

192ND WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 20-22, 2022

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

REPORTING PERIOD: MAY 2022 – JULY 2022

1. FISHERIES

DEEP-7

At the end of July, 371 commercial fishers reported 1,972 trips, and caught a total of 178,423 lbs. of mixed Deep-7 species (Figure 1). Landings in the remaining month of the 2021-2022 fishing season will likely not be substantial as many Deep-7 fishers shift to other fisheries in the summer months leaving average catch during the period relatively low.

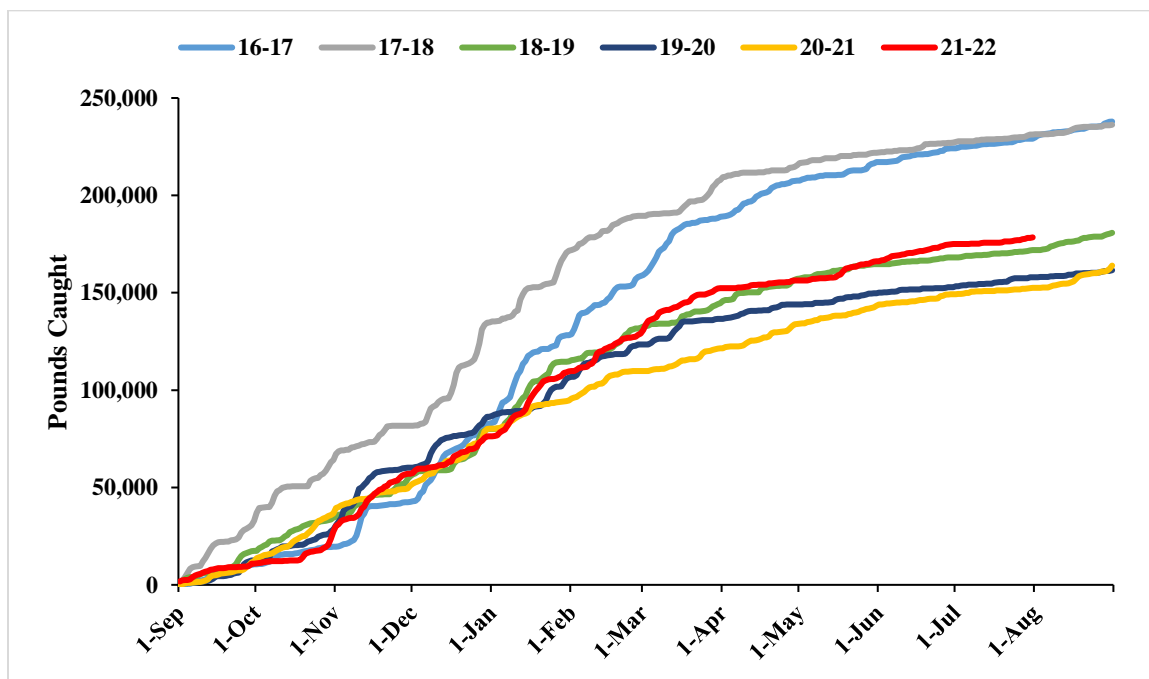


Figure 1. Cumulative Deep-7 catch, 2017-2022 seasons

Whereas ‘ōpakapaka typically make up approximately 50% of all deep-7 landings, during the 2020-2021 season they made up just 36% of the total catch (Figure 2). Among the contributing factors, fishers noted difficulty locating normal aggregations of ‘ōpakapaka, persistently high shark depredation, and challenging fishing conditions. As of the end of this reporting period, ‘ōpakapaka catch in the current season appears to be more typical of the fishery making up 43% of the catch thus far (Figure 3). This is corroborated by local fishers who have been noting more typical patterns of ‘ōpakapaka distribution. While total landings of most of the species in the complex remain relatively low, ehu and gindai landings are above their corresponding ten-year average annual landings with one month remaining in the season.

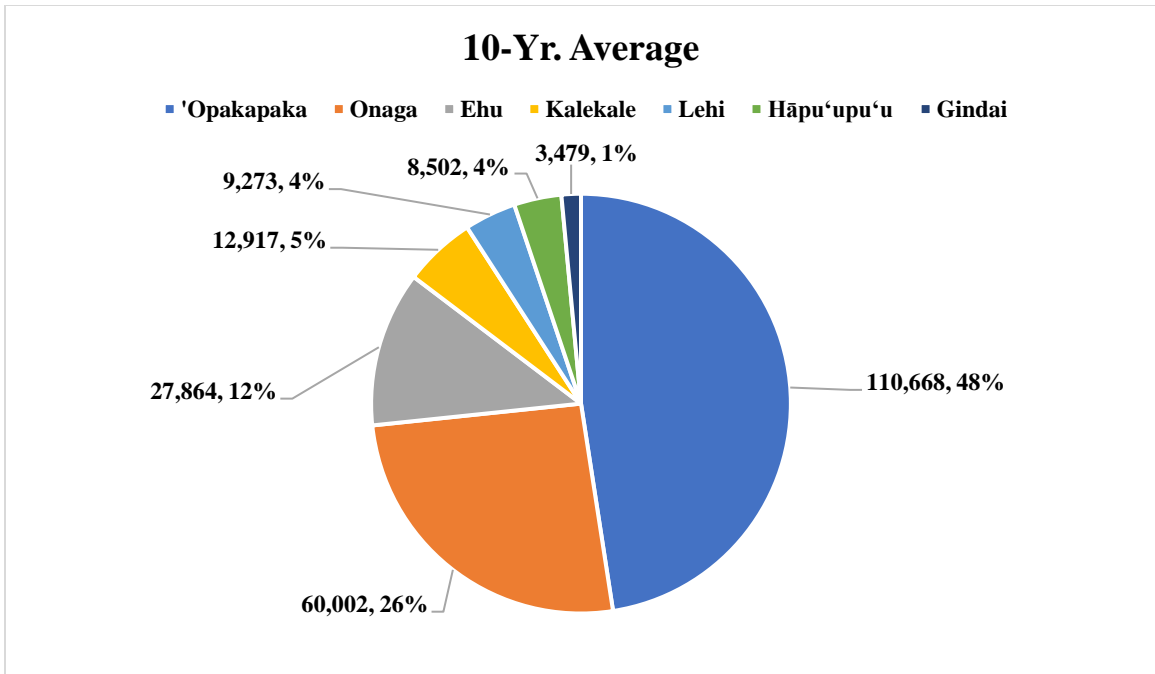


Figure 2. 10-yr. average annual catch and percent species composition for the Deep-7 fishery, 2012—2021 seasons

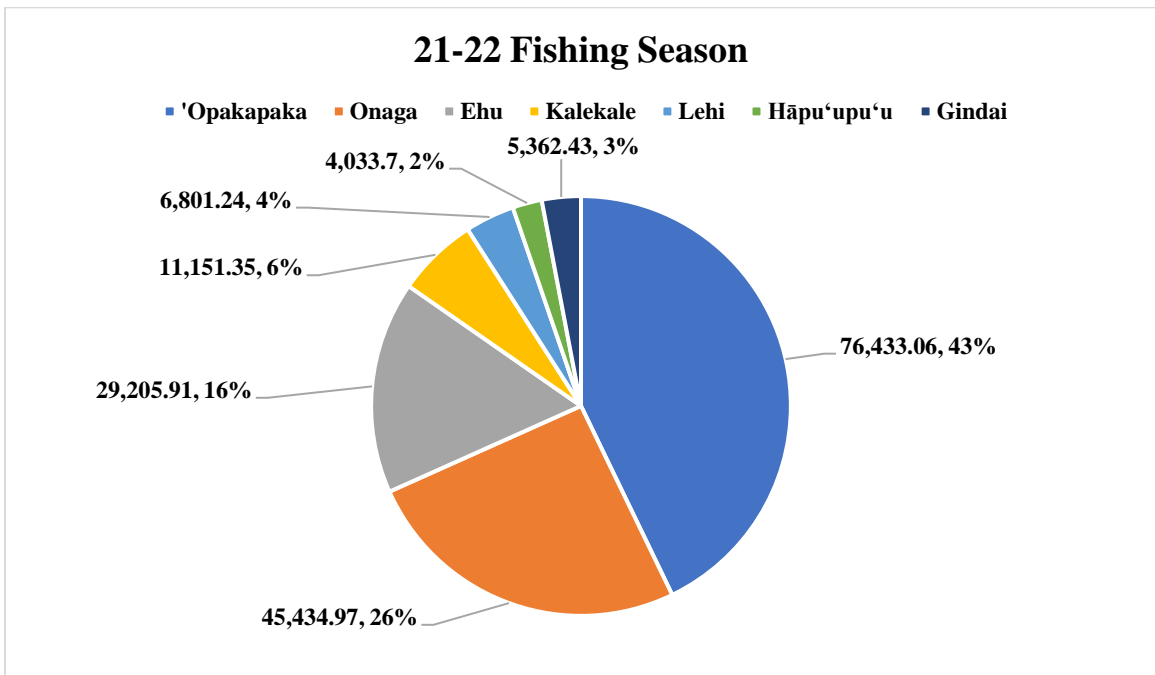


Figure 3. Species composition of Deep-7 catch during the 2021-2022 season, September-July

KONA CRAB

Take of all Kona crab was close throughout the State during the reporting period. The season reopened on September 1, 2022. An update of catch following the reopening will be included in the next Island Report.

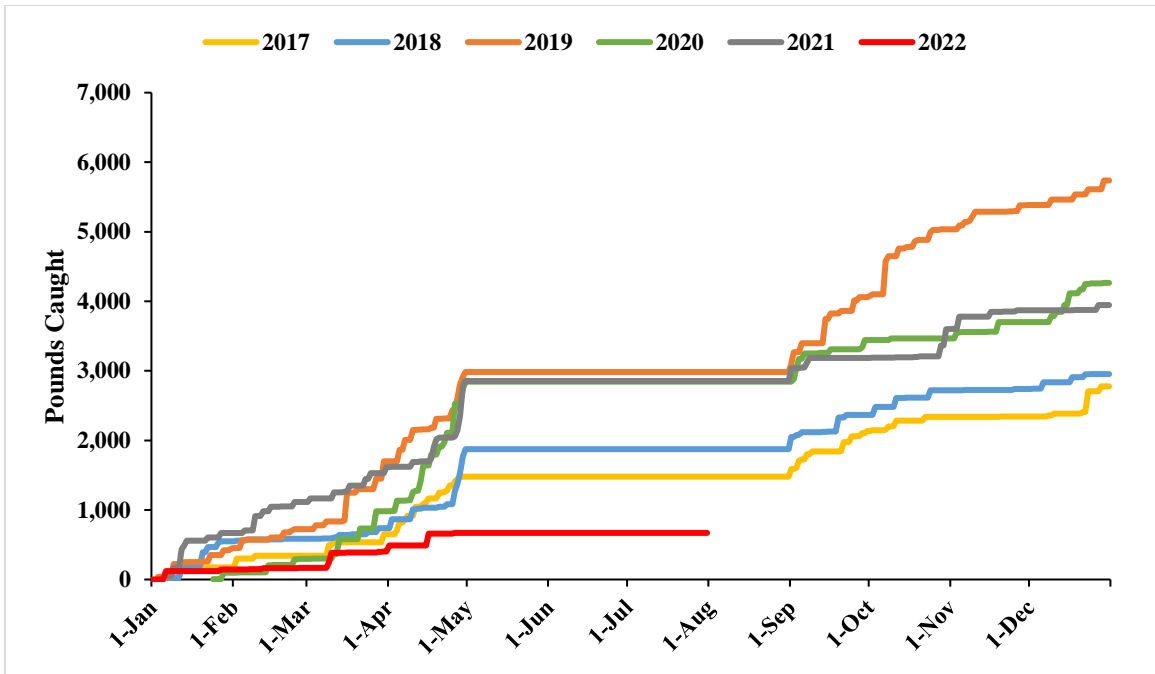


Figure 4. Cumulative MHI Kona crab catch, 2017-2022

UKU

By the end of July, 148 CML holders made 428 trips, and caught a total of 27,948 pounds of uku during the 2022 season (Figure 5). Commercial uku landings throughout the reporting period tracked closely to the 2020 season. These relatively low landings in the current season appear to be persisting despite record average prices being offered by reporting marine dealers.

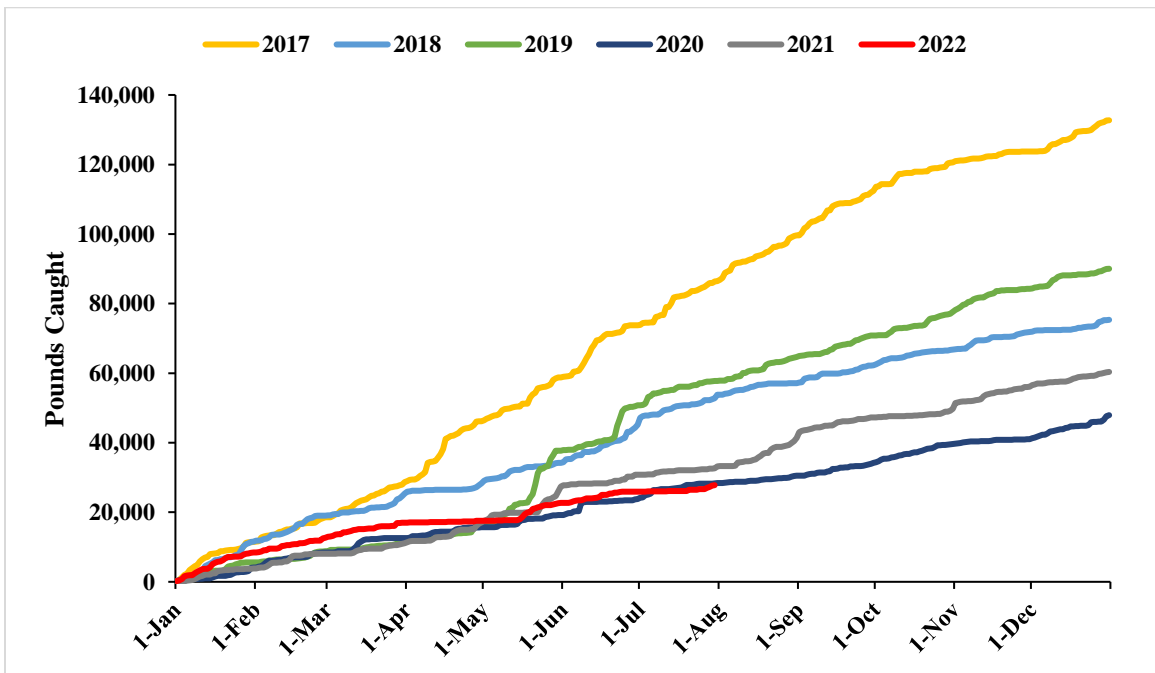


Figure 5. Cumulative MHI uku catch, 2017-2022

LICENSE AND REPORTING

A total of 1,940 Commercial Marine Licenses (CMLs) were newly issued or renewed as of July 31, 2022 (Figure 6). Total revenue from these CMLs was \$270,950. Licenses issued or renewed during the reporting period were only 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 fishery participants. Longline fishery associated CML requests or renewals have conversely increased steadily in the past ten years.

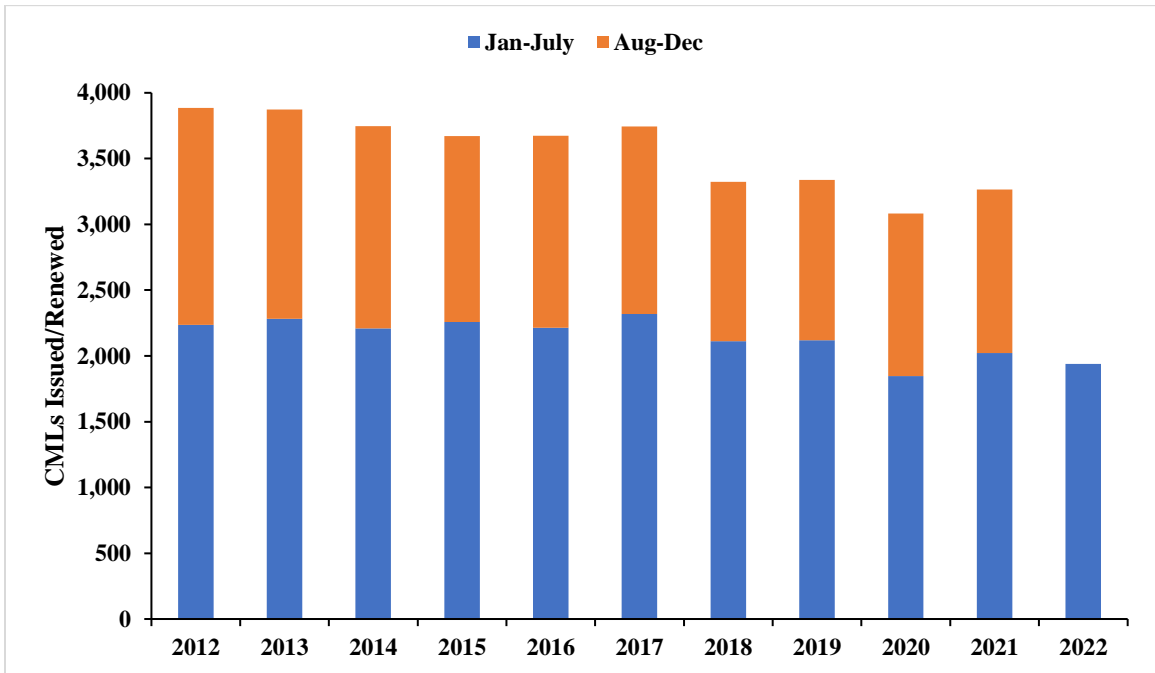


Figure 6. Annual CMLs issued/renewed, January 2012-July 2022.

2. RESOURCE PROTECTION

PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT (PMNM)

Permits Issued - Six (6) new permits were granted during this period (May, 2022 to July, 2022):

- One (1) PMNM Conservation and Management permit (final permit issued in June, 2022; permit was presented at 5/13/22 BLNR Meeting);
- One (1) PMNM Research permit (final permit issued in June, 2022; permit was presented at 5/27/22 BLNR Meeting)
- One (1) PMNM Research permit (final permit issued in July, 2022; permit did not require BLNR review – activities to be conducted on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (MANWR), which is outside of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine Refuge).

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- One (1) PMNM Special Ocean Use permit (final permit issued in June, 2022; permit did not require BLNR review – activities to be conducted at Midway only)

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 here (2020 is in the process of being updated): (<https://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov/permit/annualrep.html>).

The high number of access permits requested in recent months was likely the result of the favorable weather and ocean conditions occurring in the spring and summer months, and potentially also lessening of work and travel related COVID-19 restrictions. The permit coordinators group is currently reviewing or processing a relatively low number requests (2 to 4 applications currently) for the fall-winter 2022 application period.

The PMNM Permit Working Group, Resource Protection Working Group, and the Permit Coordinator’s Group, met in May, June, and July of 2022. Topics presented and discussed included: differences between the current regulations in the original boundary area (50 miles out) and the expanded area (200 miles out) and potential new regulations, detection canine and their potential use during pre-access vessel inspections, updates on *Chondria* and *Cenchrus*, and the MMB decision regarding ballast/abandonment of materials other than scientific instruments on the seafloor in the expanded area.

3. ECOSYSTEM & HABITAT

FISH AGGREGATION DEVICES (FADs)

During the period of May 2022 to July 2022 activity was moderate for the FAD Program.

During May 2022, one FAD was replaced:
GG – Nakaohu Pt., Maui (replaced on 5/6)

During June 2022, there was no activity.

During July 2022, five FADs were replaced and one FAD was recovered:
CC – Kaena Pt., Lanai (deployed on 7/9)
Q – Pauwela Pt., Maui (deployed on 7/9)
N – Cape Halawa, Molokai (deployed on 7/9)
T – Makapuu, Oahu (deployed on 7/10)
U – Kaneohe, Oahu (deployed on 7/10)
X – Kahuku, Oahu (recovered on 7/15)

4. OTHER

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS) MANAGEMENT

DAR has been preparing for the potential arrival of the Caribbean coral disease, Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD), in the Pacific. Preparations include the creation of a SCTLD Action Plan, collaborations with other jurisdictions, and identification of potential gaps in monitoring and response efforts.

The AIS team completed their annual “SNAP” surveys to monitor invasive algae levels in Kāne‘ohe Bay and the Waikiki MLCD. As a method of biocontrol in areas of highest algal levels, the AIS team outplants Hawaiian collector urchins (*Tripneustes gratilla*) spawned and raised at the Ānuenue Fisheries Research Center. They recently outplanted the 900,000th urchin in August and are on target to hit the 1 million mark by Thanksgiving. The team responded to community concerns of algae overgrowing corals near Waimānalo Beach. After a field investigation it was determined that the species causing alarm was most likely a fine alga commonly known as Golden Threads (*Chrysocystis fragilis*), often found in high concentration in the spring and summer in Hawai‘i. It was verified this out-break should not be of long-term concern. The AIS team also continues to monitor patches of an invasive green alga (*Avrainvillea erecta*) that has become established on the south shore of Oahu.

LEGISLATION

At the last Council meeting, we reported that the Hawaii Legislature passed Senate Bill 2065, banning drone fishing. The law took effect on June 27, 2022, when Governor Ige signed it into law as Act 207. The law bans the use or possession of “unmanned aerial vehicles” (or drones) on, in, or near state marine waters for the purpose of taking aquatic life. Drones are still allowed to be used for reconnaissance purposes. The law also authorizes DLNR to issue drone fishing permits, provided that drone use is consistent with other legal requirements.

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.