

# *Tau Masina o Amerika Samoa*

JANUARY 12, 2024–JANUARY 29, 2025



*Western Pacific Regional  
Fishery Management Council*

wpcouncil.org



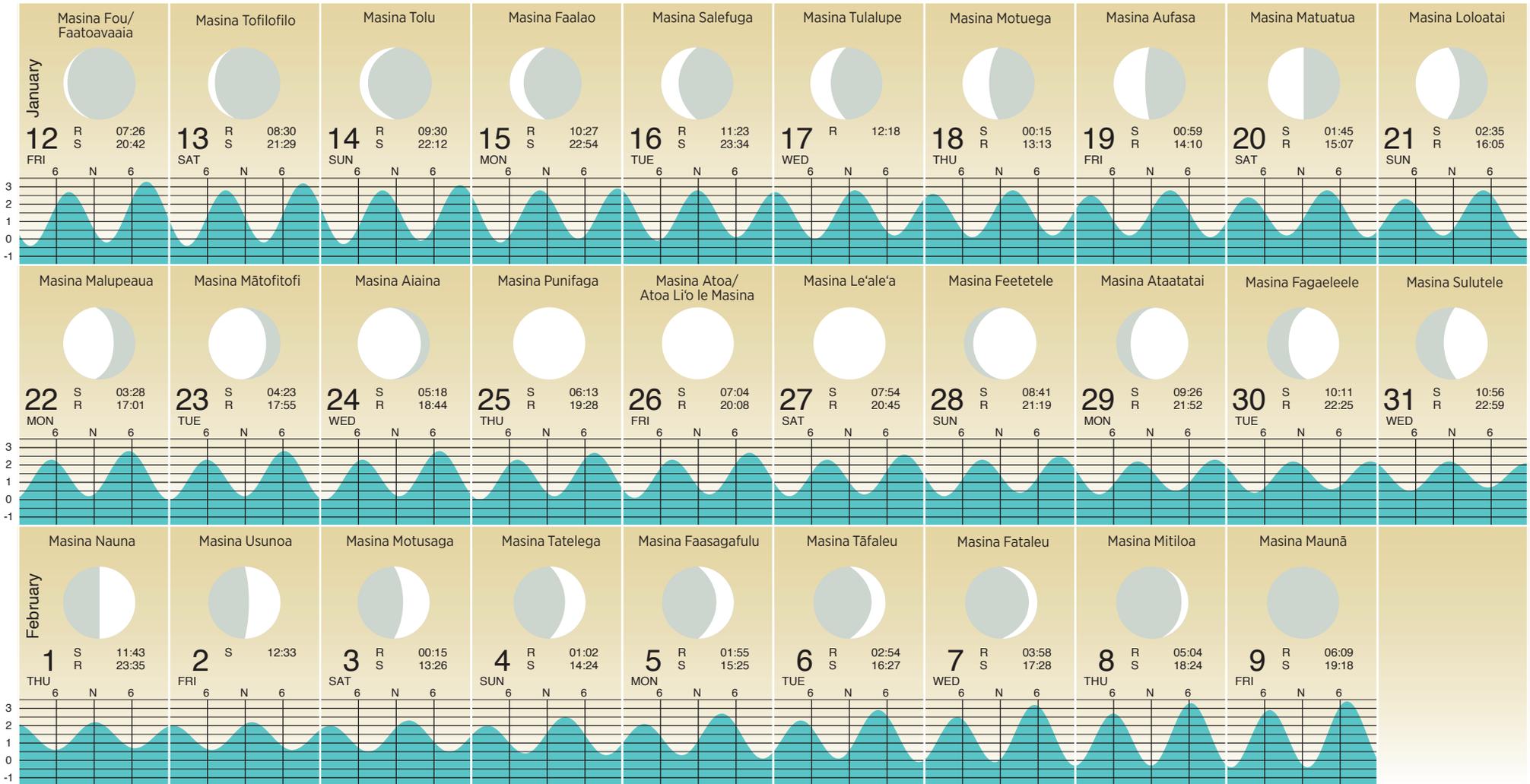
Students participating in the Council's high school summer fisheries program pose in front of the longline F/V *America*.

## History of Longlining

Longlining in American Samoa began in 1954 with seven Japanese vessels, which were slowly phased out by the Korea- and Taiwan-owned vessels over the years. The first large longline vessel, *Faivaimoana I*, arrived in late 1997. It was able to preserve high-quality bigeye and yellowfin tuna for the export sashimi market, while also freezing albacore tuna for the American Samoa canneries. Later, even larger longline vessels arrived from the United States and New Zealand to join the industry.

# Toeutuvā

January 12–February 9, 2024  
Ianuari 12–Fepuari 9, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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*Alia* floating in beautiful Ta'u Harbor. Photo: WPRFMC

## Alia

From the 1980s to the present day, the FAO-designed *alia*, traditional double-hulled catamarans, have emerged as the predominant nearshore fishing vessels in the American Samoa's fisheries. Crafted in neighboring Independent Samoa the government offered these boats to Pago Pago fishermen at subsidized rates. In the mid-1990s, fishermen in Samoa experienced success utilizing pelagic longline fishing gear with their *alia*. Shortly after that, American Samoa fishermen began to convert the *alia* from troll and handline gear to longline gear in order to fish for albacore. Over time, the fishing fleet experienced significant growth, evolving from a handful of locally built boats to include vessels sourced from the United States and New Zealand.



*Alia* moored at the Malaloa Marina floating docks. Photo: Vince Leauane



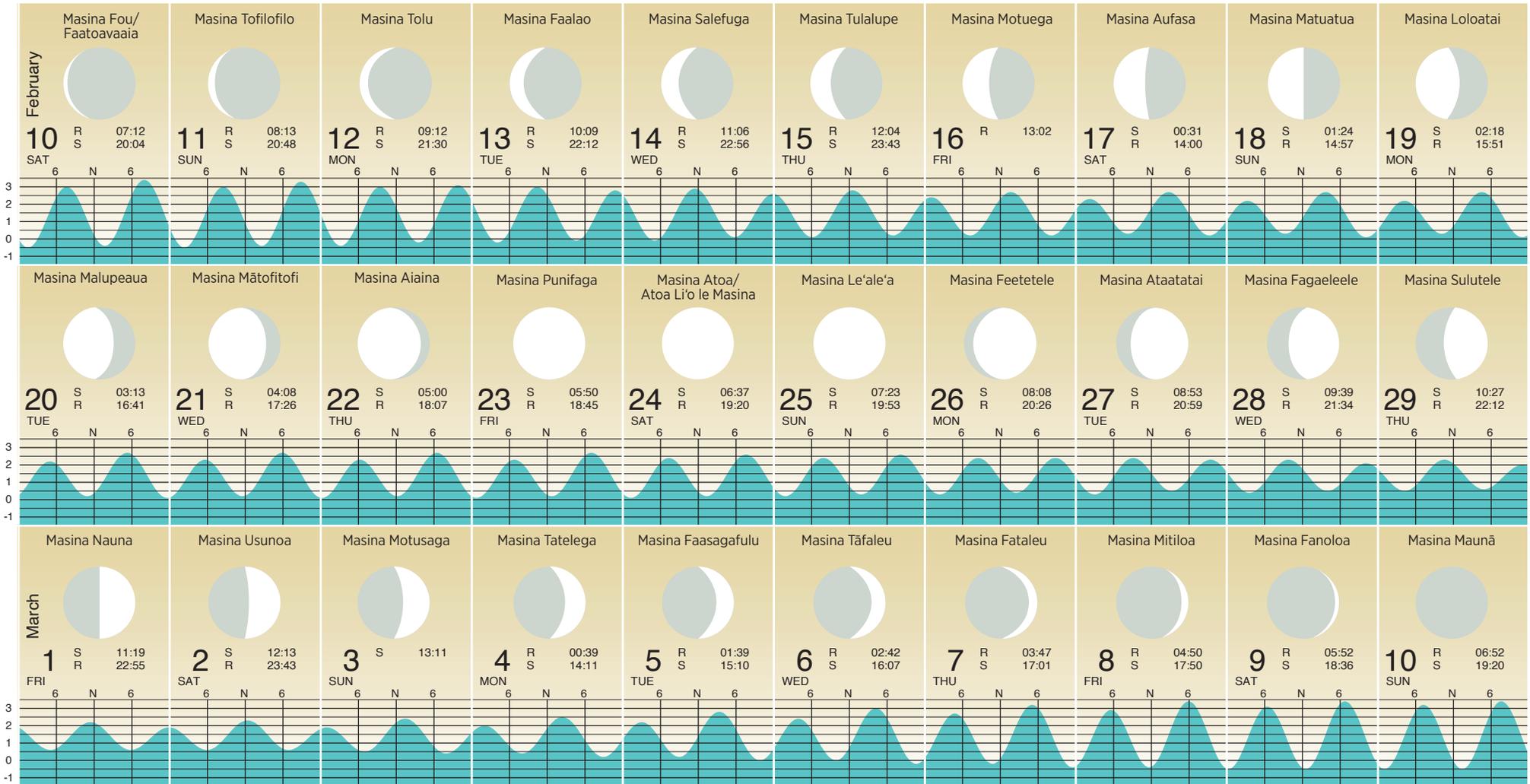
The Dory Project in the early 1970s initiated an era of modern fishing technology in American Samoa by providing easy credit and loans to fishermen to develop offshore fisheries. The project developed a boat-building facility that produced 23 vessels over a three-year period. Here, a dory is going out for a test spin in Pago Pago Harbor, circa 1973, with Marine Resources Director Dr. Stanley Swerdloff (far right) and boat builders. Source: Levine, A., and S. Allen. 2009. American Samoa as a fishing community. U.S. Dep. Commer., NOAA Tech. Memo., NOAA-TM-NMFS-PIFSC-19, 74 p. Photo: Jim McGuire



Cliff Roop, standing at far right, is the mechanic who installed the dory's Volvo Pena engines and out drive. Paul Pedro (no shirt) is driving the boat, with Dr. Swerdloff seated behind him. Chief Apisai is seated to the left of Roop, next to Swerdloff's two sons and the boat builders. The Chief was an officer of the Commercial Fisherman's Association and set up the market to catch the fish caught with the new boats. Photo: Jim McGuire

# Fa'aafu

February 10–March 10, 2024  
 Fepuari 10–Mati 10, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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## Purse Seiners

Currently, Pago Pago is home to 12 U.S. flagged purse seiners, each contributing substantially to the local economy with every port call. These vessels inject millions of dollars into the community by making purchases of fuel, food, supplies, and various other goods and services.

Three Cape Fisheries purse seine vessels wait their turn alongside the container dock to unload at the StarKist Samoa cannery. Photos: Cape Fisheries

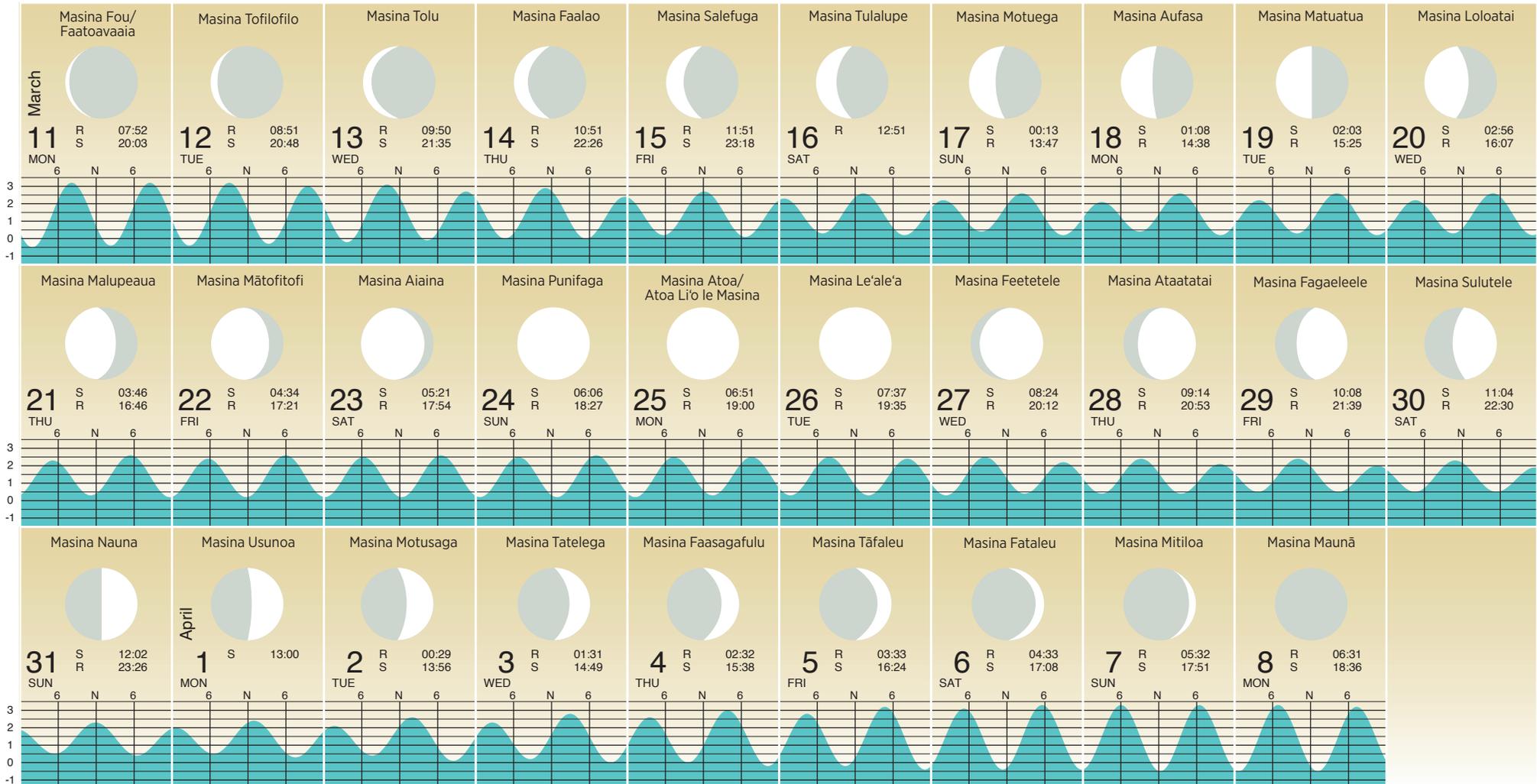


Purse seiner F/V *Cape Finisterre*.

# Fanoga

March 11–April 8, 2024

Mati 11–Aperila 8, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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# Fishery Data

The estimated annual pelagic landings have ranged from 2 to 9.7 million pounds between 2012 and 2022. The 2022 landings were ~3 million pounds, which is slightly up from 2.7 million pounds in 2021, but a continuation of the decline from 9.7 million pounds in 2012. The American Samoa-based longline fishery targets albacore tuna and also catches bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin, which make up the vast majority of the total landings. Fishers also catch mahimahi, blue marlin, wahoo and swordfish. Pelagic revenue from longline vessels in 2022 was 3.8 million dollars, continuing an upward trend since 2020.

Source: 2022 American Samoa Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report, WPRFMC



Pacific albacore tuna. Photo: Flickr



Crew members aboard the longline F/V *Fetuolemoana* demonstrate for high school students how they bait hooks for a longline set. Photo: WPRFMC

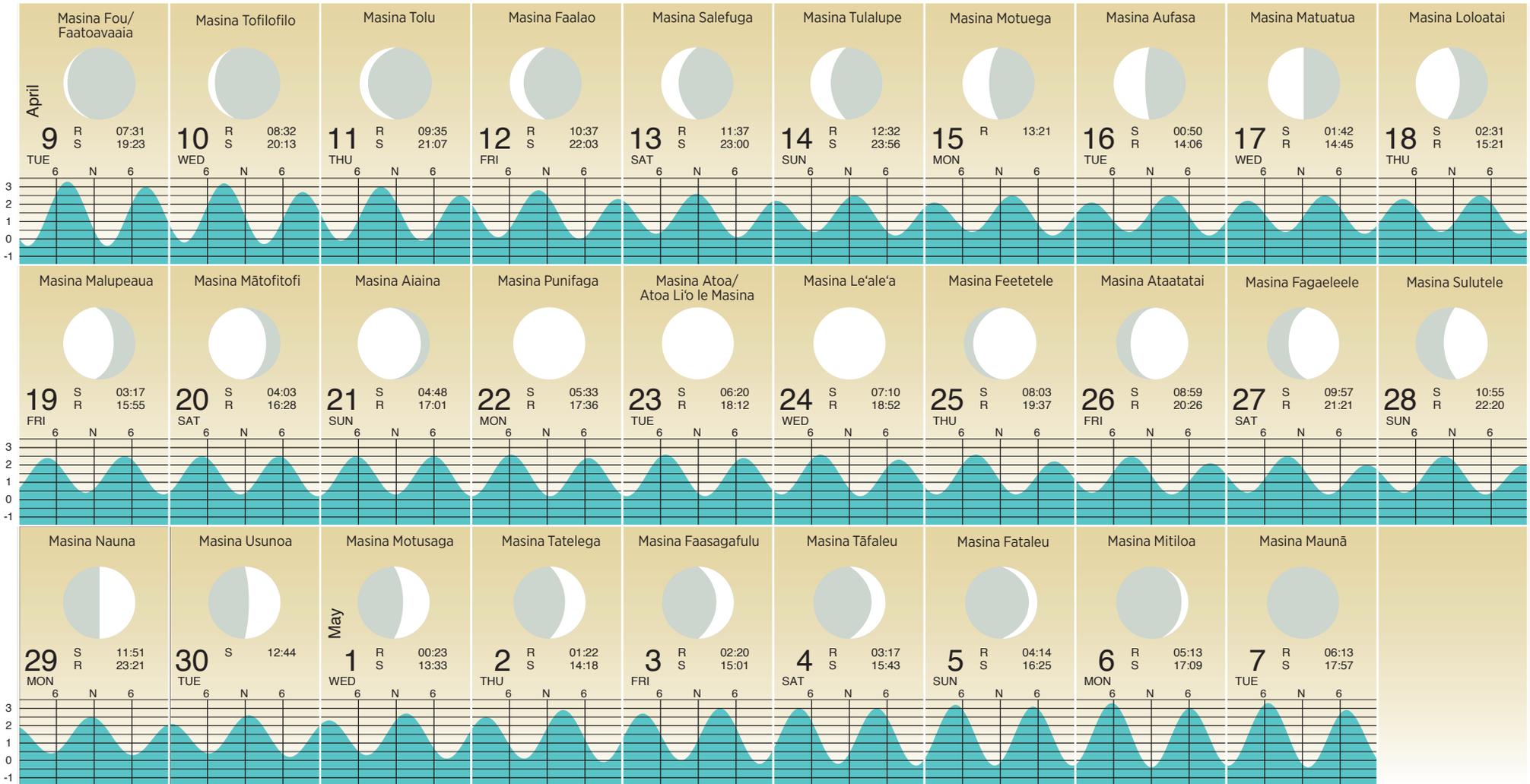


F/V *Fetuolemoana*. Photo: Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)

# Aununu

April 9–May 7, 2024

Aperila 9–Mē 7, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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## Where Does the Fish Go?

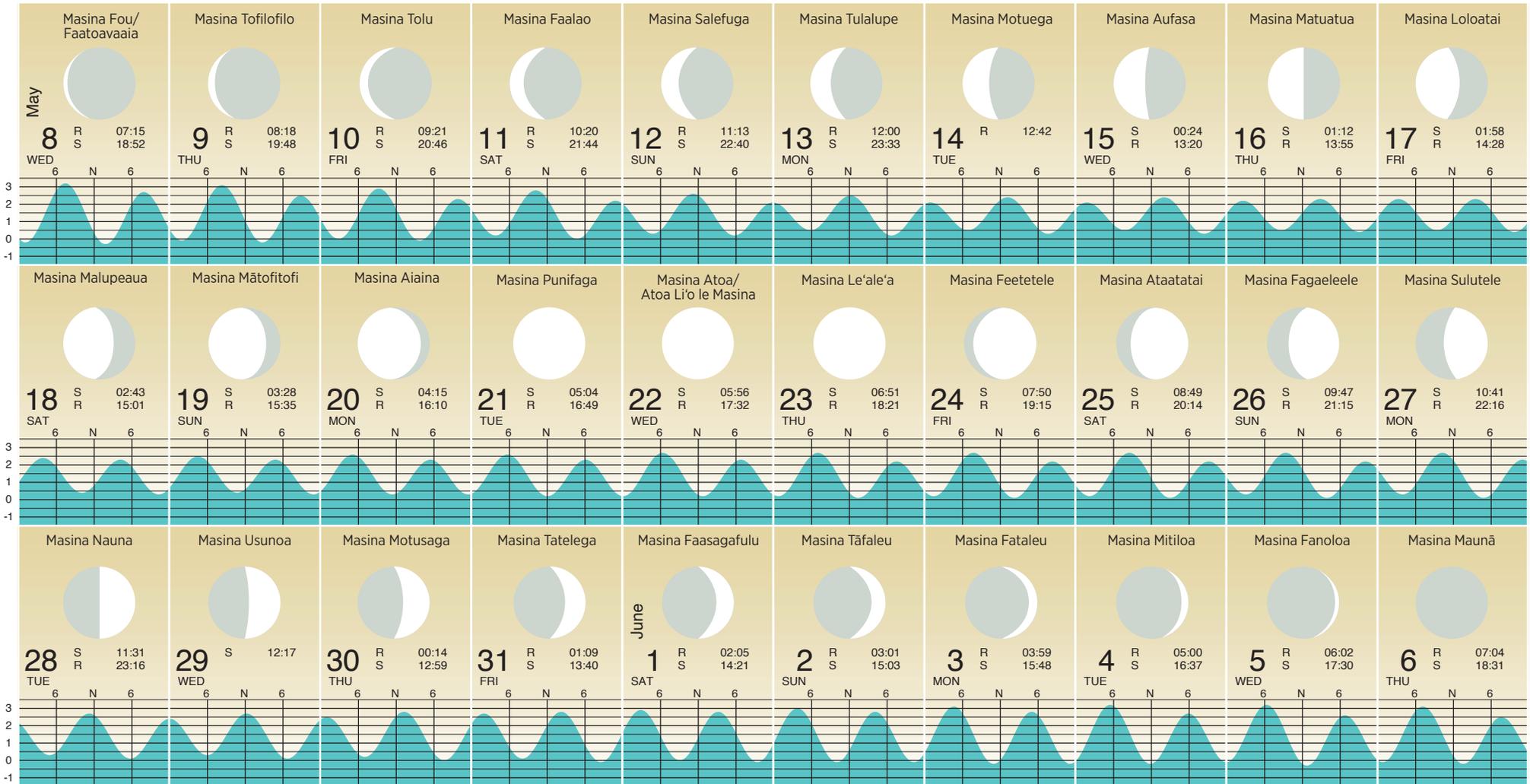
Purse seine vessels play a critical role in the supply chain, providing approximately 70% of the tuna processed in American Samoa, predominantly skipjack and yellowfin. Albacore tuna, caught by longliners, accounts for the rest. In addition, other tuna species and non-target species caught by longliners, which are not intended for canning, are transshipped and transported from American Samoa using reefer containers, like those shown here.

Two super seiners and several longliners are tied to the dock in front of Samoa Tuna Processors' 5,000-ton cold storage in Pago Pago. Photo: Cape Fisheries



# Oloāmanu

May 8–June 6, 2024  
Mē 8–Iuni 6, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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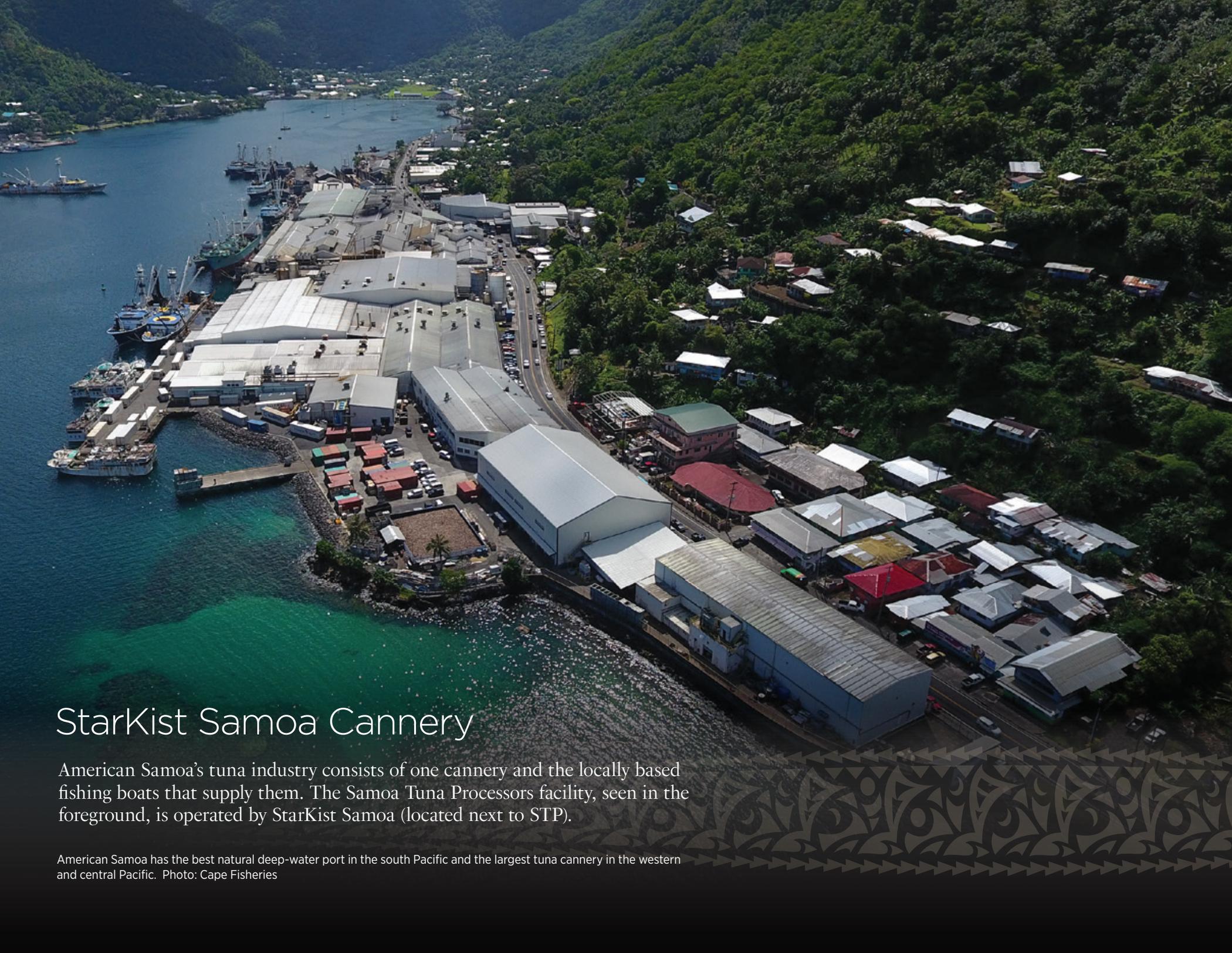
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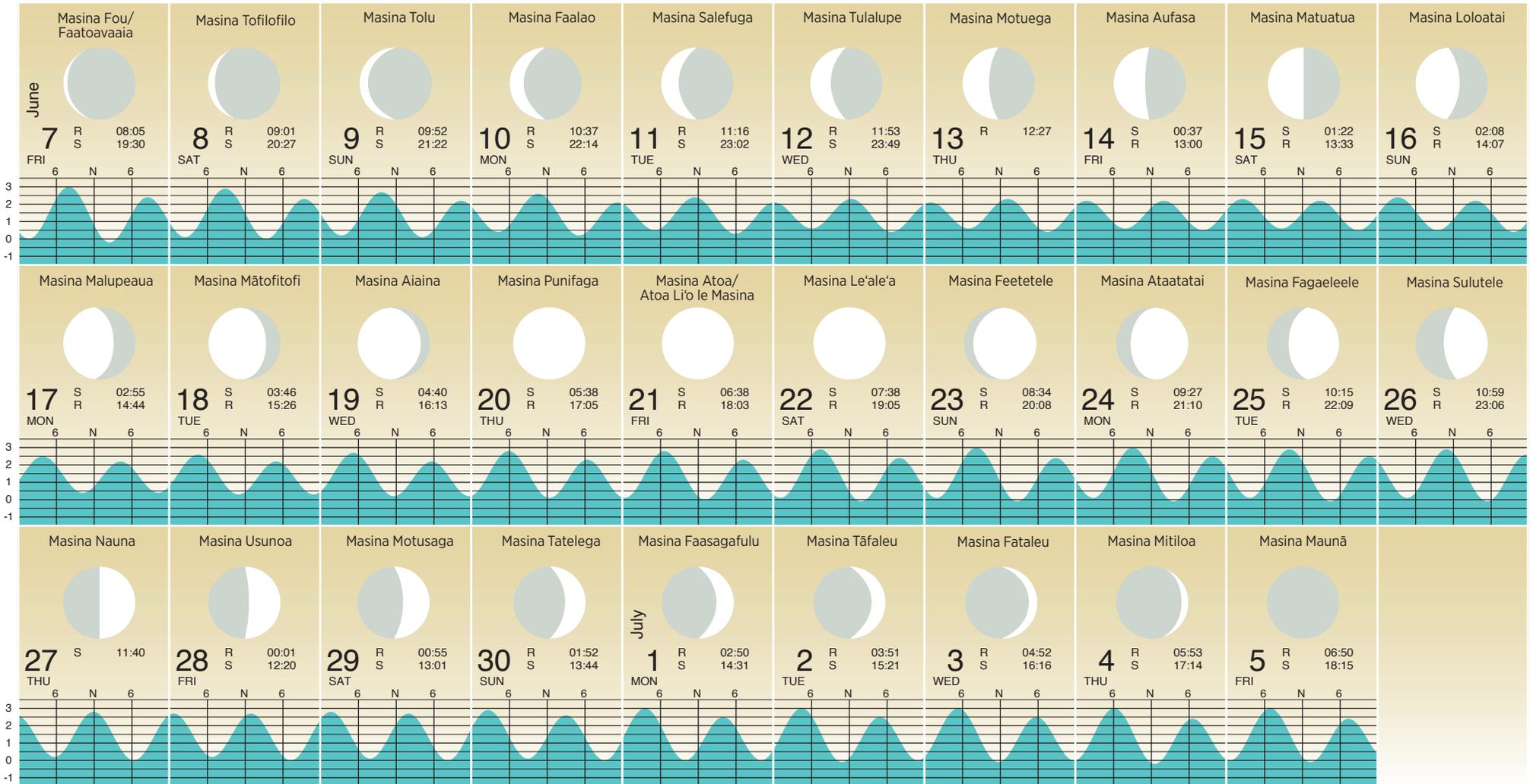
# StarKist Samoa Cannery

American Samoa's tuna industry consists of one cannery and the locally based fishing boats that supply them. The Samoa Tuna Processors facility, seen in the foreground, is operated by StarKist Samoa (located next to STP).

American Samoa has the best natural deep-water port in the south Pacific and the largest tuna cannery in the western and central Pacific. Photo: Cape Fisheries

# Lotuaga

June 7–July 5, 2024  
 Iuni 7–Iulai 5, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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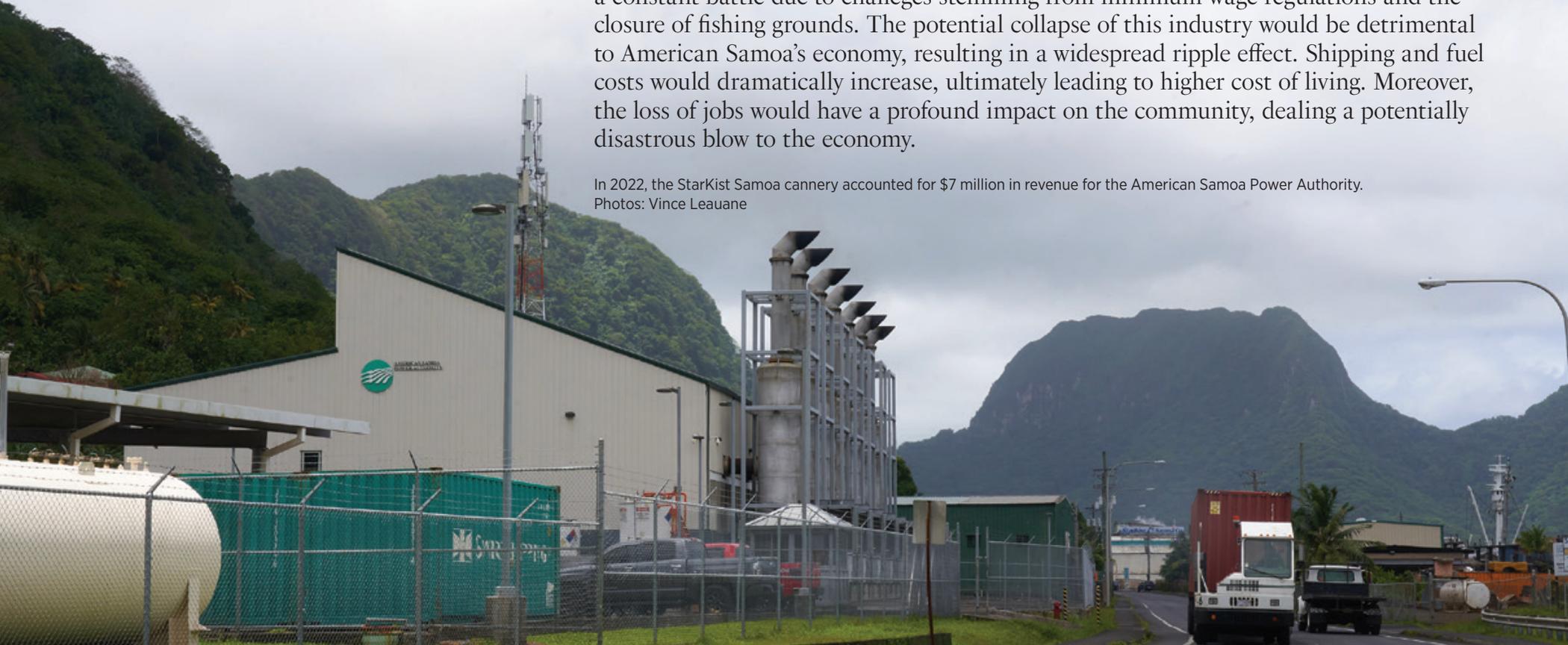


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# Importance of the Cannery to American Samoa

The tuna cannery in American Samoa stands as a vital economic cornerstone, offering employment to thousands of people in the territory. Over the years, viability has been a constant battle due to challenges stemming from minimum wage regulations and the closure of fishing grounds. The potential collapse of this industry would be detrimental to American Samoa's economy, resulting in a widespread ripple effect. Shipping and fuel costs would dramatically increase, ultimately leading to higher cost of living. Moreover, the loss of jobs would have a profound impact on the community, dealing a potentially disastrous blow to the economy.

In 2022, the StarKist Samoa cannery accounted for \$7 million in revenue for the American Samoa Power Authority.  
Photos: Vince Leauane

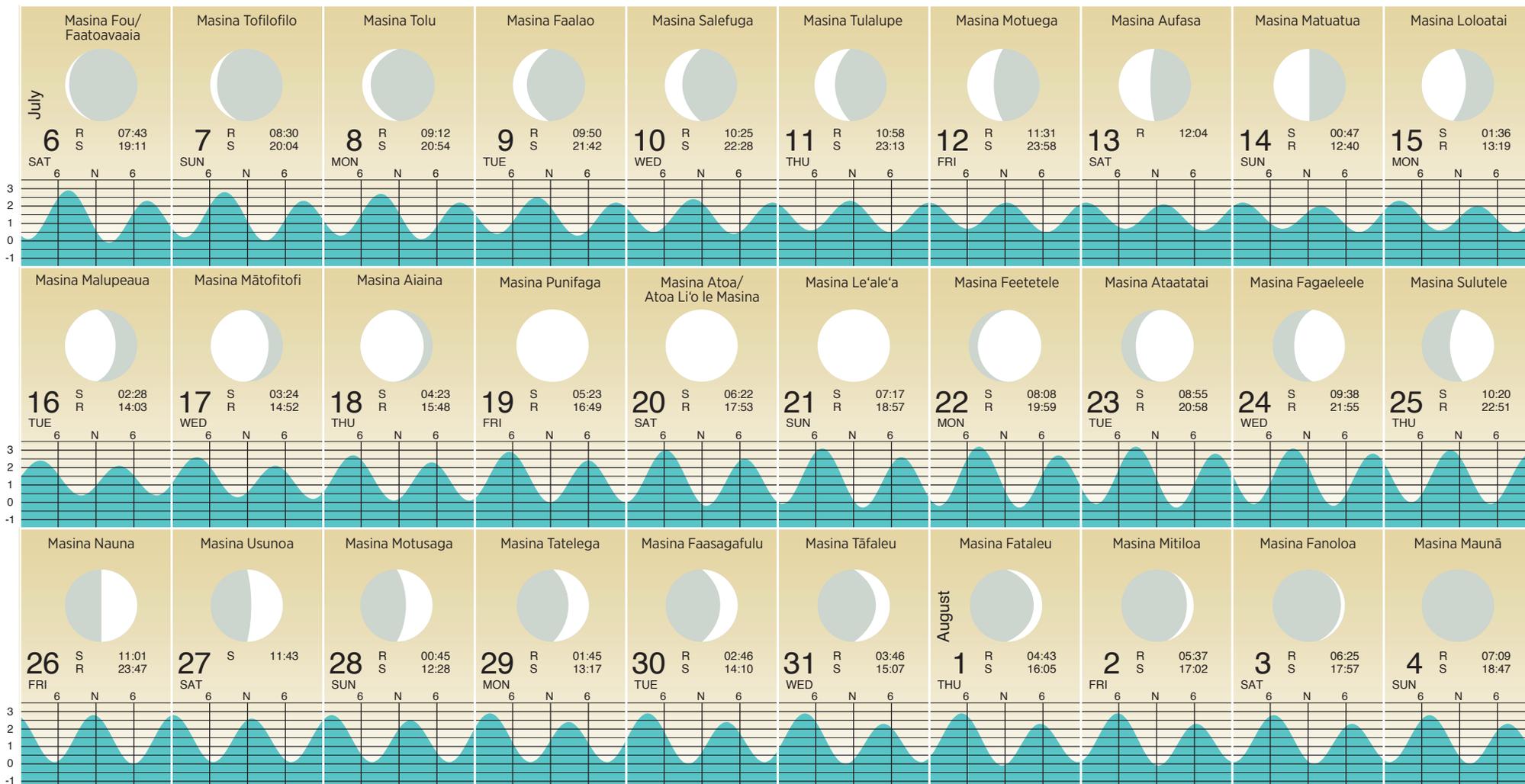


View of the buses and fast food restaurants that provide services to the StarKist cannery workers.

# Tu'iefu

July 6–August 4, 2024

Iulai 6–Aukuso 4, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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Samples of the premium flavored tuna packets produced at the StarKist cannery in American Samoa. Photo: WPRFMC

## Importance of the Cannery to the Nation

StarKist has been a long-time supplier of canned tuna to the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. school lunch program. In 2022, U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the Reston, Virginia-based StarKist company landed a major contract to supply canned tuna for the U.S. government's nutrition and food-assistance programs. The contract was to supply around \$12.5 million worth of canned light tuna (230,400 cases) for fiscal year 2022. All products sold and supplied by StarKist to U.S. government food programs are manufactured in American Samoa.

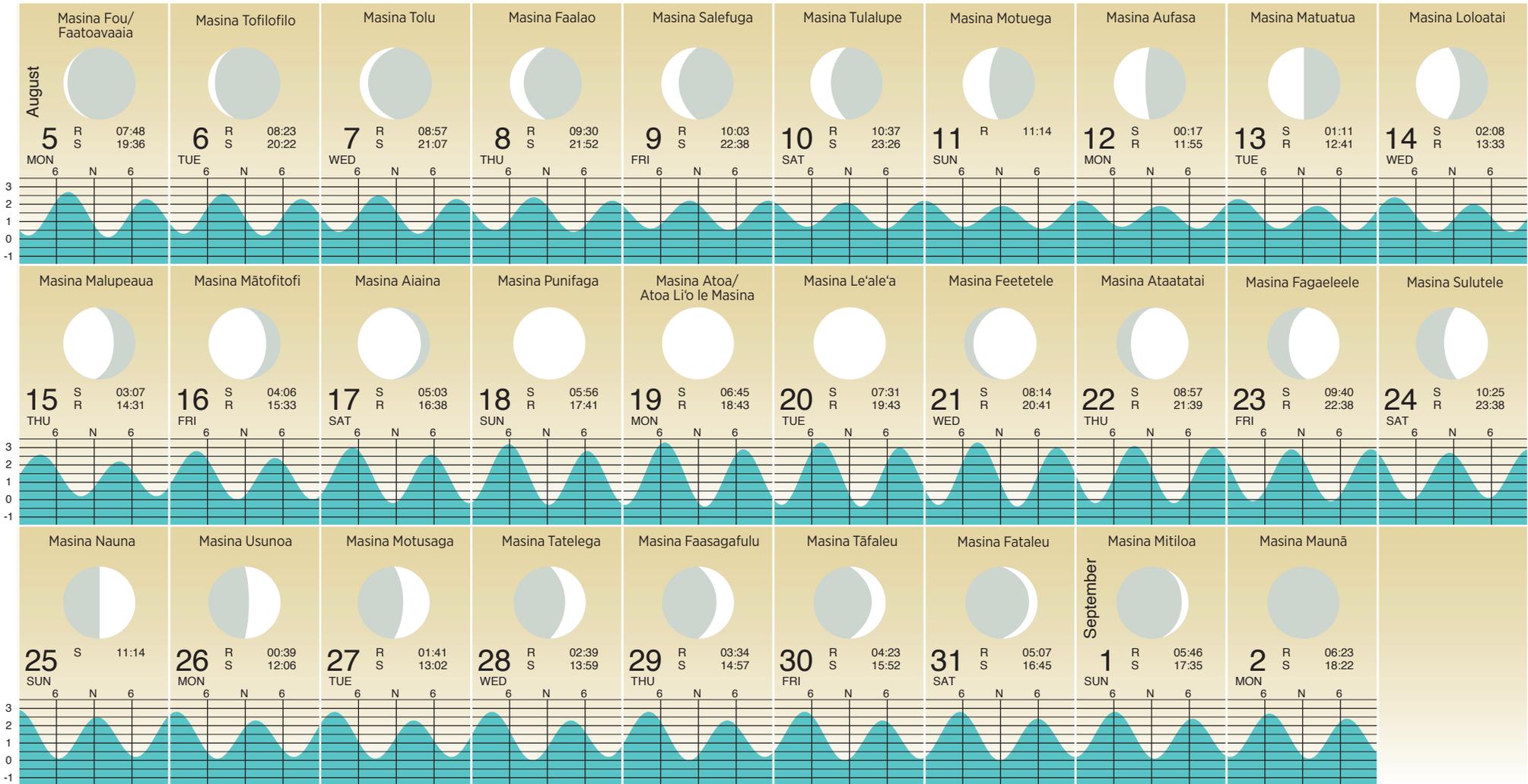
In terms of commercial fishery landings and value at major U.S. ports, in 2020 Pago Pago ranked seventh and fifth in the nation, with 170 million pounds valued at \$108 million.

Source: SeafoodSource.com and National Marine Fisheries Service



# Mulifā

August 5–September 2, 2024  
Aukuso 5–Setema 2, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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## Fish and Culture

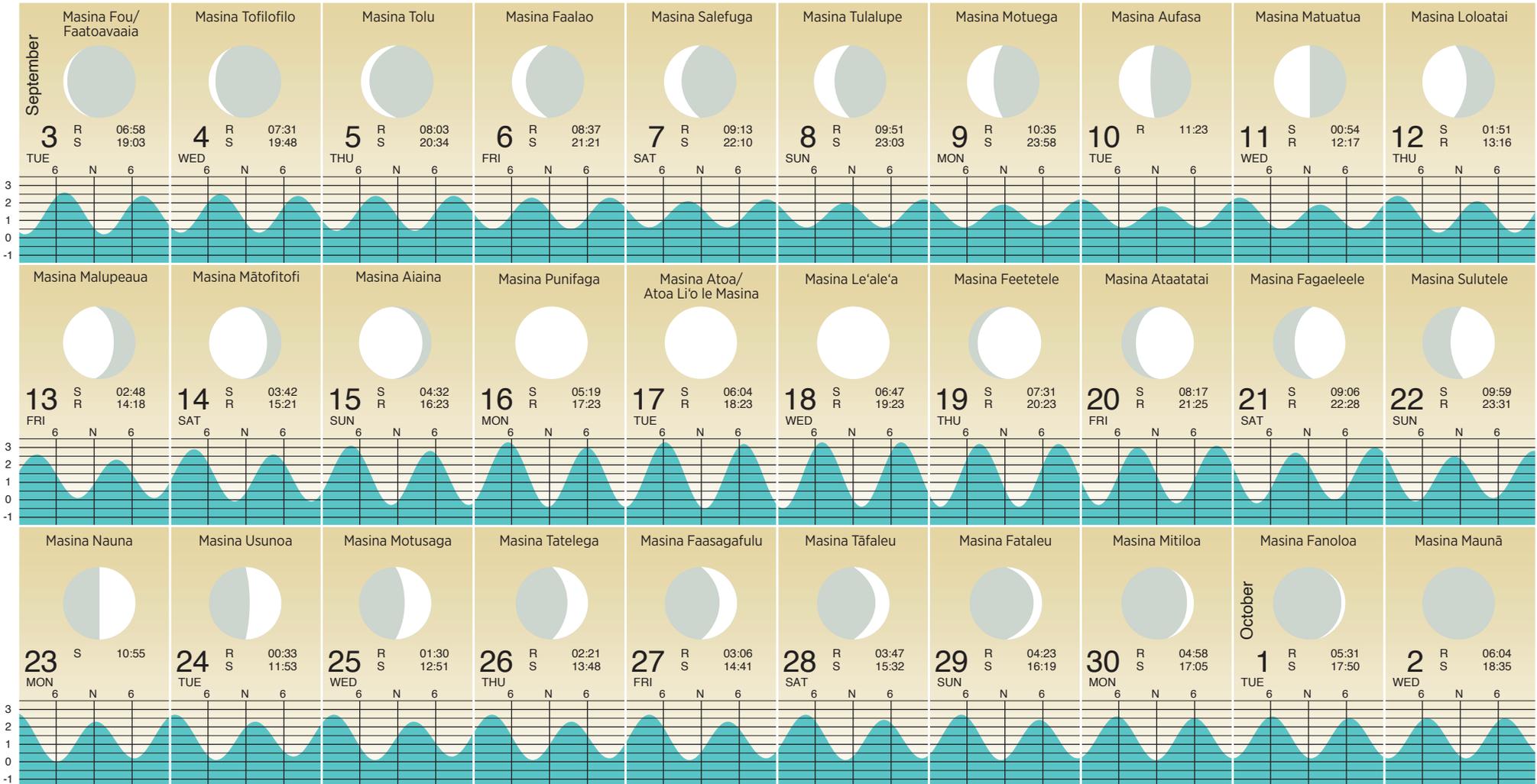
According to legend, Polynesian navigator Liava'a sailed to Tutuila Island in search of Fagasā pure waters. His boat accidentally left, stranding his daughter Sina ashore, who was still collecting fresh water. When he realized his mistake, Liava'a transformed his crew into dolphins to return and protect Sina. They herded a school of *atule* (bigeye scad) to shore to ensure that all who cared for Sina were well fed.

Though separated, Liava'a never gave up his search and they were briefly reunited years later. Upon their passing, their memories were preserved in special stones, guarded by High Chief Lili'ō. This tradition lives on: when *atule* arrive in Fagasā, an *'ava* ceremony is held to show gratitude. The villagers use braided coconut fronds to guide the fish into the shallows, then collect them in *'enu* (handwoven funnel traps) and transfer them into *ola* (woven baskets).



# PāloloMua

September 3–October 2, 2024  
Setema 3–Oketopa 2, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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**Above:** The male *palolo* tails are reddish brown and the females are bluish green. Photo: WPRFMC

**Below:** Traditionally, Samoan villagers prepared for the *palolo* harvest by bathing, dressing in good clothing, and wearing flower leis made of *moso'oi* (*canaga*) and other fragrant blossoms. Photo: Worldsensorium.com

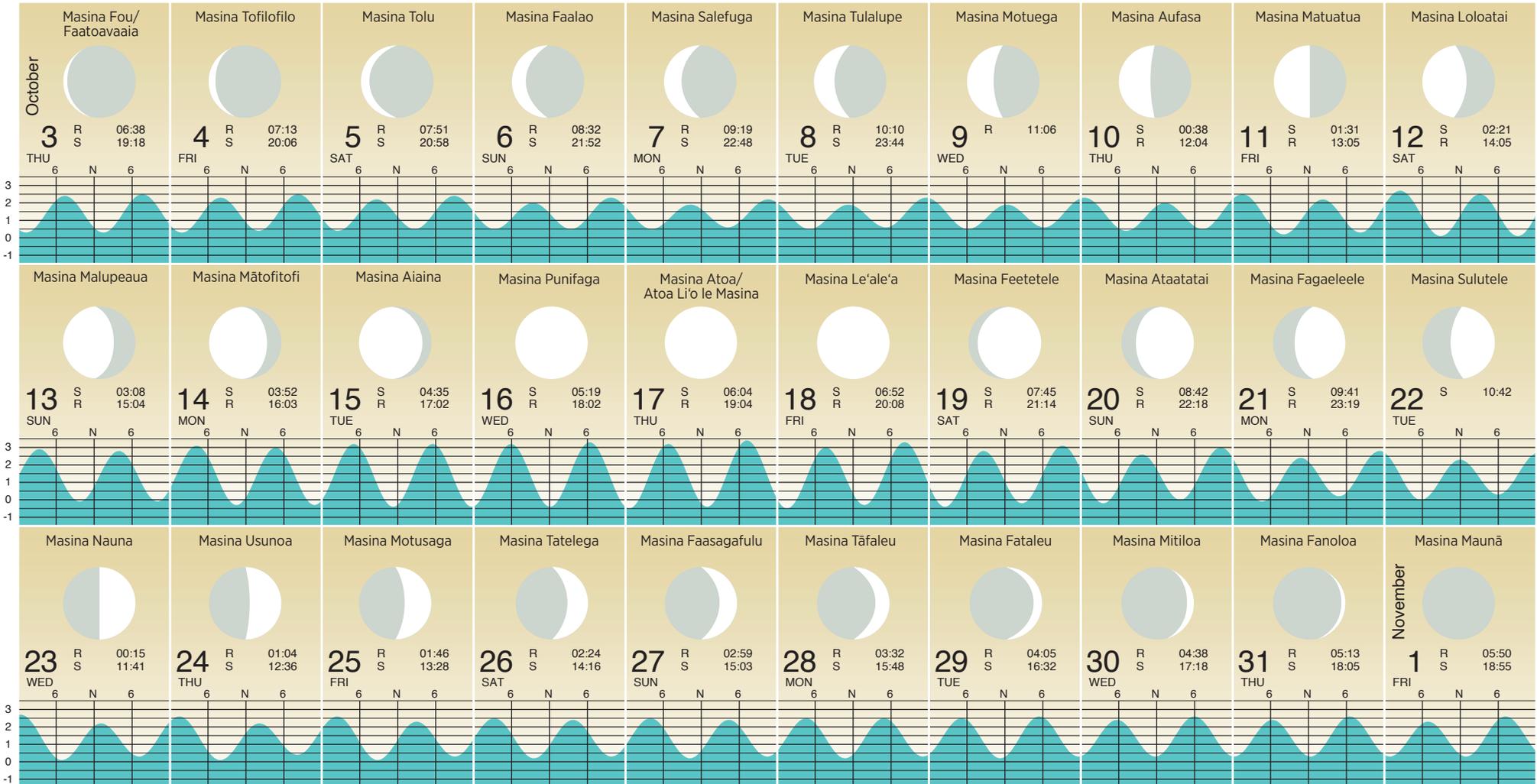
## Palolo—Caviar of the Pacific

*Palolo*, a type of reef worm, is a local delicacy, eagerly anticipated each year as it emerges only during the months of October and November. It is either eaten raw on the spot when harvested, or prepared in several different ways, such as sautéed and fried with eggs. The long-standing tradition of *palolo* harvest remains strong after many generations because of its high demand and cultural value.



# Pālolo muli

October 3–November 1, 2024  
Oketopa 3–Novema 1, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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# Division of Fish in the Village

## Legend: The History of the Fish in Atua

In ancient Samoan times, there lived a chief Tautai-fau, also known as Veleva. He brought a rare, large black shark known as *naiufi* to his father, but was summoned by Tuiatua Polailevao of Ma'a. The shark was brought to the house of a young man named Seleanamani, where he divided the fish. The head to Saleauma, the middle to Ma'a, and the tail to Salefao. Impressed with this cutting skills, the Tuiatua renamed the young man to Selelimalelei (*sele* is cut in pieces; *limalelei* is a skilled hand). In this way, the capital of Atua received its name, "to cut up food."

Source: Severance and Franco, 1989, Report to the WPRFMC



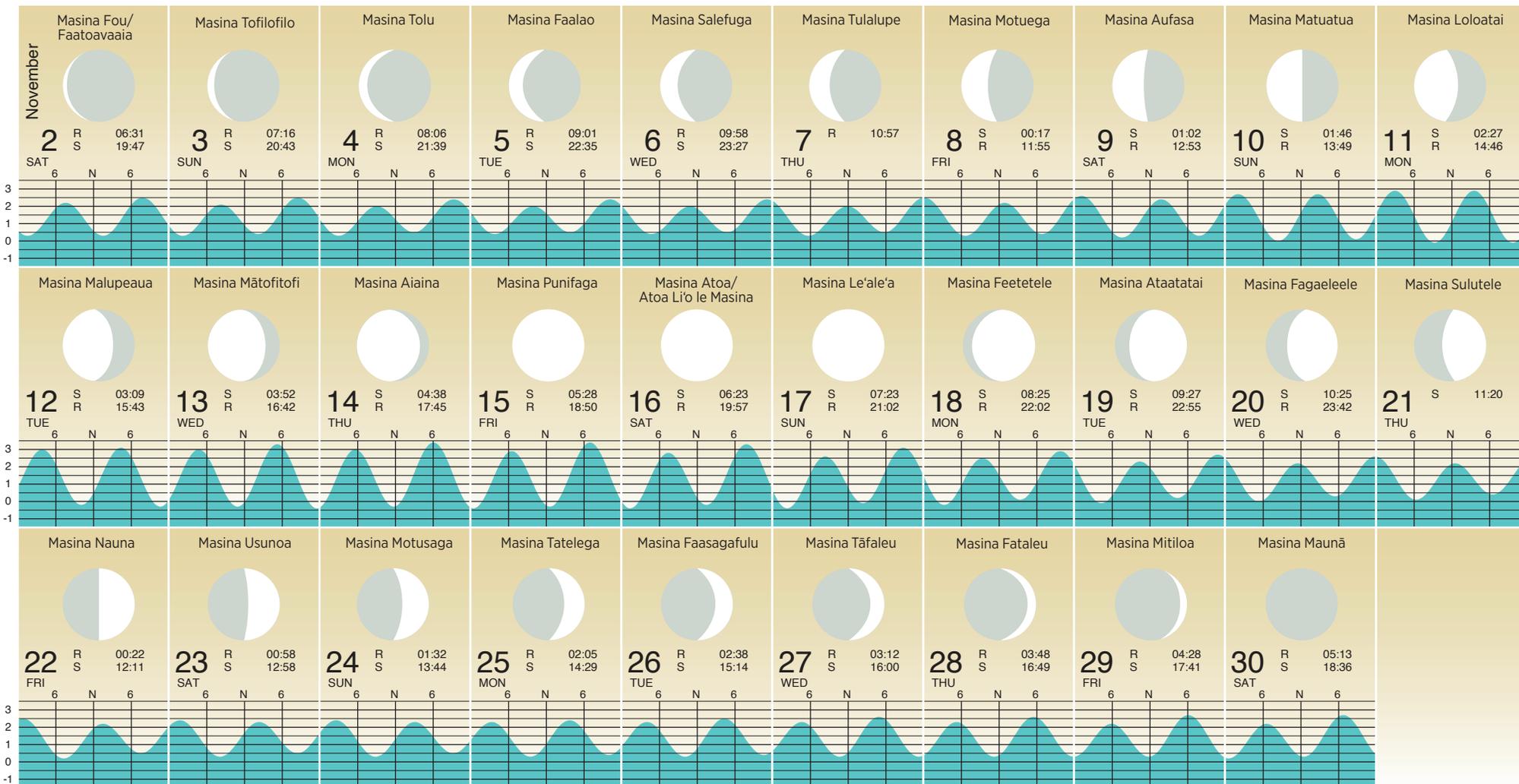
Historically, *i'a sina* (goatfish) runs in American Samoa occur between the start of *palolo* season in October through the appearance of large schools of *lō* (juvenile rabbitfish) in April. Large catches of *i'a sina* are shared among residents of the village and used in cultural ceremonies as gifts. Photo: Tamiano Gurr

**Inset photos at right:** The local fishing community continues to catch all types of seafood as it plays a vital role in Samoan culture. They are brought to shore and distributed according to Samoan customs. They play a major role in identifying and enhancing the status of the High Chiefs, families, *fai'feau* (pastors) and fishermen. Photos: Tamiano Gurr, Leitufia Brian Tauilili

# Taumafamua

November 2-30, 2024

Novema 2-30, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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# Hooked on FADs

Fish aggregating devices (FADs) are man-made structures deployed in the ocean to draw and concentrate fish populations. They are anchored to the sea bottom and have floats at the surface, becoming an attraction for marine life and small fish, which are in turn food for larger high-value fish like tuna. They are typically used by fishermen to enhance their catch efficiency.

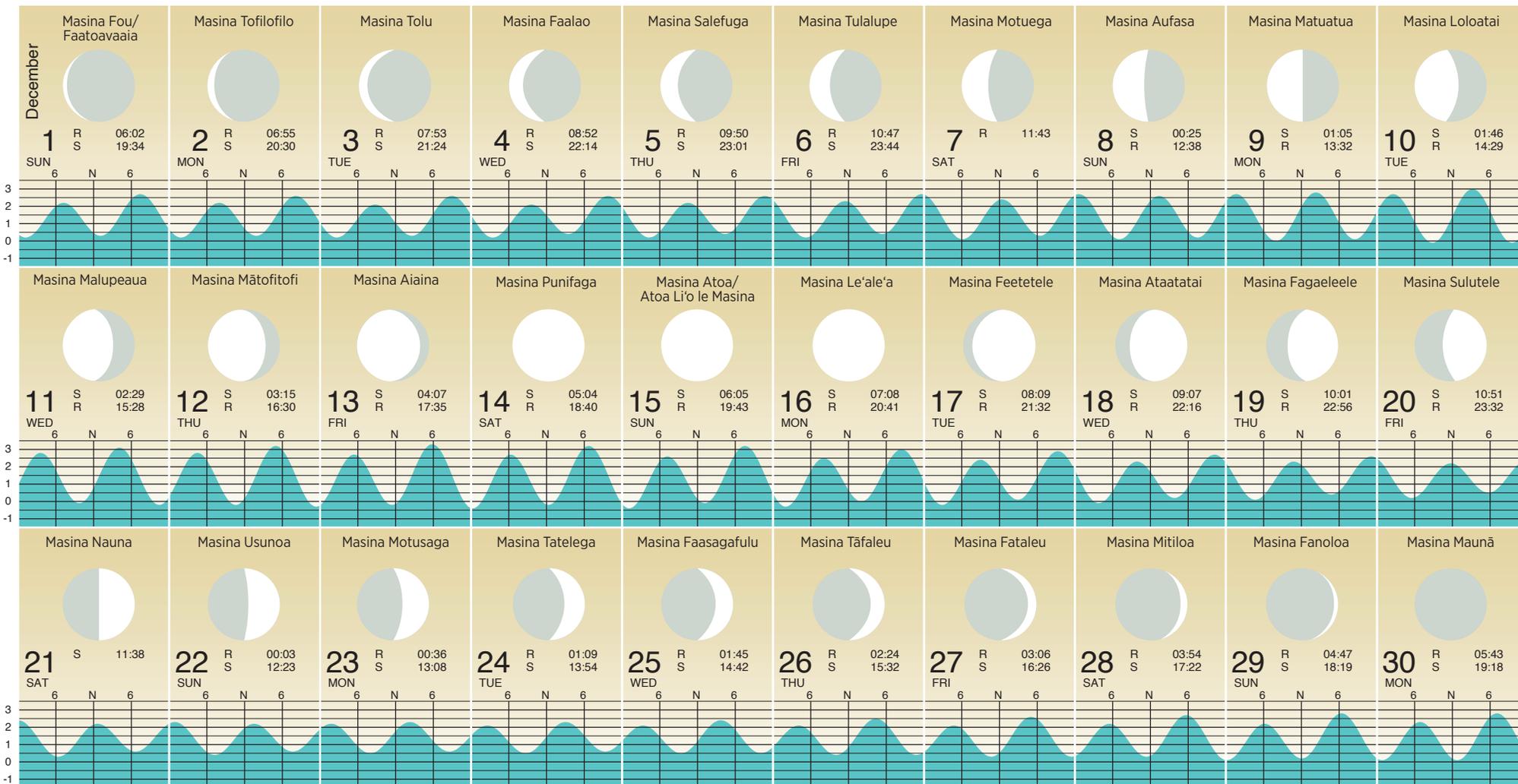
The American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) has 10 FAD locations around Tutuila, with five currently deployed. The agency uses two types: catamaran marker buoys and the Indian Ocean design. To promote responsible fishing practices, DMWR organizes outreach programs during fishing tournaments, providing valuable education to the local fishing community.



DMWR staff working on deploying an Indian Ocean-style FAD that consists of concrete block anchors, hundreds of feet of rope, a string of surface floats and a surface flag marker to make it easier for fishers to locate. Photos: DMWR

# Toetaumafa

December 1-30, 2024  
Tesema 1-30, 2024



Moon-related observations and activities

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Join us in being part of the solution!

**Share Your Fishery Concerns With Our Advisory Panel Team**

The Advisory Panel’s mission is to engage the fishing community and provide opportunities to actively participate in the Western Pacific fishery management process. The members are appointed by the Council and provide a bridge between the fishing community and fishery managers and scientists. They listen to the community’s sentiments about fishing resources and challenges, and provide advice and recommendations to the Council.

**American Samoa AP Members**

**Nate Ilaoa, Vice Chair**  
restaurant owner  
684-699-2739  
nate@pavafox.com

**Joe Hamby**  
seafood processor, commercial fisher

**Jerome Ierome**  
noncommercial fisher

**Dustin Snow**  
marketer, noncommercial fisher

**Brian Thompson**  
noncommercial fisher

**Nonu Tuisamoa**  
noncommercial fisher

**Alternates**

**Joseph Fa’aita**  
noncommercial fisher

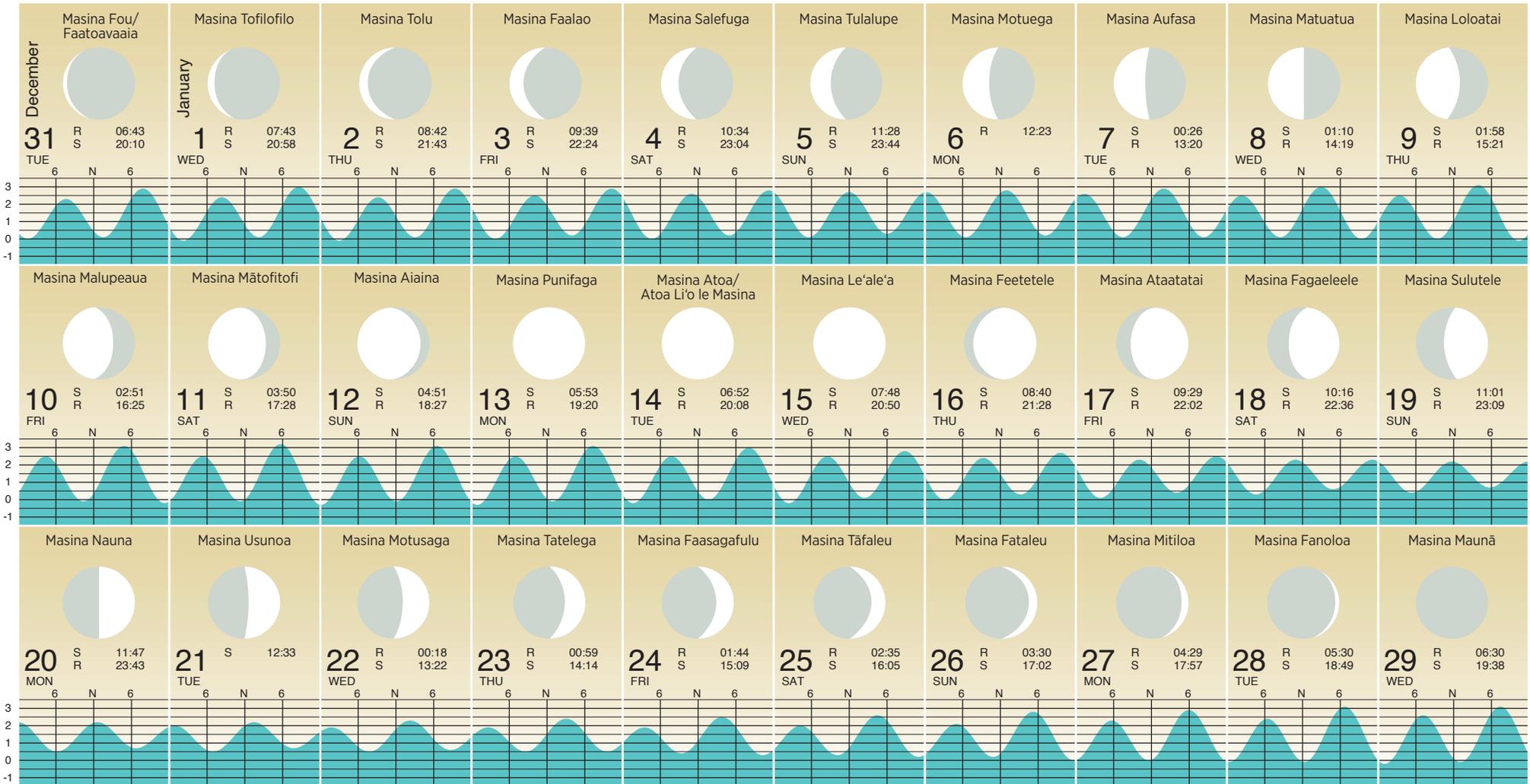
**Ray Tulafono**  
territorial fisheries management (retired),  
noncommercial fisher

Community members at the Council’s Fishers Forum, a public outreach event held in conjunction with the June 2023 meeting in Utulei Village, American Samoa. Photo: WPRFMC

# Utuvāmua

December 31, 2024–January 29, 2025

Tesema 31, 2024–Ianuari 29, 2025



Moon-related observations and activities

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## About This Calendar

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council has produced traditional lunar calendars for American Samoa since 2007. These calendars follow the traditional Samoan calendar months and are designed to be a resource for the community to learn about the moon phases and their relationship with the tides.

The *2024 Tau Masina o Amerika Samoa* provides information about fisheries in the territory, and describes the importance of the cannery and seafood harvest for the Samoan culture. The lunar months, moon phases, and traditional calendar months are given in Samoan. The moon phases in this calendar are for Pago Pago Harbor. Data to discern the first day of the lunar month are used with permission from HM Nautical Almanac Office, UKHO and the Keeper of Public Records, UK. The tide charts with moon rise and set times are in Samoan Standard Time for Pago Pago and were provided by OceanFun Publishing, NZ.

A special *fa'afetai tele lava* to the Council's American Samoa Advisory Panel members for their content and photo contributions and editing; and to Aiono Keseta Okenaisa Fauolo, Samoan Studies Institute Director at the American Samoa Community College, for her guidance on the Samoan lunar month names.

For an electronic version of this calendar, go to [www.wpcouncil.org/educational-resources/lunar-calendars](http://www.wpcouncil.org/educational-resources/lunar-calendars).

Send us an email at [info@wpcouncil.org](mailto:info@wpcouncil.org) to let us know how you use our calendar!

## About the Council

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council was established by Congress in 1976 to manage fisheries in the offshore waters surrounding Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Hawai'i and the U.S. Pacific Remote Island Areas. The fisheries in federal waters surrounding American Samoa are managed under the American Samoa Archipelago and Pacific Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plans. Traditional knowledge and wide community involvement are integral parts of the ecosystem-based approach to fishery management.



Gurr family lands a massive trevally in the waters off Maloatā. Photo: Peter Gurr

## AMERICAN SAMOA CONTACTS

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**Front cover photo:** High school students from the Council-sponsored summer course reel in a wahoo on their first ever fishing trip. Photo: Russ Cox

**Back cover background photo:** School of bigeye trevally. Photo: Botanic Gardens of Sydney / Flickr