



WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

August 15, 2022

TO: Interested Parties,
FROM: *Kitty M. Simonds*
Kitty M. Simonds

SUBJECT: Summary of Action Items for the 192nd Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

1. Alternatives for an Aquaculture Management Framework in the Western Pacific
2. Alternatives for Fisheries Management Measures in the NWHI

The 192nd meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will convene in-person on September 20-22, 2022, with remote participation option available by web conference (Webex).

The Webex link is <https://tinyurl.com/192CouncilMtg> (if prompted, enter event number: 2463 841 8576; password: CM192mtg). Specific information on joining the meeting, instructions for connecting to the Webex and providing oral public comments during the meeting will be posted on the Council website at: <https://www.wpcouncil.org/event/192nd-council-meeting-virtual/>.

In-person attendance will be hosted at the Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu Room, 2005 Kalia Road, Honolulu, HI, 96815.

The Council will consider and may take action on the issues summarized below, including any public comments on them. Written public comments on final action items should be received by the Council's executive director by 5 p.m. (HST), Friday, September 16, 2022, by postal mail, fax or email as indicated below.

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Summary of Action Items at the 192nd Council Meeting

1. Alternatives for an Aquaculture Management Framework in the Western Pacific (Final Action)

Offshore aquaculture is currently operating in State of Hawaii waters and has expanded into Federal waters in Hawaii and will likely do so in other parts of the western Pacific as demand for seafood increases in the face of limited wild supplies. If managed sustainably, aquaculture has the long-term potential to satisfy seafood demands in island communities and enhance export commerce while providing employment and easing any potential pressure on wild fish resources. In order to ensure that any aquaculture activities are environmentally sound, economically sustainable and minimizes impacts to wild fish stocks and capture fisheries, the Council and NMFS must have the ability to implement a program to review, permit, and monitor proposed aquaculture projects and activities.

The purpose of this amendment is to establish long-term sustainable aquaculture in federal waters by establishing a federal management program for developing a sustainable aquaculture industry in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Pacific Islands Region (American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, the Pacific Remote Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands). An aquaculture management program is needed to provide the Council and NMFS with a framework that provides for a review and authorization of where, how, and how much aquaculture is developed, to regulate and manage aquaculture activities in federal waters of the EEZ.

At its 192nd meeting, the Council will consider taking final action on Aquaculture Management Framework in the Western Pacific.

The Council will consider the following alternatives:

- 1) No action (Status Quo/Current Management)
- 2) Amend the 5 FEPs and regulations to establish a new limited entry aquaculture management program that would include a permitting, recordkeeping and reporting system for commercial (10 years) and research (3years) projects; allowable species limited to the Council's managed species, and limited gear restriction
- 3) Same management program as Alternative 2, but expanded with longer permit durations for commercial (20 years) and research (6 years) permits, and a broader scope of allowable species and gear types.

2. Alternatives for Fisheries Management Measures in the NWHI (Initial Action)

In 2016, President Obama, under Presidential Proclamation 9478 that set aside an area adjacent to the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument that constituted a Monument Expansion Area (MEA). Through the proclamation, the Secretary of Commerce (NOAA), in consultation with the Secretary of Interior (USFWS), were provided responsibility for management of activities and species within the monument expansion area under their respective authorities (e.g. Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, Endangered Species Act (ESA), etc.). The Proclamation prohibited commercial fishing activities and allowed for regulated fishing activities, including Native Hawaiian practices (including exercise of traditional, customary, cultural, subsistence, spiritual, and religious practices) within the MEA, and non-commercial fishing (provided that the fish harvested either in whole or in part, does not enter commerce through sale, barter, or trade, and that the resource is managed sustainably).

On September 23, 2016, the NMFS sent the Council a letter requesting the Council's recommendations for amending the Hawaii Archipelago and Pacific Pelagic FEPs to establish appropriate fishing requirements under the MSA including the prohibition on commercial fishing and the regulation of non-commercial fishing within the monument MEA. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the Council will look at providing regulations for allowable fishing activities in the NWHI that are consistent with the care and management of the objects within the MEA designated by Presidential Proclamation 9478.

There is a need for the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plans to be amended to reflect the regulated fishing activities in the MEA allowed by the Proclamation while optimizing yields for fishing that is allowed providing social, economic, and cultural benefits for the fishing community.

At its 192nd meeting, the Council will consider taking initial action to permitting and reporting structures for fisheries in the NWHI, and may identify a preliminary preferred option and direct staff to develop the associated analyses to amend its Hawaii Archipelago and Pacific Pelagics Fishery Ecosystem Plans.

- 1) No Action (Status Quo)
- 2) Prohibit commercial fishing within the NWHI MEA, codify MEA area, require federal permits and catch reporting for non-commercial fishing within the MEA
- 3) Prohibit commercial fishing within the NWHI MEA, codify MEA area, require federal permits and catch reporting for LIMITED non-commercial fishing within the MEA
- 4) Prohibit all fishing within the MEA