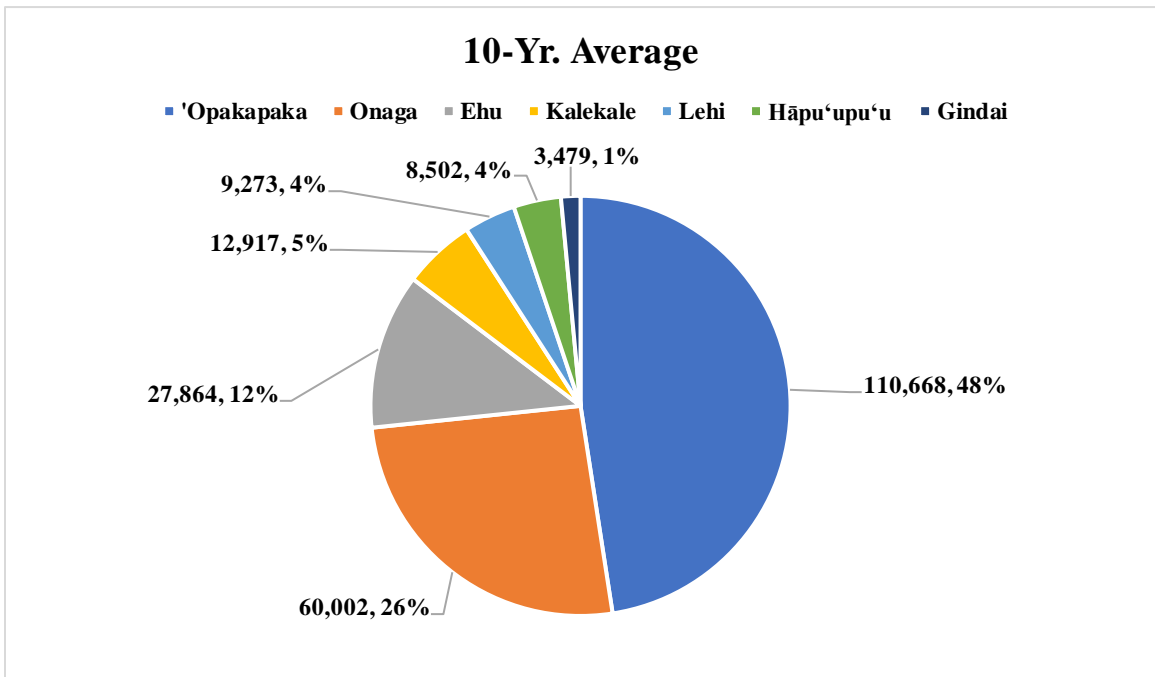


Figure 3. 10-yr. average species composition for the Deep-7 fishery, Fishing Years 2012-2021.

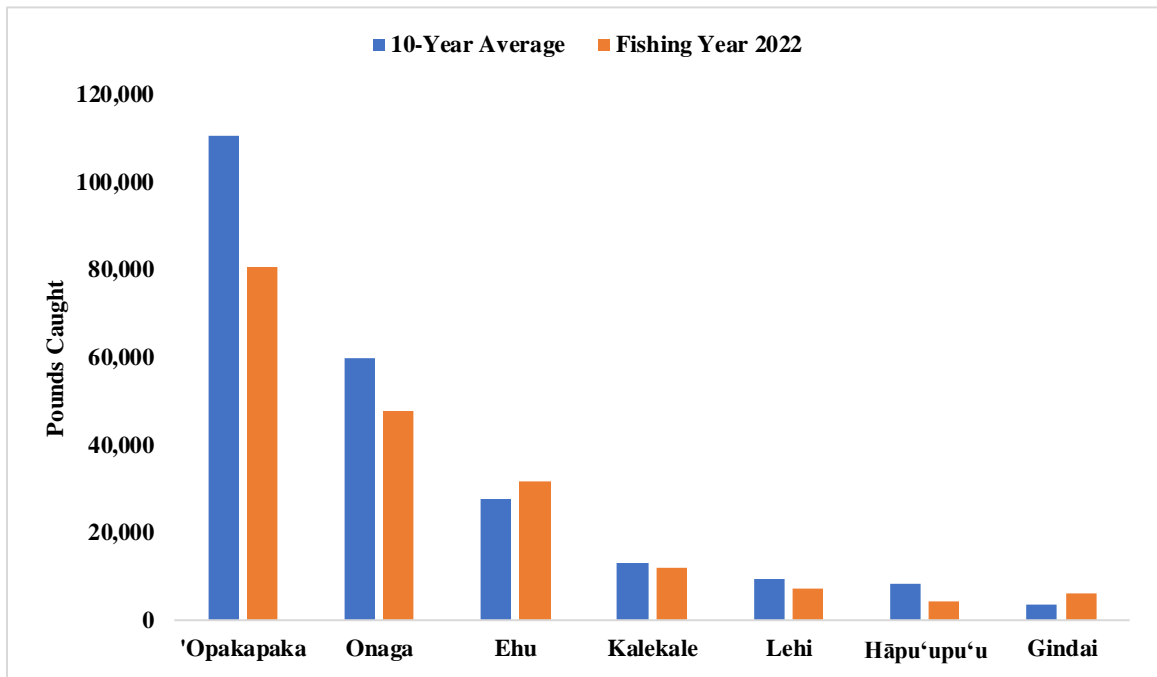


Figure 4. Comparison of species-specific 10-year average seasonal total landings and landings from Fishing Year 2022.

DEEP-7 (Fishing Year 2023)

At two months into FY 2023, 179 CML holders made 470 trips and caught a total of 43,700 pounds of mixed Deep-7 species (Figure 5). Landings thus far exceed that of the previous four Fishing Years for the same period. However, early season catch is not always predictive of total season performance.

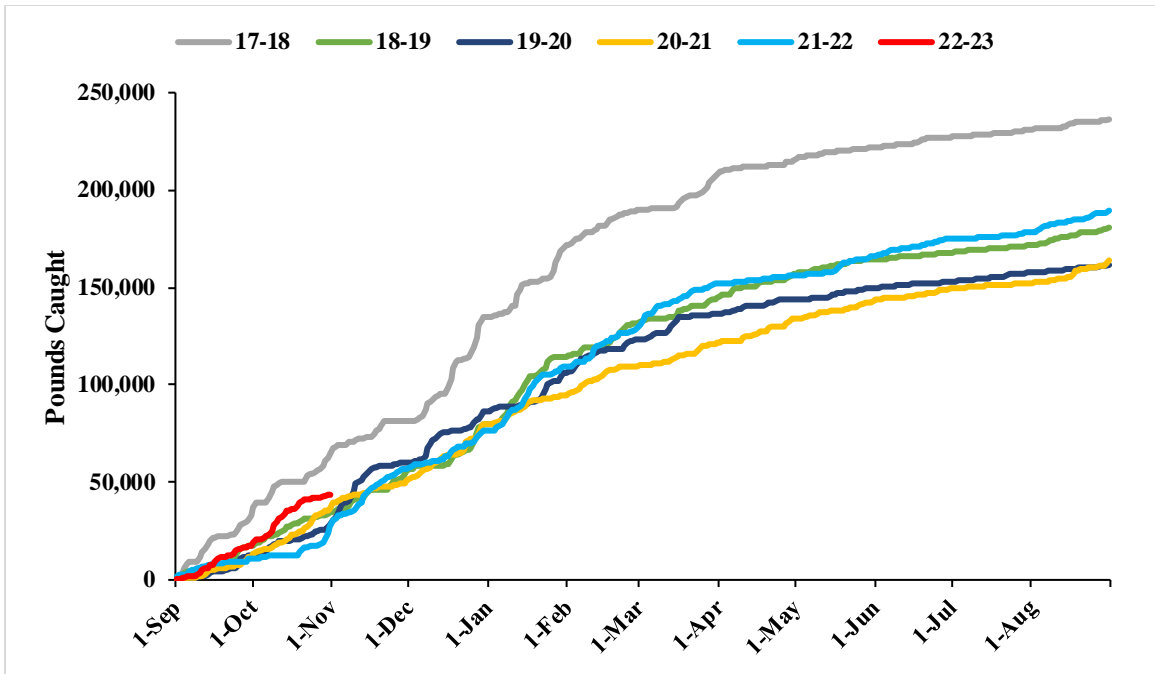


Figure 5 Cumulative Deep-7 catch, Fishing Years 2018-2023.

Species composition from the first two months of FY 2023 appear to mirror that of FY 2022 (Figure 6). Ehu and gindai catch continues to make up above-average proportions of the total catch. Though it appears that some of the atypical catch trends noted in the previous season may be persisting, with just two months into the season assumptions about what catch will look like in the long-term cannot be made.

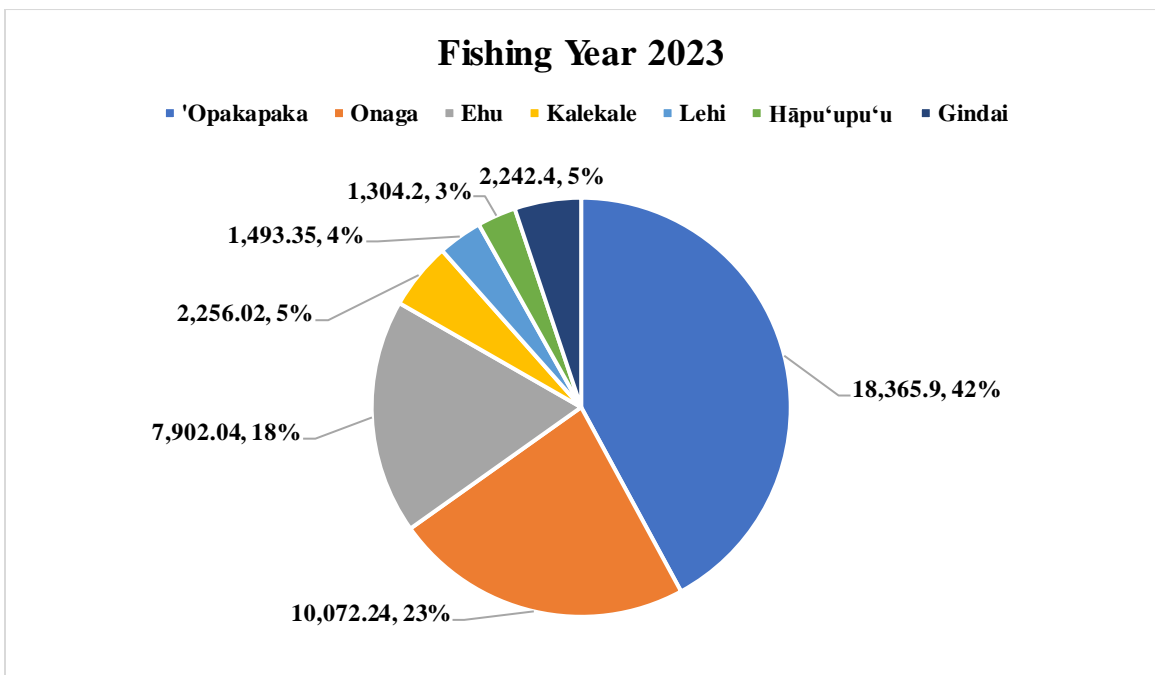


Figure 6. Species composition of Deep-7 catch during Fishing Year 2023, September-October.

KONA CRAB

The 2022 Kona crab season reopened to commercial and non-commercial take on September 1. As October 31, 15 CML holders made 43 trips, and caught a total of 1,949 pounds of Kona crab (Figure 7).

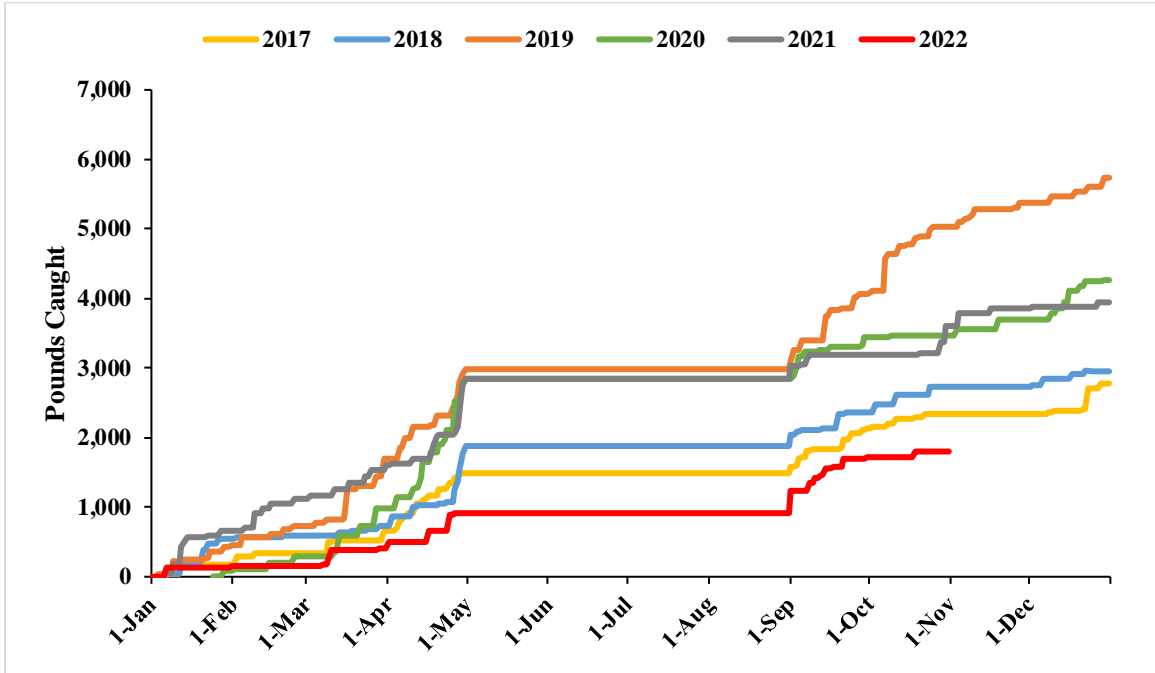


Figure 7. Cumulative MHI Kona crab catch, 2017-2022

UKU

By the end of October, 206 CML holders made 705 trips, and caught a total of 45,776 pounds of uku in 2022 (Figure 8). Uku catch continues to track closely with 2020 and 2021 despite improved market conditions.

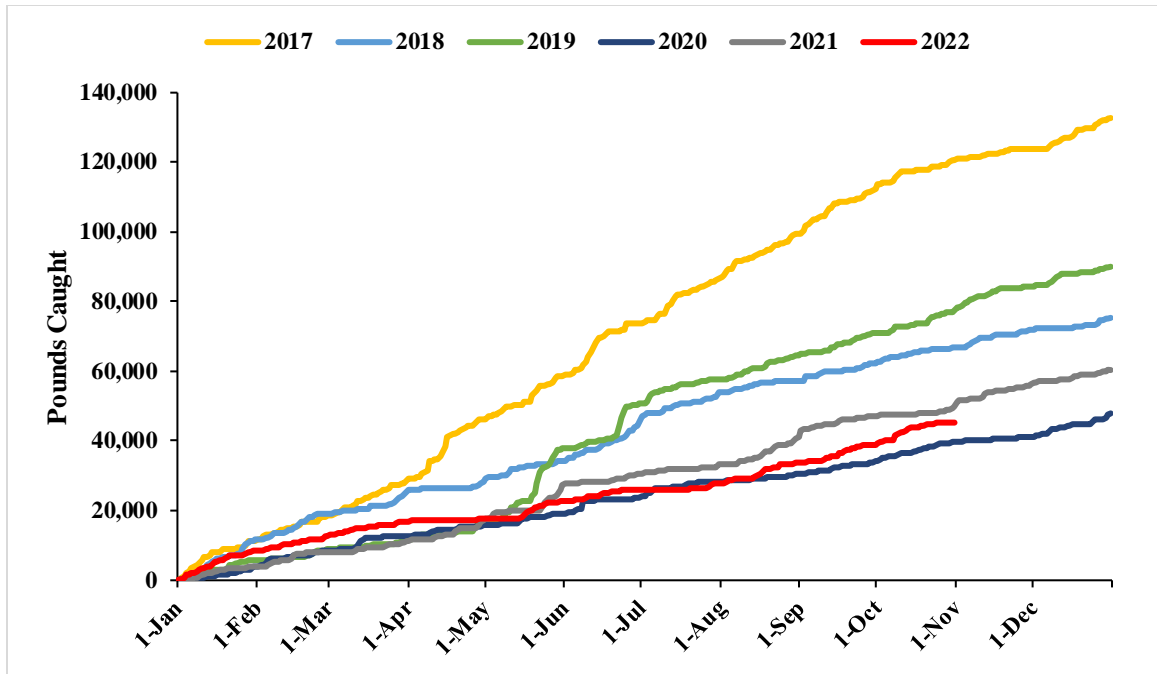


Figure 8. Cumulative MHI uku catch, 2017-2022

LICENSE AND REPORTING

During the reporting period, 778 Commercial Marine Licenses (CMLs) were issued or renewed for a total revenue of \$103,150 (Figure 9). This brings the annual total to 2,720 CMLs and \$374,300 in revenue at the end of October. Licenses issued or renewed during the reporting period remain slightly greater than the same period in 2020, and less than the same period in 2021. The steady decline in CMLs issued or renewed is driven by declining requests from non-longline commercial fishery participants. Longline fishery associated CML requests or renewals have conversely increased steadily in the past ten years.

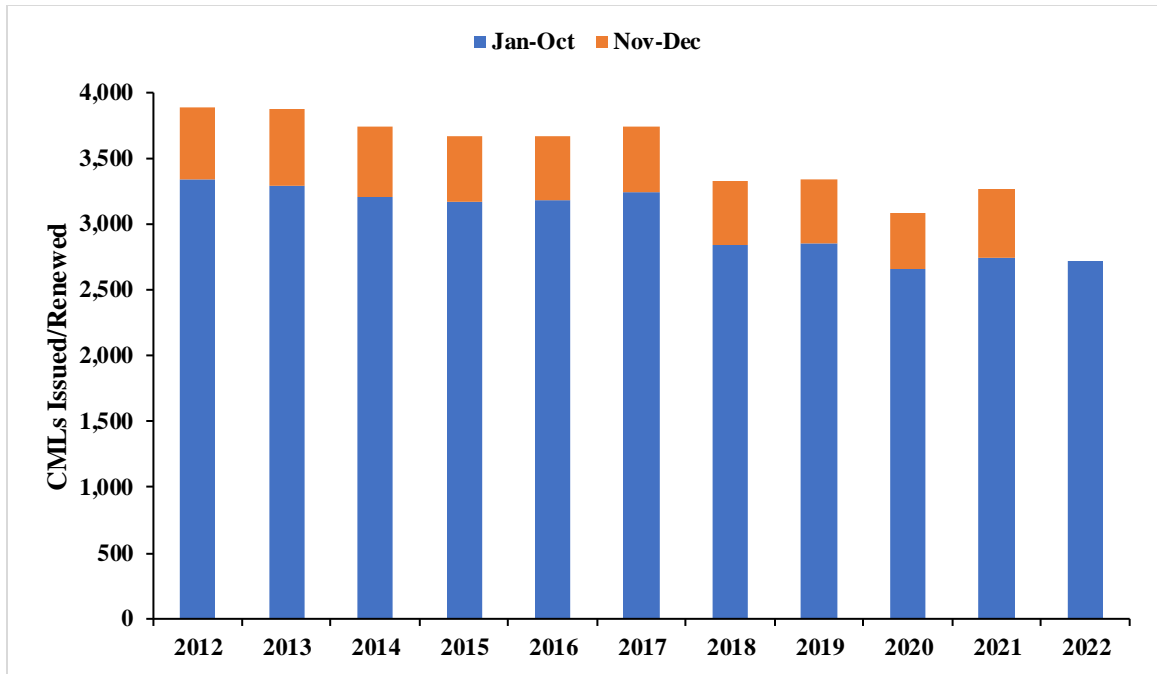


Figure 9. Annual CMLs issued/renewed, January 2012-October 2022.

2. RESOURCE PROTECTION

PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT (PMNM)

Permits Issued: Two (2) new permits or amendments were granted during this period (August, 2022 to October, 2022):

- One (1) PMNM Conservation and Management permit amendment (final amendment issued in August, 2022; permit was presented and approved at 8/27/22 BLNR Meeting);
- One (1) PMNM Research permit (final permit issued in October, 2022; permit did not require BLNR review – activities are taking place outside of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine Refuge).

BLNR submittals:

- One (1) PMNM Conservation and Management permit amendment was submitted for review for the 8/27/22 BLNR meeting – permit amendment was approved by the BLNR and issued in August

The permit coordinators group is currently reviewing or processing three applications for monument access: two applications were sent back for revision and one application was the Co-Trustee application submitted to the BLNR for review that the upcoming December 8th meeting. Permit applications currently under review and their corresponding research, conservation, management, educational, cultural, or special use objectives or activities can be found on the PMNM website: (<https://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov/permit/applicationrev.html>). A

summary of a sample of activities permitted for each year can be found at:
(<https://www.papahānaumokuākea.gov/permit/annualrep.html>).

The PMNM Permit Working Group, Resource Protection Working Group, and the Permit Coordinator's Group met in August, September, and October of 2022 to discuss the following:

- Integration of the current Hawaii Monk Seal Research Program (HMSRP) permit into the Co-Manager's (Co-Trustee) PMNM permit
- Modification of Marine Debris Disposal Protocol for a Chondria Mitigation Zone (CMZ)
- Disposal of the Sincerity Ace lifeboat recovered by the Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project (PMDP) at Pearl and Hermes.

3. ECOSYSTEM & HABITAT

FISH AGGREGATION DEVICES (FADs)

During the period of August 2022 to Oct 2022 activity was light for the FAD Program.

During August and September 2022, there was no activity.

During October 2022, 2 FADs went missing and 1 FAD was recovered as detailed below:

EK – Hanalei, Kaua'i (missing on 10/3)

SO – Kealaikahiki, Kaho'olawe (missing on 10/9)

HS – Halona Pt., Kaho'olawe (recovered off Kāne'ōhe Bay, O'ahu on 10/6)

4. OTHER

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS) MANAGEMENT

To help defend Hawai'i's reefs against the arrival of Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD), DAR has submitted an emergency rule regarding vessel traffic for consideration to the Board of Land and Natural Resources. SCTLD is a devastating coral disease that has spread throughout the Caribbean since 2014 that can cause up to 94% mortality depending on coral species. Evidence indicates that the disease may spread through ballast water or hull fouling. The preventative measures would require vessels travelling from affected ports to take stricter management actions and provide DAR with additional travel information. The rule was presented for comment to key representatives of the shipping industry and other affected organizations at the Alien Aquatic Organism Task Force (AAOTF) meeting Oct 20th, 2022.

The DAR Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Team continues the monthly monitoring of the invasive alga *Avrainvillea erecta* sites offshore of Sand Island and outplanting *Tripneustes gratilla*, the native collector urchin, to control algae on managed reefs in Kāne'ōhe Bay.

RULEMAKING

No updates

LEGISLATION

No updates

CARES ACT

The 290 Hawaii fishery participants that applied for Round 2 CARES Act funding continue to wait for disbursement of funds. Applicants will be notified when there are updates.