



## **American Samoa MOTU RIPOTI**

*191<sup>st</sup> Council Meeting*

*June 21-23, 2022*

- **Cannery Update**
  - Production continues daily, with an average daily production of 352mt. In 2021, the average daily production was 328mt, which was a decline of 26% from 2020. 2021 was an anomaly that could be attributed to COVID impacts
  - Current production is supported by a daily average of 780 fish cleaners. In 2021, the average fish cleaner count was 650 which was a decline of approximately 31% from 2020.
  - A total of 733 Guest Workers from Samoa are employed with the cannery.
  - Challenges:
    - Fish supply low, forcing production to alternative SKU's vs production plans
    - Unloading contractors (stevedores) continue to face labor shortage impacting operations
    - Shipping delays
    - Fuel increases
- **Tautai o Samoa Longline Association**
  - The TOS recently held its 1<sup>st</sup> annual meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss issues of importance to the fleet operations (poor fishing conditions, increased federal regulations and rising costs. During the meeting, new officers were elected:
    - President: Krista Haleck-Korry
    - Vice President: Anthony Lafaele Feliciano
    - Secretary: Edgar Feliciano
    - Treasurer: Jeff Moustacas
    - Business Development Officer: Carlos Sanchez
    - Board Members: Elder Vince Haleck, Stuart Chikami, Christinna Lutu-Sanchez
  - LVPA
    - The association has seen positive fishing impacts to the reopening of the LVPA, providing more access to fishing grounds within the EEZ.
- **Fishery Report**
  - Catch reports over the past weeks have identified a decline in Skipjack, but a sharp increase in juvenile Yellowfin.
  - Commercial alia fishing is virtually non-existent at this time, for many reasons, but the higher costs for fuel and general inflation play a major role in commercial fishing trips. We also consider the introduction of the Omnicron variant of COVID-19 into American Samoa in February, which led to yet another round of business closures, travel restrictions, curfews and social distancing mandates ordered by the Governor. Many of the restrictions are just now being loosened up. A few recreational trips by weekend warriors are made each month, mainly trolling and bottom-fishing when weather permits.

- The Malaloa floating docks remain unusable and in a state of neglect and disrepair.
- The new boat ramp in Pago Pago is incomplete and unusable as it sits dangerously high above the water line at low tide.
- No fishing tournaments schedules have been announced yet.
- Council member Will Sword to provide info on shipyard services to the longline fishing fleet
- SuperAlia update (From the AS Department of Commerce)
  - Work-in-Progress: 1) Armstrong Consolidated Incorporated Boats (ACI BOATS) based in Port Townsend, Washington State is now working in cutting the metal to form the construction of the first vessel. This vessel is estimated to be completed in January or February of 2023. The large components of the vessel are now being ordered and purchased e.g. engines, fishing gears etc. This is the on-going work from the start in building the first pillar of the project. All four fishing vessels are going to be built by ACI Boats.
  - 2) The project management is now working in compiling the incubation program or training and education syllabus for the establishment of the second pillar of this economic fisheries development initiative. This concept would keep the sustainability of the local fisheries going.
- Shipyard Report
  - The shipyard has accomplished its goal to be able to service larger vessels such as the purse seiners and USCG cutters. Over the last year, they repaired the cradles and revitalized the shipyard to bring up it up to standards. At present, the shipyard cradle measures 310 ft x 65 ft wide and has a total tonnage capacity of 3000 tons.
  - The shipyard has another major project which will increase its capabilities and drydock 4 to 5 boats (longliners etc) at a time.
- Pago Pago Gamefishing Association
  - CM Brian Peck to provide an update
- CARES Act 1.0 Update
  - Relief assistance for approved subsistence fishermen were mailed and received in April 2022. 225 Subsistence fishers were approved for funding. The relief assistance payments were distributed in the PO Boxes provided in their applications.
  - After a lengthy process, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) and NOAA have reviewed and approved 21 commercial applicants for the first round of CARES Act relief assistance. The PSMFC confirmed that the relief payment checks for the eligible and approved commercial applicants were mailed on 5/31/22.
  - Round 1 relief checks for American Samoa's subsistence users were mailed to the DMWR on 3/8/2022. Once received, those checks were to be placed in local mail for delivery to individual applicants. Should any funds remain from other previously approved commercial sectors or administrative costs, those funds will be issued as a second relief payment to subsistence users.

- The spend plan for the second round of CARES funding is being finalized, and we anticipate that to be completed within the month. Once NOAA approves the spend plan, the application process will begin.