

Congressional Corner



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The mid-term elections are done and there looks to be a change in the next Congress. The 117th Congress ends in December and the 118th Congress will be seated in January 2023 with some new faces and new priorities for legislation, including fisheries. The current bills being considered will need to be acted upon before the end of the year in order to be signed into law. One of those bills is H.R. 4690, the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act of 2021.

H.R. 4690, introduced by Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA) and Rep. Ed Case (D-HI), would reauthorize and amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The bill includes provisions for climate-ready fisheries, supporting fishing communities, strengthening public process and transparency, modernizing fisheries science and data, and sustaining fisheries through healthy ecosystems and improved management. Huffman and Case held numerous public hearings on the bill prior to its introduction, including in Hawai'i, and the bill had a markup session in September in the Committee on Natural Resources. The bill still needs to be reported to the House and scheduled for a vote. The Senate is yet to act upon MSA legislation.

In the Senate, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and fishery disasters both continue to be addressed. Amendments are being introduced to existing bills, such as the one that reauthorizes the U.S. Coast Guard, which may include requirements for fisheries.

Although it is unlikely that MSA legislation will advance in this Congress, the period between the mid-terms and the end of the year does provide time to add parts of any bill to existing bills that are more likely to pass or have already passed the House or Senate. It is also likely that similar bills and provisions will be reintroduced in the next session. 🐟



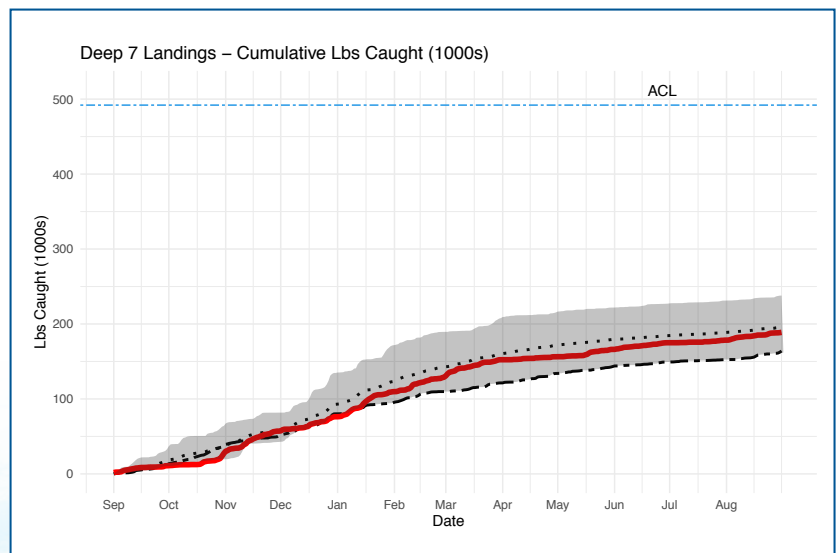
Update from Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources on the Final MHI Deep-7 Bottomfish Landings for the 2021-22 Fishing Year



The fishing year for the main Hawaiian Islands Deep-7 bottomfish complex runs from Sept. 1, 2021 to Aug. 31, 2022. Data recorded from fishing trips during that time totaled 188,871 pounds of bottomfish, which is 38.4% of the 492,000-pound annual catch limit (ACL).

The table includes summary info from Deep-7 bottomfish fishing trips for the current and previous five fishing seasons.

Fishing Season	Licenses	Trips	# Caught	Pounds Caught
2016/17	340	2,351	66,483	237,878
2017/18	341	2,169	59,332	236,119
2018/19	318	2,024	47,919	181,174
2019/20	334	1,843	45,903	161,713
2020/21	320	2,092	52,050	164,170
2021/22	378	2,111	57,711	188,871



The graph shows ACL tracking for Deep-7 bottomfish, with the bold red line representing the current fishing season. The grey shaded area shows the range for the minimum and maximum of cumulative landings for the five most recent seasons. The dashed black line represents the landings for the 2020-2021 fishing year and the dotted line represents the 5-year average. 🐟