Improving Fishery and Community Resiliency Across the U.S. Pacific Islands Region

Community Consultation & Capacity Building
Trip Report 2/28 - 6/30

Prepared for the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Cover Photo Credit: Joshua DeMello, Manu‘a Islands, American Samoa

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This work is funded under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Council’s funding support through **AWARD NUMBER NA24NMFX441C0008.**

Submitted by: Pacific Islands Fisheries Group 15 July 2025

Table of Contents

“We live off the ocean, - it’s not just us using the water, we are also a species to the ocean” - Guelo, Rota, CNMI

Executive Summary

Pacific Islands Fisheries Group in conjunction with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) conducted 16 community consultation meetings from February 25th to June 30th across American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the main Hawaiian Islands as part of a regional effort to engage the fishing community. The purpose of these meetings was to utilize the Council's public consultation process to listen, learn and understand the impacts and issues U.S. Pacific Island communities are facing. The team facilitated community engagements, meeting with more than 275 fishermen and community members. Through the course of the meetings, over 410 comments, ideas, and observations were recorded and logged (see Annex). These community voices covered four key categories: environmental change, community observations, barriers to fishing, and recommendations for the future. Specific issues ranged from warming waters, disappearance of seasonal fish runs, increased military activities, lack of catch data, and concerns about lack of market opportunities. The following report highlights feedback from the community, and recommendations for future engagements.

1. Introduction

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional councils established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to manage fisheries in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) ranging from 3 to 200 nautical miles. The Council is responsible for developing and implementing fishery ecosystem plans for waters surrounding Hawai'i, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and U.S. Pacific Remote Island Areas. Along with ecosystem plans, the Council's guiding mission is to promote sustainable fisheries, protect marine ecosystems and support the livelihoods of fishing communities through science-based decision-making and stakeholder engagement. Community consultations and listening sessions are a cornerstone to the successful process of supporting U.S. sustainable fisheries and communities.

The Pacific Islands Fisheries Group (PIFG) was tasked to plan, lead, and facilitate community consultation meetings in the region under Community Engagement and Capacity Building with the Council under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Community and Climate Change funding. In February 2025, the Pacific Islands Fisheries Group and Council staff initiated a series of outreach and engagements with communities across the region, first traveling to the Marianas, then the main Hawaiian Islands, and concluding with American Samoa in June. During the course of the meetings, the facilitators engaged with fishermen from different backgrounds, experiences, and interests, shared information on the purpose and management of federal fisheries, and listened to the community. Community members in turn provided feedback on changes they have observed in their waters, challenges fishing communities are facing, and barriers to sustainable fishing.

2. Methodology

Pacific Islands Fisheries Group, with over two decades of experience in community engagement, outreach, and facilitation, worked within the Council consultation process and utilized Protocols and Tips for Visiting and Working in the Territories developed by the WPRFMC.[1] The team organized venues, logistics, and promotion of the events through coordination with the Council staff, Island Coordinators, and local contractors.

The team developed outreach materials, shared informational flyers, and engaged community members via social media, community and network outreach, and by contacting organizations engaged in fisheries and related coastal work. Each meeting was held at a venue suited to the needs of the community, ranging from conference halls and community centers to hotel meeting rooms. As some meeting areas were more remote and lacked services, the best available venue was set up and coordinated through the local government. Meetings were scheduled for 2 to 2.5 hours, depending on the location and time allotted. Meetings were set in the evening for

[1] WPRFMC Protocols and Tips for Visiting and Working in the Territories. 2024. Retrieved July 15,2025, from: https://www.wpcouncil.org/protocols-and-tips-for-visiting-and-working-in-the-territories

most events to maximize community attendance, though this did vary based on the cultural protocols of the region. During the meetings, Pacific Islands Fisheries Group followed a standardized agenda (Appendix B), beginning with an explanation of their purpose and the background of the community consultation process. They introduced the Council, shared the fishers' observation process, and engaged the community through a series of facilitated questions aligned with the intent of the project.

For each meeting, Council staff and Pacific Islands Fisheries Group provided informational material on federal fisheries, the Council's work, and utilized a sign-in sheet to record attendance. A notetaker recorded the feedback, comments, and discussions raised during the meeting, which were shared and reviewed by Council staff and Pacific Islands Fisheries Group. Following each meeting, a verbal hot wash was conducted to identify areas for improvement, key discussion topics, and necessary follow-ups.

Following each regional trip, a short synopsis report was produced for Council Members, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation summarizing community feedback and voices. Finally, this report concludes the first round of meetings of the project, summarizing key points, feedback, trends and recommendations. This report will be incorporated into the planning process for round 2 from August to December 2025 and beyond.

3. Community Meeting Summary

Each community meeting involved unique comments and ideas brought out by the individuals in attendance. While Saipan hosted a larger meeting crowd, Tinian and Rota were much more focused with a smaller, but very passionate group of fishermen. Meetings across the Hawaiian Islands ranged from full rooms to a few attendees on Lāna‘i interested in federal fisheries. American Samoa had average-sized groups of attendees, with the meeting in Tutuila having a large contingent of agency staff. The community was interested in federal fisheries, opportunities to improve their fisheries, and how to understand and be a part of the discussion of ecosystem changes. Overall, common themes of ecosystem change concerns across the board were focused on fishers observing reduced reef fish and fish populations in local waters, absence of seasonal runs of atulai (*Selar crumenophthalmus*) and mañåhak (*Siganus spinus*), and changing seasonal arrival and runs of ti'ao (*Mulloidichthys flavolineatus*) and i'e' (*Caranx ignobilis*). Along with seasonal abundance, absence, and changes in seasonality, fishers expressed a high concern about the increasing abundance of sharks and depredation of catch. While each community provided unique and place-based observations and trends, there were several overarching messages that stood out, which help align future work and will be covered in the discussion section. The notes below are paraphrased for clarity and flow, but closely reflect the original phrasing and intent captured by the notetaker.

Mañåhak (juvenile rabbitfish) are caught using the traditional practice of throwing a talaya (cast net) as the fish gather in large numbers over the reefs(PC: Pacific Daily News).

3.a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Island

Meetings in CNMI took place from February 27 to March 1 across Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Each meeting was set up in a similar style to allow for communities to learn about the ongoing project and then contribute their insights and observations of changes in their ecosystem. The focus of CNMI was a lack of business infrastructure to export fish, observations of declining fish stocks, increasing shark depredation, and warming waters. There were also discussions about others coming into CNMI waters and fishing, not receiving “credit” for that catch in stock assessments, and general lack of management and or regulations. There was also concern about contract workers entering and fishing the same as native peoples without any regulation or licensing, and a general lack of understanding of what is in their waters from a monitoring perspective. Access was another main concern with the military expansion in Guam, Tinian, and Saipan—how this would impact the communities, both good and bad, was a clear priority. Access to areas have already been restricted and additional military firing ranges are being built or near completion, which would come with associated closures and restrictions. The communities were open and eager for opportunities to educate new fishers, youth, and community on sustainable practices, seeing this as one of the key solutions to keeping healthy fish stocks. There was also a strong interest for opportunities and exporting of fish products to stimulate the economy and create revenue.

3.a.1 Saipan

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Saipan

Location: Saipan, CNMI
Date: 2/28/2025
Participants: 27 attendees included: Local fishers, resource managers, small-boat program representatives, and community members

Observed Environmental Changes

Participants shared observations of noticeable changes in local marine conditions and species presence:

- The mañåhak used to run every cycle. We haven't seen them for two or three years.
- Atulai didn't show up this past season. Two years ago it was abundant, but last year nothing.
- We're not seeing convict tang anymore. It used to be common.

- Rabbitfish used to school around Laolao, but they haven't been around in a while.

- Buoy data on wind, current, and temperature doesn't match what we experience on the water.

Barriers to Fishing

A range of logistical, regulatory, and economic challenges were discussed:

- Fuel prices and gear costs make it harder to fish consistently.

- Fishing permits are required for methods we've used for generations like talaya nets, even though they're for subsistence.

- Half of our waters are off-limits due to closures. It doesn't feel like that's based on science.

- When closures happen and no data is collected, it feels like we're being managed without input.

- We have regulations, but not enough enforcement capacity. Even the scientists and agencies are underfunded.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Participants described long-standing cultural ties to fishing and concerns about ongoing environmental and development pressures:

- When the skipjack and i'e run in Tinian, it brings the whole community together.

- Some species we traditionally relied on like turtles or giant clams are now restricted. That affects how we pass down knowledge.

- There are too many people in the water from tourism. That pressure is changing the ecosystem.

- We're worried about contamination and runoff from military training areas affecting reef health and seafood safety.

- There's a disconnect between the regulations and the community. People want to comply, but they don't feel heard.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Community members expressed interest in better data, collaboration, and transparent decision-making:

- There needs to be a way to access historical data and studies related to toxicity, reef health, and species decline.
- Pilot projects like small-boat scenario planning could help test ideas that work for local realities.
- More consistent engagement and follow-up is needed. One-time meetings aren't enough.
- We need to reestablish advisory groups or coalitions that can regularly bring information to decision-makers.
- Policies should consider food security, not just enforcement or conservation.

3.a.2 Tinian

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Tinian

Location: Tinian, CNMI
Date: 2/29/2025
Participants: 7 attendees included: Local fishers, community members, agency staff, and local officials

Observed Environmental Changes

Participants shared observations of noticeable changes in local marine conditions and species presence:

- Scribbled rabbitfish and octopus, once commonly found around the island, are no longer seen in traditional areas.

- Reef fish populations have declined, with divers frequently returning to the same locations and depths, contributing to scarcity.

- The steep sloped banks are now flatter and feel farther away than before, possibly affecting fishing outcomes.

- Frequent earthquakes have been a factor that impacts fish behavior and availability.

- Marlin season was strong last year, and mahimahi came early and in abundance this year, which drove prices down.

- Tuna have not been seen in the area for the last four to five months, which is unusual.

- Weather has been windier and cooler than in previous years, with swells and currents also shifting.

- A foreign fleet was reportedly seen fishing near Aguigan, raising concerns about offshore activity.

Barriers to Fishing

A range of logistical, regulatory, and economic challenges were discussed:

- High fuel costs make it difficult to fish consistently, despite the availability of pelagic species.

- There are only 18 active boats on the island, with very few full-time commercial fishers.

- Fishermen are willing to report catch data, but the forms and systems needed to do so are not available.

- Commercial fish licenses are not clearly defined or required, leading to inconsistencies in reporting and regulation.

- Fishing permits are not enforced because of limited personnel, and people are hesitant to report violations by relatives or neighbors.

- Contract workers harvest marine resources without regulation, sometimes not eating what they catch.

- Ice is expensive and limits how long fish can be kept; this affects small-scale sales and drying practices.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Participants described long-standing cultural ties to fishing and concerns about ongoing environmental and development pressures:

- Fishing remains closely tied to food, health, and tradition, with people often ordering fish directly from boats or drying it to sell.
- Fish is viewed as food, not a trophy, and younger generations are becoming less engaged with fishing.
- The cost of boats and gear is preventing more people from becoming fishers, with fewer new fishers each year.
- Traditional fishing runs, such as the atulai season, used to draw large crowds, creating community-wide events.
- Contamination, runoff, and reef degradation due to military training and coastal development have been ongoing concerns.
- There is a lack of protection for local fishing practices; existing rules don't always match community needs.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Community members expressed interest in better data, collaboration, and transparent decision-making:

- Aquaculture projects, like rabbitfish cultivation, are a potential solution for declining species.
- There is a need to enforce existing regulations and provide tools such as logbooks and reporting forms for fishermen to comply.
- Incentives such as fuel, ice, or fishing derbies could help encourage participation in data reporting.
- Consistent communication and follow-up are needed to ensure meetings lead to action.
- Future meetings should be advertised earlier, with posters and QR codes placed at docks and community bulletin boards.
- School engagement and outreach are ways to teach the next generation about sustainable fishing.

3.a.3 Rota

Rota (Luta) backside of island, PC: Joshua DeMello

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Rota

Location: Rota, CNMI
Date: 3/1/2025
Participants: 4 Attendees included: Local government official, fisher, community member, and facility manager

The Rota meeting occurred simultaneously with a large event, which detracted greatly from the number of attendees. The Mayor agreed to work with Pacific Islands Fisheries Group to ensure more fishers attended the next meeting and participated in the discussions.

Observed Environmental Changes

Participants shared observations of noticeable changes in local marine conditions and species presence:

- There are fewer fish than before, and the decline is noticeable across nearshore areas.
- Ciguatera is affecting red snapper, and worms have been found in other fish species.
- Rota does not have the same shark problems as Guam.
- Older fishers are surprised by how deep younger spearfishers are diving, 80 to 90 feet, something that wasn’t possible with older gear.

- When surf conditions are high, fishers often go hunting in the mountains instead of fishing.

- Fishing activity is tied closely to environmental conditions, and there is no consistent monitoring of local fish stocks.

Barriers to Fishing

A range of logistical, regulatory, and economic challenges were discussed:

- Fishing gear is very expensive and there are no tackle stores on Rota.

- Young fishers rely on sharing boats and splitting fuel costs to fish economically.

- Only about 10 active boats operate on Rota, and most fishing occurs in small, coordinated groups.

- Fishers sell their catch informally through WhatsApp and social media group chats, as there is no central market or dockside sales area.

- There are concerns about individuals from other islands fishing in Rota waters without regulation.

- Participants raised the idea of creating a permitting system specific to Rota, as current CNMI-wide regulations don't reflect local needs.

- Some fishers have exported tuna from Rota to Guam, while others participate in tournaments, but face high entry and operational costs.

- A few recent incidents were mentioned involving tournament fishers transporting undocumented individuals.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Participants described long-standing cultural ties to fishing and concerns about ongoing environmental and development pressures:

- Fishing is often a family or community effort, with younger generations stepping in as key providers.

- The average income on Rota is low, around $16,000 per year, and fishing contributes significantly to household food and income.

- There is no formal retail market for fish, so fishers sell directly to community members through digital platforms.

- When ocean conditions are poor, subsistence shifts to land-based hunting, showing flexibility in food gathering practices.

- Local government officials emphasized the importance of building youth interest in natural resource jobs, including fisheries.

- There is strong interest in hosting fishing tournaments to promote fishing culture and community engagement.

- Concerns were raised about population changes and how migration may be affecting fish availability and local reliance on marine resources.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Community members expressed interest in better data, collaboration, and transparent decision-making:

- There is a need to assess Rota's fish stocks independently from Saipan and develop localized management tools.

- Permitting systems should distinguish between residents and nonresidents, with consideration for regulating contract workers.

- Grant opportunities are needed to support fishing gear access, youth participation, and capacity building.

- Participants suggested coordinating in advance with the Mayor's Office to schedule meetings and maximize turnout.

- Weekdays during regular work hours were identified as the best time for meetings, with the Mayor offering administrative leave for staff to attend.

- Posters, social media outreach, and in-person coordination were suggested to improve outreach before future events.

- Providing snacks or meals from local vendors and purchasing fish for events were offered as ways to involve the community and support local fishers.

- Consistent follow-up and engagement were requested to ensure that community feedback leads to real outcomes.

3.b Guam

Two community meetings were conducted in Guam in the villages of Malesso and Dededo. Fishers and community members voiced concerns over similar challenges including: declining fish stocks, shifting species distributions, and increasing shark interactions, which they linked to rising ocean temperatures, runoff, and habitat degradation. Participants described changes to traditional fishing areas, noting that marine preserves were predator-heavy and lacked local input in their design. In both villages, there were strong calls for better enforcement, youth education, and inclusion of indigenous knowledge in science and management decisions. Many expressed frustration that locals follow the rules while outsiders often do not, and that cultural fishing practices are being lost due to overregulation, lack of access, and generational disconnection. Both communities stressed the need for locally informed policies that balance conservation with cultural survival and food security.

3.b.1 Malesso

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Malesso (Merizo)

Location: Malesso, Guam
Date: 3/4/2025
Participants: 25 attendees included: Local fishers, Mayor, community elders, youth fishers, and resource managers

Observed Environmental Changes

Participants described a range of changes in their marine environment and ecosystem:

- There are fewer fish than before, possibly due to storms, increased fishing pressure, or habitat loss.
- Water temperatures affect where fish are found; warmer waters drive fish offshore and reduce reef activity.
- Ahi bites have declined during warm temperature periods.
- Fishing around FADs has become less productive than in past generations.
- Military sonar activity may be affecting fish runs.

- Shark populations have increased, especially in preserves.
- Unusual sightings of species like vampire fish and absence of others like anglerfish were noted.
- Rabbitfish runs have been lower or absent, and mud crab populations have declined over the past 16 years.
- Lagoon environments have changed; sandbars are burying coral heads and water temperatures are rising dramatically at low tide.
- Visibility has decreased, and corals once visible are now obscured by turbidity.
- Runoff and burning are believed to be contributing to ecosystem degradation.

Barriers to Fishing

Participants noted economic, enforcement, and governance-related obstacles:

- Fishers have to go farther offshore, spending more money to catch fish.
- Markets are buying fish from Palau or elsewhere due to local scarcity.
- Locals feel constrained by fishing regulations while outsiders do not follow the same rules.
- There is a perception of misaligned blame, with science and legislation not fully understanding fisher realities.
- Marine preserves are seen as predator-heavy and lacking balance, with calls to open them to restore equilibrium.
- Enforcement is viewed as insufficient or poorly timed.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Participants emphasized the importance of intergenerational knowledge and cultural continuity:

- Younger generations need more education in fishing traditions and ocean safety.

- Fishing should be taught young, and there were suggestions to designate safe fishing areas for kids.

- Social media has shifted motivations for fishing, with some prioritizing showmanship over subsistence.

- Fishing shouldn't become a history lesson, it needs to remain a living practice.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Suggestions for improving fisheries management included:

- Create programs to engage youth and educate them early about ocean stewardship.

- Use grants or neighborhood watch-style funding to support community-driven monitoring.

- Establish clear buoy markers to help fishers understand jurisdiction boundaries (e.g., marine reserve areas).

- Increase consistent and community-informed enforcement.

- Support locally driven research and make NOAA or other buoy data more accessible.

- Rebalance conservation efforts to support both sustainability and cultural fishing rights.

3.b.2 Dededo

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Dededo

Location: Dededo, Guam
Date: 3/5/2025
Participants: 13 attendees included: Local fishers, mayor, and community members

Observed Environmental Changes

Participants shared observations of noticeable changes in marine ecosystems, fish behavior, and ocean conditions:

- There are more sharks, possibly due to larger predatory fish in the area.
- Nearshore shark depredation is occurring right from shore in some places.
- Sand is disappearing in areas like Tumon Bay, possibly related to the loss of sea cucumbers that once helped maintain sandy substrates.
- Large coral die-offs are happening, with rubble replacing formerly live coral particularly after bleaching events.
- Waterspouts have been observed in recent years, a new and concerning phenomenon for fishers.

- The Tumon Bay Marine Protected Area (MPA) has not yielded the larger fish that were expected after 20 years of closure.

- Oil sheens from suntan lotions and tourism activity are visible in Tumon waters, contributing to water quality issues.

- There has been an increase in observations of oceanic whitetip and silky sharks, which are now showing up close to shore.

- Seasonal runs of pelagic fish like mahi and wahoo are less predictable and less productive than in the past.

- Species such as ruby opelu (mackerel scad) and saltwater catfish are being observed inshore where they weren't seen before.

Barriers to Fishing

Participants raised various economic, regulatory, and social challenges affecting their ability to fish:

- There are more fishers but fewer fish.

- Fuel costs and rough waters make it harder to fish, especially for those who need to travel farther offshore.

- Commercial operators like jet skis and tour boats often disrupt fishing, and enforcement is inconsistent.

- Tourism and military activity compete with traditional uses of marine resources.

- Many MPAs and other restrictions have reduced access to once-productive fishing areas.

- Fishermen expressed frustration with data being collected without enough fisher input or collaboration.

- Lack of support and respect from inshore and offshore fishers was noted, along with illegal and disrespectful fishing practices.

- Some expressed concern that scientific regulations are being created without incorporating indigenous knowledge or lived experience.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Participants reflected on cultural ties to fishing and concerns about erosion of traditional knowledge:

- Fishing traditions are fading, like the talaya method and knowledge of fishing seasons based on the moon.
- Traditional knowledge is being lost because younger generations are not practicing fishing as they once did.
- The local population is shrinking in proportion to incoming populations, leading to cultural dilution.
- Some fishers catch without regard for conservation by keeping small fish and ignoring traditional harvest cycles.
- Community members want to see indigenous fishing rights protected and revitalized.
- Fishing is part of Chamorro identity, and it was emphasized that cultural practices must be maintained even in the face of climate change and modernization.
- Military buildup and increased immigration are creating additional competition for marine resources.
- Fishermen shared stories of fishing with family in the past, noting a stark difference in fish abundance and water clarity compared to today.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Community members emphasized the need for collaborative solutions, better enforcement, and inclusion of local knowledge:

- Enforcement must improve to ensure both local and outside fishers follow the rules.
- Scientific processes should expand to include traditional knowledge and more localized input.
- Testimonies during fisheries meetings should be more than three minutes to allow fishers to share meaningful stories and data.
- Support is needed for local fishers through programs, funding, and better communication.

- Aquaponics and aquaculture may offer future opportunities to address food security and declining wild stocks.

- There’s strong interest in holding more community-based conversations around indigenous fishing rights.

- The Mayor and Vice Mayor expressed commitment to advancing discussions about fishing access, conservation, and culture.

- Participants encouraged greater participation in independent data collection programs to help guide science with on-the-water realities.

3.c Hawaiian Islands

Across the main Hawaiian Islands, community members emphasized deep concern over ecological changes linked to climate shifts, altered streamflows, human development, predator population increases, and cultural erosion. Many participants reported seeing fewer nearshore species, disappearance of limu and freshwater sources, and increased sedimentation. In nearly every meeting, from Kona to Lānaʻi and Keʻehi, community members linked land-based activities like construction to marine decline. While offshore fisheries were described as relatively stable, nearshore areas were seen as severely affected by cumulative stressors, including pollution, stream diversions, and invasive species. Turtles, monk seals, and sharks were frequently mentioned as growing in number and outcompeting people for marine resources. Participants also described unpredictable current patterns, fewer spawning events, and a noticeable shift in seasonal fish patterns.

Beyond environmental observations, participants voiced strong frustrations with state and federal management systems. They highlighted the disconnect between local empirical knowledge and regulatory decisions, particularly those made without adequate community input. Barriers to fishing included high fuel prices, youth disengagement, coastal development blocking access, and policies that failed to account for community-based stewardship. Many advocated for renewed investment in education, culturally grounded regulations, and youth-focused fishing mentorships. There was interest in restoring traditional systems of governance, such as konohiki-style (traditional) management, and integrating science with local knowledge to co-create responsive and respectful management approaches. Communities across the islands called for a return of resources, fair representation in policymaking, and a balanced approach to resource management that includes Hawaiʻi’s fishing families.

3.c.1 Kona, Hawai‘i

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Kona

Location: Kona, Hawai‘i
Date: 3/13/2025
Participants: 28 attendees including: commercial and subsistence fishers from across Kona coast

Observed Environmental Changes

- There’s been a noticeable increase in shark depredation; oceanic whitetip sharks are the biggest issue, not nearshore sharks.
- Steno (dolphin) are now taking larger ‘ahi than before, damaging more catch, even when brought in quickly.
- The average ‘ahi size has dropped to around 70 lbs, with “porpoise” [dolphin] school ‘ahi around 90 lbs; once they were 130–150 lbs, which is concerning.
- There was a significant south swell last year that brought trash and rough conditions across the islands.
- Currents have changed to stronger and more erratic, requiring double buoy setups and making trolling less effective.

- This was the worst season for mahimahi in recent memory. The environment has clearly shifted.

Barriers to Fishing

- Longer effort is yielding fewer fish due to shark damage.
- Fishermen feel used by researchers; they contributed to shark tagging research and are now being negatively impacted by the resulting protections.
- Shark tours around buoys are increasing shark aggregation and harming small-boat commercial fishers.
- Shortline operations are setting too many lines, some reportedly over a mile in length despite the line length limit.
- Strong competition from imports is hurting Native Hawaiian fishers who already struggle with regulations and rising operational costs.
- There is frustration over inaccurate data from catch reports that don't reflect the true abundance or effort due to fear of regulatory backlash.
- Protected species rules driven by tourism (like "porpoise" [dolphin] interaction bans) are limiting fishing opportunities.
- There's a disconnect between fishers and policymakers; people keep attending meetings, but don't see real change, causing meeting fatigue.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

- There is great regret among fishers who participated in shark research; it feels like their cooperation backfired.
- As Polynesians, fishers feel the territory is theirs, not shark tour companies or outside interests.
- Fishers noted that Native Hawaiians historically ate sharks and had shark heiau, but today, sharks are seen as untouchable.
- The idea of "fishing replenishment areas" is viewed as a myth; fishers argue there's no real spillover benefit.

- Article 12 Section 7 gathering rights are being referenced to reinforce Native Hawaiian access to marine resources.

- Frustration over new seasonal closures and increasing regulations tied to "green money" received by external groups.

- Fishers used to have a market for sharks and wanted to see sustainable harvest reconsidered.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

- Regulate shark tourism near FADs; stop increasing depredation hotspots.

- Reform shortline regulations limit one set per vessel to reduce pressure.

- Create a shortline registry, similar to bottomfish, to allow enforcement to track and limit use.

- Adjust lines for replenishment zones; let’s revisit the drawing board—fishers don’t see evidence of replenishment.

- Ensure labels reflect source support for mandatory COOL (country of origin labeling) with clear identification for small-boat vs longline fish.

- Provide tangible solutions after meetings; fishers want to see actual change, not just more talk.

- Support traditional fishing rights and practices; apply Article 12 provisions as legal grounding for access.

3.c.2 Hilo, Hawai‘i

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Hilo

Location: Hilo, Hawai‘i
Date: 3/14/2025
Participants: 20 attendees including: commercial trollers, subsistence fishers, local business owners, marine scientists, and community members from East Hawai‘i

Observed Environmental Changes

Community members consistently noted how climate and land-use changes like redirected groundwater, increased wave action, or sedimentation from upland activity have dramatically shifted their nearshore and offshore ecosystems. Concerns about the degradation of fishponds and freshwater flows were central to many comments.

- The limu is gone where we used to gather it along the shoreline, now we don't know where it went.
- Pollution and redirected freshwater have changed our coastline; the fishponds that once fed us can't survive without it.
- After the lava flow, the nursery habitats changed, and now there are fewer juvenile fish.
- Winter seas are rougher, and rains are more frequent so we can’t go out safely on our 14-foot boats like before.
- King tides weren’t something we talked about before, but now we hear it all the time.

Barriers to Fishing

Participants shared that access to resources has diminished due to environmental shifts, declining abundance, financial strain, and equipment needs. Fishing has become more difficult, unpredictable, and expensive for local families.

- You can't feed your family when you're stuck on land because of rough seas.
- Ika shibi fleet is much smaller now; you hardly see a 200 lb "gorilla" 'ahi anymore.
- Used to be lots of aku around the FADs, now they're hard to find.
- I had to switch to frozen poke because fresh is too expensive or unavailable.
- My son goes fishing less now, he can't offset the cost anymore.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Several speakers emphasized ecosystem changes affecting traditional practices and local diets. There was concern about overprotection of species, species shifts, and imbalance in marine ecosystems.

- Without freshwater, there's no nehu (Hawaiian anchovy), and without nehu, there's no aku.
- You see more sharks now, especially blacktips in Hilo Bay. We catch them by accident when we're targeting pāpio.
- Fish are smarter. Kole (surgeonfish) don't bite like they used to. And āholehole (Hawaiian flagtail) disappeared after that sewage issue in Honokōhau.
- Turtles are overprotected. Now they're everywhere, and it's thrown off the balance.
- Seeing more ta'ape and knifejaw, but fewer rainbow runners and āholehole.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

The group called for improved education, culturally grounded regulation, and more community voice in rulemaking. Enforcement alone isn't working, and the system should be made responsive to real fishing conditions.

- We need more outreach, not just enforcement; people need to understand why the rules are there.

- Some laws don’t make sense. Like why can you fish for crabs with a net but not with a line?

- If regulations need to change, give us a real seat at the table to help do it.

- We want our kids to learn how to fish and how to share their catch, fish smart and understand the system.

- Having a voice is one thing, but having a voice that leads to actual change is what matters.

3.c.3 Kahului, Maui

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Maui

Location: Maui, Hawai‘i
Date: 4/22/2025
Participants: 14 attendees including: commercial and subsistence fishers, community advocates, cultural practitioners, and shoreline users from across West and South Maui

Observed Environmental Changes

Participants emphasized significant changes in nearshore and offshore environments due to sedimentation, climate shifts, and altered freshwater flows. Coastal development and historic land use were also linked to ecosystem degradation.

- The grounds changed—used to be sand and mud, now it’s all rocks and different species.
- We used to walk on the reef in Kahakuloa, now it’s impossible, something’s changed.
- In the 1980s Ma‘alaea had vibrant coral and seaweed, now it’s bare.
- Runoff, cesspools, and connections to Keālia Pond must be affecting the limu.

Barriers to Fishing

Community members described increased shark depredation, overregulation, reduced access due to coastal development, and economic barriers, all limiting their ability to fish effectively and safely.

- Shark depredation is worse than ever, gotta bring fish in fast or lose them.
- Used to lose 1 out of 5, now it's 5 lost to 1.
- Oceanic conditions are harsher; small boats can't make it out like before.
- Beach access is gone, taken by the rich. The island is shrinking, not sea-level rising.
- Fishing costs too much now, and we have less time to fish.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Discussions focused on the cultural importance of fishing and access to traditional gathering areas. Participants highlighted a shift in local fish populations, increased presence of turtles and sharks, and impacts from external harvesters.

- We have more turtles now, but they eat all the limu and fish can’t compete.
- Sharks used to be scared of us, now they come in close and attack.
- Hagi (triggerfish), whales, turtles, and Galápagos sharks have increased; everything’s shifting.
- At Lahaina, Micronesian folks are taking everything, even loli (Hawaiian sea cucumber), and selling them.
- There’s more poaching, especially post-COVID, and sales on social media aren’t being tracked.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Participants called for unified land and ocean policies, stronger community involvement in regulation, recognition of true commercial fishers, and educational efforts for youth. Concerns about data transparency and government responsiveness were also raised.

- The land and ocean are managed separately, and that’s a mistake, they must be collectively managed together.

- We should define a true commercial fisher, too many part-timers are hurting the system.
- Where is the data going? We submit reports, but never hear back from NOAA.
- HMRFS (Hawai'i Marine Recreational Fishing Survey) data collectors barely stop by and we have only seen two assignments a week for all of Maui.
- We need to educate the next generation about fishing as the purpose is to feed your family, not posting photos.
- Incentives like tax cuts could encourage fishers to share data.

3.c.4 Lānaʻi

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Lānaʻi

Location: Lānaʻi, Hawaiʻi
Date: 4/23/2025
Participants: 3 attendees including: cultural practitioners, Community-based Subsistence Fishing Area organizer, educators, subsistence and small-boat fishers

Observed Environmental Changes

Community members described sediment runoff, altered freshwater flows, marine species imbalance, and a post-wildfire shift in local fishery dynamics as major environmental concerns. The decline of limu and limu-dependent species like shrimp was attributed to pollution, turtle overpopulation, and infrastructure changes.

- Sediment erosion and overpopulation of turtles are throwing off the balance; there's even tumors on the turtles.

- King tides weren't something we paid attention to before, but now the impact is noticeable.

- Lānaʻi used to be rich with limu, but it's harder to find now pollution and changes to the sewer system might be part of the reason.

- Manauea (limu) cages won't survive the winter; it gets too cold here for them.

- Shrimp populations are declining too; they're affected by the changes in limu and sediment.

Barriers to Fishing

Local knowledge holders expressed concern that regulatory frameworks conflict with traditional practices and that empirical knowledge is often dismissed. The decline in nehu, post-COVID fish availability, and burdensome new size regulations were raised as practical barriers to fishing sustainably.

- Minimum size rules force us to target bigger fish, those are the breeders.

- After COVID and new DAR (Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources) rules, there's less fish, and less flexibility to adapt.

- There's barely any nehu anymore, even though it used to be everywhere.

- Lānaʻi can sustain our own community, but when we have to share with others, things get tough.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Participants emphasized the importance of preserving place-based knowledge and engaging youth in cultural fishing practices. There were reflections on historical impacts from invasive species like goats and sheep, and how land-use decisions continue to affect marine systems. Concerns about ESA-listed species causing ecological imbalances were also discussed.

- Our moʻolelo (stories/history) record where aku have run for generations our kids should know these stories.

- Goats and sheep were brought in by foreigners; they've destroyed habitat near the Maunalei Stream.

- The imbalance of ESA-listed species like turtles isn’t being acknowledged; it's throwing everything off.

- People say whales don’t eat, but we’re seeing big ika (squid) wash up; something’s changing.

- There used to be plenty of aku, but after COVID it felt like they disappeared.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Community members called for greater investment in youth programming, better integration of local knowledge into management, more flexible support for cultural restoration efforts, and improved funding streams for small-scale education and aquaculture projects.

- We've tried everything, but our kids still haven’t even been to Keomuku. We need more opportunities to reconnect them.

- It’s hard to do programs for the youth there’s too many distractions and not enough support.

- We’ve worked with schools to bring Lānaʻi-specific knowledge into classrooms, but there should be more.

- We want to raise limu and fish in brackish tanks to get our keiki involved; it would be easier with some support.

- It would help to use plastic gauges to create a slot limit for ʻopihi (limpet), something to manage them better.

3.c.5 Kaunakakai, Molokaʻi

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Molokaʻi

Location: Office of Hawaiian Affairs / Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Molokaʻi
Date: 4/24/2025
Participants: 8 attendees including: subsistence and cultural practitioners, hunters, small-scale commercial and recreational fishers, community leaders

Observed Environmental Changes

Participants noted that changes on land such as deforestation, sedimentation, invasive species, and past agricultural practices continue to affect the marine ecosystem. Concerns were also raised about predator overpopulation (sharks, seals), water temperature fluctuations, and coastal habitat degradation.

- Over the past three years, we've seen big changes, land use impacts the ocean. It's all connected.

- The pineapple industry left its mark; now we see turtles with tumors, but we can restore the balance with stewardship.

- There are more seals around Molokaʻi than before. We're told they're being relocated from the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

- Invasive mangroves brought in the early 1900s have impacted the flats; we need to trim them back.

- After lobster fisheries were wiped out, the seals came to the main Hawaiian Islands and started nibbling other species.

Barriers to Fishing

Fishers discussed ecological, economic, and regulatory barriers including shark depredation, competition from larger operators, and frustration with state and federal policies that conflict with local stewardship systems. The increase in seals and sharks has impacted deepwater fishing grounds like those for onaga and ʻōpakapaka.

- Tiger sharks have learned how to track boats; our fishing grounds are infested.

- We don't get support from the scientists who use our knowledge and leave. We never get resources back.

- They're creating regulations, but we're the ones keeping Molokaʻi going. Fish is our diet, our way of life.

- We catch taʻape to clean the reef, but then we get taxed. The government brought them, now they tax us for removing (and selling) them.

- Our deep-sea areas are overrun; if we're supposed to stop fishing just to let predators feed, something's wrong.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Molokaʻi attendees expressed strong intergenerational values around stewardship, with a deep cultural foundation in local ahupuaʻa-based resource management. Many reflected on how traditions around sharing, consent to fish, and kuleana (responsibility) are being disrupted.

- When I was growing up, you didn't fish in someone else's ahupuaʻa without asking permission.

- Our kupuna (grandparents) built this system where each family had a role, and everyone came together to care for our place.

- On Moloka‘i, if you fish, you share with those who can’t. You don’t go commercial. Take what you need.

- We’re trying to teach our keiki by building limu gardens and getting them in the water.

- We’ve fished for ta‘ape for free, tried to sell them, and got taxed. It's like doing the government’s job without support.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

The community emphasized the need for investment in Moloka‘i-led management, support for ta‘ape removal, tax incentives for eradicating invasives, and infrastructure for youth engagement and food security. They voiced concern about external researchers and agencies not returning benefits to the community.

- Let us prepare for the coconut rhinoceros beetles; we need support before the crisis, not after.

- Create incentives to target invasive species like ta‘ape; maybe tax breaks or a viable fishery.

- Give us funding to grow our limu garden and build ocean guard programs for our keiki.

- Help us develop local cage systems to control invasives and protect native species.

- Don’t wait until people are starving to change; it needs to start now.

3.c.6 Līhuʻe, Kauaʻi

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Kauaʻi

Location: Līhuʻe Neighborhood Center, Kauaʻi
Date: 4/28/2025
Participants: 25 attendees including: city and county members, Division of Aquatic Resources staff, Advisory Panel members, and commercial and subsistence fishers from across the island

Observed Environmental Changes

Fishers shared that ocean and climate conditions have shifted significantly altering currents, fish behavior, and access to productive koʻa (fishing grounds). Military activity, predator population shifts, and sedimentation were also noted as key factors shaping the marine environment.

- This is a different ocean now. The last ʻanaeholo (mullet) I saw was off Waikīkī in the 1960s; now you don't see those anymore.
- The currents have changed. What used to flow west to east is now moving upcurrent.
- The whales are eating more fish, and you'll see acres of pilot whales if the tuna are around.
- There's a lot more fish lately, but they're smaller and the currents and koʻa are different.
- Kaʻula Rock still gets bombed by the Navy. They give us an hour to leave, and people just aren't listening to the fishers.

- Turtles are out of balance now. There should be a license system to harvest and feed families again.

- The monk seals are eating deep 7 bottomfish and even pelagics off the buoys.

Barriers to Fishing

Community members described a growing list of challenges: access loss, regulatory burdens, rising costs, and increasing predator populations. Some expressed concerns about equity in policymaking, the influence of tourism, and inconsistent enforcement.

- Fishers always get blamed, but it's tourism and development that change the ecosystem and we lose access while no one addresses it.

- The talk is always about more regulations, but look at COVID—we kept people fed. Don't forget that.

- They created minimum size limits, which makes us target the larger breeders.

- Now we need insurance just to fish from a 26-foot boat. Fishing is hard enough already.

- They keep pushing us out. If you let the government run things, Kaua'i's going to become an aquarium.

- We tried to work with Costco; they'd only take fish if we could sustain a consistent supply. But we can't keep up with the market structure.

- We need more FADs placed in 500-fathom zones to bring in younger fishers, but the current ones aren't working like they used to.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

There was strong emphasis on generational knowledge, localized climate adaptation, and the cultural significance of fishing. Several participants discussed the role of fishing as a family practice and a matter of food sovereignty, not just recreation or income.

- Fishing was about 'ohana, hukilau, spotters in planes–the whole community was involved.

- The culture is shifting. You can't sell fried fish here, but you can sell poke, sashimi, or salmon.

- Our culture doesn't show up in the data. We need the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA) to prioritize Native Hawaiian practices.

- The next generation runs into jet skis, tour boats, and county rules; they can't practice the way we did.

- My cultural practice means going early in the morning, before the boats. But access is harder now.

- Deep sea bottomfish are still good around Niʻihau; they're quality but there's fewer fishers now. People think it's overfishing, but that's BS.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Participants called for regulatory flexibility, targeted policy change to restore access and stewardship rights, and increased transparency in fisheries planning. There was strong support for bottomfish access restoration, clear native Hawaiian preferences under HEPA, and youth engagement programs.

- HEPA should be used to give Native Hawaiians priority to speak on issues; NEPA just lets everyone talk.

- The Council and DAR should collaborate to create permits for shark and turtle harvest.

- The state gave $14.9 million to Holomua, but that money's from the mainland, from tourism. It's not helping us here.

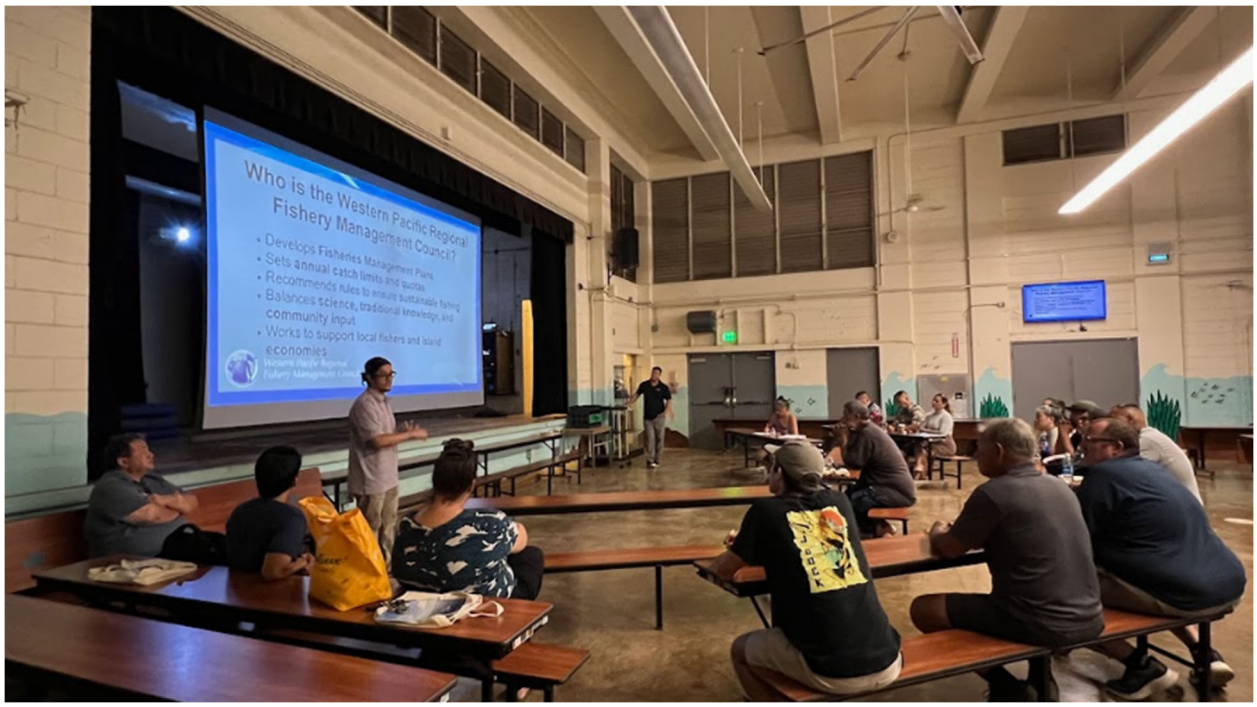
- Bring back access to the NWHI for bottomfishers, as they supplied 50% of our bottomfish at one time.

- Make fishing viable again: help with labor, processing, and fileting; we can't afford the rising costs.

- Create community-based fishing tournaments again, and help us resolve issues with the County.

- We've gotta let the doers do and support those who are feeding the island, not just talking.

3.c.7 Waiʻanae, Oahu



IRA Community Meeting Summary: Waiʻanae

Location: Waiʻanae Intermediate School Cafeteria, Oʻahu
Date: 4/29/2025
Participants: 19 including: commercial and subsistence fishers, community members, and local advocates

Observed Environmental Changes

Community members noted changes in ocean health, currents, and habitat quality linked to pollution, infrastructure, and development. Though some fish populations remain steady, broader environmental shifts particularly predator increases and water contamination are reshaping fishing conditions.

- The ocean's different now there's more pollution from roads, cars, and wastewater, even though the water is treated, not purified.
- Coral structures changed after Hurricane Iwa (1982), but now the finger coral off the harbor has started to come back.
- Currents impact fish availability, and people misinterpret that as fish depletion.

- Exceptional years for fish still happen, with one species usually blooming each season.
- Halalū (juvenile bigeye scad) would come every September and grow fast, but now schools mix and it’s hard to avoid catching the small ones.
- Concerns were raised about sediment and possible radiation effects from Japan’s recent water release.

Barriers to Fishing

Fishermen described economic strain, market limitations, and regulatory burdens as pressing challenges. Some stressed the disconnect between policy decisions and the lived experience of local fishers, particularly around seals, sharks, offshore development, and sanctuary rules.

- The price for fish hasn’t kept up in 20 years; it's gone from $2 to $3/lb.
- There’s no market to support local production, even with 200,000 to 400,000 pounds of akule landed per year, it’s not being depleted, but there's no one to buy it.
- If one good fisherman dies, you can lose an entire crew and up to 40,000 pounds a year just like that.
- Vandalism of gear is a real issue, nets are cut, and people don't respect fishing practices.
- Tourism projects like offshore wind cables are disrupting fishing grounds, and sharks nibble on the cables, creating new hazards.
- Too many tourist boats are chasing dolphins, and local boaters have no venue to voice concerns.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Participants emphasized the importance of restoring traditional knowledge systems like konohiki management and respecting cultural protocols. Concerns about seals, turtles, ta‘ape, and offshore sanctuaries reflected deep frustration over resource governance and a desire to rebalance local voices in decision-making.

- There’s interest in bringing back the konohiki system, where fishermen ask for permission and share information before fishing.

- Ta‘ape was introduced and released in Nānākuli and Miloli‘i; it wasn't here before, and now it's causing problems.

- Some felt that seals were brought in intentionally, noting that 9 were introduced to the main Hawaiian Islands in 2009.

- Seals can cost fishers a whole day, and some said they’re seeing four generations now.

- One person went to court over a seal caught in a net and lost the case, asking how these incidents are monitored and how much fish a seal consumes annually.

- The cultural relationship with seals and turtles is complex; they must be dealt with as part of cultural practices, not just regulations.

- Some advocated for including representatives from the Hawaiian Provisional Government at future meetings.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Fishermen called for changes to management frameworks, more direct engagement with state and federal agencies, and reevaluation of sanctuary and development impacts. The need for improved market access, cultural respect, and accurate data collection were recurring themes.

- Reports and laws should be based on good data; flawed data leads to bad regulation.

- Fishermen want input and engagement like they had with previous reports on akule and ta‘ape.

- Questions were raised about the environmental assessments for the introduction of monk seals and offshore wind projects.

- There was frustration that sanctuaries and closures have taken away access to productive schools of fish like those once running from Barbers Point to the power plant.

- Some advocated for including local voices in decision-making about sanctuaries, harbors, and coastal access.

- Calls were made to monitor seal movements and consider their impact on fisheries, as well as explore offshore cage farming and improved reporting mechanisms for interactions.

3.c.8 Keʻehi, Oʻahu

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Keʻehi

Location: Keʻehi, Oʻahu
Date: 4/30/2025
Participants: 25 attendees including: commercial and subsistence fishers, agency representatives, and local community members

Observed Environmental Changes

Participants described long-term shifts in nearshore and offshore ecosystems due to altered water quality, climate, development, and hydrology. They highlighted the interconnectedness of freshwater, streamflow, limu, and fish populations, and shared concerns about the disappearance of once-abundant species.

- Growing up in ʻEwa, there were plenty of fish and limu, but that changed with sewage discharge, development, and tourism. The ecosystem has shifted, and many species like ʻōmaka (yellowtail scad), nehu, and mullet are no longer seen.

- The yellowfin tuna used to reach 350 lbs; now you don’t see that anymore.

- Kailua's canal used to be open, but now with concrete and diversions, it’s clogged and floods more often.

- There’s been major shoreline erosion, changes in salinity, and reduced color and nutrients in the water.

- Spring water and lava tubes no longer flow due to construction of what used to be rich estuarine systems now feel disconnected.

- Freshwater-fed areas once supported koi, āholehole, and nehu, but urbanization erased those cycles.

- Clear water now dominates, but the clarity masks loss of productivity in nutrients and bottom food chain species.

- Water quality testing by the Department of Health has declined, and salinity shifts are poorly monitored.

- Sonar, changing currents, and drifting FADs may be affecting fish migration and biting behavior.

- Offshore, the fisheries seem relatively stable, but nearshore conditions are severely degraded and less predictable.

Barriers to Fishing

Community members cited economic, regulatory, and ecological pressures as major barriers to sustainable fishing. High costs, unclear entry points into commercial fisheries, and policy decisions disconnected from empirical knowledge were common themes.

- Fuel prices remain a major obstacle.

- There’s no clear path to becoming a longline fisherman; it's a dead-end for younger fishers.

- Market dynamics have shifted: roadside selling is up, but markets aren’t taking fish, affecting how fishing is classified (recreational vs. commercial).

- Catch limits are discussed for fish, but what about for people what is the carrying capacity of these systems with growing populations?

- Nearshore fishing is getting harder with more thrill crafts, beachgoers, and regulations not to mention rising costs and gear loss.

- Kids' involvement in fishing is largely dependent on family engagement; there's no consistent system.

- Flawed data leads to flawed policies. There's a disconnect between science and what local people observe.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Speakers emphasized the erosion of traditional practices and knowledge due to land-use changes, cultural displacement, and lack of recognition by governing bodies. Participants noted the role of turtles, seals, and invasive species in changing food webs and expressed frustration with federal and external influences on local fisheries.

- Out-of-state advocates and ENGOs are drowning out local voices that don't understand what applies to the Western Pacific.

- There used to be tumors in necropsies, but improved conditions may have reduced them; turtles may now graze more limu, leading some to wrongly assume it's just gone.

- ʻŌʻio (bonefish) is less common now due to commercial lomi sales and pressure.

- More turtles, seals, and sharks are seen indicating population shifts in predators that further strain fisheries.

- Traditional indicators like coconut trees are showing that spring waters are disappearing; these changes are tied to cultural loss.

- Some still follow knowledge from uncles about koʻa grounds and lunar cycles, but it's not being passed down widely.

- When people say no more limu, maybe the turtles are just eating it faster now.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

The community called for stronger local monitoring, culturally grounded management, and inclusion of fishers in policy and data development. There was strong interest in linking ecological data with traditional observations and adapting regulations to real, place-based conditions.

- More empirical studies and surveys are needed before implementing new rules fishers want to see real science tied to what they observe.

- Bag limits lack scientific basis, while size restrictions are more effective.

- Participants urged state and federal agencies to improve water quality tracking, stream restoration, and ecosystem carrying capacity modeling.

- Concerns about sonar, international pressure, and offshore developments (like privateFADs) need to be better evaluated for local impacts.

- Spearfishing and gear type changes have made schooling fish more elusive; this needs consideration in policy.

- They want a stronger voice in federal decisions especially as rules are increasingly shaped by non-local perspectives.

3.d American Samoa

The American Samoa IRA community meetings held across Tutuila, Ta‘u, Ofu, and Olosega gathered local fishers, community members, and government representatives to discuss changes in the marine environment, barriers to fishing, and priorities for future generations. Participants reported increased shark presence, shifting fish distributions, coral degradation, and declining palolo worm runs, with many questioning the impacts of climate change and local development. Across all islands, fishers highlighted challenges such as limited access to fuel, deteriorating boat ramps and marinas, lack of gear, and the high cost of maintenance and safety equipment. There was strong emphasis on teaching youth traditional fishing knowledge, addressing regulatory concerns, and improving infrastructure. Communities expressed mixed views on seabed mining and marine monuments, with widespread agreement on the need for better representation, ongoing dialogue, and inclusion in fisheries decision-making.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3.d.1 Ofu and Olosega, Manuʻa

IRA Community Meeting Summary – Ofu and Olosega Islands

Location: Ofu and Olosega, American Samoa
Date: 6/26/2025
Participants: 21 attendees including: local fishermen, community leaders, Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources staff, and residents representing different generations and fishing experience

Observed Environmental Changes

- Fish have been disappearing since 2019, possibly due to climate change or other environmental changes.
- Sharks are growing in size, taking more bottomfish, and coming closer to shore.
- Corals are dying, possibly from climate impacts or runoff from a relocated landfill.
- A new algae is growing on the reef in front of the clinic, killing corals. It may be from detergents, excess freshwater, or poor septic systems.
- Tides seem higher, and many currently sandy areas were once coral reefs.
- Palolo rises are occurring less frequently and in lower volumes than in the past.

- Water temperatures and lagoon conditions have changed; sandbars have shifted, burying coral heads.

Barriers to Fishing

- Gasoline is rationed at 10 gallons per person weekly for car and boat, limiting fishing range.
- There are no local gear or tackle stores; Ta‘u is the only nearby source.
- There is no ice machine or access to fuel vouchers anymore.
- Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are not supported by many locals, who feel excluded from traditional fishing grounds.
- Fishing gear is improvised due to access issues – even using screwdrivers to catch fish.
- There is no emergency contact system in place for ocean safety.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

- Fishing is mostly subsistence-based – we fish when we need to, not to sell.
- Bottomfish, trolling, aku, wahoo, parrotfish, faisua (clams), octopus, and turtles are still relatively abundant.
- Fishing knowledge should be passed down, including where to find specific species and how to conserve those areas.
- Trash in the ocean and marine debris are concerns; youth should be taught to fish responsibly and sustainably.
- Locals fish for food security, not for profit. Outsiders and foreign vessels are seen as threats to local access and sustainability.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

- Provide boats and equipment for young fishers.
- Establish programs to teach youth about safe, sustainable fishing methods.
- Set up an emergency response system for fishers at sea.

- Support improved infrastructure, including septic systems and coral reef protection.
- Open up protected areas like Rose Atoll and monuments for local fishing.

3.d.2 Taʻu, Manuʻa

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Ta'u Island

Location: Ta'u, American Samoa
Date: 6/27/2025
Participants: 16 attendees including: Local fishers, community members, marine patrol staff, and Council representatives

Observed Environmental Changes

Participants discussed how climate and environmental factors have shifted over time, affecting fishing behavior and conditions:

- Ocean temperatures were reported to be consistent, but currents have become unpredictable, often spinning, pulling downward, or changing rapidly.
- Lines do not troll straight anymore due to stronger or erratic currents.
- Year-round big waves are damaging coral structures.
- More sharks are appearing, including large and small sizes.
- Turtles and whales are being seen more frequently, including whale sightings in August.

Barriers to Fishing

Logistical and infrastructure-related issues are making fishing more difficult:

- Improper motor sizes are damaging aluminum-hulled boats (alias); 60 HP motors are too strong and not suited for the boats, which need 40 HP.

- Many people use kayaks, but they are exhausting and unsafe in poor weather.

- Thrownet fishers struggle to find consistent good fishing spots.

- Bottomfish move quickly from areas, and only a few can be caught before they scatter.

- Outboard engine failures and high maintenance costs lead to boats being unused for long periods.

- There is only one active alia and one private boat operating on Taʻu.

- Safety gear is lacking Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs), radios and flares, and there is difficulty complying with marine patrol rules, which are not aligned with USCG regulations.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

The community emphasized the importance of teaching traditional knowledge and supporting youth:

- Young fishers should learn from elders how to fish, weather awareness, and ancestral techniques.

- Fishing tournaments are a good opportunity to teach and engage youth.

- Passing on “boating magic” and skills from elders to younger generations is valued.

- There is a need for electric reels to make deep bottomfishing more accessible to younger or less-experienced fishers.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Participants shared several recommendations to support sustainable fishing and community resilience:

- Minimizing shark depredation was highlighted, including calls to revise laws on shark harvest.

- More support is needed to repair and maintain boats and engines due to the high costs of shipping and parts.

- Reactivating the Taisamama fishing association could help centralize community input to the Council.

- Participants want someone local from Taʻu to be appointed to the Advisory Panel (AP) to relay information directly.

- There is support for workshops on safety, equipment use, and traditional knowledge sharing.

- There was interest in understanding the government's stance on seabed mining and its potential impacts on Taʻu's fishing community.

3.d.3 Tutuila

IRA Community Meeting Summary: Tutuila

Location: Tutuila, American Samoa
Date: 6/27/2025
Participants: 40+ attendees including: Local alia fishers, elders, youth educators, government staff, Council representatives, marine patrol officers, and community members

Observed Environmental Changes

Participants reflected on environmental changes and their impacts on fishing behavior and marine ecosystems:

- Ocean temperature is reportedly always changing, but difficult to detect day-to-day. Scientific data suggests warming, but it's not observable locally.
- Climate change was said to displace both fish and people, creating social and economic impacts.
- More sharks are being observed, including within the harbor, and there are increased sightings of turtles and dolphins.
- Skipjack abundance has declined, with assumptions that purse seiners may be taking more offshore fish.
- Palolo has become scarcer and less predictable, with small containers selling for $50 what was once freely shared; now feels commodified.

Barriers to Fishing

Community members described several infrastructure, economic, and access barriers limiting their fishing activity:

- Multiple boat ramps are in poor condition, including the main ramp in Pago Pago that floods during high tide, making truck launches difficult.
- There is a lack of dock infrastructure, safe boat tie-up options, and floating docks.
- Marina areas are unsafe, with sharp edges, rust, and corrosion.
- Access to ice and safety gear like flares, radios, and life-saving equipment is limited and costly.
- There are too few vocational workers trained in boat maintenance or marine engineering.
- Financial constraints prevent fishers from investing in proper gear, making it difficult to support their families.
- Polluted streams, especially near urban areas, were cited as reasons for reduced fishing activity.

Cultural Practices & Community Observations

Fishers and community members emphasized the importance of intergenerational knowledge and cultural ties to the ocean:

- Young fishers need to be taught conservation, navigation, weather interpretation, and traditional methods like fishing with lanterns and reef foraging.
- Participants noted a shift in youth mindset, with fewer interested in fishing despite family traditions.
- Community-based events like akule fishing continue to bring people together, but climate change and regulatory burdens are affecting consistency.
- There were concerns about outsiders collecting sea snails and other reef species, reducing local availability and prompting cultural loss.
- Elders stressed the importance of teaching youth not just fishing, but the values behind it, taking only what is needed and respecting the ocean.

Requests & Feedback for Future Engagement

Participants provided numerous ideas and requests to support sustainable fishing and community resilience:

- Develop education and training programs focused on youth, conservation, marketing, maintenance, and boat safety.
- Support infrastructure upgrades to ramps, marinas, and docks, along with ice machines and equipment storage.
- Provide affordable safety and navigation equipment.
- Revisit the super alia program to ensure it supports local needs without depleting resources like bottomfish.
- Train fishers on shark deterrence strategies and allow more discussion on shark harvest to manage growing populations.
- Address pollution from development, including the use of weed killers and cementing near wetlands.
- Create a monitoring system for coastal harvesting, especially near streams and lagoons.

Governance, Regulations, and Marine Monuments

Participants shared perspectives on federal regulations, seabed mining, and MPAs:

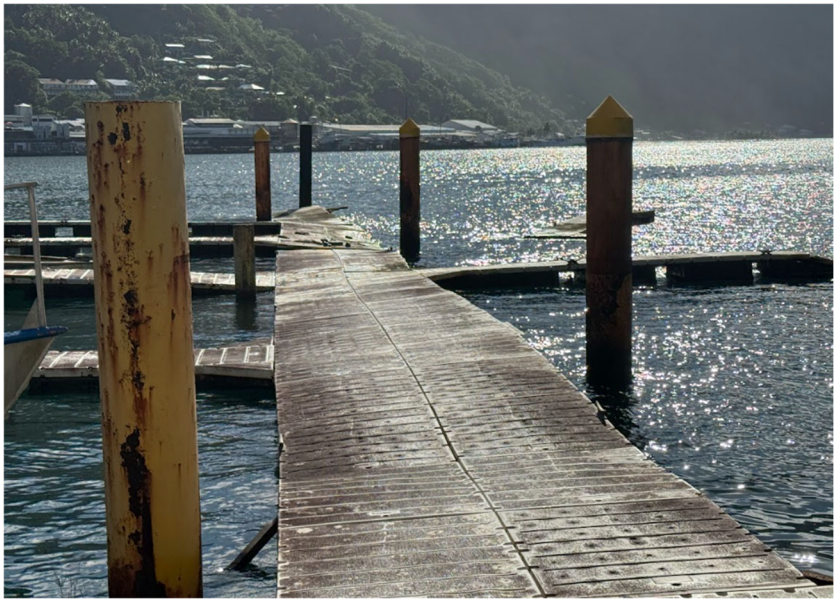
- There is a disconnect between changing federal regulations (e.g., Code of Federal Regulations updates) and on-the-ground awareness among local fishers.
- Some participants feel community input is overlooked and are calling for more consistent outreach and inclusion in decision-making.
- Concerns were raised about regulations affecting access to species like giant clams, and that local knowledge must be considered.
- Many voiced strong opposition to seabed mining, citing environmental risk and cultural impact.
- Opinions on marine monument boundaries varied: some support maintaining protections, while others favor opening certain zones (e.g., within 12 nm) for commercial fishing of migratory tuna.

- There was consensus that fishing activity should not jeopardize seabird nesting areas or increase gear entanglement near atolls.

4. Discussion

Across the main Hawaiian Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the CNMI, community members shared deep concerns about the long-term sustainability of their marine ecosystems, access to traditional fishing grounds, and the erosion of intergenerational fishing knowledge. Despite geographic differences, common threads emerged in relation to environmental degradation, the impacts of policy and regulation, shifting cultural dynamics, and infrastructure challenges. Together, these observations reflect the nuanced and interconnected nature of ocean-based livelihoods across the Pacific, how climate change is impacting them, and a clear need for support to ensure fisheries continue to remain vibrant into the future.

Environmental changes from warming ocean temperatures and shifting currents to coral bleaching, erosion, sedimentation, and invasive species were central to nearly every discussion. Fishers across Hawai‘i noted changes in species behavior, reduced catches, and disappearing nearshore species such as limu, nehu, and juvenile fish. In American Samoa, CNMI, and Guam, participants cited coral die-offs, new algae growth, and more aggressive shark behavior, linking these phenomena to climate change, pollution, and development. Sediment runoff, altered stream flows, and disrupted freshwater inputs were also reported across multiple islands, reinforcing the role of land-sea interactions in shaping marine health. Along with this, fishers noted changing currents and increased severity and frequency of wind, storms, and loss of ability to fish offshore.



Barriers to fishing were particularly pronounced in outer islands and rural communities that are further from the main population centers. Access to fuel, gear, ice, and markets was inconsistent or costly, with many communities relying on improvised or outdated tools. Safety concerns including lack of communication equipment, emergency response systems, or harbor infrastructure further compounded these access issues. In Hawai‘i, younger fishers struggle with rising costs and regulatory burdens, while in American Samoa and the CNMI, rationed fuel and absent supply chains limit daily fishing operations.

Regulatory frameworks and enforcement emerged as both a concern and a source of frustration. Participants voiced the need for fisheries regulations to be more adaptive, data-informed, and inclusive of local knowledge. There was widespread skepticism around federal

and state-driven MPAs, especially when communities felt excluded from planning or saw no clear pathway for sustainable co-management. Concerns were also raised about the disproportionate impacts of enforcement on small-scale or subsistence fishers, compared to foreign fleets or industrial actors.

Cultural continuity and community-based practices were emphasized as both a strength and a need. Many elders shared stories of traditional fishing practices, seasonal knowledge, and respect-based resource sharing that are fading from younger generations. At the same time, there is strong community interest in revitalizing these values through education programs, keiki fishing activities, aquaculture experiments, and cultural storytelling. Participants across regions called for the restoration of local management practices, like konohiki systems and customary permissions, that emphasize stewardship over extraction.

Finally, participants across all meetings called for more meaningful engagement, equity, and support in fisheries policy and planning. This includes involving local leaders in decision-making, funding infrastructure that reflects local priorities (like ramps, ice machines, or private Fish Aggregation Devices), and ensuring that federal data collection captures real on-the-ground experiences. Many expressed that without investment in people, not just science or gear, the health of fisheries and the cultural identity they sustain will continue to decline.

The communities expressed gratitude for the Council on the community consultation process and invited the organization back to continue to discuss and understand these challenges and support the identification of solutions and ways to have a positive impact.

These meetings highlighted a core belief that to ensure the future of fisheries in the Pacific, policies must not only address biological and ecological concerns, but also be grounded in the lived realities and traditional knowledge of island communities.

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4.a Interest in future small-boat commercial fishing

At each IRA community consultation, Pacific Islands Fisheries Group introduced the upcoming commercial fisher vocational training pilot program aimed at exposing new entrants to small-boat commercial fishing opportunities. Across all islands, there was a strong and consistent expression of interest in this initiative. Many fishers, particularly younger participants and those currently fishing part-time or subsistence-style, emphasized a desire to deepen their knowledge and transition into commercial fishing as a livelihood. In every region, highly qualified and motivated individuals were identified, eager to take part in this pilot program to gain practical experience, learn from established commercial operations, and bring these lessons back to strengthen their own communities.

There is a strong appetite for more programs like this across the region. Participants frequently called for expanded training opportunities, including mentorship from experienced fishers, workshops on fish handling, gear use, marketing, and business development. In Waiʻanae and Keʻehi, several fishers spoke about the dying trade of fishing, the lack of market access, and the need to equip the next generation with both technical skills and cultural grounding. In Molokaʻi, participants stressed that each community member has a role and trade, and that vocational programs should help elevate and sustain these community-based practices. On Lānaʻi and Kauaʻi, fishers highlighted a disconnect between younger generations and the ocean, urging that more structured education and fishing access be made available to reestablish these relationships.

In American Samoa (Ofu and Taʻu), interest in the program was also tied to local calls for greater economic opportunity, especially where subsistence fishing is the norm and youth face limited employment paths. There, participants requested not only training but also support with vessels, gear, and ongoing mentorship. Similar sentiments were echoed in Guam and the CNMI, where the fishing community emphasized the need for structured pathways to develop commercial skills, especially for younger fishers looking to revitalize the industry. In all places, participants viewed this program as a long-overdue opportunity to rebuild local capacity, increase food security, and ensure that commercial fishing remains in the hands of the communities that rely on it most.

4.b Relationship to Regulatory Review, Scenario Planning, and Governance

The insights gathered from the community consultations directly inform and strengthen several other core IRA project components beyond engagement itself. In the area of Regulatory Review, fishers consistently called for rules that are better aligned with local realities, emphasizing that current size limits, gear restrictions, and access regulations often lack scientific justification or cultural grounding. Their input highlights the need for a more adaptive, evidence-based, and participatory management framework. For Scenario Planning, communities shared observations of shifting currents, weather patterns, species availability, and ecosystem dynamics critical qualitative data that can help model and anticipate future challenges. Their lived experiences form the foundation for realistic and locally relevant future scenarios. In Protected Species Management, fishers reported increasing interactions with sharks, monk seals, turtles, and other species, underscoring the urgency of developing responsive, science-informed, and culturally sensitive strategies. These accounts can help update protected species policies that are currently perceived as rigid and disconnected from on-the-water realities. These responses demonstrate how the community-driven insights gathered through consultations serve as an essential nexus, providing the local knowledge, concerns, and forward-looking ideas that directly inform regulatory innovation, climate resilience planning, and co-management of protected species across the Pacific.

Scenario Planning

The findings and community priorities that emerged from the IRA community consultations serve as potential key inputs to the Council's scenario planning efforts as well. Participants across the Hawaiian Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the CNMI described significant environmental shifts including changes in ocean temperature, current patterns, sedimentation, and species abundance that are actively reshaping fishing practices and access. For example, in Moloka'i, fishers emphasized sediment erosion and predator imbalances as core concerns, while in Ofu and Olosega, water quality and invasive algae were major ecosystem stressors. These local observations provide early indicators of shifting baselines and serve as critical signals that should be modeled in future scenarios.

Importantly, scenario planning must incorporate both large-scale and small-boat fisheries, and the IRA meetings highlighted the nuanced differences in how climate and socio-economic changes affect these sectors. For instance, large-scale fishers in Guam pointed to challenges from foreign fleets and shifting tuna migratory patterns, while small-boat fishers in Wai'anae and Kaua'i highlighted difficulty accessing traditional nearshore areas and the loss of market viability. Scenario planning must include these community highlighted realities and prepare tailored responses that allow for local adaptation. For example, if small nearshore fish such as akule and others continue to lose favor on the menu, how does this affect the markets and long-term sustainability of fishers as well as other parts of the market, ecosystem, and islands.

Regulatory Review

The community consultations revealed widespread frustration with regulatory systems perceived as rigid, top-down, or out of touch with on-the-ground conditions. Participants across nearly all islands voiced concerns that regulations particularly those related to minimum sizes, MPAs, and licensing systems are not adaptive enough and often exclude or penalize traditional or subsistence fishers. In Lānaʻi and Kauaʻi, fishers stressed that management must better reflect localized ecological conditions and practices. Similarly, in American Samoa, residents expressed concern over MPAs limiting access to customary fishing grounds without community inclusion or clear benefits.

The IRA process offers a key opportunity to channel this feedback into meaningful regulatory reform. A regulatory review grounded in these community perspectives would enable the Council to modernize its frameworks to be more inclusive, flexible, and place-based. This could mean shifting from fixed, one-size-fits-all rules to more dynamic management tools like adaptive co-management, tiered access systems, or community-based quota allocations. Moreover, feedback from the meetings strongly supports a review of reporting and monitoring burdens to better align with small-boat capacity and to avoid unintentionally discouraging compliance.

Protected Species Management

Interactions with protected species such as monk seals, turtles, and sharks emerged as a dominant theme across all community meetings. In nearly every location, fishers spoke of rising encounters with monk seals and sharks, often describing them as increasingly aggressive or opportunistic in their behavior around fishing vessels. In Molokaʻi, fishers reported shark depredation on bottomfish grounds as a major problem, while in Kauaʻi and Waiʻanae, many expressed frustration that protected species such as monk seals are prioritized over their ability to fish and feed their families. There is a growing perception that species protections are not balanced with community needs and are creating imbalances in nearshore ecosystems.

These concerns underscore the urgency of updating protected species management in ways that are both ecologically sound and socially equitable. The Council can integrate these lived experiences into scientific assessments and consider new frameworks for co-management that include traditional ecological knowledge. Management approaches must evolve to recognize the complexity of human-wildlife interactions and develop strategies that support both protections and fisher livelihoods.

Community Engagement and Capacity Building

The entire IRA process reflects a profound shift toward recognizing communities not merely as stakeholders but as co-managers of the marine ecosystem. Across every meeting, participants emphasized the need for greater inclusion in decision-making, particularly for younger fishers, Indigenous leaders, and those from communities closest to the resource, yet most often overlooked. Calls for training, mentorship, and economic opportunity, especially the small-boat

commercial fisher vocational training pilot program, were deeply tied to broader themes of resilience, local leadership, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Community engagement must therefore be the core part for every dimension of fisheries governance now and into the future. From scenario planning to regulatory reform and species management, local communities must be central to both the process and outcome. This means co-designing tools for decision-making, funding community-led monitoring, and ensuring that federal and territorial policies reflect the lived realities of those most dependent on ocean resources. The Council's focus on capacity building through programs like the IRA consultations and the pilot training initiative provides a blueprint for a governance model that is both adaptive and rooted in local empowerment. From the community's perspective, it is incredibly valuable and important to build these relationships, build trust, and center on cultural values and what the community really needs and is asking for. This can be a key outcome for how the Council can transform fisheries governance into a more inclusive and resilient system for future generations.

4.c Recommendations for Future Meetings

Based on feedback, debriefs, and discussions, future meetings should prioritize early and sustained outreach through trusted community channels such as local associations, respected elders, small-boat fishing groups, and island council representatives. Yet, this varies from region to region. While some areas social media proved effective in bringing new community members to the conversation, other areas, WhatsApp and word of mouth were most effective. Many participants emphasized the importance of building trust and transparency in planning, especially by clearly communicating the purpose of the meetings, how the information will be used, and what outcomes are expected. Outreach meetings in American Samoa should include bilingual material and or a translator, as well as consistent follow-ups after the meetings to maintain relationships and demonstrate that community voices are being carried forward.

What proved most effective at the meetings were making sure each attendee felt seen when the meeting started and provided material, followed by clear introduction, and leading into ample time for discussion, centered on the voices of local fishers. Small group settings or facilitated breakout sessions would be a key methodology for future meetings when the size increased to above 30 participants. Participants would in that setting feel more comfortable sharing, especially for sensitive or politically charged topics and would create more opportunity for more voices to speak up. It was advised and recommended to host meetings in accessible locations familiar to the community, provide refreshments, and offer flexible scheduling (e.g., evenings or weekends, depending on the region) to accommodate fishers' working hours.

Recommendations by Region

- **Hawai‘i (Maui, Moloka‘i, Lāna‘i, O‘ahu, Kaua‘i):** Continue building on strong relationships with longline, bottomfish, and nearshore communities as these fishers are all interconnected to the same resource. Many requested more targeted discussions around access, enforcement, traditional management systems (e.g., konohiki), and

youth training. O‘ahu communities noted a desire for deeper involvement in sanctuary planning and decision-making around offshore development plans.

- **American Samoa:** Future engagement in Manu‘a, especially on Ofu, Olosega, and Ta‘u, should prioritize addressing barriers to basic fishing infrastructure, fuel access, and safety. There was strong interest in youth mentorship programs and concerns about MPAs limiting access. Including high school students and church groups in future planning would expand reach and intergenerational impact.

- **CNMI:** Feedback highlighted the need for localized outreach that includes Saipan, Tinian, and Rota fishers. In Rota, participants emphasized the loss of traditional knowledge and asked for targeted meetings around youth training, habitat restoration, and enforcement.

- **Guam:** Participants expressed frustration with past engagement processes and asked for more community-driven agenda setting. There was interest in island-specific policy solutions, youth programs, and better support for fishers navigating permitting and federal regulations. Future meetings should consider the inclusion of both Chamorro and newer migrant communities involved in fishing.

Across all regions, there is clear momentum and community willingness to engage further provided meetings are grounded in respect, reciprocity, and tangible action.

4.c Key Topics to Address

Across the islands, participants described notable environmental changes such as coral die-offs, increased algae growth, and shifting ocean currents, which they linked to changes in fish abundance and behavior. A pressing and consistent concern was the growing number of sharks, particularly their interference with bottomfishing and their increasing presence close to shore. Fishers also expressed frustration with barriers to fishing such as a lack of fuel, ice, and gear, as well as deteriorating infrastructure like unsafe ramps and aging outboard motors. Many emphasized the importance of passing on fishing knowledge to the next generation and requested support for youth training and safety education. Discussions also pointed to a decline in traditional species such as palolo and akule, sparking concerns about intergenerational access to culturally significant foods. Finally, participants discussed enforcement challenges, especially the need for greater alignment between local and federal rules, and the desire for locally informed, community-driven management that recognizes cultural practices and subsistence needs.

Shark Abundance and Impacts

- Nearly all communities reported increased shark presence and depredation, along nearshore and offshore areas. Fishers are losing catch to sharks, affecting bottomfishing

and trolling success rates. There were multiple calls to reconsider protections or explore shark deterrence tools.

Climate Change and Environmental Shifts

- Participants observed warmer water, higher tides, shifting currents, and more frequent large swells. Coral die-offs, linked to warming, runoff, and new algae growth, were a concern especially near landfills or freshwater inputs. Some noted changes since 2019 as a critical tipping point in fish abundance or habitat quality.

Declining Fish Runs and Unpredictable Seasons

- Traditional seasonal runs of palolo, rabbitfish, akule, mackerel have declined or become less predictable. Some attributed this to changing ocean temperatures, pollution, or overfishing by outsiders, but there is a lack of data and any scientific support beyond what fishers are observing.

Barriers to Fishing Access and Infrastructure

- Common across all meetings were issues like dilapidated boat ramps, lack of ice machines, unsafe marinas, and inaccessible safety equipment.

Youth Engagement and Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer

- There is concern that young people aren't fishing anymore or are disconnected from traditional methods. Elders called for programs that teach sustainable fishing, ocean safety, and cultural values. "Fishing shouldn't be a history lesson" captured the sentiment that action is needed to keep practices alive.

Desire for More Inclusive Governance and Community-Led Management

- Fishers feel rules are being made without their input, especially around marine preserves and federal regulations. Many advocated for more community-based management, citing the need for collaboration and respect for local knowledge. There is support and interest for reviving local coalitions or selecting representatives to speak directly to policymakers.

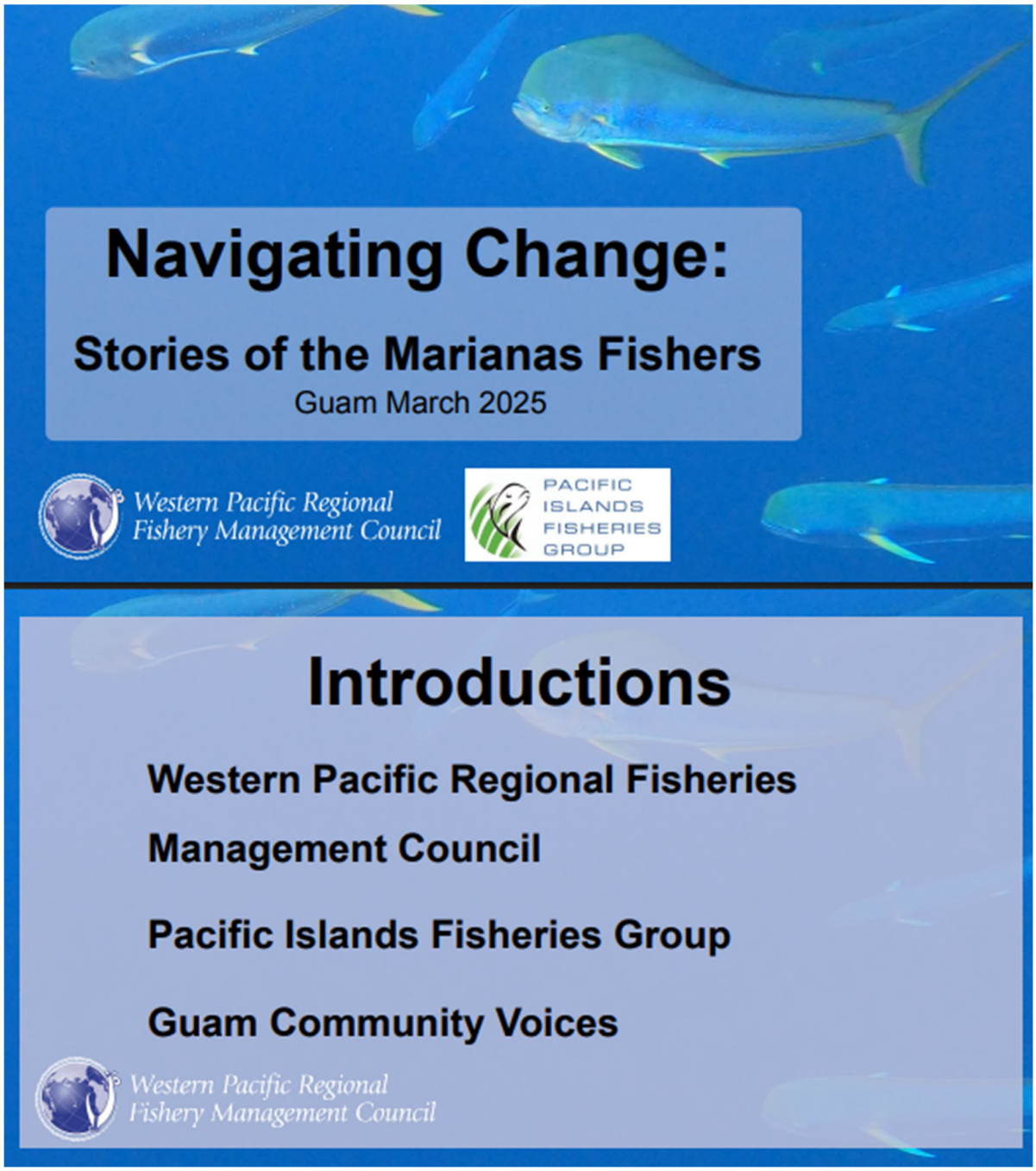
5. Conclusion

The first round of the IRA Community Consultation meetings across the Hawaiian Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the CNMI revealed a broad yet interconnected set of challenges and opportunities facing small-boat and subsistence fishers throughout the Pacific. They also set the stage for increased engagement and participation with the community in a more bottoms-up approach for future fisheries management. Participants shared firsthand experiences of environmental change, resource decline, regulatory frustrations, and shifting cultural practices while also voicing a strong desire for greater involvement in shaping the future of fisheries management. Despite the regional diversity, recurring themes such as the loss of access to traditional fishing grounds, concerns over protected species interactions, and the need for community-driven solutions were consistent.

These consultations underscored the importance of recognizing place-based knowledge, tailoring management approaches to local contexts, and ensuring that Indigenous and often overlooked communities have the tools and voice to meaningfully participate. There is a clear appetite for capacity-building efforts such as commercial vocational training, youth mentorship programs, and improved infrastructure to support fishing livelihoods and marine stewardship The insights from these meetings directly support and inform other IRA objectives, including scenario planning, regulatory review, and protected species management. They also provide a foundation for more responsive, collaborative, and community-centered governance across the region. Moving forward, continued engagement grounded in transparency, equity, and cultural respect will be essential to sustain these conversations and translate them into meaningful outcomes that protect both the resource and the people who rely on it.

6. Annexes

6.a Presentation
6.b Meeting Agenda
6.c Comments Matrix


Navigating Change:
Stories of the Marianas Fishers
Guam March 2025
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERIES GROUP
Introductions
Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council
Pacific Islands Fisheries Group
Guam Community Voices
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Why We Are Here

Use the Council's public consultation processes to listen, learn and understand the impacts and issues U.S. Pacific Island communities face as they are impacted by change and how they are adapting to evolving ecosystems.

Agenda

- **Overview of the Our Effort**
- **Local Impacts & Challenges: Community Voices**
- **Community Testimonials**
- **Next Steps & Community Involvement**
- **Q&A / Closing Discussion**
- **Wrap-Up & Appreciation**

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Community Consultation Effort Overview

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Local Impacts & Challenges: Community Voices

Environmental Fishing
Regulations Economic Etc.

1,124 lb Blue marlin captured by Sea Baby III second grander for Kona in 2024

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Environmental

Temperature - Colder, Normal, Warmer

Wind – Strong, normal, mild

Currents – Strong, normal, weak

Surf – Large, Normal, Small

Season – Wet, Dry, Stormy

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Fishing Impacts

Nearshore

Bottomfish

Pelagic

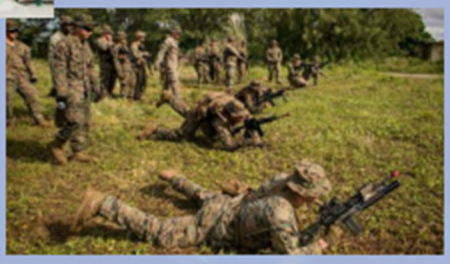
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Other Impacts

Fuel & Supply Prices

Tourism

Military Build Up



Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Community Testimonial

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Challenges Shared with us:

- Lack of funding for maintaining fishing infrastructure
- Competition with less regulated fishing fleets

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Challenges Shared with us:

- Shifting fish migration patterns
- Extreme Weather
- Sea level rise
- Regulations and rule barriers

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Community Testimonials

- Please share your voice, stories, ideas
- Please make space for others to speak
- All ideas and thoughts are important
- Please raise your hand

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Are there more or less fish now?

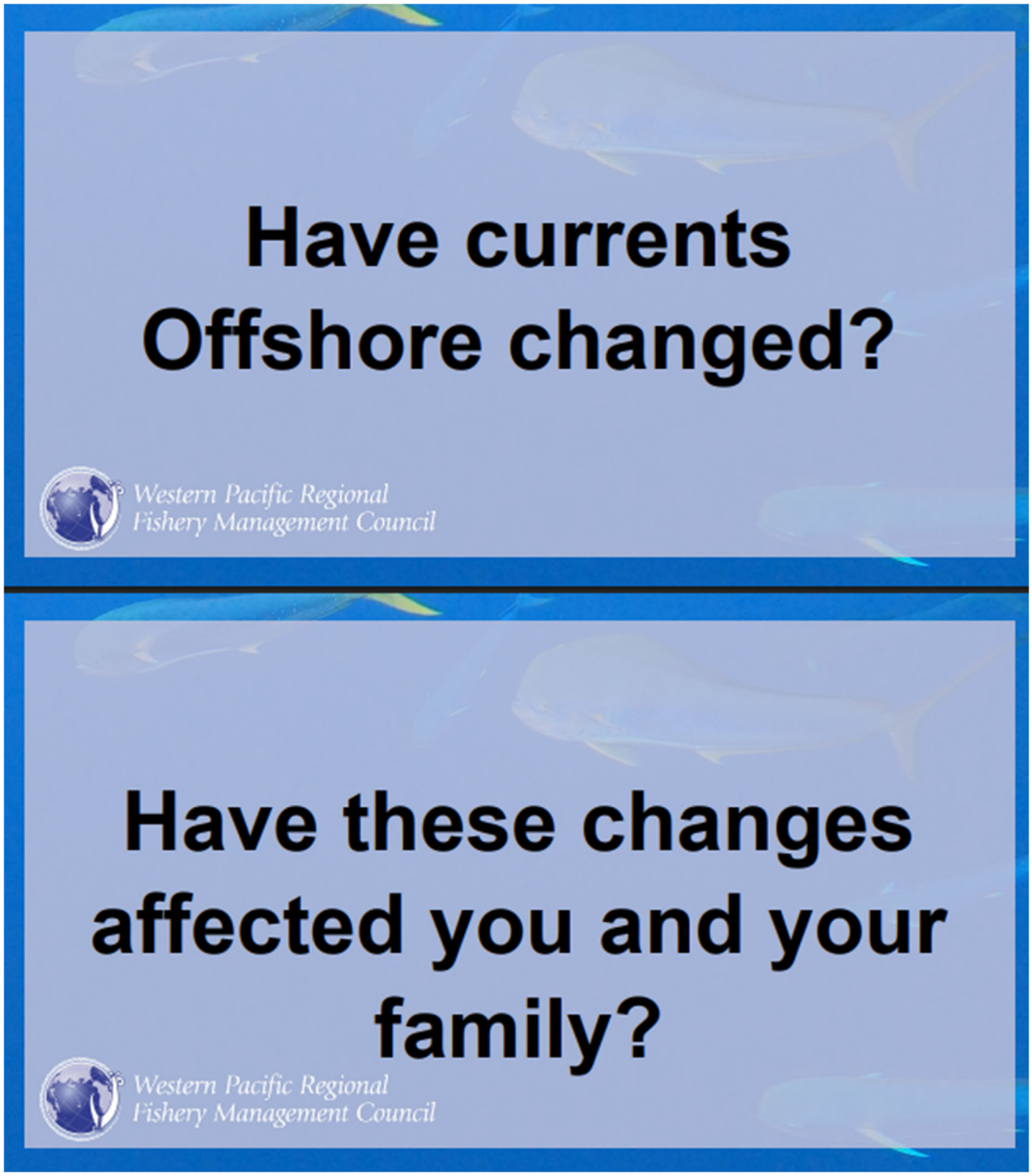
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Have other species increased or decreased?

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Is the ocean the same or different than the past?

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council


Have currents Offshore changed?
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
Have these changes affected you and your family?
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

How do rules and laws affect the fisheries in your waters?

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Do you feel you have a voice in policies and rule making?

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

What would improve the way fisheries are managed?

Western Pacific Regional
Fishery Management Council

How have fishery conditions changed over the past few years?

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Fishery Management Council

What do you want the next generation to learn about fishing?

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Next Steps & Community Involvement

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

Thank You

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERIES GROUP

Western Pacific Regional

Fisheries Management Council

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Josh DeMello, joshua.demello@noaa.gov

Pacific Islands Fisheries Group

Clay Tam, Pacificfisheries@gmail.com

Alex Min, Alex.cannon.min@gmail.com

6.b Agenda

Mariana Archipelago Community Consultations

Navigating Change:

Stories of the Marianas Fishers

Dates: **CNMI - Saipan**
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Azucena Rm., Coral Tree Ave., Garapan
February 27 (Th) 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. (ChST)

CNMI - Tinian
Tinian Public Library, San Jose
February 28 (F) 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (ChST)

CNMI - Rota
Mayor of Rota Conference Hall, San Francisco de Borja Hwy., Tatachog
March 1 (Sat) 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. (ChST)

Guam - Malesso'
Malesso' Village Community Center, 440 Joseph A. Cruz St., Malesso'
March 4 (T) 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (ChST)

Guam - Dededo
Dededo Village Community Center, 335 Iglesias Cir., Dededo
March 5 (W) 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (ChST)

Community Meeting Agenda

1.	Welcome, Introductions, Community Giveaways	
2.	Overview of the Community Consultation Effort	Mark Mitsuyasu
3.	Local Impacts & Challenges: Community Voices	Clay Tam
4.	Community Testimonials	Alex Min
	Break	
5.	Next Steps & Community Involvement	Alex Min
6.	Updates on Regulations, Policies & Support Programs	Josh DeMello
7.	Q&A / Closing Discussion	Clay Tam
8.	Wrap-Up & Appreciation	Mark Mitsuyasu

6.c Comments Matrix

Link to open source google excel book.
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1YkNZM5ELWHYuz3sZLkiTHqpCHq7aUqhW/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114069377611306586701&rtpof=true&sd=true

Location	Category	Comment
Saipan	Environmental	The mañåhak used to run every cycle. We haven't seen them for two or three years.
Saipan	Environmental	Atulai didn't show up this past season. Two years ago it was abundant, but last year nothing.
Saipan	Environmental	We're not seeing convict tang anymore. It used to be common.
Saipan	Environmental	Rabbitfish used to school around Laolao, but they haven't been around in a while.
Saipan	Environmental	Buoy data on wind, current, and temperature doesn't match what we experience on the water.
Saipan	Environmental	Shark interactions increase when the temperature gets above 80 degrees.
Saipan	Barriers	A range of logistical, regulatory, and economic challenges were discussed:
Saipan	Barriers	Fuel prices and gear costs make it harder to fish consistently.
Saipan	Barriers	Fishing permits are required for methods we've used for generations like talaya nets even though they're for subsistence.
Saipan	Barriers	Half of our waters are off-limits due to closures. It doesn't feel like that's based on science.
Saipan	Barriers	When closures happen and no data is collected, it feels like we're being managed without input.

Saipan	Barriers	We have regulations, but not enough enforcement capacity. Even the scientists and agencies are underfunded.
Saipan	Cultural	When the skipjack and i'e run in Tinian, it brings the whole community together.
Saipan	Cultural	Some species we traditionally relied on like turtles or giant clams are now restricted. That affects how we pass down knowledge.
Saipan	Cultural	There are too many people in the water from tourism. That pressure is changing the ecosystem.
Saipan	Cultural	We're worried about contamination and runoff from military training areas affecting reef health and seafood safety.
Saipan	Cultural	There's a disconnect between the regulations and the community. People want to comply, but they don't feel heard.
Saipan	Feedback	There needs to be a way to access historical data and studies related to toxicity, reef health, and species decline.
Saipan	Feedback	Pilot projects like small boat scenario planning could help test ideas that work for local realities.
Saipan	Feedback	More consistent engagement and follow-up is needed. One-time meetings aren't enough.
Saipan	Feedback	We need to reestablish advisory groups or coalitions that can regularly bring information to decision-makers.
Saipan	Feedback	Policies should consider food security, not just enforcement or conservation.
Tinian	Environmental	Scribbled rabbitfish and octopus, once commonly found around the island, are no longer seen in traditional areas.
Tinian	Environmental	Reef fish populations have declined, with divers frequently returning to the same locations and depths, contributing to scarcity.

Tinian	Environmental	The steep sloped banks are now flatter and feel farther away than before, possibly affecting fishing outcomes.
Tinian	Environmental	Frequent earthquakes were mentioned as a factor that impacts fish behavior and availability.
Tinian	Environmental	Marlin season was strong last year, and mahimahi came early and in abundance this year, which drove prices down.
Tinian	Environmental	Tuna have not been seen in the area for the last four to five months.
Tinian	Environmental	Weather has been windier and cooler than in previous years, with swells and currents also shifting.
Tinian	Environmental	A foreign fleet was reportedly seen fishing near Aguigan, raising concerns about offshore activity.
Tinian	Barriers	A range of logistical, regulatory, and economic challenges were discussed:
Tinian	Barriers	High fuel costs make it difficult to fish consistently, despite the availability of pelagic species.
Tinian	Barriers	There are only 18 active boats on the island, with very few full-time commercial fishers.
Tinian	Barriers	Fishermen are willing to report catch data, but the forms and systems needed to do so are not available.
Tinian	Barriers	Commercial fish licenses are not clearly defined or required, leading to inconsistencies in reporting and regulation.
Tinian	Barriers	Fishing permits are not enforced because of limited personnel, and people are hesitant to report violations by relatives or neighbors.
Tinian	Barriers	Contract workers harvest marine resources without regulation, sometimes not eating what they catch.
Tinian	Barriers	Ice is expensive and limits how long fish can be kept; this affects small-scale sales and drying practices.

Tinian	Cultural	Fishing remains closely tied to food, health, and tradition, with people often ordering fish directly from boats or drying it to sell.
Tinian	Cultural	Fish is viewed as food, not a trophy, and younger generations are becoming less engaged with fishing.
Tinian	Cultural	The cost of boats and gear is preventing more people from becoming fishers, with fewer new fishers each year.
Tinian	Cultural	Traditional fishing runs, such as the atulai season, used to draw large crowds, creating community-wide events.
Tinian	Cultural	Contamination, runoff, and reef degradation due to military training and coastal development were raised as ongoing concerns.
Tinian	Feedback	Aquaculture projects, like rabbitfish cultivation, were suggested as a solution for declining species.
Tinian	Feedback	There is a need to enforce existing regulations and provide tools such as logbooks and reporting forms for fishermen to comply.
Tinian	Feedback	Incentives such as fuel, ice, or fishing derbies could help encourage participation in data reporting.
Tinian	Feedback	Consistent communication and follow-up are needed to ensure meetings lead to action.
Tinian	Feedback	Future meetings should be advertised earlier, with posters and QR codes placed at docks and community bulletin boards.
Tinian	Feedback	School engagement and outreach were suggested as ways to teach the next generation about sustainable fishing.
Rota	Environmental	There are fewer fish than before, and the decline is noticeable across nearshore areas.

Rota	Environmental	Ciguatera is affecting red snapper, and worms have been found in other fish species.
Rota	Environmental	Fishers noted that Rota does not have the same shark problems as Guam.
Rota	Environmental	Older fishers are surprised by how deep younger spearfishers are diving 80 to 90 feet, something that wasn't possible with older gear.
Rota	Environmental	When surf conditions are high, fishers often hunt in the mountains instead of fishing.
Rota	Environmental	Fishing activity is tied closely to environmental conditions, and there is no consistent monitoring of local fish stocks.
Rota	Barriers	A range of logistical, regulatory, and economic challenges were discussed:
Rota	Barriers	Fishing gear is very expensive and there are no tackle stores on Rota.
Rota	Barriers	Young fishers rely on sharing boats and splitting fuel costs to fish economically.
Rota	Barriers	Only about 10 active boats operate on Rota, and most fishing occurs in small, coordinated groups.
Rota	Barriers	Fishers sell their catch informally through WhatsApp and social media group chats, as there is no central market or dockside sales area.
Rota	Barriers	There are concerns about individuals from other islands fishing in Rota waters without regulation.
Rota	Barriers	Participants raised the idea of creating a permitting system specific to Rota, as current CNMI-wide regulations don't reflect local needs.
Rota	Barriers	Some fishers have exported tuna from Rota to Guam, while others participate in tournaments but face high entry and operational costs.

Rota	Barriers	A few recent incidents were mentioned involving tournament fishers transporting undocumented individuals.
Rota	Cultural	Participants described long-standing cultural ties to fishing and concerns about ongoing environmental and development pressures:
Rota	Cultural	Fishing is often a family or community effort, with younger generations stepping in as key providers.
Rota	Cultural	The average income on Rota is low, around $16,000 per year, and fishing contributes significantly to household food and income.
Rota	Cultural	There is no formal retail market for fish, so fishers sell directly to community members through digital platforms.
Rota	Cultural	When ocean conditions are poor, subsistence shifts to land-based hunting, showing flexibility in food gathering practices.
Rota	Cultural	Local government officials emphasized the importance of building youth interest in natural resource jobs, including fisheries.
Rota	Cultural	There is strong interest in hosting fishing tournaments to promote fishing culture and community engagement.
Rota	Cultural	Concerns were raised about population changes and how migration may be affecting fish availability and local reliance on marine resources.
Rota	Feedback	Community members expressed interest in better data, collaboration, and transparent decision-making
Rota	Feedback	There is a need to assess Rota's fish stocks independently from Saipan and develop localized management tools.
Rota	Feedback	Permitting systems should distinguish between residents and nonresidents, with consideration for regulating contract workers.

Rota	Feedback	Grant opportunities are needed to support fishing gear access, youth participation, and capacity building.
Rota	Feedback	Participants suggested coordinating in advance with the Mayor's Office to schedule meetings and maximize turnout.
Rota	Feedback	Weekdays during regular work hours were identified as the best time for meetings, with the Mayor offering administrative leave for staff to attend.
Rota	Feedback	Posters, social media outreach, and in-person coordination were suggested to improve outreach before future events.
Rota	Feedback	Providing snacks or meals from local vendors and purchasing fish for events were offered as ways to involve the community and support local fishers.
Rota	Feedback	Consistent follow-up and engagement were requested to ensure that community feedback leads to real outcomes.
Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	There are fewer fish than before, possibly due to storms, increased fishing pressure, or habitat loss.
Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	Water temperatures affect where fish are found; warmer waters drive fish offshore and reduce reef activity.
Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	Ahi bites have declined during warm temperature periods.
Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	Fishing around FADs has become less productive than in past generations.
Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	Military sonar activity may be affecting fish runs.
Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	Shark populations have increased, especially in preserves.
Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	Unusual sightings of species like vampire fish and absence of others like anglerfish were noted.

Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	Rabbitfish runs have been lower or absent, and mud crab populations have declined over the past 16 years.
Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	Lagoon environments have changed; sandbars are burying coral heads and water temperatures are rising dramatically at low tide.
Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	Visibility has decreased, and corals once visible are now obscured by turbidity.
Malesso (Merizo)	Environmental	Runoff and burning are believed to be contributing to ecosystem degradation.
Malesso (Merizo)	Barriers	Fishers have to go farther offshore, spending more money to catch fish.
Malesso (Merizo)	Barriers	Some are buying fish from Palau or elsewhere due to local scarcity.
Malesso (Merizo)	Barriers	Locals feel constrained by fishing regulations while outsiders do not follow the same rules.
Malesso (Merizo)	Barriers	There is a perception of misaligned blame, with science and legislation not fully understanding fishermen realities.
Malesso (Merizo)	Barriers	Marine preserves are seen as predator-heavy and lacking balance, with calls to open them to restore equilibrium.
Malesso (Merizo)	Barriers	Enforcement is viewed as insufficient or poorly timed.
Malesso (Merizo)	Cultural	Younger generations need more education in fishing traditions and ocean safety.
Malesso (Merizo)	Cultural	Fishing should be taught young, and there were suggestions to designate safe fishing areas for kids.
Malesso (Merizo)	Cultural	Social media has shifted motivations for fishing, with some prioritizing showmanship over subsistence.
Malesso (Merizo)	Cultural	Fishing shouldn't become a history lesson, it needs to remain a living practice.

Malesso (Merizo)	Feedback	Suggestions for improving fisheries management included:
Malesso (Merizo)	Feedback	Create programs to engage youth and educate them early about ocean stewardship.
Malesso (Merizo)	Feedback	Use grants or neighborhood watch-style funding to support community-driven monitoring.
Malesso (Merizo)	Feedback	Establish clear buoy markers to help fishers understand jurisdiction boundaries (e.g., 3-mile limits).
Malesso (Merizo)	Feedback	Increase consistent and community-informed enforcement.
Malesso (Merizo)	Feedback	Support locally driven research and make NOAA or other buoy data more accessible.
Malesso (Merizo)	Feedback	Rebalance conservation efforts to support both sustainability and cultural fishing rights.
Dededo	Environmental	There are more sharks near Malesso, possibly due to larger predatory fish in the area.
Dededo	Environmental	Nearshore shark depredation is occurring right from shore in some places.
Dededo	Environmental	Sand is disappearing in areas like Tumon Bay, possibly related to the loss of sea cucumbers that once helped maintain sandy substrates.
Dededo	Environmental	Large coral die-offs are happening, with rubble replacing formerly live coral particularly after bleaching events.
Dededo	Environmental	Waterspouts have been observed in recent years, a new and concerning phenomenon for fishers.
Dededo	Environmental	The Tumon Bay MPA has not yielded the larger fish that were expected after 20 years of closure.
Dededo	Environmental	Oil sheens from suntan lotions and tourism activity are visible in Tumon waters, contributing to water quality issues.

Dededo	Environmental	There has been an increase in observations of oceanic whitetip and silky sharks, which are now showing up close to shore.
Dededo	Environmental	Seasonal runs of pelagic fish like mahi and wahoo are less predictable and less productive than in the past.
Dededo	Environmental	Species such as ruby opelu and saltwater catfish are being observed inshore where they weren't seen before.
Dededo	Barriers	There are more fishers but fewer fish.
Dededo	Barriers	Fuel costs and rough waters make it harder to fish, especially for those who need to travel farther offshore.
Dededo	Barriers	Commercial operators like jet skis and tour boats often disrupt fishing, and enforcement is inconsistent.
Dededo	Barriers	Tourism and military activity compete with traditional uses of marine resources.
Dededo	Barriers	Many MPAs and other restrictions have reduced access to once-productive fishing areas.
Dededo	Barriers	Fishermen expressed frustration with data being collected without enough fisher input or collaboration.
Dededo	Barriers	Lack of support and respect from inshore and offshore fishers was noted, along with illegal and disrespectful fishing practices.
Dededo	Barriers	Some expressed concern that scientific regulations are being created without incorporating indigenous knowledge or lived experience.
Dededo	Cultural	Fishing traditions are fading, like the talaya method and knowledge of fishing seasons based on the moon.
Dededo	Cultural	Traditional knowledge is being lost because younger generations are not practicing fishing as they once did.

Dededo	Cultural	The local population is shrinking in proportion to incoming populations, leading to cultural dilution.
Dededo	Cultural	Some fishers catch without regard for conservation, keeping smaller fish and ignoring traditional harvest cycles.
Dededo	Cultural	Community members want to see indigenous fishing rights protected and revitalized.
Dededo	Cultural	Fishing is part of Chamorro identity, and it was emphasized that cultural practices must be maintained even in the face of climate change and modernization.
Dededo	Cultural	Military buildup and increased immigration are creating additional competition for marine resources.
Dededo	Cultural	Fishermen shared stories of fishing with family in the past, noting a stark difference in fish abundance and water clarity compared to today.
Dededo	Feedback	Enforcement must improve to ensure both local and outside fishers follow the rules.
Dededo	Feedback	Scientific processes should expand to include traditional knowledge and more localized input.
Dededo	Feedback	Testimonies during fisheries meetings should be more than three minutes to allow fishers to share meaningful stories and data.
Dededo	Feedback	Support is needed for local fishers through programs, funding, and better communication.
Dededo	Feedback	Aquaponics and aquaculture may offer future opportunities to address food security and declining wild stocks.
Dededo	Feedback	There's strong interest in holding more community-based conversations around indigenous fishing rights.
Dededo	Feedback	The Mayor and Vice Mayor expressed commitment to advancing discussions about fishing access, conservation, and culture.

Kona	Environmental	There's been a noticeable increase in shark depredation oceanic whitetip sharks are the biggest issue, not nearshore sharks.
Kona	Environmental	Steino are now taking larger fish than before, damaging more catch even when brought in quickly.
Kona	Environmental	The average ahi size has dropped to around 70 lbs, with porpoise school ahi around 90 lbs once 130 “150 lbs, which is concerning.
Kona	Environmental	There was a significant south swell last year that brought trash and rough conditions across the islands.
Kona	Environmental	Currents have changed stronger and more erratic, requiring double buoy setups and making trolling less effective.
Kona	Environmental	This was the worst season for mahimahi in recent memory the environment has clearly shifted.
Kona	Barriers	Longer effort is yielding fewer fish due to shark damage.
Kona	Barriers	Fishermen feel used by researchers; they contributed to shark tagging research and are now being negatively impacted by the resulting protections.
Kona	Barriers	Shark tours around buoys are increasing shark aggregation and harming small-boat commercial fishers.
Kona	Barriers	Shortline operations are setting too many lines, some reportedly over a mile in length despite the hook limit.
Kona	Barriers	Strong competition from imports is hurting Native Hawaiian fishers who already struggle with regulations and rising operational costs.
Kona	Barriers	There is frustration over inaccurate data being used from catch reports that don't reflect the true abundance or effort due to fear of regulatory backlash.

Kona	Barriers	Protected species rules driven by tourism (like porpoise interaction bans) are limiting fishing opportunities.
Kona	Barriers	There's a disconnect between fishers and policymakering people who keep attending meetings, but don't see real change, causing meeting fatigue.
Kona	Cultural	There is great regret among fishers who participated in shark research; it feels like their cooperation backfired.
Kona	Cultural	As Polynesians, fishers feel the territory is theirs not shark tour companies or outside interests.
Kona	Cultural	Fishers noted that Native Hawaiians historically ate sharks and had shark heiau but today, sharks are seen as untouchable.
Kona	Cultural	The idea of fishing replenishment areas are viewed as a myth; fishers argue there's no real spillover benefit.
Kona	Cultural	Article 12 Section 7 gathering rights are being referenced to reinforce Native Hawaiian access to marine resources.
Kona	Cultural	Frustration over new seasonal closures and increasing regulations tied to "green money" received by external groups.
Kona	Cultural	Fishers used to have a market for sharks and want to see sustainable harvest reconsidered.
Kona	Feedback	Regulate shark tourism near FADs; stop increasing depredation hotspots.
Kona	Feedback	Reform shortline regulations limit one set per vessel to reduce pressure.
Kona	Feedback	Create a shortline registry, similar to bottomfish, to allow enforcement to track and limit use.
Kona	Feedback	Adjust lines for replenishment zones; let's revisit the drawing board fishers don't see evidence of replenishment.

Kona	Feedback	Ensure labels reflect source support for mandatory COOL (country of origin labeling) with clear identification for small-boat vs longline fish.
Kona	Feedback	Provide tangible solutions after meetings fishers want to see actual change, not just more talk.
Kona	Feedback	Support traditional fishing rights and practices; apply Article 12 provisions as legal grounding for access.
Kona	Feedback	3.c.2 Hilo, Hawai'i
Hilo	Environmental	The limu is gone from where it used to gathered along the shoreline, now we don't know where it went.
Hilo	Environmental	Pollution and redirected freshwater have changed our coastline; the fishponds that once fed us can't survive without it.
Hilo	Environmental	After the lava flow, the nursery habitats changed, and now there are fewer juvenile fish.
Hilo	Environmental	Winter seas are rougher, and rains are more frequent this is why we can't go out safely on our 14-foot boats like before.
Hilo	Environmental	King tides weren't something we talked about before, but now we hear it all the time.
Hilo	Barriers	You can't feed your family when you're stuck on land because of rough seas.
Hilo	Barriers	Ika shibi fleet is much smaller now you hardly see a 200 lb gorilla anymore.
Hilo	Barriers	Used to be lots of aku around the FADs, now they're hard to find.
Hilo	Barriers	I had to switch to frozen poke because fresh is too expensive or unavailable.
Hilo	Barriers	My son goes fishing less now he can't offset the cost anymore.

Hilo	Cultural	Several speakers emphasized ecosystem changes affecting traditional practices and local diets. There was concern about overprotection of species, species shifts, and imbalance in marine ecosystems.
Hilo	Cultural	Without freshwater there's no nehu, and without nehu, there's no aku.
Hilo	Cultural	You see more sharks now, especially blacktips in Hilo Bay, where we catch them by accident when we're targeting papio.
Hilo	Cultural	Fish are smarter. Kole don't bite like they used to. And aholehole disappeared after that sewage issue in Honokahau.
Hilo	Cultural	Turtles are overprotected. Now they're everywhere, and it's thrown off the balance.
Hilo	Cultural	Seeing more ta’ape and knifejaw, but fewer rainbow runners and aholehole.
Hilo	Feedback	We need more outreach, not just enforcement people need to understand why the rules are there.
Hilo	Feedback	Some laws don't make sense. Like why can you fish for crabs with a net but not with a line?
Hilo	Feedback	If regulations need to change, give us a real seat at the table to help do it.
Hilo	Feedback	We want our kids to learn how to fish and how to share their catch fish smart and understand the system.
Hilo	Feedback	Having a voice is one thing, but having a voice that leads to actual change is what matters.
Maui	Environmental	The grounds have changed where there used to be sand and mud, now it's all rocks and different species.
Maui	Environmental	We used to walk on the reef in Kahakuloa, now it's impossible something's changed.

Maui	Environmental	In the 80s Ma'alaea had vibrant coral and seaweed, now it's bare.
Maui	Environmental	Runoff, cesspools, and connections to KeÄlia Pond must be affecting the limu.
Maui	Environmental	We're on a precipice; this is our opportunity for coastal restoration.
Maui	Barriers	Community members described increased shark depredation, overregulation, reduced access due to coastal development, and economic barriers, all limiting their ability to fish effectively and safely.
Maui	Barriers	Shark depredation is worse than ever gotta bring fish in fast or lose them.
Maui	Barriers	Used to lose 1 out of 5, now it's 5 to 1.
Maui	Barriers	Oceanic conditions are harsher; small boats can't make it out like before.
Maui	Barriers	Beach access is gone, taken by the rich. The island is shrinking, not the sea rising.
Maui	Barriers	Fishing costs too much now, and we have less time to fish.
Maui	Cultural	We have more turtles now, but they eat all the limu and fish can't compete.
Maui	Cultural	Sharks used to be scared of us now they come in close and attack.
Maui	Cultural	Hagi, whales, turtles, and Galapagos sharks have increased everything's shifting.
Maui	Cultural	At Lahaina, FSM folks are taking everything, even loli, and selling them.
Maui	Cultural	There's more poaching, especially post-COVID, and sales on social media aren't being tracked.

Maui	Feedback	The land and ocean are managed separately, and that's a mistake as they are connected and should be managed together. .
Maui	Feedback	We should define a true commercial fisher too many part-timers are hurting the system.
Maui	Feedback	Where is the data going? We submit reports, but never hear back from NOAA.
Maui	Feedback	HMRFs barely come by as we've only seen two assignments a week for all of Maui.
Maui	Feedback	We need to educate the next generation in fishing. It is about feeding families, not posting photos.
Maui	Feedback	Incentives like tax cuts could encourage fishers to share data.
Lānaʻi	Environmental	Sediment erosion and overpopulation of turtles are throwing off the balance, there's even tumors on the turtles.
Lānaʻi	Environmental	King tides weren't something we paid attention to before, but now the impact is noticeable.
Lānaʻi	Environmental	Lānaʻi used to be rich with limu, but it's harder to find now pollution and changes to the sewer system might be part of the reason.
Lānaʻi	Environmental	Manauea cages won't survive the winter; it gets too cold here for them.
Lānaʻi	Environmental	Shrimp populations are declining too; they're affected by the changes in limu and sediment.
Lānaʻi	Barriers	Minimum size rules force us to target bigger fish; those are the breeders.
Lānaʻi	Barriers	After COVID and new DAR rules, there's less fish, and less flexibility to adapt.
Lānaʻi	Barriers	There's barely any nehu anymore, even though it used to be everywhere.

Lānaʻi	Barriers	Lanai can sustain our own community, but when we have to share with others, things get tough.
Lānaʻi	Cultural	Our moʻolelo record where aku have run for generations our kids should know these stories.
Lānaʻi	Cultural	Goats and sheep were brought in by foreigners; they've destroyed habitat near the Maunalei Stream.
Lānaʻi	Cultural	The imbalance of ESA-listed species like turtles isn't being acknowledged, it's throwing everything off.
Lānaʻi	Cultural	People say whales don't eat, but we're seeing big ika wash up something's changing.
Lānaʻi	Cultural	There used to be plenty of aku, but after COVID it felt like they disappeared.
Lānaʻi	Feedback	We've tried everything, but our kids still haven't even been to Keomuku; we need more opportunities to reconnect them.
Lānaʻi	Feedback	It's hard to do programs for the youth there's too many distractions and not enough support.
Lānaʻi	Feedback	We've worked with schools to bring Lanai-specific knowledge into classrooms, but there should be more.
Lānaʻi	Feedback	We want to raise limu and fish in brackish tanks to get our keiki involved; it would be easier with some support.
Lānaʻi	Feedback	It would help to use plastic gauges to create a slot limit for ʻopihi–something to manage them better.
Molokaʻi	Environmental	Over the past three years, we've seen big changes; land use impacts the ocean. It's all connected.
Molokaʻi	Environmental	The pineapple industry left its mark; now we see turtles with tumors, but we can restore the balance with stewardship.
Molokaʻi	Environmental	There are more seals around Moloka'i than before. We're told they're being relocated from the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Molokaʻi	Environmental	Invasive mangroves brought in the early 1900s have impacted the flats we need to trim them back.
Molokaʻi	Environmental	After lobster fisheries were wiped out, the seals came to the main Hawaiian Islands and started nibbling other species.
Molokaʻi	Barriers	Tiger sharks have learned how to track boats our fishing grounds are infested.
Molokaʻi	Barriers	We don't get support from the scientists who use our knowledge and leave. We never get resources back.
Molokaʻi	Barriers	They're creating regulations but we're the ones keeping Moloka'i going fish is our diet, our way of life.
Molokaʻi	Barriers	We catch taʻape to clean the reef, but then we get taxed; government brought them in, now they tax us for removing them.
Molokaʻi	Barriers	Our deep-sea areas are overrun if we're supposed to stop fishing just to let predators feed, something's wrong.
Molokaʻi	Cultural	Moloka'i attendees expressed strong intergenerational values around stewardship, with a deep cultural foundation in local ahupua'a-based resource management. Many reflected on how traditions around sharing, consent to fish, and kuleana are being disrupted.
Molokaʻi	Cultural	When I was growing up, you didn't fish in someone else's ahupuaʻa without asking permission.
Molokaʻi	Cultural	Our kupuna built this system; each family had a role, and everyone came together to care for our place.
Molokaʻi	Cultural	On Molokaʻi, if you fish, you share with those who can't. You don't go commercial. Take what you need.
Molokaʻi	Cultural	We're trying to teach our keiki by building limu gardens and getting them in the water.

Molokaʻi	Cultural	We've fished for ta’ape for free, tried to sell them, and got taxed; it's like doing the government's job without support.
Molokaʻi	Feedback	Let us prepare for the CRB; we need support before the crisis, not after.
Molokaʻi	Feedback	Create incentives to target invasive species like ta’ape maybe tax breaks or a viable fishery.
Molokaʻi	Feedback	Give us funding to grow our limu garden and build ocean guard programs for our keiki.
Molokaʻi	Feedback	Help us develop local cage systems to control invasives and protect native species.
Molokaʻi	Feedback	Don't wait until people are starving, change needs to start now.
	Feedback	3.c.6 Lihue, Kaua'i
Kauaʻi	Environmental	This is a different ocean now. The last ʻanaeholo (mullet) I saw was off Waikīkī in the '60s. You don't see those anymore.
Kauaʻi	Environmental	The currents have changed. What used to flow west to east is now moving upcurrent.
Kauaʻi	Environmental	The whales are eating more fish, and you'll see acres of pilot whales if the tuna are around.
Kauaʻi	Environmental	There's a lot more fish lately, but they're smaller; the currents and koʻa are different.
Kauaʻi	Environmental	Kaʻula Rock still gets bombed by the Navy. They give us an hour to leave, and people just aren't listening to the fishers.
Kauaʻi	Environmental	Turtles are out of balance now. There should be a license system to harvest and feed families again.
Kauaʻi	Environmental	The monk seals are eating deep 7 bottomfish and even pelagics off the buoys.

Kauaʻi	Barriers	Fishers always get blamed, but it's tourism and development that change the ecosystem and we lose access while no one addresses it.
Kauaʻi	Barriers	The talk is always about more regulations, but look at COVID we kept people fed. Don't forget that.
Kauaʻi	Barriers	They created minimum size limits, which makes us target the breeders.
Kauaʻi	Barriers	Now we need insurance just to fish from a 26-foot boat; fishing is hard enough already.
Kauaʻi	Barriers	They keep pushing us out. If you let the government run things, Kauaʻi's going to become an aquarium.
Kauaʻi	Barriers	We tried to work with Costco; they'd only take fish if we could sustain supply. But we can't keep up with the market structure.
Kauaʻi	Barriers	We need more FADs placed in 500-fathom zones to bring in younger fishers, but the current ones aren't working like they used to.
Kauaʻi	Cultural	Fishing was about the whole community involved.
Kauaʻi	Cultural	The culture is shifting. You can't sell fried fish here, but you can sell poke, sashimi, or salmon.
Kauaʻi	Cultural	Our culture doesn't show up in the data. We need HEPA to prioritize Native Hawaiian practices.
Kauaʻi	Cultural	The next generation runs into jet skis, tour boats, and county rules they can't practice the way we did.
Kauaʻi	Cultural	My cultural practice means going early in the morning, before the boats. But access is harder now.
Kauaʻi	Cultural	Deep sea bottomfish are still good around NiÊ»ihau they're quality but there's fewer fishers now. People think it's overfishing, but that's BS.

Kauaʻi	Feedback	HEPA should be used to give Native Hawaiians priority to speak on issues NEPA just lets everyone talk.
Kauaʻi	Feedback	The Council and DAR should collaborate to create permits for shark and turtle harvest.
Kauaʻi	Feedback	The state gave $14.9 million to Holomua, but that money's from the mainland from tourism. It's not helping us here.
Kauaʻi	Feedback	Bring back access to the NWHI for bottomfishers; it supplied 50% of our fish at one time.
Kauaʻi	Feedback	Make fishing viable again: help with labor, processing, and fileting we can't afford the rising costs.
Kauaʻi	Feedback	Create community-based fishing tournaments again, and help us resolve issues with the County.
Kauaʻi	Feedback	We've gotta let the doers do and support those who are feeding the island, not just talking.
Waiʻanae	Environmental	The ocean's different now there's more pollution from roads, cars, and wastewater, even though the water is treated, not purified.
Waiʻanae	Environmental	Coral structures changed after Hurricane Iwa, but now the finger coral off the harbor has started to come back.
Waiʻanae	Environmental	Currents impact fish availability, and people misinterpret that as fish depletion.
Waiʻanae	Environmental	Exceptional years for fish still happen, with one species usually blooming each season.
Waiʻanae	Environmental	Halalū would come every September and grow fast, but now schools mix and it's hard to avoid catching the small ones.
Waiʻanae	Environmental	Concerns were raised about sediment and possible radiation effects from Japan's recent water release.
Waiʻanae	Barriers	The price for fish hasn't kept up in 20 years, it's gone from $2 to $3/lb.

Waiʻanae	Barriers	There's no market to support local production even with 200,000 to 400,000 pounds of akule landed per year, it's not being depleted, but there's no one to buy it.
Waiʻanae	Barriers	If one good fisherman dies, you can lose an entire crew up to 40,000 pounds a year, lost just like that.
Waiʻanae	Barriers	Vandalism of gear is a real issue; nets are cut, and people don't respect fishing practices.
Waiʻanae	Barriers	Tourism projects like offshore wind cables are disrupting fishing grounds, and sharks nibble on the cables, creating new hazards.
Waiʻanae	Barriers	Too many tourist boats are chasing dolphins, and local boaters have no venue to voice concerns.
Waiʻanae	Cultural	There's interest in bringing back the konohiki system, where fishermen ask for permission and share information before fishing.
Waiʻanae	Cultural	Taʻape was introduced and released in Nānākuli; it wasn't here before, and now it's causing problems.
Waiʻanae	Cultural	Some felt that seals were brought in intentionally, noting that 9 were introduced to the main Hawaiian Islands in 2009.
Waiʻanae	Cultural	Seals can cost fishers a whole day, and some said they're seeing four generations now.
Waiʻanae	Cultural	One person went to court over a seal caught in a net and lost the case asking how these incidents are monitored and how much fish a seal consumes annually.
Waiʻanae	Cultural	The cultural relationship with seals and turtles is complex; they must be dealt with as part of cultural practices, not just regulations.
Waiʻanae	Cultural	Some advocated for including representatives from the Hawaiian Provisional Government at future meetings.

Waiʻanae	Feedback	Reports and laws should be based on good data flawed data leads to bad regulation.
Waiʻanae	Feedback	Fishermen want input and engagement like they had with previous reports on akule and ta'ape.
Waiʻanae	Feedback	Questions were raised about the environmental assessments for the introduction of monk seals and offshore wind projects.
Waiʻanae	Feedback	There was frustration that sanctuaries and closures have taken away access to productive schools of fish like those once running from Barbers Point to the power plant.
Waiʻanae	Feedback	Some advocated for including local voices in decision-making about sanctuaries, harbors, and coastal access.
Waiʻanae	Feedback	Calls were made to monitor seal movements and consider their impact on fisheries, as well as explore offshore cage farming and improved reporting mechanisms for interactions.
Keʻehi	Environmental	Growing up in ʻEwa, there was plenty of fish and limu, but that changed with sewage discharge, development, and tourism. The ecosystem has shifted, and many species like ʻōmaka, nehu, and mullet are no longer seen.
Keʻehi	Environmental	The yellowfin used to reach 350 lbs now you don't see that anymore.
Keʻehi	Environmental	Kailua's canal used to be open, but now with concrete and diversions, it's clogged and floods more often.
Keʻehi	Environmental	There's been major shoreline erosion, changes in salinity, and reduced color and nutrients in the water.
Keʻehi	Environmental	Spring water and lava tubes no longer flow due to construction; what used to be rich estuarine systems now feel disconnected.
Keʻehi	Environmental	Freshwater-fed areas once supported koi, āholehole, and nehu, but urbanization erased those cycles.

Ke‘ehi	Environmental	Clear water now dominates, but the clarity masks loss of productivity in nutrients and bottom food chain species.
Ke‘ehi	Environmental	Water quality testing by the Department of Health has declined, and salinity shifts are poorly monitored.
Ke‘ehi	Environmental	Sonar, changing currents, and drifting FADs may be affecting fish migration and biting behavior.
Ke‘ehi	Environmental	Offshore, the fisheries seem relatively stable, but nearshore conditions are severely degraded and less predictable.
Ke‘ehi	Barriers	Fuel prices remain a major obstacle.
Ke‘ehi	Barriers	There's no clear path to becoming a longline fisherman; it's a dead-end for younger fishers.
Ke‘ehi	Barriers	Market dynamics have shifted: roadside selling is up, but markets aren't taking fish, affecting how fishing is classified (recreational vs. commercial).
Ke‘ehi	Barriers	Catch limits are discussed for fish, but what about for people what is the carrying capacity of these systems with growing populations?
Ke‘ehi	Barriers	Nearshore fishing is getting harder with more thrill crafts, beachgoers, and regulations not to mention rising costs and gear loss.
Ke‘ehi	Barriers	Kids' involvement in fishing is largely dependent on family engagement; there's no consistent system.
Ke‘ehi	Barriers	Flawed data leads to flawed policies; there's a disconnect between science and what local people observe.
Ke‘ehi	Cultural	Out-of-state advocates and ENGOs are drowning out local voices; they don't understand what applies to the Western Pacific.

Keʻehi	Cultural	There used to be tumors in necropsies, but improved conditions may have reduced them; turtles may now graze more limu, leading some to wrongly assume it's just gone.
Keʻehi	Cultural	Oʻio is less common now due to commercial lomi sales and pressure.
Keʻehi	Cultural	More turtles, seals, and sharks are seen indicating population shifts in predators that further strain fisheries.
Keʻehi	Cultural	Traditional indicators like coconut trees showing spring water are disappearing these changes are tied to cultural loss.
Keʻehi	Cultural	Some still follow knowledge from uncles about koʻa grounds and lunar cycles, but it's not being passed down widely.
Keʻehi	Cultural	When people say no more limu, maybe the turtles are just eating it faster now.
Keʻehi	Feedback	More empirical studies and surveys are needed before implementing new rules fishers want to see real science tied to what they observe.
Keʻehi	Feedback	Bag limits lack scientific basis, while size restrictions are more effective.
Keʻehi	Feedback	Participants urged state and federal agencies to improve water quality tracking, stream restoration, and ecosystem carrying capacity modeling.
Keʻehi	Feedback	Concerns about sonar, international pressure, and offshore developments (like PFADs) need to be better evaluated for local impacts.
Keʻehi	Feedback	Spearfishing and gear type changes have made schooling fish more elusive; this needs consideration in policy.
Keʻehi	Feedback	They want a stronger voice in federal decisions especially as rules are increasingly shaped by non-local perspectives.

Ofu & Olosega	Environmental	Fish have been disappearing since 2019, possibly due to climate change or other environmental changes.
Ofu & Olosega	Environmental	Sharks are growing in size, taking more bottomfish, and coming closer to shore.
Ofu & Olosega	Environmental	Corals are dying, possibly from climate impacts or runoff from a relocated landfill.
Ofu & Olosega	Environmental	A new algae is growing on the reef in front of the clinic, killing corals. It may be from detergents, excess freshwater, or poor septic systems.
Ofu & Olosega	Environmental	Tides seem higher, and many formerly sandy areas were once coral reefs.
Ofu & Olosega	Environmental	Palolo rises are occurring less frequently and in lower volumes than in the past.
Ofu & Olosega	Environmental	Water temperatures and lagoon conditions have changed; sandbars have shifted, burying coral heads.
Ofu & Olosega	Barriers	Gasoline is rationed at 10 gallons per person weekly for car and boat, limiting fishing range.
Ofu & Olosega	Barriers	There are no local gear or tackle stores; Ta‘u is the only nearby source.
Ofu & Olosega	Barriers	There is no ice machine or access to fuel vouchers anymore.
Ofu & Olosega	Barriers	MPAs are not supported by many locals, who feel excluded from traditional fishing grounds.
Ofu & Olosega	Barriers	Fishing gear is improvised due to access issues “ even using screwdrivers to catch fish.
Ofu & Olosega	Barriers	There is no emergency contact system in place for ocean safety.
Ofu & Olosega	Cultural	Fishing is mostly subsistence-based “ we fish when we need to, not to sell.

Ofu & Olosega	Cultural	Bottomfish, trolling, aku, wahoo, parrotfish, faisua (clams), octopus, and turtles are still relatively abundant.
Ofu & Olosega	Cultural	Fishing knowledge should be passed down, including where to find specific species and how to conserve those areas.
Ofu & Olosega	Cultural	Trash in the ocean and marine debris are concerns; youth should be taught to fish responsibly and sustainably.
Ofu & Olosega	Cultural	Locals fish for food security, not for profit. Outsiders and foreign vessels are seen as threats to local access and sustainability.
Ofu & Olosega	Feedback	Provide boats and equipment for young fishers.
Ofu & Olosega	Feedback	Establish programs to teach youth about safe, sustainable fishing methods.
Ofu & Olosega	Feedback	Set up an emergency response system for fishers at sea.
Ofu & Olosega	Feedback	Support improved infrastructure, including septic systems and coral reef protection.
Ofu & Olosega	Feedback	Open up protected areas like Rose Atoll and monuments for local fishing.
Ta‘u Island	Environmental	Ocean temperatures were reported to be consistent, but currents have become unpredictable, often spinning, pulling downward, or changing rapidly.
Ta‘u Island	Environmental	Lines do not troll straight anymore due to stronger or erratic currents.
Ta‘u Island	Environmental	Year-round big waves are damaging coral structures.
Ta‘u Island	Environmental	More sharks are appearing, including large and small sizes.

Ta‘u Island	Environmental	Turtles and whales are being seen more frequently, including whale sightings in August.
Ta‘u Island	Barriers	Logistical and infrastructure-related issues are making fishing more difficult:
Ta‘u Island	Barriers	Improper motor sizes are damaging aluminum-hulled boats (alias); 60 HP motors are too strong and not suited for the boats, which need 40 HP.
Ta‘u Island	Barriers	Many people use kayaks, but they are exhausting and unsafe in poor weather.
Ta‘u Island	Barriers	Thrownet fishers struggle to find consistent good fishing spots.
Ta‘u Island	Barriers	Bottomfish move quickly from areas, and only a few can be caught before they scatter.
Ta‘u Island	Barriers	Outboard engine failures and high maintenance costs lead to boats being unused for long periods.
Ta‘u Island	Barriers	There is only one active alia and one private boat operating on Ta'u.
Ta‘u Island	Barriers	Safety gear is lacking EPIRBs, radios, flares and there is difficulty complying with marine patrol rules, which are not aligned with USCG regulations.
Ta‘u Island	Cultural	Young fishers should learn from elders how to fish, weather awareness, and ancestral techniques.
Ta‘u Island	Cultural	Fishing tournaments are a good opportunity to teach and engage youth.
Ta‘u Island	Cultural	Passing on boating magic and skills from elders to younger generations is valued.
Ta‘u Island	Cultural	There is a need for electric reels to make deep bottomfishing more accessible to younger or less-experienced fishers.
Ta‘u Island	Feedback	Minimizing shark depredation was highlighted, including calls to revise laws on shark harvest.

Ta‘u Island	Feedback	More support is needed to repair and maintain boats and engines due to the high costs of shipping and parts.
Ta‘u Island	Feedback	Reactivating the Taisamama fishing association could help centralize community input to the Council.
Ta‘u Island	Feedback	Participants want someone local from Ta'u to be appointed to the Advisory Panel (AP) to relay information directly.
Ta‘u Island	Feedback	There is support for workshops on safety, equipment use, and traditional knowledge sharing.
Ta‘u Island	Feedback	There was interest in understanding the government's stance on seabed mining and its potential impacts on Ta'u's fishing community.
Tutuila	Environmental	Ocean temperature is reportedly always changing, but difficult to detect day-to-day. Scientific data suggests warming, but it's not observable locally.
Tutuila	Environmental	Climate change was said to displace both fish and people, creating social and economic impacts.
Tutuila	Environmental	More sharks are being observed, including within the harbor, and there are increased sightings of turtles and dolphins.
Tutuila	Environmental	Skipjack abundance has declined, with assumptions that purse seiners may be taking more offshore fish.
Tutuila	Environmental	Palolo has become scarcer and less predictable, with small containers selling for $50 what was once freely shared now feels commodified.
Tutuila	Barriers	Multiple boat ramps are in poor condition, including the main ramp in Pago that floods during high tide, making truck launches difficult.
Tutuila	Barriers	There is a lack of dock infrastructure, safe boat tie-up options, and floating docks.

Tutuila	Barriers	Marina areas are unsafe, with sharp edges, rust, and corrosion.
Tutuila	Barriers	Access to ice and safety gear like flares, radios, and life-saving equipment is limited and costly.
Tutuila	Barriers	There are too few vocational workers trained in boat maintenance or marine engineering.
Tutuila	Barriers	Financial constraints prevent fishers from investing in proper gear, making it difficult to support their families.
Tutuila	Barriers	Polluted streams, especially near urban areas, were cited as reasons for reduced fishing activity.
Tutuila	Cultural	Young fishers need to be taught conservation, navigation, weather interpretation, and traditional methods like fishing with lanterns and reef foraging.
Tutuila	Cultural	Community-based events like akule fishing continue to bring people together, but climate change and regulatory burdens are affecting consistency.
Tutuila	Feedback	Develop education and training programs focused on youth, conservation, marketing, maintenance, and boat safety.
Tutuila	Feedback	Support infrastructure upgrades to ramps, marinas, and docks, along with ice machines and equipment storage.
Tutuila	Feedback	Provide affordable safety and navigation equipment.
Tutuila	Feedback	Revisit the super alia program to ensure it supports local needs without depleting resources like bottomfish.
Tutuila	Feedback	Train fishers on shark deterrence strategies and allow more discussion on shark harvest to manage growing populations.
Tutuila	Feedback	Address pollution from development, including the use of weed killers and cementing near wetlands.

Tutuila	Feedback	Create a monitoring system for coastal harvesting, especially near streams and lagoons.
Tutuila	Feedback	There is a disconnect between changing federal regulations (e.g., CFR updates) and on-the-ground awareness among local fishers.
Tutuila	Feedback	Concerns were raised about regulations affecting access to species like giant clams, and that local knowledge must be considered.
Tutuila	Feedback	Many voiced strong opposition to seabed mining, citing environmental risk and cultural impact.
Tutuila	Feedback	Opinions on marine monument boundaries varied: some support maintaining protections, while others favor opening certain zones (e.g., within 12 nm) for commercial fishing of migratory tuna.
Tutuila	Feedback	There was consensus that fishing activity should not jeopardize seabird nesting areas or increase gear entanglement near atolls.