



204th Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
Sept. 16-17, 2025

Education and Outreach Report

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

Publication

Pacific Islands Fishery News

The summer 2025 issue of the Council's quarterly newsletter (www.wpcouncil.org/wp-council-newsletters) was distributed in early September 2025 primarily through the Constant Contact email list with ~3,500 subscribers. Printed copies are distributed to local agencies, fishermen and other community members throughout the island areas. A few topics are listed below.

Summer 2025

- Guest article from SSC member Dr. Ray Hilborn regarding tuna fishing's effect in the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument, along with a summary on the recent court ruling on this topic
- Two articles on the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and recent and upcoming international meeting outcomes
- Key discussion themes from the May 2025 Council Coordination Committee meeting in New Bedford, MA
- Community meetings on the Guam Fishery Management Plan development, challenges facing American Samoa fishers and proposed military activities in the Mariana Islands
- An insert on the 2024 Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Reports

Outreach Materials

The Council has developed outreach maps and timelines to help the public understand how fishing regulations have been layered over time—first through the Council's fishery management plans, then through later presidential proclamations. Two new maps, for the Hawaiian Islands and American Samoa's Rose Atoll, join an existing Mariana Islands map to show how early Council measures prohibited destructive gear, established protected areas, and set permit requirements—years before national monument designations added further restrictions.

In addition, a simple 1-page handout was created to show a side-by-side comparison of shark fishing and feeding regulations in Hawai'i state and federal waters. Images of many of the shark species managed under the Council's Hawai'i and Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plans are shown on the back side. Additional versions to show regulations in the three territories are in development.

These new resources are available at www.wpcouncil.org/educational-resources/handouts.

Media

In this reporting time period (June 1 – August 31, 2025), the Council published seven press releases; one on the 156th Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting, four on the 203rd Council meeting, and two on the American Samoa and Hawai'i Island community meetings.

The Council received media requests (some as follow ups from press releases) resulting in several news articles:

Regarding opening federal waters to commercial fishing in marine national monuments in the Pacific:

- Mahealani Richardson from Hawaii News Now interviewed Council Executive Director Kitty Simonds.
 - June 19, 2025: [Fishing council to ask Trump to lift fishing ban in Papahānaumokuākea](#)
- Mia Anzalone from the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* interviewed Council ED Simonds.
 - June 29, 2025: [Culture and fish at center of debate in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument](#)
- Marcel Honore from *Honolulu Civil Beat* interviewed Council members Will Sword and Archie Soliai.
 - July 9, 2025: [Pacific Tuna Fleets Pushed To Lift Ban In Waters They Barely Fished](#)
- Paul Molyneaux, writing for *National Fisherman*, worked with Council staff on his article, providing a statement from Council Chair Will Sword and photos/maps.
 - July 18, 2025: [Reopening the Pacific Monuments](#)
- Daniel Cusick from *E&E News-Greenwire* interviewed Council staff Joshua DeMello.
 - Aug. 14, 2025: [Expanded commercial fishing eyed in Pacific marine monuments](#)

Walter Ulloa from *The Guam Daily Post* interviewed Council staff DeMello regarding next steps for several fishery-related issues affecting the Mariana Islands and Micronesia.

- June 25, 2025: [Council supporting a review of monument fishing restrictions](#)

Gayathri Krishna from *Atuna* requested information that came out of the American Samoa community consultation meetings.

- July 9, 2025: [American Samoa Tuna Fishers Share Their Woes](#)

Walter Ulloa from *The Guam Daily Post* interviewed Council staff Felix Reyes on the Council's observations regarding the Dept. of Aquatic and Wildlife Resource's community consultation meetings to develop its fishery management plan.

- July 22, 2025: [Guam fishers voice concerns on plan for coral reef management](#)

‘A‘ali‘i Dukelow with Hawaii News Now requested comment regarding the Kapa‘a v. Trump case concerning commercial fishing in the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument. Council ED Simonds provided a statement in response.

- Aug. 10, 2025: [Federal court rules against Trump’s order to allow commercial fishing in marine monument](#)

Region-Wide Outreach

The Council provided support for the community consultation meetings organized by the Pacific Islands Fisheries Group in American Samoa in June (end of Round 1) and Hawai‘i Island in August (beginning of Round 2). The Council and PIFG publicized the meetings through newspaper ads, a press release, the Council email list and social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram), printed flyers and WhatsApp fishermen groups.

Council ED Simonds recorded a short video regarding the 2-year community consultation process that was aired at the beginning of each meeting starting in August.

Aug. 20, 2025: The Council organized a virtual training workshop for new Council members Edgar Feliciano, Jesse Rosario and Nathan Ilaoa to provide them with important context for issues in the Western Pacific Region and helpful hints to engage before, during and after meetings. Advisory Panel members Amanda Padilla, Ray Tebuteb, Audrey Toves and Dre Lizama also attended.

Regional Initiatives – Hawai‘i

June 9, 2025: As part of its 203rd meeting in Honolulu, the Council hosted a public Fishers Forum at the Ala Moana Hotel. Titled “From Hanapa‘a to How Much? What It Takes to Fish and Sell in Hawai‘i,” the event brought together commercial fishers, seafood marketers and community members to discuss the evolving and often difficult realities of commercial fishing in the islands. Approximately 100 people gathered at the event, with 11 exhibitors from various government agencies and organizations. Council member Matt Ramsey and Council Hawai‘i Advisory Panel (AP) Vice Chair Gil Kuali‘i helped to moderate the event.

Panelists shared raw and honest insights about the economic, regulatory and cultural challenges facing Hawai‘i’s fishing community, especially as traditional knowledge erodes and entry into the profession becomes increasingly inaccessible.

“In the ‘80s and ‘90s, fishing was big,” said long-time fisherman Abe Apilado and Hawai‘i AP member. “Now, fishermen are hardly recognized for their contributions. There’s a loss of fishing knowledge and community representation.” He noted “akule used to be king — today we leave fish in the water because no more market.”

He pointed to the growing burden of regulations, rising costs and reduced access to traditional fishing grounds such as the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. He also stressed the strong work ethic required to commercially fish, considering today’s economic challenges.

Apilado urged the community to invest in youth, remove the stigma from underappreciated fish species, and revive the tradition of fishing as a way to nourish — not just supply — our communities.

Kapili Kalahiki-Anthony, a former NOAA Fisheries observer and founder of Native Hawaiian Trading Co., highlighted the entrepreneurial and cultural aspects of modern-day fishing. He credits Hawai‘i’s legendary fisherman, Leo Ohai, who taught him the importance of knowing all fishing methods and having the experience to recognize when to target seasonal fisheries.

“You can’t just fish — you have to market yourself, use social media,” he explained. “It’s not just about money, but we do have to pay the bills. The key is to light that spark — to show the kids what we do and connect the dots.”

Kalahiki-Anthony discussed the importance of indigenous knowledge and innovation in revitalizing Hawaiian fisheries. Through his nonprofit, he is working to provide vocational training and mentorship, hoping to build a future where Hawai‘i’s youth see fishing as both a viable career and a cultural calling.

From the business side of the industry, Josh Schade of Ahi Assassins, a member of the Council’s Fishing Industry Advisory Committee, addressed market dynamics and the discontent many fishers feel when they see their catch sell for far more than they’re paid.

“It’s easy to say it’s unfair,” said Schade, “but between the boat and the plate, there’s a whole network of people working hard to get that fish to the customer. If we clarify what happens behind the curtain, we can resolve a lot of the frustration in our community.”

The forum drew a diverse audience, reflecting a shared concern for Hawai‘i’s food security, cultural heritage and economic resilience. A recurring message throughout the night was that supporting local fishers means more than buying local — it means acknowledging the *mana* ‘o (knowledge), effort and heart that sustains the practice.

July 25, 2025: Council staff supported Sea Life Park’s *Manō* (Shark) Week with an outreach table with information about shark species in Hawai‘i, including trivia questions and a new handout on state versus federal shark fishing regulations. Visitors also took apart and reassembled a fish model and received fish coloring pages, word searches, crossword puzzles and fish fact handouts on *‘ōpaka* (pink snapper) and ‘ahi.

Regional Initiatives – Guam

Aug. 9-10, 2025: Council staff supported the 5th annual Greg D. Perez International Sportfishing Derby from the Agat Marina, which had ~100 people over two days. Outreach materials were provided including newsletters, monographs, Fishermen’s Code of Conduct in English and Chamorro, fish recipes and the Getting to Know Your Council guidebook. The Council’s banner was set up on one side of the fish weighing area and the Fishermen’s Code of Conduct was printed in the event booklet as a full-page feature.

Aug. 23, 2025: Council staff supported the 1st Annual Cocos Lagoon Boat-Based Malesso Mafuti Bottomfish Kid's Derby with similar outreach materials. Around 120 people attended the event, which was initiated by Council member Frank Perez and hosted by the Malesso Mayor and DAWR with support from the Council and the Greg D. Perez Foundation.

Regional Initiatives – CNMI

Council staff supported the following events:

July 12-13, 2025: Saipan Fishermen's Association 41st Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament with outreach materials including newsletters, cookbooks, educational handouts, lunar calendars; and giveaways such as stickers, hats, coolers and canvas bags.

Aug. 22, 2025: I Sanhalom Laguna Anglers Association 6th Annual Mafuti Derby with a donation of lunar calendars for the registration event that was distributed to each participating team.

Aug. 23-24, 2025: Office of Youth Affairs Youth Shoreline Fishing Workshop/Derby with a donation of promotional items and lunar calendars for event participants.