



**200th Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council**  
September 23-25, 2024

**National/Regional Communications & Outreach Report**

This report summarizes national and regional communications and outreach efforts by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council from approximately June 2024 through the end of August 2024.

**CCC Communications Group Meeting**

The Council Coordination Committee Communications Group (CCG), with members from each of the eight councils, met in Portland, OR, Aug. 6-8, 2024, to primarily discuss plans for the 50th Anniversary of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA). The group agreed to highlight the diversity of U.S. fisheries and connect key management milestones from the past 50 years to the MSA and the Council system, while also addressing future challenges. The term “milestones” was chosen over “successes” to reflect differing perspectives. The materials will target legislators, the public and fisheries constituents.

Products:

Three key products were proposed:

1. **Documentary:** A professionally developed 30-minute film that tells the story of 50 years of fisheries management through people that engage in the fisheries and the Council processes, set to premiere in 2026.
2. **Printed Handout:** A one-page overview leading to a webpage for more detailed information.
3. **Webpage:** A 50th Anniversary landing page highlighting the documentary and key materials.

The documentary will showcase diverse fisheries stories, covering different gear types, sectors and regions. Work plans for the 50th Anniversary materials will be developed and presented at the October 2024 CCC meeting, with production expected in 2025. Sustainability will guide promotional material choices and an updated anniversary logo will be created.

The CCG also participated in a communications training hosted by COMPASS Science Communication. The workshop focused on defining audiences, goals and messaging. The training also touched on using accessible language, tricks for making messages memorable and storytelling.

The CCG was tasked with developing an infographic on Making Effective Council Motions that could be used by all councils, based on outcomes from the first Council Member Ongoing Development workshop held in 2022. The group discussed examples, created a mock-up and plans to deliver the final infographic to the CCC at its October meeting.

A detailed draft meeting summary can be found at the end of this report.

## **Publications**

### *Pacific Islands Fishery News*

The summer issue of the Council's quarterly newsletter was distributed in September 2024 primarily through the Constant Contact email list with ~3,400 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, in addition to the Annual American Fisheries Society Meeting held in Honolulu on Sept. 16-19, 2024. This issue has articles about unfair trade and problems with foreign fish flooding U.S. Pacific Island markets, highlights from the September Council meeting, proposed regulations for giant clams and oceanic whitetip sharks, outcomes from the Hawai'i small-boat fishing community meetings, trends seen in the 2023 Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Reports and the new American Samoa Dept. of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) resource boat launching, among others ([www.wpcouncil.org/wp-council-newsletters](http://www.wpcouncil.org/wp-council-newsletters)).

### *Western Pacific Region Status of the Fisheries 2023*

The Council's *Western Pacific Region Status of the Fisheries 2023* report was released in early September. The publication highlights some of the changes in the U.S. Pacific Island fisheries from 2021 to 2023 discussed in the SAFE reports. Fishery statistics can be affected by numerous factors, including environmental changes and socioeconomic variables. In recent years, major climate events and the lingering impacts and ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic also affected regional fisheries in several ways. Some of these effects are described, in addition to recent stock statuses and management measures.

Find the *Status of the Fisheries* and full reports at [www.wpcouncil.org/annual-reports](http://www.wpcouncil.org/annual-reports). To access the data used to generate the reports, go to [www.wpcouncildata.org](http://www.wpcouncildata.org).

Also, the Council's Fishermen's Code of Conduct was included in the printed event booklet for the Greg D. Perez International Sportfishing Derby held in Guam, Aug. 17-18, 2024.

## **Media**

In this reporting time period (June 1 – August 31, 2024), the Council published six press releases; two on the Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting, and four on the 199th Council meeting.

In June, the Council received a media request from *Atuna* regarding electronic monitoring and observer coverage on longliners in response to a press release on the June Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting. It resulted in an article titled, "EM Has Limitations And Cannot Replace Human Observers" ([atuna.com/news/em-has-limitations-and-cannot-replace-human-observers](http://atuna.com/news/em-has-limitations-and-cannot-replace-human-observers)).

## **Fishers Forum in Hawai'i**

As part of its 199th meeting held in Honolulu, the Council hosted a public Fishers Forum June 24, 2024. The Forum's theme was "Where Are the Fish Going? Climate Change & Fisheries." About 75 people were at the Ala Moana Hotel to hear from 12 exhibitors from various

government agencies and organizations about some of the ways that changes in climate have been and will continue to impact our lives. Council Chair Will Sword welcomed the attendees, speaking about the importance of the theme and briefly touching on issues before the Council at its meeting that week.

Don Kobayashi, NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) discussed large-scale changes in Pacific Ocean conditions, including El Niño cycles, trends in carbon dioxide, pH and phytoplankton size, and how that affects the bigeye tuna catch forecast. Justin Suca, PIFSC, presented on climate variability and change around Hawai‘i, and how that propagates through the food web starting with fish larvae and through dispersal and settlement. Long-time large-boat fisherman Justin Myking and small-boat fisherman Carl Jellings shared their experiences out on the water and changes they have seen in environmental conditions and general fish locations around Hawai‘i. Roy Morioka spoke about the 2023 annual fisher’s observation summit, and gathering input from fishermen to feed into the Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Reports.

To informally assess what Forum attendees learned from the presentations, the Council conducted an interactive quiz-style survey using Kahoot! Thirty people signed up for the survey and answered questions based on the presentations, such as the key variable that drives the NOAA Fisheries bigeye tuna forecast. A word cloud was generated from words attendees used to describe the Forum.



Community outreach for this event included flier and newsletter distribution, and radio and social media advertisements. The radio station posted live from the event and it was also posted on the Council’s website. Items generously donated by sponsors, along with items from the Council to acknowledge participation, were raffled off to attendees.

### **Regional Initiatives – American Samoa**

The Council partnered with DMWR at the 2024 Manu‘a Flag Day Fishing Derby and Fishing Clinics held July 11-12, 2024. The Council supported the inshore tournament through Sustainable Fisheries Funds, aligning with the American Samoa Marine Conservation Plan’s objectives for outreach and education activities. Category winners of the inshore derby received Council outreach materials such as lunar calendars, brochures and coolers, as well as fishing rod and reel combos.

### **Regional Initiatives – CNMI**

#### **40th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament**

The Council organized an outreach table at the 40th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament held at the Smiling Cove Marina July 13-14, 2024. There were 91 vessels registered, including 66 from Saipan, 6 from Tinian and 19 from Guam, along with crews from the mainland United States and other countries. Staff shared informational materials about the Council process and the U.S. Pacific Territories Fishery Capacity-Building Scholarship,

engaging attendees with questions on a Spin the Wheel game. Participation recognitions given to derby winners included Council outreach materials, hats, lunar calendars, canvas bags and coolers.

The Council also supported the Talaya Club's clinic on Aug. 17, 2024, with outreach materials like pamphlets, booklets and newsletters, hats, lunar calendars, canvas bags and coolers. The 20 participants ranged in age from 10 to 18. CNMI Advisory Panel alternate David Cabrera spoke to the attendees about what it means to be an AP member.

Council Coordination Committee Communications Group  
Portland, OR  
Meeting Summary: August 6-8, 2024

Kris Kleinschmidt (PFMC) convened the meeting and welcomed the group. Maria Davis (NPFMC) shared the land acknowledgment for the area and group members introduced themselves.

**Magnuson-Stevens Act 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Goals:**

Emily Muehlstein (GMFMC) presented an overview of discussions that the CCG has already had, and the input added by the CCC. Maria Davis (NPFMC) shared input she received from Dave Whaley, the CCC's Legislative Consultant. The CCG agreed that the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is a huge milestone and will require an extra special effort to properly commemorate.

The CCG agreed to focus 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary materials around highlighting the diversity of fisheries across the nation and connecting fisheries management milestones of the past 50 years to the MSA and the constituent-driven Council system. Communications should also highlight the challenges that we will face in the next 50 years.

The CCG did specify that it wanted to intentionally avoid the use of the term 'success' because a success from one perspective is often a failure from another. Instead, the term 'milestones' was agreed upon as more appropriate. The CCG agreed that materials should be appropriate for legislators, the public, and fisheries constituents. It was noted that it's difficult to reach all these audiences simultaneously.

**Products:**

Maria (NPFMC) shared the products that were developed for the 40<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. Most notably, a printed booklet explaining the value and function of the Council process and highlighting regionally specific accomplishments was developed. Members of the CCG discussed the utility of the booklets and cautioned that the value of any product produced for the 50<sup>th</sup> should be weighed against the effort required to produce it.

The CCG agreed that while a print product was useful, it would be better to develop a one-page printed handout to grab the reader's attention, provide a brief overview, and separately drive readers to a digital follow-up that includes in-depth information. This solution addresses the audiences that still appreciate printed materials, while simultaneously ensuring that information contained on the web-based landing page can be easily updated.

Emily (GMFMC) gave a brief overview of scoping done with video production companies to explore the potential for developing a documentary. The CCG determined that it would be appropriate to develop a documentary that tells the story of 50 years of fisheries management through stories of people that engage in the fisheries and the Council processes. Personal stories should be connected to provisions in the MSA or components of the fisheries management Council processes by a narrator.

At its best, a documentary would be appropriate for all audiences and would create a compelling narrative by connecting management milestones to the people they've benefitted. Additionally, a documentary could be used to anchor the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary events as 'video premieres.' During the May 2026 meeting in Homer, Alaska, the video will be screened to the CCC audience and during the October 2026 meeting a screening would be held for CCC audiences and legislators.

The CCG discussed a concern that a documentary would likely not allow each region to showcase all the sectors and fisheries. Instead, the documentary would focus on telling a diversity of stories and highlighting an array of fisheries across the nation and would not be regionally focused. This would require that the story lines and people included in the documentary be chosen wisely to give a broad overview of federal fisheries stories across the nation.

The following is a list of diversities across fisheries that should be considered if a documentary is developed:

- Different gear types
  - trawl, trap/pot, fixed gear
- Different sectors
  - Recreational/commercial/charter/subsistence
- At-sea constituents vs support businesses, viable fishing communities
- Indigenous fisher involvement
- Coldwater vs tropical ecosystems
- Young vs older fishermen, male vs female active fishermen
- Fishermen who have been also involved in the Council process, either as a council member or who have affected change by participating in public comment

The CCG determined that the documentary could consider including the following storylines:

- The basic importance/intro to MSA, which could be highlighted by an older fisherman talking about foreign fishers coming up to 3 miles off the shoreline, establishing MSA, fishing before MSA.
- The importance of achieving stability/balance in the fishery. This could be highlighted through a description of MSY and be told through a narrative highlighting food security and harvest stability for commercial fisheries.
- The importance of sustainable fishing futures highlighted by generational fishing exhibited when grandfather takes grandchild fishing or an old fisherman teaches a young adult the business.
- Exemplifying the open public process that relies so heavily on local knowledge. This could be shown through stories told by participants in the Council system through APs, public comment, Council members, incorporation of traditional ecological knowledge from indigenous communities.
- Discussing the challenges that lie ahead and the need for developing climate-resilient fisheries. This could be depicted by a young charter fisher who is hopeful for a fruitful career.

**The CCG proposed the following products be developed in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The products all aim to highlight how the MSA and regional Council system provide flexibility in management approaches to address the diversity of fisheries across the nation, while ensuring sustainability for fish stocks and fishing communities. Products will also highlight anticipated challenges for the next 50 years:**

- 1. A professionally developed 30-minute video documentary that tells the story of 50 years of fisheries management through stories of people that engage in the fisheries and the Council processes.**
- 2. A one-page printed handout that highlights the diversity and unique aspects of the Councils and directs readers to the documentary and webpage.**
- 3. A 50th anniversary landings page on [www.fisherycouncils.org](http://www.fisherycouncils.org) that directs readers to the documentary and the one-pager.**

The CCG discussed the workload and timeline associated with developing a documentary and other 50th Anniversary materials. The CCG plans to develop a project scope and workplan, which includes estimates of budget and staff time, to provide to the CCC during its October 2024 meeting. If approved by the CCC, a small subgroup from the CCG plans to work on documentary development. An RFP can be created to obtain a contractor following the October CCC meeting and the video could be storyboarded, filmed, and edited in 2025. A separate subgroup of people from the CCG will lead the development of the landing page and associated printed one-page handout. Work on this product will all be performed in 2025. Both subgroups are expected to bring drafts and progress reports back to the CCG and CCC for review and approval, if and when necessary.

The CCG agreed that any outreach or promotional materials ordered in celebration of the 50th should be locally and sustainably sourced, for example, bags made from recycled fishing gear. The CCG also discussed the development and use of a 50th Anniversary logo and decided to update the logo used for the 40th Anniversary in-house.

### **CCC Host Guidance Materials**

Janice Plante (NEFMC) began the session by reminding the group that it's important to have CCC hosting guidance especially as historical knowledge is lost with staff turnover. Since hosting duties only occur every eight years, it's incredibly useful to have a document and associated repository of resources to guide each Council as they take on host Council responsibilities. The CCG reviewed and fleshed out the Host Council Guidance document. The CCG added numerous tasks to the meeting preparation timeline; improved the Audio-Video, Electrical Needs, and Internet section of the document; and added guidance explaining the host Council's responsibilities for the October CCC meeting, which is organized by NMFS. The CCG had a number of brief side conversations about how to appropriately fund outreach or promotional materials, social events, and refreshments for the meeting.



The CCG committed to keeping the materials updated. The Host Guidance Document and Host Council Materials Folder are living documents and should be updated regularly. At the end of each year, the host Council should review and update materials and guidance as necessary.

Before the October 2024 CCC meeting, Maria (NPFMC) will link examples of past efforts within the drive to the Host Guidance Document and audit the rest of the folder and materials. CCG members will each share the folder with appropriate admin staff for review.

### **Council Showcase**

#### **CFMC:**

Cristina Olan (CFMC) provided an overview of special efforts that the Caribbean Council has recently undertaken. She highlighted their social media work and use of ISSUU to serve content including meeting and outreach materials. She also showed examples of recent publications the CFMC has developed and discussed the need to produce all materials in both English and Spanish. Cristina and Diana Martino (CFMC) detailed an effort focusing on promoting the consumption of underutilized species including a festival, a workshop for chefs, and a workshop that taught people to create jewelry using lionfish spines. She also discussed a Big Fish Initiative project to protect spawning aggregations and discussed the program for educating commercial fishers. They also discussed the use of fisherman liaisons to communicate with their fishing constituents.

#### **GMFMC:**

Emily Muehlstein (GMFMC) provided a demonstration on the Council's History of Management tool which displays the history of Gag and Greater Amberjack management. The tool sorts actions by management type and provides a summary action and links to the policy document and FRN for each action.

#### **MAFMC:**

Mary Sabo (MAFMC) discussed a proposal for hosting job opportunities and/or RFPs on [www.fisherycouncils.org](http://www.fisherycouncils.org). She clarified that each Council would be responsible for adding their own content when an opportunity comes available. The CCG proposes that we add a page to [www.fisherycouncils.org](http://www.fisherycouncils.org) where Councils can post employment and RFP opportunities. This central repository will amplify individual Council opportunities and create a convenient platform for prospective employees and contractors to find opportunities.

#### **SAFMC:**

Kim Iverson (SAFMC) explained that their Council's spawning special management zones are scheduled to sunset in 2027. The SAFMC is collaborating with The Nature Conservancy to do research within the Spawning SMZs and associated outreach to increase public awareness. The work completed through this effort will be used to inform scoping for future management action. She also highlighted their Seminar Series where guest speakers discuss research that relates to Council issues and species. Kim also noted recent updates to the Council's display materials and participation at the recent ICAST 2024 recreational fishing convention in Orlando, FL. Nick Smillie (SAFMC) premiered a video from the "What it Means to Me" project that aims to



provide an additional, novel method to improve relationships between fishermen and the South Atlantic Council and to promote more involvement in the management process.

**PFMC:**

Kris Kleinschmidt (PFMC) demonstrated the use of their sub-website that hosts publicly accessible materials. In this separate website, Council staff all has credentials that allow them to upload and manage documents in real-time that are served directly to the public. This allows the primary website to be protected while simultaneously allowing staff to share the responsibility of serving website content. They are still working on appropriate archiving protocols between the sub and primary websites.

**NPFMC:**

Maria Davis (NPFMC) briefly showed the program they used to serve meeting material and gather/display public comment. This program was developed by a contractor jointly for the NPFMC and PFMC and is utilized differently by both Councils.

**WPFMC:**

Amy Vandehey (WPFMC) discussed efforts to update and relaunch a Speakers Bureau Program that had been successful in Hawaii in the past. The Program includes speakers from Council staff, Advisory Panels, fishing industry, local and federal government, and will expand from only based in Hawaii to also in American Samoa, Guam and the CNMI. Most involved will be available to present to classrooms and community groups both in-person or virtually. The format to distribute the topics covered and contact information will change from a printed brochure to online so that it's easy to update as needed.

**NEFMC:**

Janice Plante (NEFMC) discussed the Council Public Outreach Event that is hosted during each Council meeting with a cash bar and appetizers. The event brings the Council, staff, and public together to foster open lines of communications after meeting hours. She also detailed the Council's involvement in the Maine Fishermen's Forum where they organize and participate in numerous seminars.

**COMPASS Science Communication Training**

The CCG participated in a full-day communications training hosted by COMPASS Science Communication. The workshop focused on defining audiences, goals, and messaging. The training also touched on using accessible language, tricks for making messages memorable, and storytelling.

CCG members identified the most valuable pieces of the training, including a reminder to find ways to tell stories or add tricks to make things more memorable, even in traditionally dry materials like presentations and press releases. It was noted that it's important to focus on the passions and values of your different audiences, rather than their shortcomings. Group members enjoyed receiving feedback from peers and sharing stories and comparisons of the different audiences and successful and less successful tactics used in Council communications. CCG members also appreciated the concept that communications do need to be accurate, but that

sometimes we need to let go of precision to make the message more appropriate for our audiences.

### **CCC Outreach Material Development**

#### **Council Member Ongoing Development (CMOD) Drafting Council Motions:**

During the first CMOD in 2022, the skills session focused on drafting council motions. The CCG was tasked with developing a take-away that could be shared and used by all Councils. Janice (NEFMC) shared an example of an infographic developed by a contractor on Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management, and Nick (SAFMC) provided an example of a video presentation created in-house using Canva on the Council process. Kris (PFMC) shared a presentation called “Rough Seas and Oceans of Motions,” a guide to making motions that is given to PFMC members. The CCG agreed it would be most appropriate and useful to develop a one-page infographic/summary (double sided) to cover the topic of making effective Council motions.

The CCG created a mock-up of a Making Effective Council Motions infographic and Nick Smillie (SAFMC) committed to developing a draft for CCG review and approval. The CCG plans to deliver the final infographic to the CCC during its October 2024 meeting.

#### **Council Process Timeline:**

The CCG briefly discussed individual efforts each Council has made to depict the Council process and associated timelines. The group committed to sharing those materials and determined that given the regional differences in process, it may not be appropriate to develop a joint product.

#### **Fisheries Forum Materials:**

Fisheries Forum, a program hosted through Duke University, provided educational opportunities for Council Members prior to the development of CMOD. Since that program is no longer in existence, the website hosting materials associated with past sessions could eventually be dismantled. The CCG discussed whether the materials are still relevant and wasn't able to reach consensus. However, members of the CMOD subgroup and other Council members have expressed a desire to archive the materials for Council use. The CCG determined that [www.fisheriescouncils.org](http://www.fisheriescouncils.org) is not an appropriate venue for hosting these materials because that site is devoted to housing materials directly related to CCC and Council activities. The CCG suggested that the CMOD page on the [www.fisheriescouncils.org](http://www.fisheriescouncils.org) website might be an appropriate place to link to this information.

Kris (PFMC) committed to scoping the burden of creating a simple, stand-alone web repository to host the materials. He will request analytics on the existing site to determine whether the materials should remain publicly accessible or if they should simply be provided to internal audiences, such as Council members and staff. Some CCG members expressed concern that the Fisheries Forum video content would require resources to host because they take up a large amount of storage space. The CCG decided it was appropriate to host all the materials that were

not video-based content and Kris will determine whether the video content can be hosted externally in an efficient manner. The CCG plans to migrate the Fisheries Forum content before the April 2025 CMOD meeting.

### **Wrap-up**

The CCG does not currently anticipate a need to meet in-person in 2025 and is committed to meeting virtually and working on the various projects summarized in the report. The CCG notes that there may be utility to meet in-person during one of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

### **Attendees**

Hayden York (PFMC)

Kris Kleinschmidt (PFMC)

Kim Amber (PFMC) (*Present for the COMPASS training session only*)

Janice Plante (NEFMC)

Maria Davis (NPFMC)

Diana Evans (NPFMC)

Kim Iverson (SAFMC)

Nick Smillie (SAFMC)

Emily Muehlstein (GMFMC)

Amy Vandehey (WPFMC)

Diana Martino (CFMC)

Cristina Olan (CFMC)

Mary Sabo (MAFMC)