



203rd Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
June 9-11, 2025

Education and Outreach Report

This report summarizes regional education and outreach efforts by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council primarily from March to May 2025.

Publications

Pacific Islands Fishery News

The spring 2025 issue of the Council's quarterly newsletter (www.wpcouncil.org/wp-council-newsletters) was distributed in late May 2025 primarily through the Constant Contact email list with ~3,500 subscribers. Less than 100 hard copies are directly mailed. A few hundred hard copies of each are distributed through local agencies, fishermen and other community members throughout the island areas, including at the community consultation meetings throughout Hawai'i in April 2025. A few topics are listed below.

Spring 2025

- What the Presidential Proclamation on the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument really means for the Western Pacific
- Outcomes from fisher community engagements in the Mariana Islands and Hawai'i
- Changes happening in the Guam fishing scene, including shifts in tackle shops and fishery infrastructure
- Improving fisheries literacy in American Samoa classrooms through a new Fisheries Training for Educators initiative

Media

The Council received several media requests on the following topics:

- Presidential Proclamation and Executive Orders on fishing in the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument and seafood competitiveness. Executive Director Kitty Simonds, Council Chair Will Sword and Vice Chair for American Samoa Archie Soliai were present in the White House when President Trump signed the Proclamation.
 - April 22, 2025: Simonds was interviewed for [the Conversation, with Catherine Cruz](#) on Hawai'i Public Radio.
 - April 23, 2025: Sword and Soliai [were interviewed](#) with radio station 93KHJ's John Raynar.
 - May 6, 2025: Simonds was interviewed by Teresa Tomassoni at *Inside Climate News* about fisheries and national marine monuments in Hawai'i.
 - Comments were also requested by Hawaii News Now and KHON2 (TV stations); *New York Times*, *Honolulu Star Advertiser* and *Civil Beat* (newspapers); and Australian Broadcast Corporation (radio station).
 - Council released two press releases:

- April 18, 2025 - [President Trump Returns Fishing to US Fishermen in the Pacific Islands](#)
- April 23, 2025 - [Clarifying Impact of President Trump's Action on Pacific Fishing](#), an updated [US EEZs of the US Western Pacific Region map](#) was created to help the public better visualize the parts of the monument affected by the proclamation
 - Numerous news outlets in the Western Pacific Region and across the country picked up the Council's press releases or mentioned the Council (*Hawaii Tribune-Herald*, KITV, *Maui News*, *Big Island Now*, *Samoa News*, *Marianas Press*, *Kuam*, *Pacific Island Times*, *Radio New Zealand Pacific*, *Saving Seafood*, *Atuna*, *National Fisherman*, *Seafood Source*, *People* and many other smaller outlets). There was rampant misinformation in the media that the Council tried to dispel with its April 23 press release, and by directly contacting the authors of various publications.
 - Council Executive Committee and Soliai (American Samoa Government) submitted Letters to the Editor of the *Ka Wai Ola* online monthly publication in response to an article published in the May 2025 issue titled "[Marine National Monument in Jeopardy](#)." The letters were included in the [June 2025 issue](#).
- WPRFMC urging increased federal funding (from *Seafood Source*, based on a March 2025 Council meeting press release), Program Officer Mark Mitsuyasu was interviewed
 - May 6, 2025: [Understaffed Western Pacific Fishery Management Council braces for further cuts](#)

April 10, 2025: Council staff scheduled and supported Alex Min, Pacific Islands Fisheries Group, and Gil Kualii, Hawai'i Advisory Panel vice chair, participation on the Hawaii Matters radio show with Michael T. at Pacific Media Group office in Honolulu. They discussed and promoted the fishing community meetings across Hawai'i.

Conference Support

The 20th anniversary International Pacific Marine Educators Network (IPMEN, <https://ipmen.net>) conference was held April 14-16, 2025, in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, concluding at National Sun Yat-sen University with the global release of the "Takao Declaration." Attended by more than 100 experts and scholars from more than 10 countries, the IPMEN conferees discussed ocean literacy, marine sustainability and the integration of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) with modern marine science. The "Takao Declaration" sets a global vision for the fusion of marine education and TEK.

- Simonds gave one of the keynote speeches remotely titled "Cocktails, Coup and Covid: The Inception, Creation and Growth of IPMEN." The recorded speech was overlaid with a PowerPoint presentation and sent ahead of the conference.
- Mitsuyasu gave an in-person presentation on "Incorporating community observations and traditional fishery knowledge on changing climate into fishery science and management."

Region-Wide Training

Council Member Ongoing Development (CMOD)

A CMOD workshop was held April 30-May 1, 2025, in Vancouver, WA. CMOD is a professional development initiative of the Council Coordination Committee designed to support U.S. regional fishery management council members by facilitating cross-regional exchange and enhancing their knowledge of key issues and procedural skills. Simonds and Council Education and Outreach Coordinator Amy Vandehey are members of the CMOD Steering Committee.

The 2025 CMOD workshop focused on understanding climate-related vulnerabilities, risks and uncertainties in fisheries management, as well as effective strategies for communicating complex topics. Funded through the councils in partnership with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the training included members, advisors and staff from all eight regions.

The Western Pacific Council was represented by members Frank Perez (Guam) and Gene Weaver (CNMI), as well as Advisory Panel vice chairs Nate Ilaoa (American Samoa) and Gil Kualii (Hawaii). Participants played a key role in sharing regional perspectives and examples throughout the event. Ilaoa presented on the SEEM* process during a session focused on frameworks for considering and addressing climate-related uncertainty and risk. Kualii spoke as part of a panel titled “Pathways for incorporating on-the-water observations and experience.”

The workshop agenda and associated meeting documents can be found at: www.fisherycouncils.org/cmod-workshops/2025.

Marine Resource Education Program (MREP)

The inaugural MREP Western Pacific Fishery Science & Management Workshop, held in Honolulu April 4-10, 2025, brought together fishers, community leaders, scientists and managers from across Hawaii, Guam, the CNMI and American Samoa. About 20 participants engaged in hands-on activities and discussions, deepening their understanding of fisheries science and the Council process. Many Council staff, advisors and affiliates supported the workshop through presentations, leading activities and by being members of the MREP Western Pacific Exploratory Committee.

MREP, founded by fishermen in Maine in 2001, is a nationally recognized training program designed to empower fishermen to have a voice in the fisheries they depend on. The program, facilitated by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), offers a neutral platform outside the regulatory process. It gives fishermen the opportunity to learn the nuts and bolts of marine fisheries science and management, and to demystify acronyms and vocabulary. Participants gain tools and insights for effective engagement in their regional fishery management council and connect with key regional fishery science and management experts.

Feedback from the Western Pacific workshop participants was overwhelmingly positive. The Steering Committee met May 21-22, 2025, to review evaluations and discuss changes for the next iteration of the annual workshop, tentatively planned for fall 2025 or spring 2026. Workshop presentations can be found at: <https://mrep.gmri.org/alumni/westernpacific>.

Region-Wide Outreach

Regional Initiatives – Hawaii

May 17, 2025: Council staff supported the 2025 POP Fishing & Marine Expo with an outreach booth featuring magnet making with Council-managed species and pledges to support local seafood, and an informal survey asking visitors about the types of changes they have been seeing when out on the water/fishing. Outreach materials included 2025 lunar calendars, newsletters, fish facts and recipe handouts, fish activity sheets and Speakers Bureau flyers.

Along with the local organization and vendor booths, POP teamed up with the U.S. Coast Guard to kick off National Safe Boating Week, promoting marine safety and career opportunities in Hawai‘i’s fishing and marine industries.

May 31, 2025: Bishop Museum 2025 Science and Sustainability Festival brought together Museum scientists, educators, cultural practitioners and community partners to highlight the ongoing work needed to protect biodiversity and build a sustainable future in Hawai‘i. This one-day festival features keiki (children) activities, workshops, exhibition highlights, special presentations and interactive performances with scientists, cultural practitioners and community organizers on the front lines of biodiversity research and conservation efforts in Hawai‘i. More than 2,600 people attended the event, primarily families.

Council staff joined more than 40 community partners that had educational booths throughout the Museum’s central grassy areas and buildings. Magnet making was a huge hit at the table and visitors of all ages lined up to color and create mementos of their pledge to support local seafood. Visitors also learned about different inside and outside parts of a fish and took home Council 101 handouts, newsletters, fish facts and recipe handouts, 2025 lunar calendars, fish activity sheets and Speakers Bureau flyers.

Regional Initiatives – American Samoa

April 19-25, 2025: Council staff supported the 2025 Steinlager I‘a Lapo‘a Fishing Tournament by distributing its 2025 classroom- and fishermen-style lunar calendars to participating teams. This outreach effort aimed to share fisheries-related information and promote awareness of lunar cycles and traditional fishing knowledge. The Council’s participation aligned with its ongoing efforts to engage with the fishing community and support education and outreach initiatives in the region.

Regional Initiatives – Guam

May 17, 2025: The Council had an outreach table at the Micronesia Mall celebrating Safe Boating Week hosted by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, to highlight the importance of preparedness, proper use of marine safety equipment, and safety at sea. About 20 tables were organized around the mall’s center court and had the Governor of Guam Safe Boating Week start and the legislative speaker and vice speaker giving certificates of recognition to the organizers. Council staff, joined by Guam AP members, interacted with the public and shared outreach material including lunar calendars, fish recipes, Council process booklets, Council newsletters and monographs, and a Spin the Wheel game.

Regional Initiatives – CNMI

Council staff supported the following events:

March 8, 2025: The 5th Annual Wahoo in the Marianas fishing tournament, organized by Tasi to Table at the Smiling Cove Marina in Saipan. The outreach table shared newsletters, cookbooks, educational handouts, lunar calendars and giveaways such as stickers, hats and canvas bags.

April 12, 2025: The 21st Annual Mahi-Mahi Derby, organized by the Saipan Fishermen's Association at the Smiling Cove Marina. The outreach table shared newsletters, cookbooks, educational handouts, lunar calendars and giveaways such as stickers, hats and canvas bags.

May 17, 2025: Tasi to Table's 2nd Annual CNMI Reel Heroes International Fishing Derby. The Council donated canvas bags, educational handouts and lunar calendars to category winners.

May 30-June 1, 2025: The first-ever Fisher's Proclamation Signing for Fisher's Recognition Week, along with Council and AP members, by contributing as members of planning committees. Organized by the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) at the Garapan Fishing Base in Saipan, the event recognized fishers and their significance to the community and traditions. Staff also hosted an outreach table at the associated Family Day event on June 1, sharing newsletters, educational handouts, cookbooks, lunar calendars and promotional items such as stickers, hats and canvas bags.