

202nd WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING**MARCH 25-27, 2025****STATE OF HAWAII, DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES****REPORTING PERIOD: NOVEMBER 2024 – JANUARY 2025****1. FISHERIES****DEEP-7 (FY 2025)**

At the end of the reporting period, 280 fishers made 1,029 trips to catch a total of 101,184 lbs. of mixed deep-7 species during the 2025 fishing year (FY; Figure 1). Relatively high landings in the month of December (44,134 lbs.) compensated for a very slow start to the season. Reported catch in December 2024 were the highest monthly landings since December 2017.

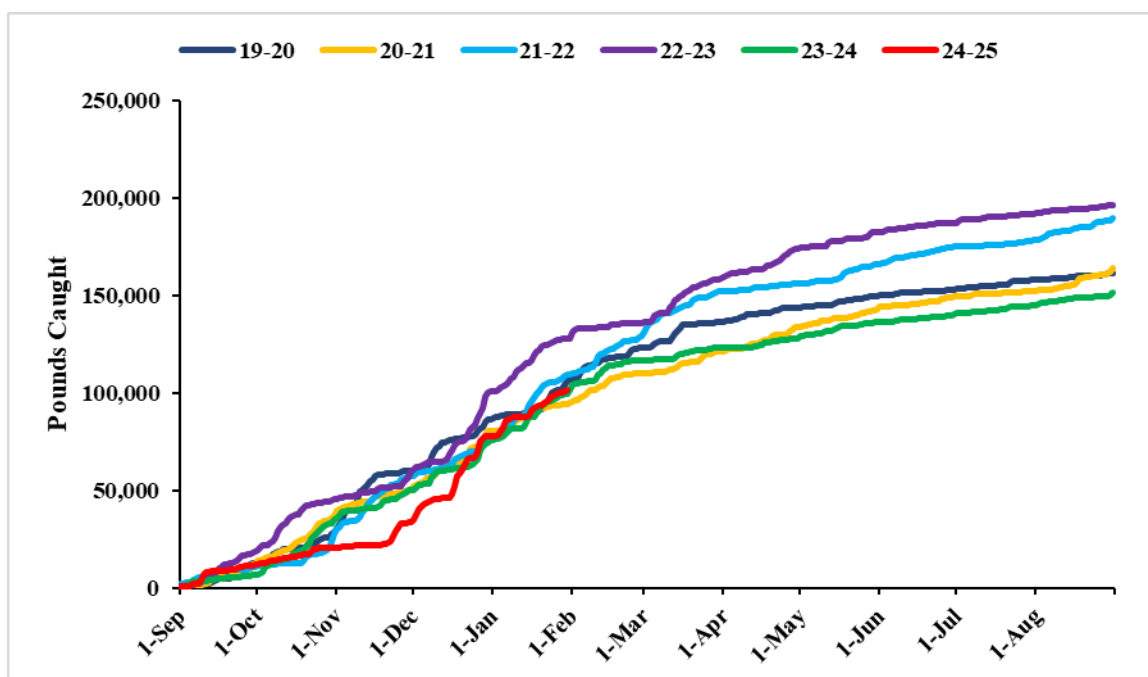


Figure 1. Cumulative Deep-7 catch, Fishing Years 2020-2025.

Catch composition at the end of the reporting period included a high ratio of onaga landings relative to other species including opakapaka (Figures 2 & 3). 'Opakapaka and onaga landings in FY 2025 track closely at similar catch rates which though seen in some previous years is considered somewhat atypical for the fishery.

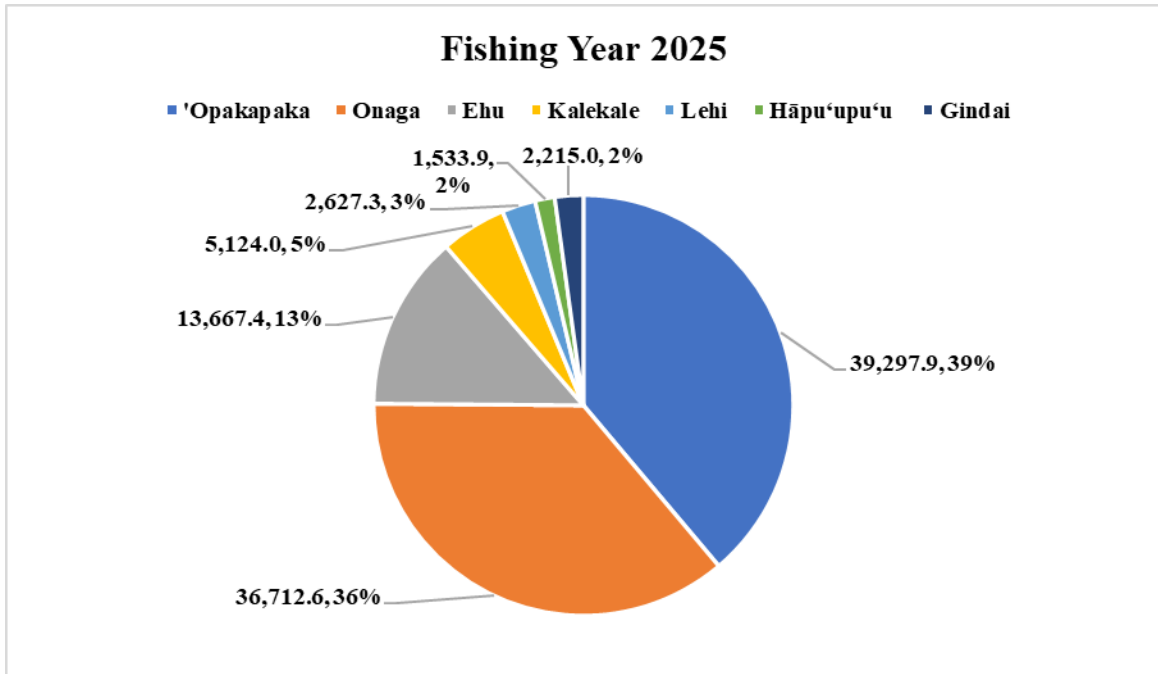


Figure 2. Species composition of Deep-7 catch during Fishing Year 2025, September – January.

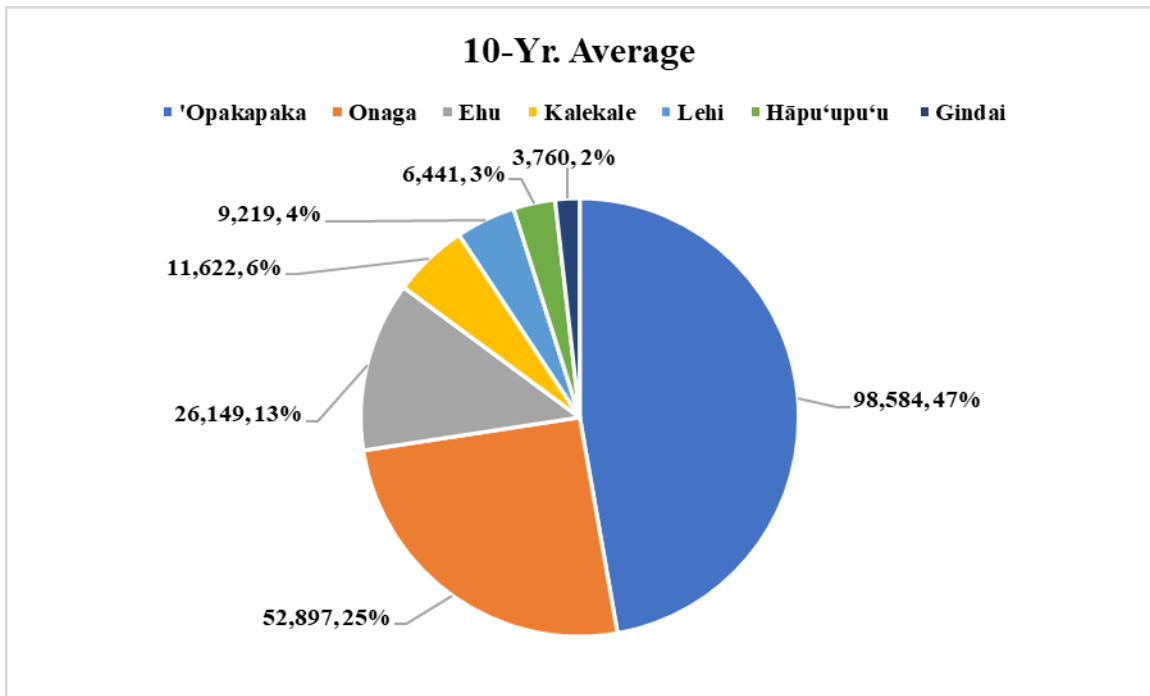


Figure 3. 10-yr. average annual catch and percent species composition for the Deep-7 fishery, Fishing Years 2014–2024.

KONA CRAB (2024)

In 2024, 25 commercial fishers reported making 68 trips for a total of 4,783 lbs. of Kona crab landed (Figure 4). New Kona crab regulations including the repeal of the no take of females and extension of the closed season one month took effect on February 22, 2024. Relatively high reported landings upon reopening of the season in October may suggest some renewed interest in the fishery. However, it remains uncertain if the regulatory changes will result in sustained long-term commercial targeting.

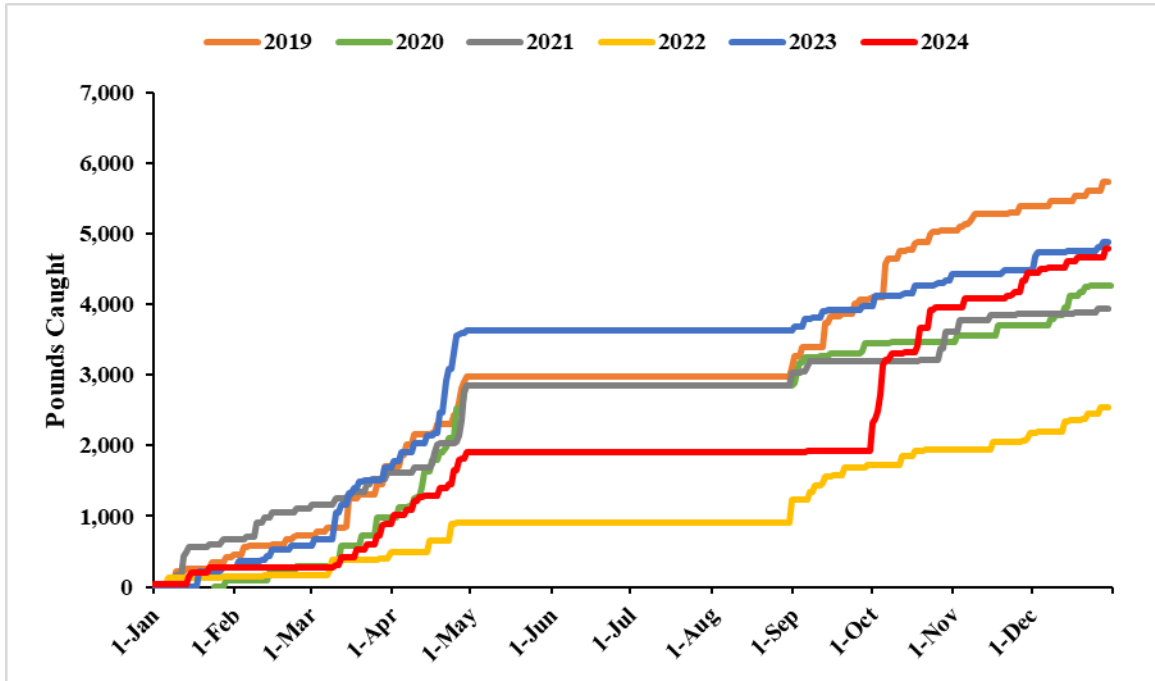


Figure 4. Cumulative MHI Kona crab catch, 2019-2024.

The 2024 Kona crab fishing season ended with slightly lower landings than 2023 although interest in the fishery appears to be rebounding following record low reported catch in 2016 (Figure 5). The MHI Kona crab fishery peaked in 1972 at approximately 70,000 lbs. landed and throughout the 1990s commercial landings came close to or exceeded the current ACL of 30,802 lbs. Though there appears to be indications that the repealed no take of females may have resulted in renewed interest in the fishery, increases in catch mirroring or exceeding what was previously seen are unlikely without the emergence of new highliners. At present the fishery remains primarily a secondary seasonal fishery and full-time fishers specializing in Kona crab remain absent.

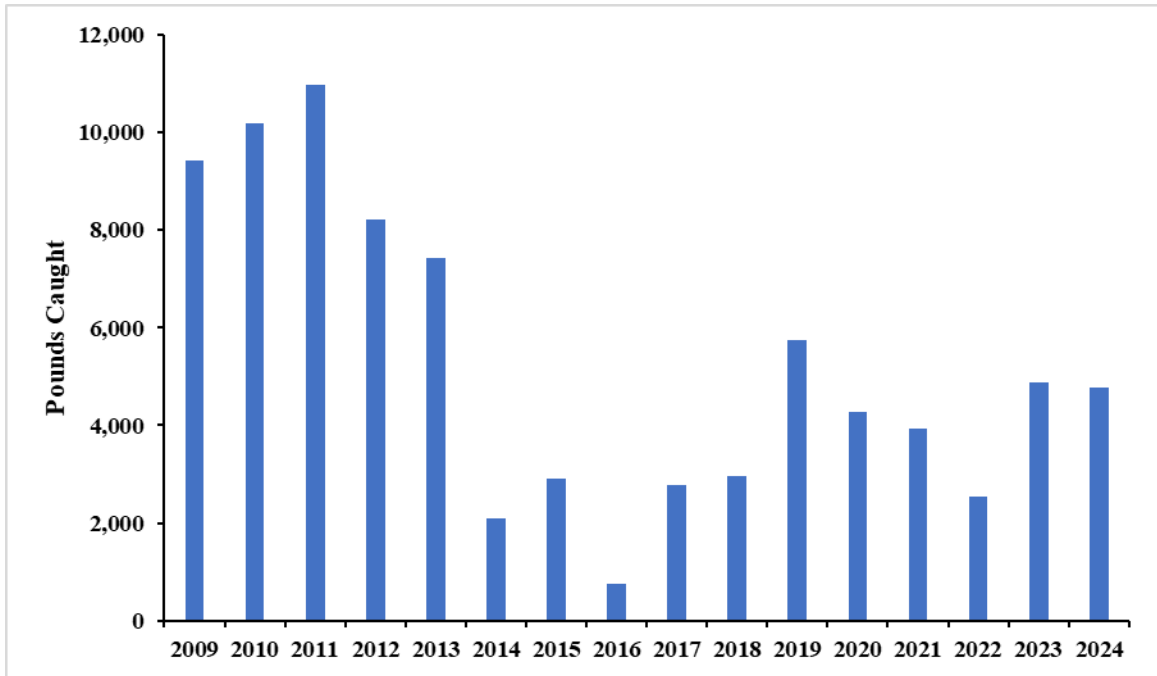


Figure 5. Annual reported commercial MHI Kona crab landings, 2009 to 2024.

UKU (2024)

In 2024, 191 CML holders made 694 trips and reported a total of 38,012 lbs. of uku landings (Figure 6). Uku throughout the year remained relatively low and consistent, not showing clear indication of increased commercial targeting around the spawning season.

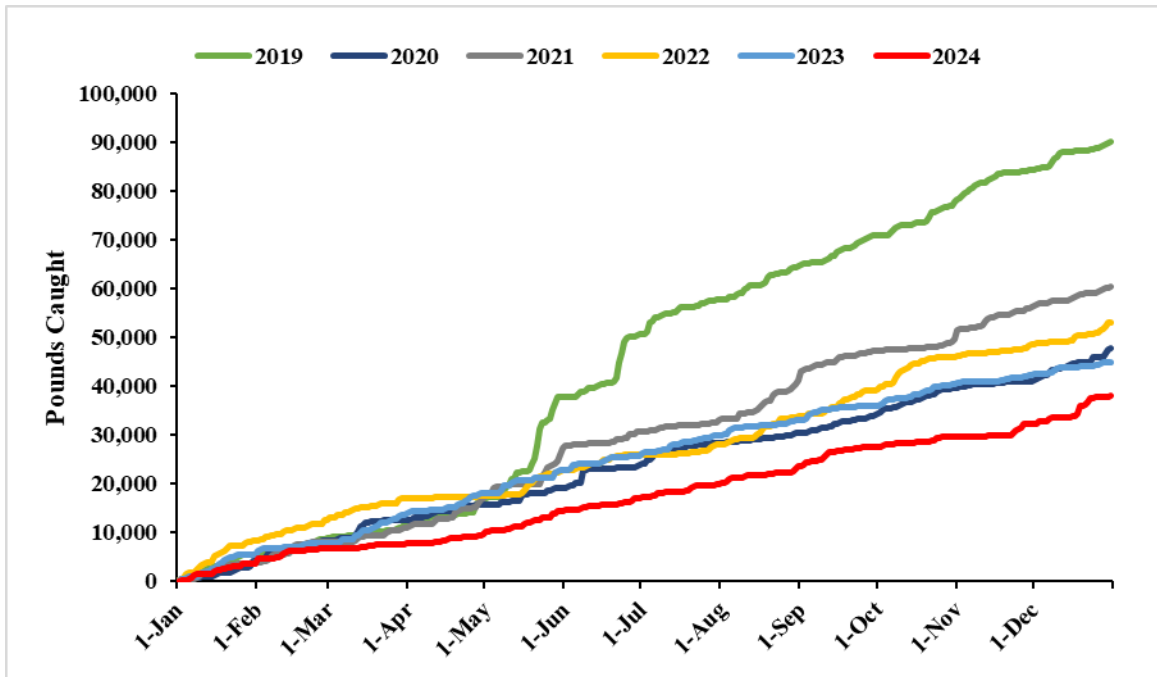


Figure 6. Cumulative MHI uku catch, 2019-2024.

Reported commercial landings from the MHI commercial uku fishery continue to decrease steadily since the most recent peak in landings occurring in 2017 (Figure 7). Increased market demand caused by the void left by the closure of the NWHI fishery appears to have subsided and today we see few fishers targeting uku at levels previously recorded. Low market capacity and highliner drop-out or retirement will likely continue to hinder growth of the commercial uku fishery without improved market demand.

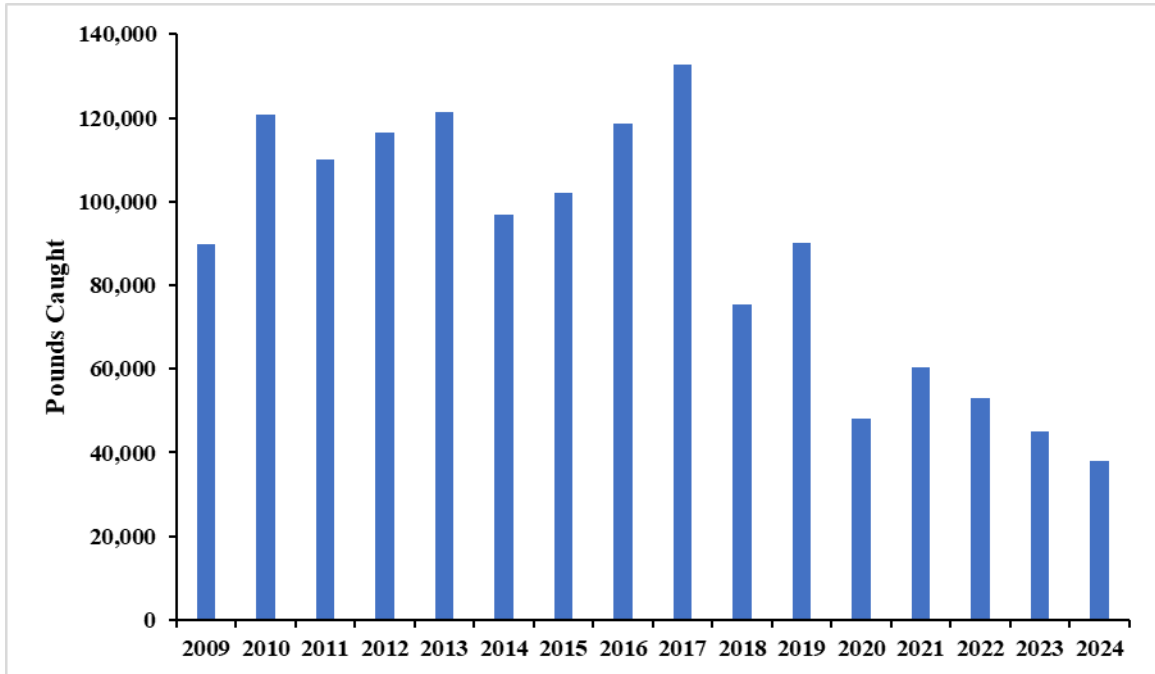


Figure 7. Annual reported commercial MHI uku landings, 2009-2024

LICENSE AND REPORTING (2024)

A total of 2,297 Commercial Marine Licenses (CMLs) were issued or renewed in 2024 for a total revenue of \$423,300 (Figure 6). We continue to see a long-term decrease in non-longline associated CMLs.

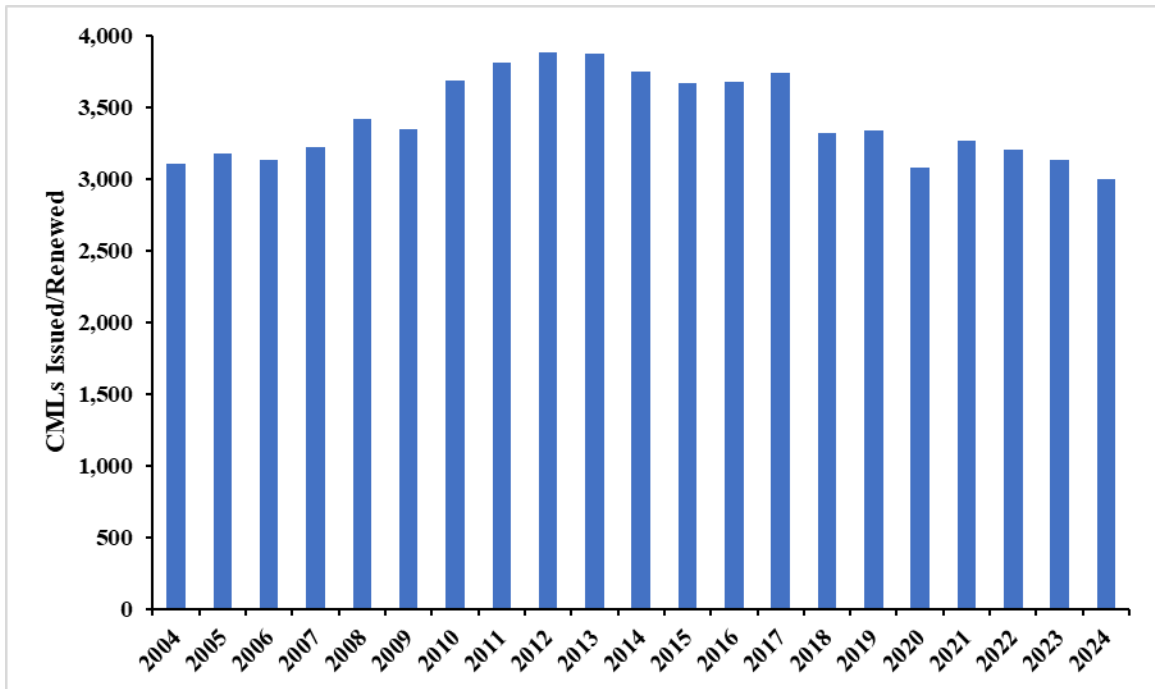


Figure 8. Annual CMLs issued/renewed, 2004 - 2024.

2. RESOURCE PROTECTION

PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT (PMNM)

Permits Issued: Two (2) new permit(s) were granted during this period (November 2024 – January 2025):

- One (1) Conservation and Management permit (approved at the BLNR meeting held on December 13th, 2024; permit issued in December 2024)
- One (1) Research permit (approved at the BLNR meeting held on January 24th, 2025; permit issued in January 2025)

Permit applications currently under review and their corresponding research, conservation, management, educational, cultural or special use objectives or activities can be found here on the PMNM website: (<https://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov/permit/applicationrev.html>). A summary of a sample of activities permitted for each year can be found here (Note: 2022/2023 are in the process of being updated – story maps are usually 1 year behind): (<https://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov/permit/annualrep.html>).

Applications in Review / Processing: The permit coordinators group reviewed or partially or fully processed two (2) applications during this period - all applications are in various stages of initial or final review or mid or final processing:

- One (1) Conservation and Management permit application (anticipated to be submitted for review/approval at the BLNR meeting scheduled for March 28th, 2025)
- One (1) Special Ocean Use permit application (permit is supplemental to above Conservation and Management permit application [same project], anticipated to be submitted for review/approval at the BLNR meeting scheduled for March 28th, 2025)
- One (1) Research permit application (anticipated to be submitted for review/approval at the BLNR meeting scheduled for March 28th, 2025)

3. ECOSYSTEM & HABITAT

FISH AGGREGATION DEVICES (FADs)

During the period of November 2024 to January 2025 activity was moderate for the FAD Program.

During November 2024, 4 FADs went missing as detailed below:

SS – Apua Pt., Hawaii (missing on 11/22)
 ZZ – Waima Pt., Hawaii (missing on 11/28)
 TT – Kanewaa Pt., Hawaii (missing on 11/28)
 OT – Waikoloa Pt., Hawaii (missing on 11/28)

During December 2024, 1 FAD went missing, and 5 FADs were replaced as detailed below:

HS – Halona Pt., Kahoolawe (missing on 12/5)

 SO – Kealaikahiki, Kahoolawe (replaced on 12/18)
 XX – Puako, Hawaii (replaced on 12/18)
 NL – Nuu Landing, Maui (replaced on 12/19)
 DD – Opana Pt., Maui (replaced on 12/19)
 CC – Kaena pt., Lanai (replaced on 12/19)

During January 2025, 5 FADs were replaced as detailed below:

T – Makapuu, Oahu (replaced on 1/3)
 II – Haleiwa, Oahu (replaced on 1/3)
 J – Wailee, Oahu (replaced on 1/3)
 CO – Kaena Pt., Oahu (replaced on 1/3)
 V – Makua, Oahu (replaced on 1/3)

4. OTHER

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS) MANAGEMENT

The Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Team has continued to respond to the outbreak of the invasive anemone, *Anemonia manjano*, on a patch reef in Kāneʻohe Bay. The entire reef and adjacent areas have been surveyed for presence of the anemone, and structure from motion images were produced of the approximately 10x20m invasion site. The AIS Team has conducted multiple stakeholder meetings and attended community group meetings to present removal options. A method of tarp-smothering combined with chlorine application has been proposed. Hawaiʻi HB1220 would provide funding for removal and coral reconstruction of the area.

A new position, the “Rapid Response Coordinator”, was hired in January to work within the AIS Team to develop plans and coordinate responses to coral disease outbreaks, coral bleaching, storm events, vessel groundings, and AIS or nuisance species outbreaks.

PACIFIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

Hawaiʻi is now an official member of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission after Governor Green signed the Compact documents in December. Applications for commissioners are now being accepted through the State Boards and Commissions website.

FISHING LICENSE UPDATES

In February, DAR launched the online system for the new Nonresident Recreational Marine Fishing License. Any non-Hawaiʻi resident 15 years and older is now required to purchase a fishing license to fish in ocean waters. Revenues will be used to fund fisheries management and enhancement projects such as FADs, artificial reefs, and fishing access.

The Commercial Marine Vessel License will be available for purchase online beginning April 14, 2025. This optional license will allow vessel operators to purchase a single license to satisfy the individual CML requirement for all crew aboard the vessel.

DAR is also working on the development of a Commercial Marine Dealer License, which should be implemented this summer.

More information about these and other licenses can be found on the DAR website at <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/licenses-permits/>.