



Report of the Hawaii Archipelago and PRIA FEP Advisory Panel Meeting

Friday, May 30, 2025; 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. (HST)

Hybrid Meeting via Webex

1. Welcome and Introductions

Gil Kualii, Hawaii Advisory Panel (AP) Vice Chair, opened the meeting at 9:03 a.m. Members in attendance included Clay Tam (overall AP Chair), Khang Dang, Carrie Johnston, Eddie Ebisui III, Amanda Padilla, Nathan Tsao, Abraham Apilado, and Len Nakano.

Council staff in attendance included Zach Yamada, Mark Mitsuyasu, Asuka Ishizaki, Mark Fitchett, Joshua DeMello (Council staff), and Thomas Remington (Council Contractor).

Others in attendance included Bryan Ishida (DAR), Marlowe Sabater, Robert Ahrens (PIFSC), Jon Niiyama (Oahu Fisher), and Alex Min (Pacific Islands Fisheries Group)

2. Review of the Last AP Recommendation and Meeting

Zach Yamada, Council staff, provided a status review of the recommendations from the last AP meeting held on March 13, 2025.

3. Council Fisheries Issues

A. 2024 Hawaii SAFE Report

Thomas Remington, Council Contractor, presented the 2024 fishery highlights from the archipelagic and pelagic report for Hawaii. In the Deep-7 bottomfish fishery, it was the lowest report year since 1971. The fishery performance is no longer dominated by highliners with fewer full-time commercial fishers. The uku fishery experienced continued declines in catch and effort, perhaps due to fishers not targeting them as frequently. There were upticks in catch for both Kona crabs consistent with 2023, and the Kona crab fishery may experience increased catch in future years, which is associated with the State of Hawaii revising its regulations to allow the take of female Kona crabs. Priority ecosystem component species generally saw decreased catch from 2023 to 2024, except for kala and lobster. Non-commercial data derived from the Hawaii Marine Recreational Fishing Survey (HMRFS) have been removed from the report as fishery scientists and managers continue to work with the State and fishermen to improve these data. The Hawaii deep-set longline fishery had increased catch, but other Hawaii pelagic fisheries experienced decreases. These fisheries had substantially decreased revenue due to a decline in average fish price per pound for pelagics. Socioeconomic data indicated stable fuel prices, and protected species reviews showed no notable increases in interactions. For the longline fishery, there was an observed decrease in revenue despite increased landings. Oceanic and climate indicators showed slight changes, with a shift from El Niño to neutral and increased sea surface temperatures. However, these increased temperatures are not likely to be associated with coral bleaching or mortality.

An AP member said the decline in deep seven bottomfish and uku was not due to market forces, but the direct impacts from shark depredation. Uku prices are at an all-time high of \$8/lb, and the deep seven species sell for around \$ 15/lb. Uku has been substituting mahimahi with the low catch of mahimahi. There is a large biomass of uku and opakapaka, but fishers are having issues landing them due to shark depredation. His son told him that he wanted to become a

commercial fisher, and he dissuaded him since this rising issue would lead to him not having a job. Shark depredation is leading to a dark future of no fishery since they are overrunning everything, creating an imbalance. Remington said the uku catch data shows that there are higher prices for bottomfish; however, fewer fish are being sold.

An AP member said at recent public meetings that the communities have expressed their frustrations with shark depredation across the State of Hawaii, which affects the fleet's ability to fish. There is also frustration with the lack of non-commercial data, and the State is not taking the steps to get that data unless there is a license or registry to collect that data to have the complete picture. As mentioned by another AP member, management cannot be like an ostrich sticking its head in the sand on this issue. He said the figures in the presentation were busy and hard to see, and suggested that species should break out the top 10 ecosystem component species list to understand the trends better.

Another AP member asked for clarification on the change in taste for taape since it is an invasive species. Tam said it was not an observed change in taste, but was driven by the cost of bottomfish, making it infeasible for feeding families. Taape catch is an important indicator of the choice of fish and what the community is eating. There are unintended consequences of protecting sharks with no mitigation in place for the fishery. Without monitoring and knowing the population and life history of sharks, there are scenarios where the dynamics of the fishery will continue to change.

An AP member said there has been a decade of support that should be recognized from recreational fishers and non-profit organizations to have chefs promote taape as a desirable fish.

Another AP member said it would be interesting to see how shark depredation is weighted in the stock assessment model. With increased shark depredation, could that create an issue to specifying ACLs in the future. Remington said that the CML can report shark depredation, but was not sure how well it was tracked over the time series. Another AP member said that shark depredation does affect the bottomfish CPUE, and scientists do not understand the gravity of the issue. There are a lot of people who are not trying to go fishing since shark depredation has become a growing issue. Another AP member said others should be careful of their words since the words fishers use for sharks are music to the ears of the anti-fishing people. Fishers see it as a problem, but the messaging from the fishermen needs to be extraordinarily tactful.

Much of the discussion by the AP was on shark depredation and the need for the Hawaii annual report data to address the issues of shark depredation. The AP agreed that the data does not address the fact that many fish are not reported, or that fishing does not occur, because fish are lost to sharks. *The AP identified the need for quantifying and addressing shark depredation issues, as well as providing greater context to the Hawaii module of the annual report*

B. MHI Uku ACL Specification for 2026-2029

Zach Yamada, Council staff, presented the options to specify annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs) for the MHI uku fishery for fishing years 2026 to 2029. In December 2024, the SSC received a presentation on the 2024 uku stock assessment update that found the fishery was not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The SSC endorsed the stock assessment update as BSIA and recommended that the Council direct staff to develop options to specify ABCs and ACLs. Council staff provided an overview of the options for Council

consideration. Under alternative 1, the Council would not specify ACLs for fishing years 2026 to 2029. This option serves as a NEPA baseline, although it does not comply with National Standard 1 of the MSA and the Hawaii FEP. Under option 2, the Council may specify ACL at 41 percent risk of overfishing (P*) and ACT at P* 36 percent based on the 2020 benchmark assessment utilizing the 2020 P* and SEEM analysis correlated with 295,419 lb and 291,010 lb, respectively. This option would include both in-season and post-season AMs. This option would not comply with National Standard 2 under the MSA, which states that management should be based on BSIA. Under option 3, the Council may specify ACL based on the 2024 assessment at P* at 41 percent and ACT at P* 36 percent based on P* and SEEM analysis correlated with 406,532 lb and 401,020 lb, respectively. This option would include both in-season and post-season AMs. Under option 4, the Council may specify ACLs based on the 2024 stock assessment update and the findings of the 2020 P* and SEEM working groups, at an ACL of 36 percent P* correlated with 401,020 lb. Under options 5 and 6, the Council may specify an ACL and/or ACT lower than the ACLs and ACTs outlined in options 3 and 4, respectively.

An AP member said the commercial sector of the fishery would be more affected by the action than the noncommercial fishery. He asked if there was an option not to include HMRFS data, while there is ongoing work to improve approaches to estimating non-commercial catch. Council staff said the Council and NMFS will continue to monitor non-commercial catch with the current approach, and monitoring could be improved in parallel with the current monitoring approach. Alternatives 4 and 6 would discontinue the in-season closure through tracking commercial and non-commercial catch.

An AP member said there is a uku pilot survey that is looking to improve the approach for calculating non-commercial catch, and asked when this would be applied for non-commercial catch monitoring.

Marlowe Sabater, PIFSC, said the uku project serves as an alternate approach to estimate non-commercial catch. PIFSC would still have to evaluate the efficacy of providing a better estimate than HMRFS. To date, the survey received an 18% response rate in March and 16% in April. Regarding the utility for in-season monitoring, PIFSC will evaluate the data collection systems and provide an alternative.

Rob Ahrens, PIFSC, said they hope the pilot survey will identify if there is a potential bias in the HMRFS data. If PIFSC estimates catch an order of magnitude lower than MRIP, then they will need to re-evaluate how MRIP is structured. If the results of the survey are similar, then there is a problem with the MRIP sample size, and they may need to find a way to reduce the uncertainty. If MRIP data is used to track in-season catches, then PIFSC will need to determine what level of uncertainty people are comfortable with using it as an in-season monitoring tool.

An AP asked if there is a potential where the uku pilot program could better inform in-season monitoring; one option would be to take the chance with MRIP now and compare the data with the results of the uku pilot survey. He asked if management would continue to use in-season monitoring and what would be used later to track catch.

Council staff said the Council and NMFS will continue to monitor the situation through MRIP and HMRFS. The action for AP consideration would include an alternative to discontinue the in-season closure AM and retain in-season monitoring.

An AP member said commercial guys get screwed in the end. Regardless of HMRFS and the uku pilot survey, if there is an in-season closure for the fishery, it would only be applied to the commercial fishery and not the recreational sector. There are significant data gaps that include information from the NWHI and fishing around Kahoolawe that should be included in the stock assessment. The stock assessment does not collect solid recreational landings compared to CML holders.

After discussions, the AP noted that the determination of an alternative to recommend to the Council was not easy. The AP was not comfortable with the current non-commercial data used in the stock assessment and to monitor the ACL, but understood that current projects to refine the data were coming down the line and hoped that it would help improve the ACL in the future. *The AP agreed that Alternative 4 was the option of lesser evil, and it would impact the commercial fishery the least and avoid in-season shutdowns of the fishery.*

C. Implementation of EM in Hawaii and American Samoa Longline Fisheries

Mark Fitchett, Council staff, provided an overview of the implementation of electronic monitoring (EM) in the Hawaii and American Samoa longline fisheries. To date, EM in the Western Pacific Region has been a voluntary program in the longline fisheries dedicated to research and development. To implement EM as a monitoring tool, the Council would need to authorize the use of EM. At its 199th and 200th meetings, the Council directed staff to work with NMFS PIRO and advisory bodies to explore regulation considerations to utilize EM for management to supplement and/or fulfill data collection requirements as implemented through the federal observer program. At its 201st meeting, the Council took initial action to develop a proposal for the Pelagic FEP to authorize the use of EM in pelagic longline fisheries with the objective to monitor and provide reliable estimates of protected species interactions and phase in the use of an NMFS-approved EM systems over three years (2025-2027) with NMFS funding as an optional program to supplement the human observer program until permanent resources are available to implement a mandatory program fully. Given the decline in human observers in 2025 and 2026, and with an uncertain future beyond due to the NMFS budgetary limitations, there is a need to implement the existing EM program from an experimental and research tool to a cost-effective monitoring program that can address monitoring requirements in the Hawaii and American Samoa longline fisheries.

First, the Council may decide to implement EM, as either a mandatory program with implementation sub-alternatives or as an optional program. Second, the Council may decide how EM will be financially supported, if it decides to take action to authorize EM. The Council and its advisory bodies' longstanding position has been that NMFS should assume costs for monitoring for protected species monitoring. The Council will consider the following alternatives. Alternative 1, no action, by authoring the use of EM for fishery monitoring and operating under the status quo monitoring regime; or Alternative 2, implement a mandatory EM program under the following sub-alternatives to phase in annually from 2025-2027. Sub-alternative 2a would use random selection of all longline vessels for implements; sub-alternative 2b would prioritize shallow-set vessels and random selection of the remaining longline vessels; or sub-alternative 2c would go based on a voluntary program followed by random selection of

the remaining vessels. Alternative 3 would implement EM as an optional program, with EM authorized to be a monitoring mechanism on participating vessels.

If the Council selects alternative 2 or 3, the Council will consider the following alternatives on how an EM program will be financially supported beyond 2027. Alternative A, implement EM with public Federal (NMFS) funding; Alternative B, implement EM with public-private cost-sharing of sampling costs, with industry funding for hardware replacement; or Alternative C, implement EM with sampling costs funded by industry.

An AP member said the industry cannot support initiating a program from NMFS and absorb the cost while still making a living. He has seen the impacts of decisions on bad practices. If NMFS wants this program, then they should pay for it.

An AP member said the purpose of EM is for protected species and not monitoring catch. The industry leans towards NMFS bearing the cost for EM since the industry does not have a certain percentage of coverage based on the regulations and the waters in which they operate. Regarding human observers, cost is only going one way, and he is a supporter of EM, not just to reduce costs, but EM to serve as a substitute standardized data collection system to make it uniform across the work. Every country provides its own observers; however, they do not know what they are doing. Moving forward, he supported the implementation of mandatory EM, with the cost borne by NMFS. Regarding the implementation of EM, he leaned on getting volunteers first for those who are willing to make the change and have the ability to train the rest of the fleet. The cons of random assignment are that there are fishers who may have reservations about installing and maintaining EM.

An AP member said that EM is an essential part of the puzzle, but only one percent of the problem needs to be solved. Fishers are operating under the poverty level and are going into bankruptcy. This action is missing the point, and decisions like this are not addressing the problem of the fishery economics. The data is good, but there is no correct data to implement solutions to sustain and keep fishing without federal subsistence, and the fishery is not in a position to take on the cost. If there is a cost to vessel owners in the volunteer year or down the road, there should be a grant program to incentivize it to get volunteers early by paying for it for volunteers; they need some protection to keep from tipping people over from being profitable.

An AP member said the transition from observers to EM may save NFMS a lot of money, and to make good decisions, there is a need to understand where the funding is coming from. He did not support the industry paying for EM or taking away funding from managing the stock. A voluntary program is a great way to give fishers a chance to feel like they have a choice in the matter, which could lead to better options in the future.

An AP member said the Hawaii longline fishery is one of the most highly regulated fisheries, and the NMFS should cover the cost since this is a burden, as they have to make a living off fishing. All of the other industries are subsidized compared to agriculture and other businesses. In all fairness, if the fishers are held to a higher standard, then the US should compensate the fishery.

An AP member said management still needs to look at solutions to make this industry more successful. She asked if adding tariffs to non-US fisheries for fishing coming in through here, and having that money help the fishery.

The AP agreed that the responsibility for supporting this program falls on the federal government and should not burden the industry. Members had difficulty determining which option would be best without knowing how it would be funded beyond the implementation phase. They agreed that the use of a voluntary system allows those who are engaged in the fishery to be part of the program and help promote it to the rest of the fleet.

D. Hawaii and American Samoa Longline Fisheries Crew Training Requirement

Asuka Ishizaki, Council staff, presented on the Hawaii and American Samoa longline fishery crew training requirement, which the Council will consider as final action at the upcoming June meeting. The Council at the 201st meeting took initial action on the regulatory amendment to implement a crew training requirement and scheduled final action for the June 2025 meeting. At the March meeting, the Council received an update on the refinement of the regulatory approach, the status of the pilot training program, and the revised draft of the Reasonable and Prudent Measure (RPM) Terms and Conditions (T&C).

For final action, the Council will consider two alternatives: Alternative 1, which is the alternative action to revise the longline fishery protected species workshop requirement to include crew training; and Alternative 2, which is the no-action alternative. Specifically, the action alternative would amend the regulations under the Pelagic FEP to implement crew training through both a crew certificate requirement and a person-on-deck requirement. Under Alternative 1, the Council will consider sub-alternatives for crew training recertification frequency, with the sub-alternatives being a 1- or 2-year certification duration or no expiration for the certificate. The action is anticipated to reduce post-release mortality of protected species and improve outcomes of protected species interactions. It is not expected to affect fishing effort, operations, areas fished, species targeted, or other fishery resources.

An AP member said he is a fan of training effectiveness and highlighting crew safety. He supported Alternative 1b with every 2-year certification to strike the happy medium.

An AP member asked about the progress of the training video and if data had been collected on the success stories of the training program. Council staff said NMFS is transitioning to video training with budget constraints. NMFS went from having translators on site to now focusing on videos with translated captions. The primary purpose of the training is to handle protected species and not collect data. The video training will continue to be in person to allow accessibility and continue to have a feedback loop with the owners, operators, and crew.

An AP member asked the industry representative if the contractor crew moves between fisheries after they finish their contract for the Hawaii longline. The industry AP member said the crew comes from different countries with varying contract periods. The Filipino, Indonesian, and Vietnamese crews have contracts that vary from 2 to 5 years. They will usually stay on contract with the Hawaii longline fishery for about 8 to ten years. Hawaii and New Zealand are viewed as the premier fishing destinations, and the contracted fishers have experience from fishing with the Taiwanese, Korean, and Chinese fleets.

An AP member said that the US is so strict that it is paving the way for others to follow suit. If some of these guys are transferring out to other longline fleets, then they can give the training they received while fishing with the US to their next contract. Council staff said the benefit of the program is that the training gets exported to the next fishery. The US is the only

country that does crew training, and this program could lead to a WCPFC recommendation that the other countries have to take to create a similar program. There is an opportunity down the line for that certificate to carry across the board. If that happens, then the Council could revisit this program to make it transferable if there is value in it; we can adjust even after it's implemented.

An AP member said the expansion of the crew training program could overlap with EM, where crew could flash their certificate to show that they have their training, and keep track of those whose certificates need renewal.

The Hawaii AP recommends Alternative 1, sub-alternative 1b (implement crew training requirement with a 2-year certification duration), which would allow striking a balance between training effectiveness and burden on the fishery.

4. Regulatory Review, Community Consultation, and Planning through IRA

A. Scenario Planning

Mark Fitchett reported that contracts have been initiated for scenario planning, and the contractors plan to conduct workshops in Hawaii over the fall and before New Year's. In American Samoa, in the first and second quarters of 2026. He said that more information will be available in September once the steering committee has been convened.

Joshua DeMello reported that small-boat scenario planning will occur after the first big-boat scenario planning, which will likely take place next year. The Council is still working on finding a contractor for that project, but the other projects, such as the community engagement and regulatory review, will provide input into those meetings. Hawaii's small-boat engagement is planned for later this year, and some of this project will be incorporated as well.

B. Regulatory Review

Joshua DeMello provided an update on the Council's IRA projects on regulatory review. The contractor should be starting next month and will be looking at FEP and local regulations. They will look at whether the regulations are climate-ready. The AP should be thinking about regulations that should be removed, determining what is good and bad, and what needs work. The Council will hold community meetings after the desktop review of regulations.

An AP member said the Council's project should include an analysis of the regulations that protect sharks, since there has been a negative impact on the fishery due to depredation.

Another AP member said that shark depredation is a high priority, followed by the listing of protected species and other regulations related to habitat. He said that the NWHI should not be a sanctuary. There are no benefits similar to the bottomfish restricted fishing area (BRFA) that the State of Hawaii implemented. With each closed management approach, there should be a sunset rule or subject to review on the size and scale of the closed area. There is a misconception that fishermen take everything in the ocean and make millions of dollars. Under the current administration, he is chomping at the bit to go back to fishing in the NWHI. Another AP said that he attended all of the NWHI Sanctuary hearings, and it was obvious that the Hawaiian culture is fractured. During the hearings, there was a lot of support for no fishing in the sanctuary, and people in attendance were against fishing. There was a recent video circulated of a fisher, Palikapu Dedman, where he talked about how westernized the culture is with the influence of the US. He said that fishing has been a part of Hawaiian traditions, and it did not make sense that the

opposition said that fishing did not occur in the NWHI. Hawaiians do not have a voice anymore, and even the so-called Hawaiian organizations are advocating for banning fishing.

Council staff said the NWHI sanctuary is currently under review as outlined by a recent executive order (EO). The Council does not know the current status, but there could be a call for public comment, in which the AP could voice its position on designating it as a sanctuary. The Council has been in support of removing the sanctuary and has sent in its position to oppose overlaying the monument with a sanctuary. The recent EO on seafood calls for review of the monuments, and there could be options to revise and review the NWHI. The longline industry is okay with opening 50-200 nm for their fishing, but there is interest in bottomfish as well. The Council could look to manage the NWHI bottomfish fishery under its existing limited entry program with the Mau and Hoomalu zone, and the Council would like to hear from the AP if they are interested in bottomfish and ask what areas would be needed for bottomfishing. Another option to consider is whether only to allow bottomfishing or to allow all fishing in the NWHI. If the AP has recommendations, then it should consider what types of fishing should be allowed and bring it forward to the Council for its consideration. The Council had previous initiatives that brought together Hawaiian practitioners to deal with significant issues to promote the take of green sea turtles and maintain sustainable fisheries.

Another AP member said there is a need for the Hawaiian community to have a hooponopono since there is a lot of emotion that comes with different perspectives on community-based fisheries management.

An AP member said he got involved with fisheries management in the fight for the first monument and then the expansion in the NWHI. Different groups advocated for maintaining access in the NWHI, and there were groups focused on protecting Nihoa. If you consider what they promised with the monument, those promises will not be kept, and different organizations are using Hawaiians as pawns to fight against each other. He said if fishing were allowed, then it should be for the whole NWHI to allow access. He said he feels bad for the first set of fishers that would go into the NWHI because they are going to get hit by sharks, ulua, and dolphins. Rules only prevent people from fishing. The culture around fishing has changed; people used to go just for holoholo, but now people only react when the fish bite.

An AP member said that one major conversation that came up in a recent workshop was making the MSA more flexible and adaptive. As it is now, the MSA is so rigid that it disables fishery managers from making flexible decisions or reacting to different changes. Governance needs to be looked at in general.

An AP member said there has been an influx of turtles, and there is an imbalance. She said that at a recent outreach event, a DAR representative told her to contact him if there are interactions with shark tours. If AP members observe shark tours, then they should take pictures and videos and send the evidence to DAR for follow-up.

Regarding Regulatory Review, the Hawaii AP recommends that the Council consider allowing all fishing in the NWHI monument/sanctuary.

C. Community Consultation

Alex Min, Pacific Islands Fisheries Group (PIFG), will provide an update on the IRA community consultation project that includes planned community meetings and the vocational fisheries course. To date, PIFG has conducted public meetings in Guam, CNMI, and Hawaii, and will be traveling to American Samoa in June 2025. The purpose of these meetings was to meet with communities and hear their concerns and needs, as well as identify how climate change is impacting them. Key takeaways from the Hawaii meeting were that shark depredation is a growing issue, along with access. There have been ecological changes and shifts in the fishing culture that call for youth engagement, education, and labor shortages, making it hard to sustain fishing as a viable livelihood. In addition to the community consultation meetings, PIFG will be conducting a Young Fishers Vocation Training that will be held in September 2025.

5. State of Hawaii DLNR Update

Bryan Ishida, Hawai'i DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), presented the agency report for February 2025 to May 2025. During the 2024-2025 deep-seven bottomfish fishing year, 309 commercial marine license (CML) holders made 1,488 trips and reported 140,075 pounds in mixed deep-seven species catch. In December 2024, they saw the highest catch of deep-seven since December 2017, which is an indication that the fishery is still alive and well in terms of the demand for red fish during the holiday season, with calm weather. For the current fishing year, onaga is higher than usual. There is an unusual landscape of catch with higher onaga catch, and DAR will continue to monitor the catch composition ratio between the deep-seven species as the year progresses.

The Kona crab fishery had 17 CML holders making 58 trips and reporting landings of 3,557 pounds. Following the extended closed season and allowance to retain female crabs, there was an observed increase in catch, which may be indicative of renewed interest in the fishery. Currently, the Kona crab fishery remains a secondary fishery until they observe dedicated highliners or an increased market demand. For the 2025 uku (green jobfish) season, 130 CML holders were making 320 trips and reporting landings of 22,079 pounds. This was higher than the previous five years.

In 2025, there were 968 CMLs issued for a revenue of \$127,550. There is a steady decline in CMLs in the non-longline and longline sectors combined. This may continue to decline with the implementation of the commercial marine vessel license. Regarding license updates, the non-resident recreational marine fishing license is now online and required for all non-residents looking to fish non-commercially in Hawai'i. The commercial marine vessel license (CMVL) was available, and 22 longline and 7 non-longline licenses were issued for a revenue of \$41,100. This is a license that allows vessel owners with a CML to attain a CMVL so their vessel can cover everybody on board.

He said six permits for the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument were issued, one for conservation and management, two for research, 2 for Native Hawaiian Practices, and 1 special use permit. There is one permit under review for a special ocean use permit. There was one violation of a fisher in Haleiwa tying up to the FAD.

Regarding harbor infrastructure, there are six harbors in the in-house design phase: one on Kauai, two on Oahu, two on Maui, and one statewide. There are 23 that are undergoing

consultant design: five for Kauai, eight for Oahu, four for Maui, and six for Hawaii Island. There are nine ongoing contracted construction projects for harbors that include Kikiaola, Keehi, Heeia Kea, Ala Wai, Kahana Bay, Lahaina Ferry Pier, Lahaina Wharf, Kahului bathroom, and Pohoiki boat ramp dredging.

An AP member asked what the status of the Pohoiki boat ramp dredging was. Ishida said he would reach out to DOBOR to find out the status of that project.

Another AP asked who the point of contact is for potholes. Ishida said to contact the DOBOR office or the harbor master.

6. Review of Uku Data for Future Management

Rob Ahrens, PIFSC, provided an overview of the uku data for future management. He said the AP asked to look at uku as well as the ability to develop slot limits. The current stock assessment showed that overfishing is not occurring and the stock is not overfished. Currently, there is available information for life history and fishery selectivity that is captured in the 2024 uku stock assessment. However, there are gaps in modeling size-based slot limits, discard mortality, and compliance with regulations that will be explored through the uku management strategy evaluation modeling approach. Uku reach sexual maturity around 43 cm, and this estimate was derived from uku samples that were collected in the MHI and NWHI. For size selectivity, there would be different slot limits between fishing sectors with commercial inshore handline, other gear types targeting smaller uku between 20 and 40 cm, and commercial deep-sea handline targeting larger uku between 40 and 80 cm. The current plan is to explore the potential management option of slow limits on fishing mortality, and will explore this option should stock status change based on the 2024 stock assessment update.

An AP member said he has been catching females, and there is an observed high survivability of going to the broodstock tanks in Kona. There is an operation in Kona that is raising uku and will have them on hand to understand fecundity better. Ahrens said there is an opportunity for cooperative research to get funds to look at more investigations.

Sabater said there was previous discussion on depredation and asked what that would look like under the MSE approach. Ahrens said it can be explored through a potential cooperative research program to understand who is doing the depredation and if the fishing approach or gear is driving different trends and aspects of the fishery. One of the biggest challenges of slot limits is that at some point, the mortality is so high that the slow limits are lost to depredation, and then the slow could lead to a less desirable approach.

An AP member asked if there is a partnership with the State of Hawaii. Ahrens said yes, and there are questions on what that opportunity could look like.

7. Hawaii AP Action Plan Planning for 2025

Council staff provided an overview of the AP Action Plan and projects, which include community outreach, FishMaps, Smart FAD, and the revision of the Hawaii bottomfish management unit species complex.

An AP member asked to convene the Smart FAD working group to develop that plan further. The working group agreed to meet on June 20.

8. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9. Discussion and Recommendations

The Hawaii Advisory Panel made the following recommendations:

Regarding Hawaii Fishery Issues:

- ***The Hawaii AP requests the Council assist the Hawaii small-boat fishery to quantify and address shark depredation issues in order to provide greater context to the declines in fishing in the Hawaii module of the Annual SAFE Report.***

Regarding MHI Uku ACL specifications:

- ***The Hawaii AP recommends the Council select Alternative 4, setting an ACL of 401,020 lbs with a post-season AM. The AP notes that they are not comfortable with the ACL being set utilizing existing non-commercial data and hopes potential refinements of the data and stock assessments can be done with the results of current and future data collection efforts.***

Regarding the Implementation of EM in Hawaii and American Samoa Longline Fisheries:

- **The Hawaii AP recommends Alternative 2b to implement a mandatory EM program based on a voluntary program followed by random selection of the remaining vessels from 2025-2027. Further regarding cost allocation, the HI AP recommends Alternative A, to implement EM with public Federal (NMFS) funding.**

Regarding the Hawaii and American Samoa Longline Fisheries Crew Training Requirement:

- **The Hawaii AP recommends Alternative 1, sub-alternative 1b (implement crew training requirement with a 2-year certification duration), which would allow striking a balance between training effectiveness and burden on the fishery.**

Regarding the EO 14276 :

- **The Hawaii AP recommends the Council consider allowing all fishing in the NWHI monument/sanctuary**

10. Other Business

The next informal AP meeting will be on Friday, June 27.

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.