



195th Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

June 27-29, 2023

Regional Communications & Outreach Report

This report summarizes regional communications and outreach efforts conducted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council from approximately March 2023 through the end of May 2023.

Publications

Pacific Islands Fishery News

The spring issue of the Council's quarterly newsletter was distributed in June 2023 primarily through the Constant Contact email list with ~3,500 subscribers. Less than 100 hard copies will be direct mailed. A few hundred hard copies are being distributed through local agencies, fishermen and other community members throughout the regions. This issue highlights potential impacts from the proposed national marine sanctuary in the Pacific Remote Islands, the Council's final fishing recommendations for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI), NMFS' draft biological opinions on the Hawai'i and American Samoa longline fisheries, outcomes from the Archipelagic Plan Team meeting including improvements to the annual SAFE reports, among others (www.wpcouncil.org/wp-council-newsletters).

Hawaii Fishing News

The Council submitted monthly articles to this magazine for the first three issues of 2023 on the following topics:

- Winter (combined issue) – the Council and NMFS workshop on ecosystem-based fishery management priorities in the Western Pacific
- May – climate change and fisheries in the Western Pacific; a reprint of a press release from the 194th Council meeting on issues of fairness, equity and respect; and continued series of introducing the Hawai'i Advisory Panel (AP) members (Abraham Apilado Jr. and Khang Dang)
- June – limited conservation benefits of large-scale marine protected areas for Pacific tropical tunas; and results from a Hawai'i AP survey for fishermen gathering info on a range of topics including fishing ko'a, cultural take of honu (Hawaiian green sea turtle), fishing and access for the proposed NWHI national marine sanctuary, fishermen observations, data collection and other fishery issues

Islands Business

The Council submitted an article on climate change in the Western Pacific and how it is affecting fisheries and communities for the April 2023 issue of *Islands Business* magazine. The articles for this issue focused on special feature on fisheries and the critical and emerging issues facing the sector. The monthly magazine is read by decision-makers, businesses and academics and students throughout the Pacific Islands region, Australia, New Zealand, UK, USA and Asia.

Advisory Panel Brochures

At the end of 2022, the Council elected new members for its AP with subgroups in Hawaii, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Guam. The recently completed 2023-2026 AP brochures highlight regional focus topics and provide information about the members, whose experience spans multiple fishing-related sectors (www.wpcouncil.org/about-us/advisory-groups/advisory-panel).

Media

In this reporting time period (March 7, 2023 - May 31, 2023), the Council published seven press releases; four on the Science and Statistical Committee meeting, two on the 194th Council meeting and one on the Council response to the National Ocean Service's letter regarding NWHI fishing regulations.

The Council received several media requests on three main topics:

NWHI fishing regulations

- *Pacific Business News*
- *Honolulu Star Advertiser* – (pickup of 194th Council meeting press release)
www.staradvertiser.com/2023/04/08/hawaii-news/cultural-practices-in-monument-area-move-council-to-allow-sale-of-fish

Congressman Ed Case letter on repayment of federal funds

- *Civil Beat*

Proposed Pacific Remote Islands (PRI) National Marine Sanctuary

- Voice of America – video interview with John Gourley, www.voanews.com/amp/us-proposal-for-remote-pacific-marine-sanctuary-draws-mixed-response/7120278.html
- *Honolulu Star Advertiser* – re: sanctuary and Congressman Case's letter
- *Honolulu Star Advertiser* – re: UC Santa Barbara study on fishing effort in PRI (Council staff quoted), www.staradvertiser.com/2023/05/29/hawaii-news/marine-sanctuary-to-have-little-effect-on-commercial-fishing-study-finds
- *Civil Beat* - re: UC Santa Barbara study on fishing effort in PRI

Correspondingly, from March 7, 2023 to May 31, 2023, there were 46 instances when news outlets either picked up Council press releases or mentioned the Council.

Social Media

Data from March 7, 2023 to May 31, 2023:

- The Council Facebook account has ~1,100 (+100*) page likes, and Council staff scheduled 36 posts that reached 6,900 people (+17%). The number of post engagements was 430 (+24%), along with 346 (+42%) page clicks and 12 new fans.
- The Council Twitter account has 541 (+5) followers and Council staff uploaded 22 tweets, had 1 engagement, and 1 favorite of tweets in which the Council was mentioned.



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- The Council Instagram account has 147 followers (+6); 30 posts reached 371 people, with ~1.6K impressions.** (Reach refers to the number of unique accounts that saw any posts or stories at least once.)
- The Council LinkedIn account has 149 followers (+23), with 35 posts and 1.2K (+100%) impressions.

**Numbers in parenthesis denote the changes since the previous 3-month time frame.*

***Impressions track the number of times content is shown to users on the platform. In other words, an impression is counted when someone scrolls down his/her feed and passes your post.*

Website

The Council has a new Marine Spatial Management web page for information on National Marine Sanctuary proposals, fishery management regulations for Monuments in the Western Pacific and more: www.wpcouncil.org/marine-spatial-management. Find the link to the page in the top navigation bar on the Council website home page.

Fishers Forums in the Mariana Islands

The Council held its first in-person Fishers Forums in the Mariana Islands since 2018 in conjunction with the March 2023 meeting on Saipan and Guam. Both free and family friendly outreach events focused on the history of bottomfishing, different fishing gears and methods, and the science and management of bottomfishing in the region. Local newspapers and a Guam TV station covered the events.

The CNMI forum, held March 27 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel's Hibiscus Ballroom, was opened by Council Chair John Gourley and emceed by CNMI Advisory Panel Vice Chair Richard Farrell. Six partner government and private organizations joined the Council as exhibitors to share their conservation and management messages with approximately 60 community members. Attendees enjoyed a buffet dinner sponsored by Governor Palacios.

Renowned Saipan deep bottom fishers Lino Tenorio and Tony Guerrero gave a brief training session on their gear preparation, best bait and techniques used to catch bottomfish. They shared their knowledge on using environmental cues and ocean characteristics to determine the best time to fish for certain snappers, especially onaga, opakapaka, lehi, gindai and the ubiquitous monchong (pomfret). Monchong is better known in the Mariana Islands as Wonder Woman, a name coined by Tenorio.

Guam Department of Agriculture Director and Council member Chelsa Muña opened the forum at the Guam Museum March 30, which was emceed by Council member Judith Guthertz. Approximately 100 participants enjoyed interacting with 13 exhibitors from government and private organizations. Master bottomfisher Tenorio shared his knowledge with a rapt audience and made connections with attendees for future training sessions.

Community outreach to draw awareness to the two events included street banners, in-studio and call-in radio interviews, a Trivision large digital screen ad, and radio ads. Fishers Forum flyers were shared extensively on social media and with fishing chat rooms in the CNMI and Guam.

The events were also posted on the Council's website. Donated prizes from vendors combined with Council items to recognize participation were given away to lucky attendees.

Regional Initiatives – American Samoa

On April 14-15, 2023, the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) hosted its annual Flag Day Fishing Tournament, which had a fantastic turnout of both fishers and community members. Despite the rainy weather, participants still managed to land a good amount of fish during the event. The tournament showcased various fishing categories, including the largest marlin, sailfish and yellowfin tuna. It was a great opportunity for the participants to demonstrate their skills and passion for fishing.

The second day of the tournament kicked off with a traditional *fautasi* race, a long-standing Samoan tradition that is deeply rooted in the country's history and culture. A *fautasi* is a traditional Samoan longboat that was once used for both transportation and racing. Now used strictly as racing vessels on Flag Day each year, the boats are typically around 90 feet long and are powered by a team of rowers who use their strength and coordination to navigate the waters. The race was a thrilling display of Samoan culture and tradition, as teams from different villages competed against each other in a test of strength, skill and teamwork. The race was a testament to the rich maritime heritage of American Samoa and was enjoyed by both locals and visitors alike. Manulele Tausala from the village of Nu'uuli was victorious this year.

Following the races, day two of the fishing tournament began and the fishermen continued their pursuit of the biggest fish. The largest fish was a massive 428.8-pound marlin, caught by the skilled crew of the *F/V Deep Calling*. This impressive catch was just two pounds shy of breaking the all-time record for largest fish ever caught in American Samoa.

The tournament is not just a fun-filled event, but it also serves as an opportunity to promote sustainable fishing practices and raise awareness about marine resource management. The Malaloa Fishing Marina hosted activities for both children and adults throughout the day. Participants were able to take part in boat rides, visit educational tables and enjoy a range of games.

Several divisions within DMWR organized educational booths along with representatives from the newly formed Search and Rescue Department, and the Department of Public Safety's Marine Patrol Division, who were giving out presentations on protected species in American Samoa. The Coral Reef Advisory Group conducted an outreach program on managing coastal fisheries and also provided a fishing game in which kids used a toy fishing rod to "catch" and name a species of fish.

Council staff joined DMWR in educating the public with an outreach table sharing information about the Council through handouts, cookbooks, newsletters and 2023 lunar calendars. Adults and students both tested their knowledge with crossword puzzles and word find games designed to help participants learn more about concepts and terms related to fisheries management.

Regional Initiatives – Hawai'i

Council staff and the Hawai'i AP supported the following events:



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Bishop Museum Science and Sustainability Festival

The Bishop Museum in Honolulu organized its annual Science and Sustainability Festival on Earth Day, April 22, 2023. It was a huge success with 2,112 attendees, the result of an extensive outreach campaign the Museum's Communication Team organized through social media, website and TV promotions. The one-day festival featured keiki (children) activities, workshops, exhibition highlights, special presentations, and interactive performances with scientists and cultural practitioners to highlight biodiversity research and conservation efforts in Hawai'i.

Council staff joined more than 30 community partners that had educational booths throughout the Museum's central grassy areas and buildings. Magnet making was a huge hit at the table and visitors of all ages lined up to color and create mementos of their pledge to support local seafood. Visitors also learned about different inside and outside parts of a fish and took home Council 101 handouts, newsletters, fish facts and recipe handouts, 2023 lunar calendars, fish activity sheets and more.

Maui Spring Wahine Fishing Tournament

Hawai'i Advisory Panel member Amanda Padilla participated in the 2nd annual Spring Wahine (Woman) Fishing Tournament since the pandemic on April 22, 2023. Twenty-three boats registered this year and Padilla's boat *F/V Shiso Phat* placed 3rd with 'ahi. She also organized a fishing education table with information from the Council, NOAA and the Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources. The materials including lunar calendars were a huge hit with adults and kids alike.

Regional Initiatives – Guam

Council staff and the Guam AP supported a Safe Boating Week outreach event reaching 250 people with six other community partners May 20, 2023, organized by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary at the Guam Premier Outlets Mall.

The Council shared newsletters, cookbooks, Council process booklets, Fishermen's Code of Conduct postcards, bottomfish fact sheets, fish crossword puzzles, Council caps, keychain flashlights and waterproof cellphone cases. The Spin Wheel game was very popular with both kids and adults testing their fisheries and Council-related knowledge. Included on the display table were pelagic and reef fish posters, MPA information and the new Fishing Laws of Guam posters.