



Community members discuss fishing regulation alternatives in the NWHI MEA at a Council-organized meeting at the Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu Nov. 10, 2022. Photo: WPRFMC.

Fishing for Information on Regulations in the NWHI

"If Hawaiian fishermen want to go there, they should have the ability." That was the consistent message heard loud and clear from communities at public meetings that the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council organized in November 2022 on Kaua'i, Maui, Big Island (Hilo and Kona), Moloka'i and O'ahu. The meetings served as a place for community members to provide comments on potential noncommercial fishing regulation alternatives in the Monument Expansion Area (MEA) in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI). The Council will consider the public's input at its December meeting and make recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to implement.

Presidential Proclamation No. 9478 (3 CFR 9478, Aug. 26, 2016) set aside an area of 50 to 200 nautical miles (the outer boundary of the U.S. exclusive economic zone) adjacent to the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The Proclamation provides for management of activities and species under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, including noncommercial fishing and Native Hawaiian practices.

The Council developed options to allow noncommercial fishing to occur within the MEA. It previously discussed

federal permitting and reporting for both noncommercial fishing and Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing practices. Potential fishing regulations would require fishers interested in conducting fishing activities in the MEA to obtain a permit from NMFS, report their catch and bring fish out of the area. In the case of noncommercial fishing activities, the fish could not be sold, traded or bartered. However, at its September meeting, the Council expressed interest in hearing from the community on whether fishing for subsistence purposes should allow for fish to be brought back for cultural sharing.

In the Rose Atoll and Marianas Trench Marine National Monuments, the Council recommended, and NMFS approved the inclusion of customary exchange. It is widely practiced in all of the Pacific Islands to share fish freely within a community without negotiation or immediate expectation of any equivalent return. This type of fishing custom does authorize the sale of fish to recover certain fishing costs so community members can afford the cost of accessing the monument, practice their culture and traditions, and share fish with family

Customary exchange is the nonmarket exchange of marine resources between fishermen and community residents for goods and/or services for cultural, social or religious reasons.



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Western Pacific Regional Fishery
Management Council
1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400
Honolulu, HI 96813
www.wpcouncil.org

Telephone: (808) 522-8220
Fax: (808) 522-8226
info@wpcouncil.org

CHAIR

Archie Soliai—American Samoa

VICE CHAIRS

Will Sword—American Samoa
John Gourley—CNMI
Manny Dueñas—Guam
Roger Dang—Hawai'i

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kitty M. Simonds

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STORY ICON KEY

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GOVERNMENT



Federal



Hawai'i



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American Samoa

*Dedicated to ecosystem-based
fisheries management in the
U.S. Pacific Islands.*



and friends upon their return.

More than 80 community residents participated in the six public meetings. At every meeting, participants raised the opportunity to fish in the MEA as being a critical issue. However, they noted that the area is far from inhabited islands (almost 200 miles from Kaua'i). Participants on Kaua'i said that allowing fishing to occur is important, but would be too expensive for most people.

Kaua'i Mayor Derek Kawakami said, "If you are talking about recreational fishing in the [NWHI], it should be about Native Hawaiian by practice and not blood quantum. Kaua'i is impacted the most by the monument. I don't know too many fishermen who can afford to go there and fish for recreation. There should be consideration of some commercial up there to bring back to the local community to enjoy local fish."

Participants on Maui and other islands echoed these thoughts on food security and commercial fishing, saying that fishermen should be allowed to go there and bring back resources to feed the community.

An O'ahu fisherman commented, "There are questions of practicality and the physical capability of being able to fish in the MEA. You would need at least a 40-foot-long vessel because there is no shelter to run to or access in the MEA." He noted Mother Nature will be the strongest manager of the area. The general sentiment was that fishing opportunities should be maximized as subsistence and noncommercial fishing is not feasible in that area unless you are a billionaire. Bobby Gomes, a former NWHI bottomfish limited-entry permit holder, said "even though I sold my fish, I considered myself a subsistence fisherman. I fished to pay my mortgage, just like a subsistence fishermen would trade or barter to survive."

Many meeting participants said any fishing activity that occurs in the area should be sustainable and that subsistence fishing should be allowed. Some wanted to limit subsistence fishing to Native Hawaiians, while others wanted to limit subsistence fishing to Native Hawaiian practices. One community member raised numerous points regarding Native Hawaiian access, rights and practices. "The federal government does not have the right to dissolve traditional rights that are defined by the Hawai'i State Constitution." Some said fishermen should

be able to recoup costs on subsistence fishing to make it worthwhile and that the Council shouldn't make it difficult for the people to continue their subsistence practices.

Other issues raised at the meetings included regulation enforcement, continued research in the MEA and limits on fishing. Participants were unclear if there was a demand to go fishing in the area but if there was, there should be an allowance for those to go fishing, especially for cultural reasons. One participant said, "The Council should not dismiss any family's ability to get out there as there are families that may have those practices; you just need to find them."

There are few areas within the 50 to 200 nm of the MEA that have habitat suitable for certain species like bottomfish. The vast majority consists of deep ocean waters (~5,000 meters, ~16,400 feet) and bottomfish typically live at depths of 75 to 400 meters (250-1,300 feet). In the early 2000s, before the NWHI was closed to fishing, Hawai'i fishermen caught more than 5,000 pounds of bottomfish (mostly opakapaka and hapu'upu'u) in the MEA worth more than \$27,000 in today's dollars. Non-longline pelagic catch from trolling, handline, shortline, etc. in the NWHI during that same time period averaged ~250,000 pounds, mostly comprised of tunas and billfish.

The Council has managed fisheries in the NWHI since 1976 and some consider the area pristine despite fishing that has occurred sustainably up until the designation of the PMNM. The management of fisheries in the NWHI and the Council's current effort to provide sustainable fishing access was previously covered in the *Pacific Island Fishery News* Summer 2022 issue in the article "The Return of Fishing to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands."

A draft amendment to the Council's Hawai'i Archipelago and Pacific Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plans is being developed prior to the December meeting, when the Council will review the alternatives and recommend fishing regulations in the MEA. Following the meeting, the Council will send its decision to the Secretary of Commerce for review and approval. The public will have another opportunity to comment once the draft rules are published. To participate in the federal rule-making process and other public opportunities regarding the NWHI fishing regulations, visit www.wpcouncil.org.

192nd Council Meeting Highlights, September 20-22, 2022



Keone Nakoa

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Keone Nakoa, provided the opening remarks Sept. 20, 2022, at the Council meeting noting he is a native son of Hawai‘i. He said he was pleased the Council has always ensured that it has territorial representation in the leadership, and in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Nakoa is the lead Department of the Interior (DOI) official directly responsible for managing the administration of the Compact of Free Association between the United States and the freely associated states. The DOI coordinates with other federal agencies to implement regional and national level coastal policy and actions, and works closely with the governments of the U.S. Pacific Territories.

New Council members Will Sword (American Samoa), Judith Guthertz (Guam) and Shaelene Kamaka‘ala



Judith Guthertz

(Hawai‘i) were sworn in at the beginning of the Council meeting. The U.S. Department of Commerce appoints members chosen from a list of people recommended by regional governors. Members serve a three-year term, starting Aug. 11, 2022, and can be reappointed to three consecutive terms.

Sam Rauch, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reported on priority areas for Headquarters including climate change, the National Seafood Strategy and conservation. “We’ve been successful because of the Fishery Management Councils,” said Rauch. “90% of stocks are not subject to overfishing and 80%

not overfished.” Rauch also noted two large appropriation bills, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act, which have \$1 billion for habitat and coastal restorations and \$2.6 billion for coastal resiliency work, respectively. Much of this funding will go to competitive grants for states and territories.



Sam Rauch and Will Sword (r)

Council members questioned the progress of the Biden Administration’s America the Beautiful 30x30 initiative regarding the definition of conservation, pointing out the many area-based measures currently in place. Rauch said at the end of the year, the federal government is to provide an atlas of conservation areas and a working definition for conservation.

The eight regional fishery management councils developed a definition of conservation and are awaiting the federal government definition. The Councils provided a report at the May 2022 Council Coordination Committee meeting to inform the atlas.

Marine National Monument Proposed Expansion for the PRIA

The Council’s advisory groups reported key discussion points on the proposed expansion to the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. The Scientific and Statistical Committee found the proposal “conceptually challenged and factually shallow” because it lacked data or an analytical framework to evaluate or support the stated benefits. The Pacific Remote Islands Coalition, who developed the

proposal, “lacked engagement with the territories, specifically American Samoa.”

Michael Goto, chair of the Council’s Fishing Industry Advisory Committee, said U.S. fisheries are in jeopardy of “death by a thousand cuts” with actions like the proposed monument expansion that further undermines well-managed U.S. fisheries that “will only benefit China.”

Since the meeting, Council staff has followed up on several recommendations. One was to inform the White House and relevant federal agencies about the lack of scientific justification for the previous and proposed expansion of marine national monuments in the Pacific that prohibit U.S. tuna fisheries. The letter reiterated the Council’s June 2022 recommendation to request a comprehensive evaluation of the unintended consequences, including social and economic impacts, be conducted and evaluated through a transparent and public process if further closures are considered.

Another recommendation was to contact the Pacific Remote Islands Coalition to request the group directly addresses and consults with fishing communities and local fishery management agencies in the U.S. Pacific Territories. The Council also asked NMFS to assist the territories on a scientific evaluation of the proposal, including unintended consequences to American Samoa fisheries.

At the September meeting, Council members were disappointed that Hawai‘i leaders lent support to the proposed monument expansion without considering the potential impacts on the territories, which are comprised of mostly underserved communities.

Council member Judith Guthertz from Guam said, “This is an emotional issue for people in the territories. We don’t really have a voice in Congress. We don’t elect the president and we have to depend on Hawai‘i’s support. Just

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192nd Council Meeting Highlights

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because we live in the territories, doesn't mean it should rob us of the opportunity to be treated as Americans."

"The expansion will only benefit a few, and will severely impact the American Samoa economy that is 90% dependent on the tuna industry," said Council Chair Archie Soliai, Council chair and director of American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources. "I am disappointed at the lack of aloha coming from Hawai'i. We were not asked for our opinion prior to the announcement; it is not the Samoan way to disregard others." Soliai asked the DOI and NMFS to weigh in on the impact that the proposed expansion would have on American Samoa, pointing out that if the tuna industry collapses, the territory will be 100% dependent on the federal government.

Mixed Performance in 2022 Hawai'i and American Samoa Longline Fisheries Reports

The Council discussed a Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center report on the performance of the 140 Hawai'i longline vessels during the first half of 2022.

Compared to 2021, the fishery had a relatively low bigeye tuna catch (89K fish, down 14K) and catch per unit effort. Even though the catch was low, the fish price was high, so fishermen were able to recoup their operating costs. Yellowfin tuna catches have trended upward since 2015, increasing 5K fishes from 2021 to 42K, and swordfish catch is up about 1K to 9K fishes.

The nine vessels of the American Samoa longline fleet had an increased albacore tuna catch rate from January to June 2022 compared to the same period last year—13.26 versus about 9 fish per 1,000 hooks. Approximately 12 fish caught per 1,000 hooks is considered a "break-even" point for fishermen in terms of the costs and benefits of each fishing trip. American Samoa longline fishery catch rates have declined by at least 50% since 2002, so such a significant increase in fishery performance is encouraging.

Aquaculture Plans in the Western Pacific Move Forward

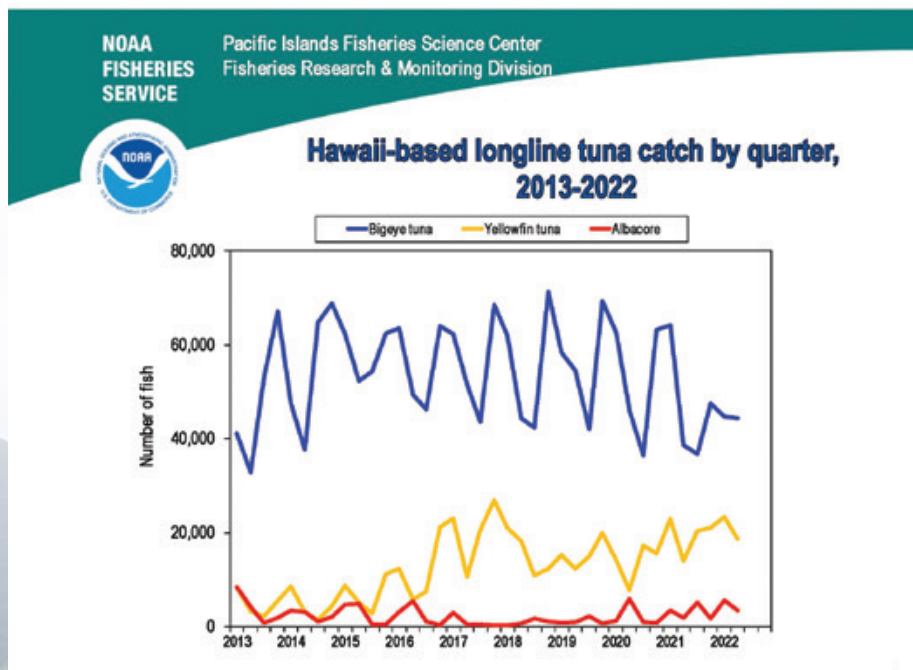
The Council recommended establishing an expanded aquaculture management program in the Western Pacific Region.

A program is needed to provide the Council and NMFS with a framework to review and authorize where, how and how much aquaculture is developed in federal waters of the U.S. exclusive economic zone. The Council will finalize an amendment to the Hawai'i and Pacific Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plans for transmission to NMFS.

Support Needed for Purse Seiners in American Samoa

Council members discussed the importance of maintaining tuna supply to the StarKist cannery in Pago Pago, American Samoa, which relies heavily on tuna brought in from U.S.-flagged purse seiners. The Council requested that NMFS proceed with a 2015 proposed rulemaking to recognize a distinct American Samoa purse seine fleet comprised of some U.S.-flagged vessels. This rulemaking could potentially recognize an American Samoa fishery that would be entitled to privileges within the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) granted to small island developing states (SIDS) and participating territories. These privileges include exemptions to seasonal fish aggregating device closures and limits to high seas fishing access. This would incentivize U.S.-flagged American Samoa vessels to fish in WCPFC waters and offload in American Samoa, but NMFS has yet to proceed with this.

Adding to this disappointment was a proposed rulemaking in September to separate U.S. purse seine effort limits into a high seas effort limit and an effort limit within the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Council members expressed their concern that there was not a sufficient public comment period for this rulemaking and about the disproportionate burden this places on the territory. In previous years,





American Samoa purse seiners (U.S. owned vessels). Photo: WPRFMC.

NMFS had combined limits to high seas and U.S. EEZ purse seine fishing days as a single limit to optimize fishing opportunities.

Council Chair Archie Soliai expressed his dismay with NMFS not proceeding with rulemaking to recognize a distinct American Samoa fleet, yet moving forward with regulations for limits that could potentially drive U.S.-flagged purse seiners to fish in the eastern Pacific and be less likely to offload in Pago Pago. “This proposed rule will have significant negative consequences for American Samoa and put the territory at significant risk. I realize the United States needs to comply with the WCPFC. But why does our government not regulate the U.S.-flagged vessels in American Samoa under the WCPFC as a SIDS?”

“Incoming tuna to supply the cannery has been going down since 2008,” said Will Sword, Council vice chair for American Samoa. “The feds keep giving away what we need to keep our production going. This does not provide justice for us with what we

produce for the nation.” Approximately 100,000 metric tons of tuna are offloaded in Pago Pago each year, of which the majority is provided by U.S.-flagged purse seine vessels.

The Council sent a letter to NMFS regarding the proposed rulemaking for separate high seas and U.S. EEZ effort limit for U.S. purse seine vessels, requesting the agency consider the negative impacts that the rule will have on American Samoa and an extension for the comment period to Nov. 1, 2022. The results of a 2016 study on the Effort Limit Area for Purse Seine closure in 2015 found it had an impact of up to \$110 million during that period.

Other Council recommendations included requesting an update from the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries on the status of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument on the sanctuary nomination inventory list, and revisions to a NMFS proposed rule on coral critical habitat to reflect new species information and comments from the Council and Territory governments.

2023-2026 Advisory Panel Members

The Council appointed new members to its Advisory Panel for the 2023-2026 term. The Council receives advice from a panel of recreational and commercial fishermen, charter boat operators, buyers, sellers, consumers and others knowledgeable about fisheries in the region, including indigenous fisheries. The panel includes subpanels for the American Samoa Archipelago, Hawai‘i Archipelago and Mariana Archipelago. Clayward Tam was chosen as the chair, and the vice chairs are Gil Kualii (Hawai‘i), Nathan Ilaoa (American Samoa), Richard Farrell (Marianas - CNMI) and Judy Amesbury (Marianas - Guam). A full list of names will be available soon on the Council website.

The meeting agenda and summary of action items are available at www.wpcouncil.org/event/192nd-council-meeting.



Giant manta ray. Photo: Pexel.com/Matt Waters.

NMFS Determines Hawai'i and American Samoa Tuna Longline Fisheries Not Likely to Jeopardize ESA-Listed Oceanic Whitetip Sharks and Giant Manta Rays



The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) completed the long-awaited biological opinions (BiOps) analyzing the impacts of the region's two tuna-targeting U.S. longline fisheries on oceanic whitetip (OWT) sharks and giant manta rays. The two species were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 2018. NMFS concluded that the two fisheries, the Hawai'i deep-set longline fishery targeting bigeye tuna and the American Samoa longline fishery targeting albacore tuna, are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of OWT sharks and giant manta rays. These species are incidentally captured in the U.S. longline fisheries and released following safe handling guidelines. Most OWT sharks and giant manta rays are released alive and have a high probability of survival after the encounter.

For all other ESA-listed species, NMFS previously prepared BiOps for the Hawai'i deep-set longline fishery in 2014 and American Samoa longline fishery in 2015. NMFS initiated the process for updating the existing BiOp for the Hawai'i deep-set longline fishery in 2018 and for the American Samoa longline fishery in 2019, and anticipates completing the all-species BiOps in early 2023. The Council has repeatedly expressed concern regarding the delays in completing these BiOps, which ESA requires to be completed within 135 days.

The "no-jeopardy" conclusion of the "Supplemental BiOps" means that the level of incidental interactions (hooking

or entanglement) of OWT sharks and giant manta rays in the two fisheries are not likely to appreciably reduce the likelihood of their survival or recovery. The impacts are not likely to cause material changes to the species' numbers, reproduction or distribution. This conclusion was based on the finding that the impacts of the two fisheries on the OWT shark population in the Pacific Ocean (estimated at ~1.3 million individuals) represents ~0.03% of the population in each of the fisheries, and that the best available information indicates the current population trajectory of this species is on an upward trend. Less is known about population estimates of giant manta rays. NMFS estimated that the subpopulations impacted by the Hawai'i deep-set and American Samoa longline fisheries have at least 1,000 individuals, and found that the level of impact from the two fisheries is small enough to allow the populations to increase over the next 40 years.

The Supplemental BiOps include reasonable and prudent measures (RPMs) that require that OWT sharks and giant manta rays incidentally caught alive in the fisheries be released in a manner that increases post-release survivorship by minimizing the amount of trailing gear left on the animal. The RPMs also require that NMFS continue to monitor and report interactions through the existing observer program, but did not trigger any new management measures. 🐟

Pursuing Fisheries Management from an Ecosystem Perspective

EBFM workshop participants at the Ala Moana Hotel on Oct. 4, 2022. Photo: WPRFMC.



Have you ever wondered how stock assessment scientists estimate the overall biomass of a managed stock like tuna or bottomfish? Well, scientists do the best they can to incorporate various times series of data into a mathematical model to calculate a fishing mortality rate and biomass. The information comes from many sources including fishery-dependent (from commercial and noncommercial catches) and fishery-independent (from scientific surveys) data, and biosamples such as otoliths (ear stones/bones) and gonads that determine life history information. Scientists' estimates are then compared to reference points and thresholds to determine if a stock is overfished or experiencing overfishing.

Commercial fish biomass gives an indication of overall stock status, fishing pressure, habitat conditions and recruitment success, or the number of fish that survive long enough to enter a fishery.

This approach is a tried and true method used to manage fisheries all over the nation. Stock assessors and fishery managers continue to improve these assessments by taking into account various environmental factors, aspects of physical oceanography and/or predator-prey relationships. The models used to incorporate all of these different parameters are described as taking an Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) approach to understanding stock dynamics.

The National Marine Fisheries

Service (NMFS) defines EBFM as *a holistic approach that recognizes all the interactions within an ecosystem rather than considering a single species or issue in isolation. The goal of ecosystem-based management is to maintain ecosystems in a healthy, productive, and resilient condition so they can provide the services humans want and need.*

Fishery managers and scientists from the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) and Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) met for an EBFM Priorities Workshop Oct. 4, 2022, to map out the implementation of EBFM in our region. This inclusive approach works toward sustainable management of the breadth of ecosystem components and management unit species. EBFM cannot succeed without effective, transparent and frequent communication allowing adaptive management to respond to emerging science. This workshop provided the opportunity to share priorities and capabilities, and to listen, talk and brainstorm activities that can be achieved in the next five to 10 years.

During the workshop, each office outlined its priorities for EBFM. The Council and PIRO highlighted the management process and necessary steps to implement future ecosystem work into policy. PIFSC followed by presenting the available data and funds available to collect data in the near future. Then, the workshop focused on an EBFM success story—the West Hawai'i Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA). This IEA addressed the longest contiguous

coral reef track in the State of Hawai'i. The area supports a wide variety of geographically specific users. The nexus of these attributes allowed the IEA team to create a mechanism for collaborative, interdisciplinary and adaptive approaches to best manage these unique resources. This presentation and discussion helped guide the afternoon session of the workshop where ultimately, the three offices worked to develop a unified process based on collaboration and communication that will help set the stage for ongoing EBFM efforts in the Pacific Islands Region.

What's Next?

The Council, PIFSC and PIRO identified staff that will participate in ongoing working groups that will meet quarterly to identify projects and refine the process needed to implement EBFM into upcoming fishery stock assessments, which will be outlined in a workshop report presented at the 193rd Council meeting in December 2022. As more ecosystem considerations are incorporated into the stock assessment process, scientists and managers will continue to improve the models used to project real life scenarios and work to increase the confidence in data that informs marine policy. 🐟

For more information, visit:

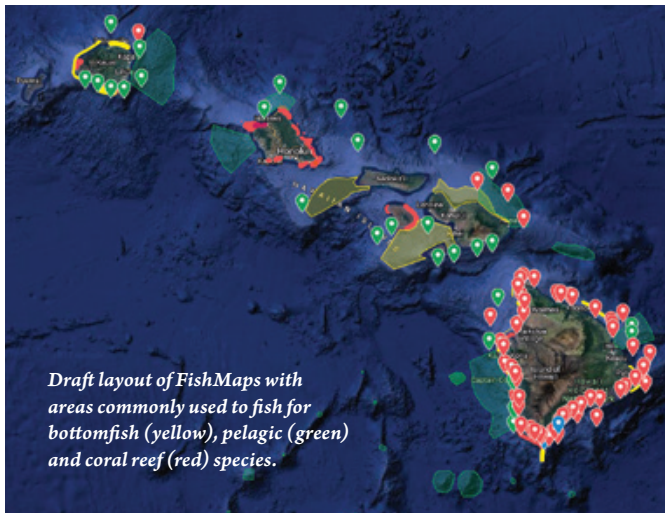
Council EBFM: www.wpcouncil.org

Council Fishery Ecosystem Plans: www.wpcouncil.org/fishery-ecosystem-plans-amendments

NMFS – EBFM: www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/ecosystems/ecosystem-based-fisheries-management



Hawai'i Advisory Panel Solicits Fishermen's Feedback



Draft layout of FishMaps with areas commonly used to fish for bottomfish (yellow), pelagic (green) and coral reef (red) species.

As COVID-19 restrictions have eased, in-person fishing tournaments in Hawai'i have started up again. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's Hawai'i Advisory Panel (AP) took advantage of this and developed a brief voluntary anonymous survey to take the pulse of the fishing community. Until mid-November 2022, there have been 37 responses (summarized below) gathered on Maui and the Big Island. Information was gathered on a range of topics including fishing ko'a, cultural take of honu (Hawaiian green sea turtle), fishing and access for the proposed Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) national marine sanctuary, fishermen observations, data collection and other fishery issues.

With new ocean spatial management actions and development on the horizon potentially further closing off areas to fishing, the Hawai'i AP launched a participatory mapping project called "FishMaps" to characterize Hawai'i's fisheries. The purpose was to document fishing ko'a (coral or traditional fishing areas) and other known fishing areas so that managers, developers and government agencies are alerted to the need to consult with fishermen. When asked on the survey, 84% of the participants said they are willing to share general information on their fishing grounds for this purpose. The best way to protect their fishing ko'a is by respecting it by leaving it alone (no development) and through proper conservation and management (52%), by not tracking the area and not telling others (28%), or through size limits, more fish aggregating devices (FADs) and better enforcement (20%).

In light of the Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association's (NHGRA) call for a cultural take of honu, participants were asked about perceived green sea turtle population changes during their lifetime, and reasons to allow harvest (if any). The majority (73%) said they had observed an increase in the number of turtles, while 27% observed a decrease or no change. The AP was surprised to see that more than three out of four respondents said that people should not be allowed to harvest green sea turtles, while 73% said harvest should be allowed for cultural purposes and home consumption.

NOAA is in the process of designating a national marine sanctuary in the NWHI and the Council has the opportunity to develop fishing regulations that comply with the goals and objectives of the sanctuary. Survey participants noted several types of fishing that should be allowed in the NWHI, including for cultural fishing practices (23%), customary exchange (34%), sustainable commercial fishing (9%), noncommercial (14%), recreational (3%) and sustenance fishing (3%). Some participants (14%) said that only research fishing should be allowed in the proposed sanctuary. In November 2022, the Council held public meetings in Hawai'i to review fishing regulations for the NWHI Monument Expansion Area, adjacent to the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument ("Fishing for Information on Regulations in the NWHI", page 1).

The Hawai'i AP recognizes that the Council is required to manage fisheries based on the best scientific information available, but is often faced with not having a complete dataset. Commercial fishers in Hawai'i are required to report their catch, but noncommercial fishermen are not. Most respondents were commercial or part-time commercial fishers (65%), with the remainder composed of recreational, subsistence, or traditional fishermen. The vast majority (82%) said they participate in two or more types of fishing (trolling, bottomfishing, shore casting, or spearfishing). Regarding data collection, 76% of noncommercial participants said they do not report their catch through an app like the Lokahi fishing app or Fishbox, nor do they keep a record of their catch. The AP continues to work on ways to improve the fishery data streams so that the Council is able to make sound management decisions that benefit the different sectors.

While fishing data can quantify the amount of fish taken out of the ocean or how many people went fishing, it still may not explain why the data looks the way it does. The AP recognizes that fishers on the ocean can see what is happening at sea and they have valuable input to better explain the data, such as why fishers have not been fishing or why the catch of a species may be variable. The majority of the survey participants said they have observed a decrease in the quantity and size of their catch. They have also seen effects from climate change like increased storms and natural disasters. In addition to observations, participants also described problems they are facing such as a lack of FAD management, and issues with enforcement, boat ramp maintenance and under reporting. They saw a need to address unnecessary fishing regulations and enforce stricter penalties on those who break the law.

We are still looking for more people to participate in this voluntary survey. If you are interested, please go to <https://forms.gle/zuhbkzJridmR2c7F7>. Contact AP Chair Clay Tam (hifish06@yahoo.com), Hawai'i AP Vice Chair Gil Kualii (fisha808@gmail.com), or Council staff Zach Yamada (zach.yamada@wpcouncil.org) with questions. 🐟



HFACT Sponsors Meetings Across Hawai'i to Engage Fishers in the State's Holomua Marine 30x30 Initiative



The state-wide fishing organization Hawai'i Fishermen's Alliance for Conservation and Tradition (HFACT) held information sessions to discuss potential impacts of the Hawai'i Department of Land and

Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources' (DAR) Holomua Marine 30x30 Initiative. The effort has its origins in Governor David Ige's commitment announced at the 2016 World Conservation Congress held in Honolulu to target "30% of Hawai'i's nearshore waters to be effectively managed by 2030."

As the "Eyes and Ears of Fishermen," HFACT has monitored the initiative's development as DAR turned it into a working program first by sitting on the Hawai'i 30x30 steering committee, and later providing comments on the process at regular meetings with the Division's management. DAR chose Maui as the first island to begin the process of identifying specific areas and determining rules to implement, but has not identified which island will follow.

HFACT's public meetings, held on Kaua'i, Maui and O'ahu between Oct. 4 and 17, 2022, at six different venues, were a great success, with overall attendance exceeding 500 shore- and boat-based fishers. Two additional in-person meetings are planned for December 6 in Kona and December 8 in Hilo.

HFACT decided to hold these meetings as the organization had concerns that fishers are unprepared for the implications of the State's initiative. Holomua Marine 30x30 documents can be complex and overwhelming to the average fisher, but HFACT feels strongly they need to be informed. At the recent meetings, the organization explained the range of possible impacts to fishers, including possible area closures to fishing, bag limits, bans on the take of certain species, gear restrictions and other fisheries management rules.

"Our concern is the non-holistic approach to this management plan," said HFACT representative and past Council member Ed Watamura. "DAR seems to only be concerned with fishing regulations and not addressing the environmental effects of land based abuses. Regulating only fishing will not solve anything."

Fisher reactions at the meetings were swift as they expressed their anxiousness about the selection and designation process of identifying areas that may become marine managed areas. Many fishers felt that a large portion of fishing areas is already highly protected. Some areas are naturally protected because the terrain makes it impossible to fish from shore or it is difficult to access. Other areas are owned by large land owners who limit access or are closed to fishing due to restrictions by the military.

Some fishers worried that fishing rules will differ from one managed area to another, causing tremendous confusion. Another major concern is that as designated areas get restricted, fishers will move to non-restricted areas and crowd those areas, creating user conflicts. Additionally, the increased pressure in certain locations may harm fisheries and result in unintended consequences.

In general, fishers were very concerned about increasing managed areas throughout the state, especially with a plan to designate 30% of all state nearshore waters as managed areas in such a short period of time. Considering that it took decades for the state to designate the current 6% of its waters as managed areas, adding 24% more in seven to eight years seems unrealistic. Prior designations of managed areas are seen as flawed and have not sufficiently included fishermen in the decision-making process. Thus, fishers are skeptical that the state can do a good job between now and 2030. Some fishers questioned the effectiveness of the existing managed areas in improving fishing, thus adding even more areas would not have the intended outcomes.

HFACT is a not-for-profit, IRS 501(c)(5) organization, that advocates for small boat and nearshore commercial, non-commercial and recreational fishermen throughout Hawai'i. HFACT board members sit on a number of federal fisheries management and endangered species advisory committees, as well as state marine and coastal zone advisory committees. HFACT is thoroughly familiar with, and participates in, ocean and marine resource management in Hawai'i and the central Pacific. 🐟



2022 Midterm Election Results in the Western Pacific Region



American Samoa

Elections for all 20 seats of the American Samoa House of Representatives took place Nov. 8, 2022, with legislators assuming office at noon January 3 following their election. According to *Talane'i*, 15 of the 20 incumbent members of the House of Representatives are returning to the Fono after the midterm election, with five running unopposed. None of the 10 women candidates who ran were successful and for the first time in two decades, there will not be a female in the House of Representatives.



Samuel Meleisea

We spoke with reelected official Samuel Meleisea, representing District 15, about his views on fisheries management. Meleisea has served on the Western

Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council American Samoa Advisory Panel since 2019, and is also a member of the Marine Railway Board to help the territory's fisheries and fishermen.

"I am truly humbled at the opportunity to return and continue my service to our populous district of Tualata. Our marine ecosystem and subsequent fisheries are vital to American Samoa, and many of my constituents depend upon it for their livelihoods. That is why I am involved in the Advisory Panel for the Council, so that the needs of my constituents are represented.

The Fono drafted a House resolution in support of our fisheries and fishermen during the Large Vessel Prohibited Area legal battle between the American Samoa Government (ASG) and NOAA. However, federal overreach has become more evident in recent actions like the proposed Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument expansion. And recently, NOAA proposed to change how it calculates fishing days in Pacific waters for U.S.-flagged vessels, thus placing further financial pressure on the U.S. and American Samoa

fishing fleet. The common issue tying all these instances together is the lack of communication between NOAA and our territorial government.

ASG is not consulted, nor are we part of the initial discussions involving policy set by NOAA that can have lasting implication(s) for our local economy. The Fono is firmly supportive of Governor Lemanu and Congresswoman Uifa'atali in their efforts to curb federal overreach in the area of marine ecosystems and the U.S. exclusive economic zone around American Samoa. These issues and more seem to fall on deaf ears from our observation with NOAA and the State Department. Fortunately, the Council has been reliably engaged with the Territory and its stakeholders. We can't afford to be silent or passive on these issues."

Hawai'i

Democrats Josh Green and his running mate, Sylvia Luke, were elected as Hawai'i Governor and Lieutenant Governor, respectively, Nov. 8, 2022, and will be inaugurated December 5. While addressing climate change is among Green and Luke's top five priorities, their position on supporting the fishing industry is unknown. Green's website does say his administration will address the overall cost of living "by eliminating taxes on food, medicine and other essentials to help make Hawaii more affordable for residents."

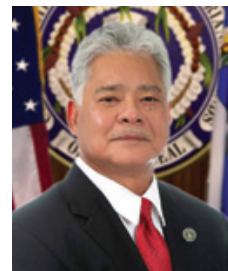
Before the next legislative session begins, Green will be assembling his Cabinet, naming new heads for the state's 18 departments, including the Department of Land and Natural Resources that has a seat on the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. He has said he supports DLNR's Holomua Marine 30x30 efforts.

Democrats also swept the Hawai'i votes across the board for all Districts of the State Senate and most of the State House, except for Districts 39, 41, 42 and 43 (all on O'ahu). 🐟

Who will be the next Governor for the CNMI?



Gov. Ralph Torres



Lt. Gov. Arnold Palacios

After a 21-hour election process, Governor Ralph DLG Torres and his running mate, Senator Vinnie Vinson F. Sablan (R-Saipan), won the Nov. 8, 2022 general election, but were unsuccessful at gaining a majority vote from the residents of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Because of this, a runoff election will take place against the Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and his running mate, Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang (I), Nov. 25, 2022.

It was a fairly tight race with the Torres-Sablan team obtaining 5,726 votes (~39% of the total votes cast) and Palacios-Apatang receiving 4,890 votes (~33%). Rep. Christina E. Sablan and her running mate, Rep. Leila Haveia Staffler (D), came in last with 4,132 votes (28%).

Attorney General Edward E. Manibusan was reelected for his third four-year term after defeating his lone challenger, former Superior Court associate judge Juan T. Lizama.

Under the CNMI Senate, three Republicans, two independents, and one Democrat emerged triumphant. The 23rd Senate will have four Republicans, three Independents and two Democrats. The incoming House of Representatives will be composed of 13 Independents, four Democrats and three Republicans.

For the Mayoral election, Ramon "RB" Camacho (I) just edged out his opponent to win the seat for Saipan. Aubry Manglona Hocog (R) became the Mayor of Rota. Current Tinian Mayor Edwin Aldan (R) ran unopposed, and the Northern Islands chose Valentino Taisacan (R).

All elected officials will take office Jan. 9, 2023. 🐟

Guam: Fishing Crosses Party Lines



Chris Dueñas



Therese Terlaje



Amanda Shelton



Tina Muña-Barnes



Sabina Perez



The Guam fishing community's hopes are high with the recent election.

COVID-19, high gas prices, an itchy inflation, shipping delays and shortage of essential products have hurt local families. And as the saying goes, "When there is a crisis, folks go fishing!" Folks turned to fishing to provide sustenance and protein to their families and some much needed dollars in their pocketbooks just to make ends meet. The election of some key senators who have demonstrated support for Guam's fishermen brings hope for legislation to protect our fragile natural resources so fishing for sustenance is maintained.

Chris Dueñas (R), a long-time fisherman, boat owner and supporter of the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association, is in for another term and may again serve as Minority Leader. Reelected Speaker Therese Terlaje (D) has been a strong supporter of Guam's fishermen and the Co-op. She regularly joins fisheries meetings in the community and at the Co-op. Amanda Shelton (D), also back in, has a family home right on the water, and her late father Sonny, was a long-time fisherman and Co-op supporter, in addition to fabricating lures and importing boats for sale. Vice Speaker Tina Muña-Barnes (D) has been a friend

to fishermen for years and an advocate for making Guam a transshipment hub for tuna once again. Sabina Perez (D), reelected, is also a strong supporter of fishermen, joining the Council's Advisory Panel meetings when items on the agenda need her input.

Governor Lou Leon Guerrero and Lt. Governor Josh Tenorio have also demonstrated their generous support of all fishermen with contributions of thousands of dollars towards the building of a new Co-op facility.

Biba Peskadot! 🐟

Guam May Soon See Consistent Supply of Fresh Locally Caught Fish

In the 1980s through the late 1990s, Guam saw a fish transshipment value of more than \$94 million. Very little of the fish made it into Guam's economy. In fact, Guam's Bureau of Statistics and Plans reported in 2018 that Guam imported 99% of its seafood, valued at more than \$29 million.

Fast forward to 2022. Fumi Kajiya, an entrepreneur whose roots hail from the old Mangilao Retail Store and whose father, Takayuki Kajiya, was a Guam fishing pioneer, is looking to provide a consistent supply of fresh local seafood. Back in the day, his father owned a boat with enough deck space to start a trolling and deep bottomfish fishery, mostly for local markets. He had a working knowledge of Japanese fishing methods and he was generous in sharing his knowledge. Unfortunately, since his passing, no one stepped up to take over the activity. But now his oldest son is looking at filling the void.

Fumi was raised and educated in Guam. With his younger brother and sister, he ran the Mangilao Retail Store after their

parents passed away. He graduated from the University of Guam (UOG), but his passion remains in fishing.

From a young age, Fumi joined his father on the boat plying for anything that took their lures and bait. And they were quite successful at it, too. Old man Kajiya became a household name amongst Guam's seasoned fishermen. Young Fumi enjoyed his adventures fishing from a boat. In fact, in a 1982 fishing derby, Fumi won the yellowfin tuna category with a huge 134.5-pound fish—a Guam derby record that he held for many years.

Council staff caught up with Fumi recently to ask about his vision to bring fresh fish to the local Guam market.

I've known you to be a fisherman ever since we were young. How did you get started fishing?

I love the ocean and enjoy the thrill of catching the big one.

You fished the cliffs behind UOG and along Glass Breakwater at night. Each time you and your friends carried such heavy loads of gear, including heavy car batteries. So obviously you are very passionate about fishing. What fuels your passion for fishing?

I guess accompanying my father on his boat fishing all day, all night and sometimes over several days, left an impression on



CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Fumi Kajiyama fishing tuna with his family in 1982. Photo: Fumi Kajiyama.

me about fishing and I have grown to love it. But his view of fishing was more for monetary reasons and thus things started to become more commercialized with computerized reels and heavy gear. I was more in it for the fun at that time, and to be able to catch the big ones that got away. So, with trial and error, I honed my skills at trying to catch the big one. You know the car battery that we used to bring to the cliff fishing was not really used for seeing in the dark, although it could be used for that when we were lifting the fish. We used them with powerful spotlights to flash the water in front of the *mamulan* (giant trevally) to scare it and prevent it from going to rocks or coral formations that could cut us off. Plus, I love eating fish too.

Recently you expressed interest in starting an open ocean fishery business. Where did you get the idea to start something like this?

I currently work as the acting manager for SPE, Inc., at their Agaña Shopping Center Tokyo Mart Express outlet. At our stores, we use a lot of fish, but they are all imported frozen products. It's not really bad, but if you've ever tried fresh tuna, compared to the frozen product

that is chemically treated, there is a big difference. Those products may look good and last longer because it's been treated, but it just doesn't have the taste. The sad thing here is that we are in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and we know tons of tunas were transported through Guam by air, but locally we are only using seafood that comes from Malaysia or South America and such. We do have some local fish available, but the supply is not sufficient and consistent enough to support the needs of all the stores, hotels and specialty markets. So, the market potential is certainly there, but no one seems to be filling this gap, and I thought this might be something to look into as a viable future business venture.

What preparations have you done to get your project going?

I purchased a 35-foot boat and together with my team, will be upgrading the boat for fishing and getting ready to berth it in Agat very soon. I also purchased all kinds of fishing equipment like what the Japanese fishermen use, including new electronic fishing technology such as sounders, GPS and a radar system, in addition to fishing

gear for pelagic fish and squid. Basically, trying to do things right by carefully studying the procedures and techniques used by successful seasoned fishermen.

How will you and your team prepare or train to use this new technology?

My plan is to establish dialogue with fishermen from Okinawa that know open ocean fishing and learn their ways of fishing that can be applied in our waters. I have my own basic fishing knowledge, but I want to expand that with guys that have been out there with experience, to not have to reinvent the wheel.

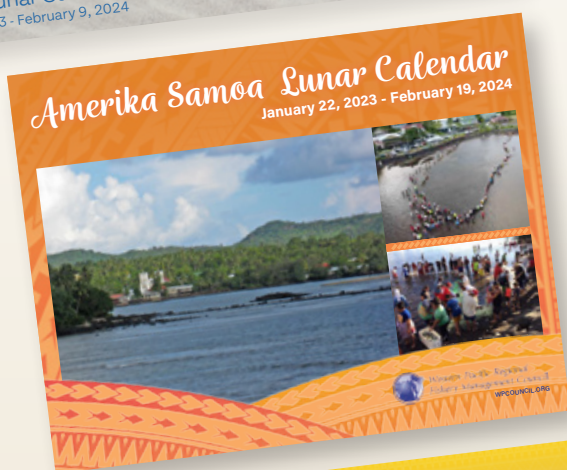
What is the timeline for your venture? When will you and your team be ready to start fishing?

I am targeting to be ready towards the end of 2023. I want to have all the elements in place, including safety gear, and access to bait for each of the species we will be targeting. At first, we plan to do exploratory fishing in the waters around Guam and the CNMI. Find out the good spots, follow the moon, the tide, and weather permitting, the annual seasonality of bait fish that come around our islands. We will work with the local community and the markets to accept our fish. And we will work closely with the tourism industry to develop a supply chain of fresh locally caught fish to the restaurants and hotels. We will do all that first before our first commercial venture next year.

Anything else you'd like to share?

My basic aim is *not* to compete with local fishermen, but rather fish areas that are a little beyond the range of local weekend fishermen so we don't affect them. I don't want people to think that when we start our fishing operation, the local fishing grounds will become empty because of us and others like us.

I also want to thank the Council, the local government agencies, my employer SPE, Inc., the local fishermen and the community for their support in helping us get started. 🐟



New Outreach Resources

The 2023 traditional lunar calendars will soon be available for Hawai'i, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands and Guam. The calendars aim to promote ecosystem-based fisheries management, support indigenous fishing and management practices, and involvement in the fisheries management decision-making process. The 13-month calendars are from mid-January 2023 through mid-February 2024 and provide tide charts, lunar rise and set times, phases of the moon (29-30 days/month).

The 2023 *Kaulana Mahina* (Hawaiian Lunar Calendar) is a partnership between the Council and the Hanalei River Heritage Foundation. This calendar features information from Project Mālama Ola (taking care of the life of the natural resources). The overarching goal is to introduce lessons to study, learn and teach about the impacts of climate change and other threats to the environment in the *muliwai* (estuary) area of the Hanalei River.

The American Samoa, CNMI and Guam calendars continue the theme of fishery and environmental observations and monitoring. For Hawai'i, in addition to the larger classroom-style *Kaulana Mahina*, the Council created a pocket-sized water-resistant version especially for fishermen.

To receive a FREE 2023 printed calendar (limited quantities available), send an email request including your full name and mailing address to info@wpcouncil.org. All calendars will also be available to download and print at www.wpcouncil.org/educational-resources/lunar-calendars.

Get to Know Your Council Members:

HIGH CHIEF TAULAPAPA WILLIAM SWORD



Learn about the people who balance competing interests while trying to make fishery management decisions for the overall benefit of the nation.

High Chief Taulapapa William Sword, Council vice chair for American Samoa, has been a Council member for a combined time of more than 10 years, five as vice chair. He also served on the Council's American Samoa Advisory Panel as vice chair for 6+ years. He has worked for 30+ years as a manager and civil engineer for an oil company that provides and stores oil for the territory. He is an avid recreational fisherman with more than 50 years of experience, most recently winning three of seven species categories in a 2021 sport fishing tournament. He serves as vice chair on the Marine Railway Board which services the fishing fleets in American Samoa. He has also been the International Game Fish Association representative in the territory for more than 10 years.

You've been with the Council for a long time. Why did you initially want to be part of it?

The Council offers a very strong and unique forum from which we can help our fishermen continue to practice sustainable fishing. I got interested in the Council because conservation of resources is important, but difficult when rogue nations do not want to conform to conservation guidelines and at the same time, ultra-conservative NGOs refuse to allow fishing in our waters, thus depriving our fishermen of the chance to monitor and better conserve our resources. Foreign fleets report nothing. However, what little we can do to preserve our fisheries through the Council process is of vital importance.

One other objective is to promote proper use of our resources, rather than let distant-water fleets ravage our fisheries at the expense of our Pacific peoples. Too many conservationists cannot see the forest for the trees and unknowingly prevent our fishermen from fishing. Our fishermen are the best persons to monitor fishing within our exclusive economic zone (EEZ) so the Council can make sustainable fishing policies. They report and are a lot more honest than foreign fishing fleets.

How does your position as a High Chief in the Samoan community help you to bring a different perspective to fishery management in the Western Pacific?

Samoans are an anomaly—our Fa'a Samoa is a democracy with a smidgen of socialism—so our society depends on everyone's involvement and it is a way

of life to have empathy with people in your village. What a fisherman catches is shared with family, friends and community. Our culture and people grew up with the land and the sea as a resource from which we derive sustenance, so we have to practice conservation in all aspects of our interaction with nature. In Samoa, we have "a'au e sa le fagota" or no fishing areas for a while, but we open it up after the area has recovered sufficiently. The job of the Chief is to lead, to speak and to guide the village in its efforts to help the community. The Council is my family and village, and I am responsible for the sustainable use of our fisheries. You cannot use the word sustainable if you have areas which are never fished at all.

What are some challenges that American Samoa fisheries are facing?

Our livelihood and our economy in American Samoa are dependent on the fishing industry. In the last decade, we have seen a near disastrous failure of our national fishery leaders to support the last remaining tuna cannery in the United States. They do not protect the purse seine and longline fleets which supply U.S.-caught fish for our cannery. So the challenge is to get our federal government to hear our Pacific voices, and to recognize the danger that they pose to our territory and hopefully get them to reverse course on their economically destructive policies.

American Samoa is the fifth largest producer of processed fish in the United States and Territories. With our purse seine fleet being reduced from more than 40 boats to 11 boats in the past decade, we see the imminent demise of this fishery. Yet the foreign fishing fleets, from

China especially, continue to ravage the fisheries in our EEZ and sell our fish back to us. For sure, federal fisheries officials are becoming the laughing stock of the Asia-Pacific fishing countries and need to show more equity and environmental justice for our fishing community. It would certainly bode well, and change neighbors' attitudes, if our fishery policies would support U.S. fishing communities in the South Pacific as they do the small island developing states countries. Actions speak louder than words, and actions indicate our federal fisheries managers do not listen or support our fishing communities. Hopefully my input will make them realize their folly.

What does effective fishery management look like to you?

Conservation and proper use of our resources, not to throw it away or give it away to other countries as the federal government has done in the last decade or so. We need to monitor our fishing effort and make sure we are using the resources in our EEZ in a prudent, sustainable and advantageous manner to meet the national interests (and American Samoa interests) rather than squander it to predator nations. We have the most responsible fishermen in the world and they are the best folks to monitor our use of our fishing resources in order to manage all the fisheries as per the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The Council does a great job at effectively managing fishing in federal waters so they are sustainable.

Lastly, what is your favorite fish to eat?

For reef fish, it is the pink snapper (onaga, *palu malau*), and for pelagics it would be *masimasi* (dolphinfish) and yellowfin tuna. 🐟

Council Family Updates

At its 192nd meeting, the Council supported the following advisory body changes:

- * Appointed **Kelsey Lizama** and **Nathan Van Ee** to the Pelagic Plan Team and Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee-Technical Subcommittee.
- * Appointed **Angela Delacruz** to the Archipelagic Plan Team.

2023-2026 Advisory Panel (AP) Members:

At its 192nd meeting, the Council appointed the following persons to the AP:
Clayward Tam (chair);

American Samoa: **Nathan Ilaoa** (vice chair), **Brian Thompson**, **Nonu TuiSamoa**, **Joe Hamby**, **Jerome Ierome** and **Dustin Snow** and, as alternate members, **Joseph Fa'a'ita**, **Ray Tulafono** and **Carl Floor**;

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: **Richard Farrell** (vice chair), **Ray Tebuteb**, **Mike Fleming**, **Cecilio Raiukiulipiy**, **Perry Mesngon** and **Lino Tenorio** and, as alternate members, **Anthony Guerrero**, **David Cabrera** and **Lawrence Concepcion**;

Guam: **Judy Amesbury** (vice chair), **Dominik San Gil**, **Dale Alvarez**, **Jesse Rosario**, **Michael Dueñas** and **James Borja** and, as alternate members, **Jason Miller**, **Jonathan Deloso** and **Michael Gawel**;

Hawai'i: **Gil Kuali'i** (vice chair), **Khang Dang**, **Carrie Johnston**, **Abraham Apilado Jr.**, **Nathan Abe** and **Amanda Padilla** and, as alternate members, **Cherise Van Kuren**, **Nathan Tsao** and **Len Nakano**. 🐟

Attention Hawai'i Recreational Fishermen – How Much do you Spend on Fishing?



The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is conducting a survey between November 2022 and January 2023 of Hawai'i recreational fishermen about their 2022 expenditures on saltwater fishing trips. The survey is designed to estimate the significant economic contribution that noncommercial and recreational fishing provides to the State of Hawai'i in terms of jobs supported, sales revenues and value-added benefits to the economy.

Hawai'i private boat owners and Hawai'i residents who registered with the NMFS National Saltwater Angler Registry in 2021 and 2022 will have the opportunity to complete the confidential voluntary survey online or via a mail-in survey. The survey will ask about costs for your most recent boat-based and shore-based fishing trips, as well as estimates for broader fishing-related expenses during the past year.

Results will be made available online. The 2017 and other past survey results are available at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/socioeconomics/marine-recreational-fishing-expendituresurvey>. Questions? Contact Justin Hospital at justin.hospital@noaa.gov or 808-725-5399. 🐟



In Memoriam



Council Executive Director Kitty Simonds and Bill Hogarth at the regional fishery management council conference in 2003.

Dr. William T. "Bill" Hogarth passed away in early November 2022. Born in Jarratt, Virginia in 1939, Dr. Hogarth's personality was larger than life and he never lost his recognizable southeastern Virginia accent that made conversations with him memorable.

His 50-year career spanned federal government to university positions as a leader in marine science, fisheries and oceanography. Before retiring, he was the director of the Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO) at the University of South Florida. In 2017, he was honored when FIO named its newest state-of-the-art research vessel after him, the *R/V W.T. Hogarth*.

From 2001 to 2007, Dr. Hogarth was the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Assistant Administrator, a position that capped a series of appointments in the agency. From 1997 to 1999, he was the Regional Administrator for the Southwest Region and the NMFS representative on the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. The Southwest Region had jurisdiction over what is now the Pacific Islands Region prior to the establishment of the regional office in 2003.

Before joining NOAA, Dr. Hogarth was the director of the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries from 1986 to 1994. He holds B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Richmond and a Ph.D. from North Carolina State University. He is survived by his wife Mary, sister Virginia, son Brandon, daughter Shelley, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. 🐟

Congressional Corner



Follow what happens to *YOUR* fisheries closely by keeping an eye on www.congress.gov.

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. 🐟



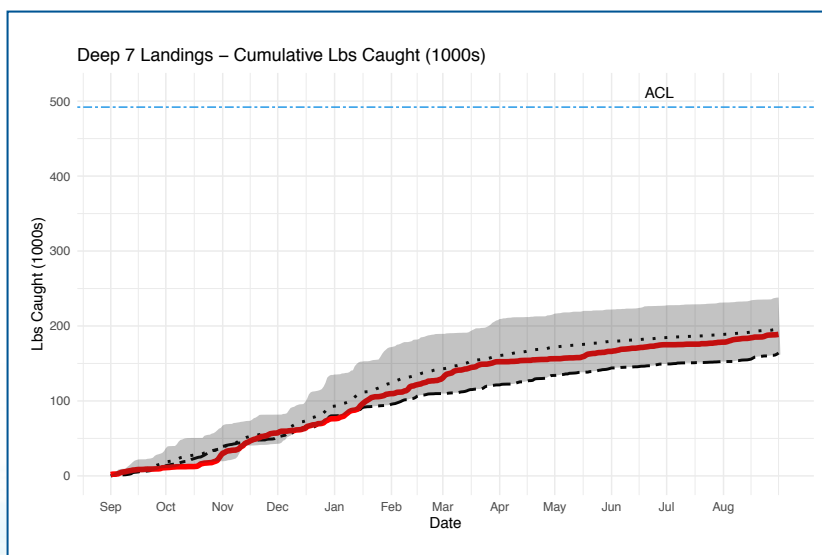
Update from Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources on the Final MHI Deep-7 Bottomfish Landings for the 2021-22 Fishing Year



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. 🐟



Highlights

FROM THE PACIFIC REGION

CNMI Underwater Treasure Hunt



(left to right) AQUASMITH Spearfishing general manager Morito Asai and store manager Eunice O. Kikkushow with Council staff Floyd Masga. The Council supported the inaugural underwater event organized to encourage the younger generation to take part in ocean activities around the CNMI.



Treasure Hunt participants search for special gold and silver coins.



Jane and Jeremiah Ogumoro show their reward for practicing their underwater skills.

Photos: Floyd Masga.

AQUASMITH Spearfishing and Island Keepers CNMI kicked off the first ever Underwater Treasure Hunt Nov. 5, 2022, at Pau Pau Beach on Saipan. Approximately 70 people both young and young at heart joined the hunt, which was preceded by a brief presentation on reef safety, and the do's and don'ts when picking up marine life. Participants were limited to using masks, snorkels and dive socks to search for the 15 gold Egyptian coins and 100 silver Buffalo nickels scattered throughout the bay. Once found, treasure hunters could exchange the coins for items from sponsors that encouraged future water activities like certificates for kayak or stand up paddleboard rentals, coolers, portable fish scales and more.

Tinian Beef, Beer, & Bands Festival Fishing Derby



Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan (far right), CNMI Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and the crew of the *Lucky Harvest* and their 772.5-pound marlin.



(left to right) Derby winners JJ Sablan, Cecilio Raiukiulipiy, Mayor Edwin P. Aldan, Ray Delacruz, Jun Salik and Jeffery Hofschneider.

Photos: Tinian Mayor's Office.

The Tinian Beef, Beer, & Bands Festival's "Biggest Catch" Fishing Derby was held Aug, 13, 2022, at the Tinian Marina Dock. Cash prizes categories included \$2,000 for billfish (50 pounds and above), \$1,500 for yellowfin, \$1,500 for wahoo and \$500 for mahimahi.

Congratulations to Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council CNMI Advisory Panel members Cecilio Raiukiulipiy and Ray Delacruz Jr. who were part of the team on the *Lucky Harvest* that landed a whopping 772.5-pound marlin, breaking a Tinian record!

Raiukiulipiy shared that after a 3-hour battle, they finally landed the monster fish, however he and his crew, including Jun Salik, and JJ Sablan, could not bring the marlin on board due its size and height of their vessel. In the end, they decided to tie the marlin up and tow it back to port. After weighing their catch, the crew and community members cut up the fish and shared blocks of marlin amongst themselves, as well as donating some to the Old Age Community Center.



Recipe



Baked Onaga with Tomatoes and Homemade Harissa

"Harissa is the chili sauce of the Moroccan people."

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE FRESH HARISSA:

- 4-6 dried small, hot, red chilies, stems removed*
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried mint
- 1 tsp ground caraway seeds
- 5 cloves garlic
- ½ cup olive oil

**Use "Japanese dried chilies" or any medium-hot chili such as Szechuan chilies or chile de arbol.*

FOR THE FISH:

- 2-2 ½ lbs whole onaga, scaled and cleaned
- 1 tbsp harissa
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 sliced lemons
- 1 Maui sweet onion, large, sliced
- 2 tomatoes, large, ripe, sliced
- 3 sprigs Italian parsley
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme

DIRECTIONS

MAKE THE HARISSA:

1. Using scissors or a sharp knife, cut chilies into pieces. Cover with boiling water and cook to soften, 30 to 90 minutes. Drain chilies and squeeze out excess water.
2. Place chilies in food processor with remaining harissa ingredients. Grind to a paste. Scrape down sides, then process again for 20 seconds. Place in small glass jar (*it will soak into and stain many plastic containers*). Cover surface with a thin layer of olive oil and seal tightly. Harissa keeps in the refrigerator for up to 8 weeks and it's wonderful in soups, sauces, and stews.

PREPARE THE FISH:

1. Pre-heat oven to 400°F. Wash fish under running water for two minutes, making sure to remove all surface blood. Dry the fish well with paper towels.
2. Make two to three diagonal slashes on each side of the fish to ensure even cooking. In a small bowl, combine harissa, olive oil and garlic. Rub the harissa mixture on both sides of the fish and inside the cavity.
3. Lightly grease a baking dish large enough to hold the whole fish, then arrange the sliced onion on the bottom. Arrange tomatoes, parsley, thyme and sliced lemons over onions.
4. Place fish on top and bake uncovered for 35 to 40 minutes, or until the fish is cooked.

Serve hot with French bread (baguette).



*Recipe and Photo Courtesy Kapi'olani
Community College Culinary Arts Department
Front Top Photo: Dean Sensui*

2022-23 Council Calendar

Check the Council website for in-person and remote public participation options for meetings hosted by the Council.

NOVEMBER

22

Hawai'i Archipelago Fishery Ecosystem Plan Advisory Panel meeting

26-Dec. 3

19th Regular Session of the Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Da Nang, Vietnam*

28-Dec. 2

2nd Workshop on Improving the Risk Analysis for Tropical Tunas in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO): Model Weighting for Integrated Stock Assessments, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) (virtual)*

29-30

146th Scientific & Statistical Committee meeting

29-Dec. 1

Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, Washington, D.C.*

DECEMBER

5-8

193rd Council meeting

8-9

3rd Workshop on Management Strategy Evaluation for Tropical Tunas in the EPO, IATTC (virtual)*

Week of Dec. 12

American Fisheries Advisory Committee meeting

12-14

4th Workshop of an Electronic Monitoring System in the EPO: Technical Standards and Data Collection Priorities, IATTC (virtual)*

JANUARY 2023

9-11

1st Workshop on Data Improvement: Industrial Longline Fishery, IATTC (virtual)*

FEBRUARY

3-9

5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress, Vancouver, B.C., Canada*

13-17

11th Meeting of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation Commission, Manta, Ecuador*

**Meetings not hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.*

Upcoming Events

The 146th Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) meeting will be held Nov. 29-30, 2022, virtually via web conference (Webex). Direct link to the meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/146SSCMtg>.

Major agenda items include: Review of paper inferring spillover benefits of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM); Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) fishing regulation alternatives review; Hawai'i (HI) deep-set and American Samoa (AS) longline biological opinion (BiOp) discussion; and Ecosystem-based fisheries management workshop report.

The 193rd meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will be held Dec. 5-8, 2022, in a hybrid format, with in-person participation available for Council members and the public at the Pagoda Hotel (1525 Rycroft St, Honolulu, HI), or remote participation via Webex. Direct link to the meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/193CouncilMtg>.

Major agenda items include: NWHI fishing regulation alternatives review (final action item) and public meetings report; Review of paper inferring spillover benefits of the PMNM; Aquaculture management framework alternatives in the Western

Pacific (final action item); HI deep-set and AS longline BiOp discussion; North Pacific striped marlin catch limits (final action item); AS bottomfish stock assessment terms of reference review; and International fishery management meeting outcomes.

For more information on agendas, meeting documents and the WebEx connection, go to www.wpcouncil.org/meetings-calendars. ➡

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Summary of Action Items at the December 2022 Council Meeting



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The Council will consider and may take action on the issues summarized below.

Alternatives for Fisheries Management Measures in the NWHI Monument Expansion Area (Final Action)

In 2016, President Obama via Presidential Proclamation 9478 set aside an area of 50-200 nautical miles (nm) adjacent to the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) as the Monument Expansion Area (MEA). Through the Proclamation, the Secretary of Commerce (NOAA), in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), were provided responsibility for management of activities and species within the MEA under their respective authorities (e.g., Magnuson-Stevens (MSA), National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, Endangered Species Act, etc.). The Proclamation prohibited commercial fishing activities and anchoring on any living or dead coral. However, it allows for regulated fishing activities within the MEA, including Native Hawaiian practices (including exercise of traditional, customary, cultural, subsistence, spiritual and religious practices). It also allowed noncommercial 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.

The Proclamation that established the MEA contains specific requirements related to the management of fishing in the area. Specifically, Proclamation 9478 authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to manage non-commercial fishing on a sustainable basis and consistent with the overall conservation objectives of the MEA.

The purpose of this action is to amend the Hawai'i and Pacific Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs) and promulgate regulations consistent with the conservation and management directives of Proclamation 9478. This action would codify the MEA's boundary and prohibit commercial fishing in the designated area, while authorizing

noncommercial fishing (including traditional indigenous, sustenance, recreational and charter recreational fishing) in the MEA. *The Council will consider a range of alternatives for fishing in the NWHI MEA.*

North Pacific Striped Marlin Catch Limits (Final Action)

The Western and Central North Pacific Ocean (WCNPO) striped marlin stock is overfished, experiencing overfishing based on best scientific information available (BSIA). The stock is subject to an interim rebuilding plan by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). At its 185th meeting in March 2021, the Council considered recommendations in response to the stock status, taking into account the relative impacts of U.S. vessels, as required by the MSA Section 304(i). The Council took final action recommending a Pacific Pelagic FEP amendment to establish a management framework using a phase-in approach, with an initial catch limit of 457 mt for 2022, and specification of catch limits for U.S. vessels throughout the duration of a WCPFC rebuilding period based on an anticipated and improved stock assessment in 2023.

Due to the unresolved uncertainty in the BSIA associated with the delay in a new stock assessment, the Council's final action from the 185th meeting has not yet been implemented. Therefore, the Council will consider taking final action at this meeting as follows:

1. No action/status quo: do not set a limit for retaining (landing) WCNPO striped marlin;
2. Set an annual catch target of 457 mt in U.S. longline fisheries, consistent with WCPFC conservation and management measures, with an annual retention limit of 434 mt as an accountability measure;
3. Set an annual catch target of 426 mt in U.S. longline fisheries, consistent with a reduction in catch equivalent to the U.S. relative contribution to international overfishing of this stock, with an annual retention limit of 404 mt as an accountability measure; and

4. Prohibit retention of WCNPO striped marlin.

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

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, Hawai'i, the Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIA) and the Northern Mariana Islands). This program is needed to provide the Council and National Marine Fisheries Service 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 took final action to establish an aquaculture management program in the Western Pacific Region and directed staff to finalize the amendment to the Hawai'i and Pacific Pelagic FEPs, but inadvertently omitted FEPs for the American Samoa Archipelago, Mariana Archipelago and PRIA. *The Council will consider rescinding its recommendation from the 192nd meeting and including the FEPs in a final action at the meeting.* 🐟