

AGENCY REPORT

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Land and Natural Resources,
Division of Fish and Wildlife
September 20, 2022 – September 22, 2022
192nd Council Meeting

This report describes the activities undertaken by the Department of Land and Natural Resources regarding fisheries and conservation during the periods of **June 1st, 2022 and August 31st, 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. Interviews are ongoing for three vacant fisheries technician positions and a specialist position. A person was successfully hired for another vacant fishery technician position in June. 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 and staff availability.
- Between the months of June to August, 50 interviews were conducted. Of those interviews, 28 were trolling, 10 were bottomfishing, 4 were spearfishing and 10 were hook and line (two interviewees conducted bottomfishing and trolling in one trip) .

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 and staff availability.
- Between the months of June to August, 30 interviews were conducted. Of those interviews, 3 were cast net, 25 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 June.
- Between June to August, an estimated 3,405.77 lbs of bottom fish, 4,886.54 lbs of reef fish, 14,730.57 lbs of pelagic fish, 352.84 lbs of invertebrates and 385.90 lbs of miscellaneous fish were sold.

Fish Habitat Surveys and Monitoring Program

- The DFW weather station was recently installed to the Fisheries Research Section warehouse to collect environmental parameters such as wind speed and direction, gust speed, temperature, pressure, and precipitation.
- A conductivity sensor, dissolved oxygen sensor, and six temperature sensors were positioned on the forereef of the Saipan lagoon.

CNMI CARES Act

Updates on the 2nd NMI Fisheries relief program

- Applications have been received by the CNMI Office of Grant Management.
- CNMI Office of Grants Management (OGM) have reviewed the submitted applications for errors and contacted applicants for corrections and additional information to complete their application.
- OGM are also reviewing the uploaded applications for calculation errors. Two reviews are conducted on the uploaded application prior to submission to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.
- As of August 19th,
 - i. Saipan - 1,149 out of 1,500 applications were received.
 - ii. Tinian - 347 out of 500 applications were received.
 - iii. Rota - 307 out of 500 applications were received.

Mandatory Data Reporting Implementation Plan (MDRIP)

- A meeting was held with NOAA PIFSC- FRMD Program to discuss the CNMI WPacFIN Program and the transition for the SILI program.
- A discussion was held on the incorporation of the SILI program into the MDRIP. DFW will work with the PIFSC- FRMD Program on this process.

Boating Access

Saipan Marina and Docks

- Operations and maintenance work continues for the Smiling Cove Marina.
- New video security system has been installed.
- Canopy Projects for all marina entrance gates were completed.
- Continue to work closely with the Public Assistance Office (PAO) on Project Worksheet #88. Completed the replacement of the fence line project as per SOW. Send out RFQ to three companies for the proposed replacement of one gangway as per PW 88 SOW.
- Installed eight (8) safety and No Parking signages.
- Constructed new Marina Storage Facility, courtesy of Department of Public Safety.
- The transient dock operations have been re-activated, given the increased marine sports activities.
- Construction has begun on the Garapan Fishing Base shoreline revetment project.

Tinian Marina

- Continued the ground maintenance services for the Tinian marina facility.
- Continue to work closely with Public Assistance Office on Project Worksheet 104. Project Scope of Work is forwarded to PAO for final review and to schedule for an ITB announcement.