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DMWR AGENCY REPORT 204TH COUNCIL MEETING

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the key fisheries-related activities, initiatives, and challenges faced by the American Samoa Government (ASG) as provided by the Director of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) since the last Council meeting. Our efforts have focused on sustainable resource management, economic viability, and community engagement.

2. Policy and Governance

Request to Open Rose Atoll Marine National Monument to Commercial Fishing:

- Governor Pulaali'i has formally requested to the US Secretary of Commerce the removal of commercial fishing prohibitions in the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument for areas seaward of 12 nautical miles.
- The primary goal of this action is to provide vital economic relief and opportunity for the American Samoa longline fleet, thereby bolstering the tuna industry, which is the primary economic driver for American Samoa.
- The longline fleet is currently facing a severe commercial fishery failure, experiencing over a 90% decline in landings and revenue compared to 2007 levels.
- The request still affords all the environmental protections created by the monument, asserting that the proposed change would ensure continued protection for critical near-shore habitats such as coral reefs and seabird nesting grounds.
- The American Samoa longline fishery operates under rigorous, sustainable management, targeting highly migratory tuna species like albacore, skipjack, and bigeye, which are not overfished and have no interaction with bottom habitats, typically fishing deeper than 300 meters.
- The fleet's ability to operate profitably is crucial for providing U.S.-caught tuna to military members and school lunch programs, aligning with President Trump's Executive Order on "Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness".

Proposed Endangered Species Act (ESA) Actions: A Threat to American Samoa's Economy and Governance:

- The Governor has also requested the withdrawal of several proposed ESA actions:
 - Indo-Pacific Corals: The proposed critical habitat designation (88 FR 229, page 83644) would impede economic development by restricting vital areas needed for human activity, such as harbors and wastewater outfalls.

- Green Sea Turtles: Proposed critical habitat designation (88 FR 137, pages 46572 & 46376) would increase regulatory burdens and costs for maintaining coastal infrastructure, despite the species' population recovery and a surge in global nesting populations since 1978.
- Giant Clams: The proposed listing determinations for ten species of giant clams (89 FR 143, page 60498) would threaten the vital aquaculture sector, which is crucial for local food security and economic diversification.
- Impact on American Samoa: These proposals are inconsistent with the administration's deregulatory principles and American Samoa's stewardship history. They would:
 - Impose costly permitting requirements on infrastructure and aquaculture projects.
 - Increase federal overreach, restricting local natural resource management.
 - Offer minimal conservation benefits, particularly for species whose primary habitats are outside the region.
 - Undermine existing local conservation efforts driven by traditional communities.
- Alternative Approach: ASG advocates for a cooperative approach that returns management of green sea turtle populations to the Territories and States, respecting local knowledge and governance.

Seabed Mining:

- ASG maintains its opposition to commercial leasing for outer continental shelf minerals within the American Samoa Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This stance is consistent with its existing territorial moratorium on seabed mining (Executive Order 006-24).

Department of the Interior (DOI) Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Proposal:

- The DMWR has submitted a DOI TAP proposal to seek legal support for revising the department's regulations.
- Many of the current policies are outdated or require updates.
- Fees and fines also need to be updated to be a more effective deterrent against illegal fishing practices.

3. Sustainable Fisheries Fund (SFF) Supported Projects for American Samoa

Through the SFF awards from previous years, the Council is assisting DMWR in initiating a number of fishery development, training and infrastructure projects to support fisheries in the territory. These projects are being managed by the department's Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) Coordinator, who was contracted to have oversight of the implementation of these projects. All SFF funded projects must be aligned with the projects and priorities listed in the current MCP document for American Samoa. The following is a summary of the major upcoming projects funded by the SFF awards for implementation on Tutuila and Manu'a.

Alia Vessel Upgrades:

With a budget of \$26,850, this project will provide large insulated coolers and weather-proof electronics like chart plotters and depth finders to alia boats to increase their capacity and improve safety and fishing efficacy.

Training for Educators:

This \$26,746.50 project aims to provide workshops and resources for intermediate and high school science teachers to help them integrate fisheries and marine science into their lesson plans.

Short-longline Pilot Fishing Project:

With a budget of \$44,066, this initiative will outfit alia vessels in Ofu and Olosega with short-longline gear to target pelagic species and provide training on its use.

Ice House and Machine:

This \$55,000 project will fund the construction of a concrete ice house and the purchase of an ice machine at the DMWR's Fagatogo workstation. The goal is to enhance fish quality and extend fishing trips, which are currently limited to 12-20 hours due to spoilage concerns.

Bottom Fish Education and Awareness: This \$5,000 project is for designing and distributing educational posters about the eleven bottomfish species. The goal is to raise awareness about the overfished status of the fishery and support conservation efforts through public education.

4. DMWR Program Updates

Education and Outreach

- DMWR Facebook page has reached over 4,600 followers. DMWR also operates an Instagram account. The increased social media engagement has allowed us to reach a larger audience and keep the public informed about important fisheries and wildlife related issues and events.

Shark Alert and Research Request:

- DMWR has issued public notices regarding potential interactions with dangerous sharks, especially in the Pago Pago Harbor area, due to a high number of reported sightings by vessel operators, divers, and the public.
- A large shark caught in 2021 at the Shipyard was confirmed as a bull shark by NOAA and IATTC scientists.
- Divers have reported an increase in the bull shark population in Pago Pago Harbor over the last five years near the Shipyard and StarKist dock.
- The reported bull shark sightings have occurred most commonly in the early morning and night time.
- DMWR is requesting at this 204th meeting for assistance with this issue and the initiation of a shark tagging program in American Samoa.

SPC Partnership for Sustainable Fisheries:

- DMWR and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) are collaborating on three key projects: Tuna Tagging, Biological Sampling, and Close Kin Mark Recapture (CKMR).
- This partnership provides technical assistance and training for DMWR staff.
- The ultimate goal is to improve data collection for sustainable tuna fisheries management and to support coastal communities.
- An SPC team spent two weeks training DMWR's Fisheries Division staff to conduct tuna biosampling which will be done in partnership with StarKist Samoa on scheduled days. The team also conducted outreach with StarKist Samoa's employees and fishing vessel agents to inform them about the protocol and rewards for retrieval of tuna tags found during off-loading of vessels.
- The Department of Marine and Wildlife Resource is collaborating with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to recover Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs). This month, the DMWR Fisheries Division successfully retrieved three FADs. The recent visit by the SPC team also provided DMWR staff with training on FAD recovery, in addition to tuna biosampling and tag

retrieval.

4. Workforce and Capacity Building

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP):

- Eight high school and college students were assigned to DMWR divisions (Fisheries, Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG), and Wildlife & Aquatic Education) for six weeks.
- Participants gained hands-on experience in fisheries, coral reef, and wildlife conservation, conducting fish and wildlife surveys and gathering important data.
- This program is recognized as a crucial pipeline for developing future resource management professionals and an important capacity-building initiative.

Staffing & Development / Christine Tominiko MOA:

- DMWR is actively addressing workforce needs, and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was executed with Christine Tominiko, a scholarship recipient from the University of Hawaii at Hilo.
- Christine is a graduate student in the Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Science (TCBES) program, and her scholarship with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council requires a post-graduation employment commitment.
- DMWR intends to engage Christine for a temporary work experience (five months, commencing around September 1, 2025, within the Fisheries and CRAG divisions) and to facilitate her future permanent employment.
- DMWR will initiate the process for her permanent employment paperwork upon her return to the University of Hawaii at Hilo for the spring semester of 2026, with her full-time permanent employment commencing on or before August 1, 2026, or upon her graduation, whichever is later. This position will be consistent with her master's degree program and will fulfill her scholarship obligations.

5. Infrastructure Development

Floating Docks Design:

- ASG has entered into an independent contractor service contract with Bellingham Marine New Zealand for the design of new floating docks for Pago Pago Harbor.
- This project aims to address the deterioration of existing docks and provide an essential upgrade to the territory's boating infrastructure, which supports small-scale local commercial and recreational fishing fleets.

ARPA Funds for DMWR:

- DMWR has expressed gratitude for assistance in acquiring ARPA funds to support its emergency responder functions.
- DMWR has been awarded funds for an upgraded enforcement vessel along with an F-350 vehicle for safely transporting the multi-vessel and from launch points, handling its weight and size both in and out of the water, the building of a boat shed to help maintain and extend the useful life of a vessel by allowing it to be safely docked on dry land, providing crucial protection during unpredictable and rough weather patterns, and the purchase of safety equipment including life rafts and flares, to ensure the safety of all passengers on board the vessel during its missions at sea.
- This vessel will allow DMWR to carry out its first responder mandate for fishing vessels in American Samoa waters and also in a support role with the Search and Rescue (SAR) and

Marine Patrol division of the Department of Public Safety for at-sea first responder needs.

6. American Samoa Longline Pelagic Fishery Disaster Relief Request

Formal Request for Commercial Fishery Failure Determination:

- A formal request will be submitted to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce for a determination of a commercial fishery failure for the American Samoa Longline Pelagic Fishery and to seek federal disaster assistance under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).
- This request will follow discussions at the 202nd meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council in March 2025, where the significant challenges facing the longline fleet will be highlighted.
- The fishery primarily targets albacore tuna for local canneries, but will also catch other pelagic species such as bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack tuna, and wahoo. The fishery will have been enduring a period of severe and cumulative economic hardship.
- The staff at NOAA Pacific Islands Science Center has assisted by providing information on landings and revenue for the fleet from 2000 to 2024 and the Council has provided DMWR with valuable guidance to the process of requesting disaster relief funds.

Multifaceted Impacts Contributing to Fishery Failure:

- Escalating fuel prices and increasing operational and maintenance expenses have severely impacted profitability.
- Stringent U.S. Coast Guard liferaft recertification requirements.
- Intense competition from foreign fishing fleets, with fisher observations in 2023 noting foreign vessels selling non-target bycatch at lower prices (\$1.50/lb) compared to local vessels (\$2.50/lb).
- Declining catch rates (CPUE) of targeted species, particularly albacore, which dropped from 33 fish per 1000 hooks in 2001, to 15 in 2009, and further to 12 in 2016, directly contributing to reduced annual revenue per vessel.
- Reduced fish prices, with the nominal price of albacore (comprising over 79% of the commercial value sold to canneries in 2024) dropping to \$1.15/lb (\$3057/mt) in 2024 from \$1.39/lb in 2023.
- A shortage of captains meeting U.S. master's requirements.
- Challenges in sourcing fishing bait, with one of two suppliers ceasing operations.

Economic Health and Trends:

- In-person surveys and cost-earnings analyses by the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) revealed that the fleet's net return in 2016 was approximately \$26,000 annually per vessel, which was only 10% of the profit level seen in 2001 (approximately \$251,000 per vessel per year).
- Total revenues for the American Samoa longline fishery were \$2.82 million in 2023, and total fleet revenue from cannery sales was \$3.23 million from 3.40 million pounds of total landings in 2024.
- These challenges have also contributed to a "dual-permits-phenomenon," with increasing demand for American Samoa longline permits from Hawaii longline permit holders due to the poor economic performance of the local fishery and the advantage for Hawaii-based vessels to maintain access to the Hawaii longline fishery even when bigeye catch limits are reached for U.S. longline vessels. Many of these dual-permitted vessels are based in Hawaii and only make

short trips to American Samoa to fulfill minimum landing requirements.

Criteria for Commercial Fishery Failure:

- The persistent economic challenges, declining catch rates, and operational burdens indicate significant economic impacts that meet the criteria for a commercial fishery failure under Section 312(a) of the MSA.
- The data presented will reflect well over the required threshold of 35% or greater loss in landings or revenue compared to prior years.
- Total longline fishing efforts, landings, and revenue in American Samoa have declined significantly since peaking in 2007.

Next Steps Requested:

- The American Samoa Government is prepared to submit a comprehensive request, including detailed documentation of the socio-economic impact on the fishery and its participants, as well as an identification of the allowable causes for this disaster.
- ASG also requests the opportunity to develop a spending plan to address the social and economic impacts and implement projects to restore and sustain the fishery.

DMWR Fisheries Division Third Quarter Report FY25

1. Shore-based creel program:

The Shore-based Creel Survey conducted a total of 175 survey runs and completed 51 sampled survey days over 65 weekdays and 13 weekends/holidays in the third quarter. The monitoring team recorded 33 participation counts and collected data from 44 interviews, including opportunistic interviews, to estimate catch and effort data from April to June 2025. This data collection generates crucial expansion totals that effectively represent the estimated fish catch landings by gear type in the near shore fishery.

Participation data from Manu'a is not included in this report, as fishing activities there are more complex than those on the main island of Tutuila. The result from this quarter indicates a steady trend compared to the previous quarter: the total expanded catch; is estimated at 8,527 pounds; the total expansion for gear per hour is 6,402 pounds; and the expanded total for catch per gear hour or (CPUE) is 1.33.

The expanded catch/ effort summary by gear methods this quarter:

Fiscal year 2025	Gleaning	Spear-Snorkel	ThrowNet	Rod and Reel
April to June	3,141lbs	3,028lbs	1,315lbs	1,043lbs

The summary also provides a list of species composition in total expanded catch landings. The five dominant species for this quarter are listed below.

1. Octopus/ *Octopus cynea*/ Fe'e 5,708lbs
2. Whitespotted surgeonfish/ *Acanthurus guttatus*/ Maono 742lbs
3. Doublespotted queenfish/ *Scomberoides lysan*/ Lai 357lbs
4. Bluespine unicornfish/ *Naso unicornis*/ Malauli 325lbs

The shore-based program continues to strengthen its collaboration with the Western Pacific Fisheries Information Network (WPacFIN) by implementing essential updates and upgrades to the Shore-based Creel Program database. These enhancements significantly improve data accuracy and accessibility. During this quarter, the project leader participated in the 17th Heads of Fisheries meeting (HOF17) in April, engaging with leaders from various Pacific island countries and territories to improve coordination and share our significant progress in fisheries governance, food security, and sustainable ocean management. Additionally, the Creel team conducted a quarterly assessment of the Manu'a Islands. The results indicate that fishing in Manu'a is primarily for subsistence, consistent with findings from previous visits. Recommendations to address on-the-ground challenges have been noted, and we will collaborate with the Boat-based team to ensure regular communication with on-site technicians to maintain accountability.

2. Key Reef Species Program:

Monitoring team conducted 3 reef flat surveys in Fagasa, Aoa and Amanave. Visual fish census data and benthic data were collected at all three sites. The team was not successful with Poloa as it was murky and strong tides. The fisheries monitoring team have received their DAN insurance and will be conducting refresher dives and calibration dives before conducting reef slope surveys.

One of project staff completed the ASCC Quest program and is now conducting monitoring surveys as the Fish visual census recorder. Staff has been conducting minor repairs to the boat trailer, navigation lights, batteries and roof. The boat hull and deck were power washed to remove dirt, algae and barnacle growth under the hull. Trailer wheel hubs and bearings were lubricated and repaired. Engines were cycled and flushed to ensure minimal corrosion from saltwater.

Listed below are some of the main projects in which our boat and staff was involved with.

- Flag Day Fautasi Committee/ Governor VIP
- Wildlife Bat surveys
- FAD Visual Spot-check surveys/ Vertical longline
- CFMP Giant Clam cage maintenance
- NOAA Teachers Workshop
- CRAG Phytoplankton collection
- PACIOOS Wave buoy swap Aunu'u

3. Sportfish Life History Program:

Staff continue to coordinate with the partner molecular laboratory, the Australian Genome Research Facility (AGRF), which is generating microsatellite population genetic data from the samples collected from Savaii, Upolu and Tutuila (for the bottomfish *Lutjanus gibbus*, *Lutjanus kasmira*, *Lethrinus rubrioperculatus*, and for the reef fish *Acanthurus lineatus*, *Myripristis berndti* and *Scarus oviceps*). Staff is conducting population genetic structure analyses for the three reef fish species and the data indicate single population genetic stocks for the islands of Tutuila, Upolu and Savaii. Staff is further adding data for Manua and Rose for *A. lineatus* and *M. berndti*. Staff is organizing the data for *L. kasmira* and *L. rubrioperculatus*.

4. Fish Aggregation Device Program:

The overall goal of this program is to provide fishermen access to pelagic tuna fisheries through the deployment of Fish Aggregating Device (FAD). The main objective of this program is to maintain 5 deep-water FADs and conduct regular survey of their status and survey fishermen's who use these FADs. There are 5 FAD sites: FAD A off Aunuu, FAD B off the Pago harbor, FAD C off Vaitogi, FAD D off Tapu-tapu and FAD E off Fagasa. The program currently uses two FAD buoys: the catamaran buoy and the Indian Ocean design. Only FADs A and B are of catamaran buoy design. Staff conducted visual inspections of FADs in the last quarter and collected data from sportfishermen. At present, FAD B needs to be redeployed after retrieval from drifting. Here are the more detailed accomplishments:

Objective 1 - Directly restore, enhance, remove, create or enhance 5 (structures by end of FY25 (9/30/2025).

Approach 1: Maintain five FADs (4 deep-water FADs in Tutuila and one in Manua) and conduct quarterly maintenance check on the FADs to ensure long term retention by end of FY2025.

Quarterly maintenance for FADs A, C, D and E were completed this quarter. During these visits, coconut fronds were replaced on all FADs. Fabrication of FAD B is complete and is now ready to be deployed.

Objective 2 - Conduct 1 investigation by end of FY 2025 (9/30/2025)

Approach 1: Assess the fisheries associated with FADs from satellite buoy data transmissions, experimental fishing and weekly fishermen interviews in FY25.

Satellite Buoys on FADs A and C are reading for installation. It is awaiting good weather for deployment. Fishermen interviews are conducted twice per week every week.

Objective 3 - Inform/communicate with at least 20 sport fishers by end of FY25

Approach 1: Attend two fishing tournaments (one in Tutuila and one Manua) and present collected catch and effort data from FADs and discuss fisheries issues in FY25.

Attended one tournament in Tutuila – I'a Lapo'a Fishing Tournament in April 2025.

Approach 2. Coordinate with the Education and Outreach Division to develop radio announcements and print media materials to increase public's awareness of FADs and prevent vandalism and FAD loss.

Currently coordinating with the Education and Outreach division to develop appropriate FAD outreach materials such as the FAD brochure. Additionally, posts and videos have been posted on the AS-DMWR Facebook page about what happens during FAD maintenance activities to show the public what FADs look like and why it is important to have them maintained.

5. Boat-Based Creel Survey Program:

The Boat-Based Creel Program in American Samoa is a vital initiative focused on assessing and monitoring marine species caught within the American Samoa Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Operated by the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) since approximately 1982, the program aims to gather essential fisheries information. The data is crucial for developing, implementing, and evaluating local marine resources management plans. It also provides a

sound scientific basis to support the sustainability management of the American Samoa's fisheries.

From April 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025, seven fishing vessels participated in our data collection efforts, utilizing methods that included spearfishing, trolling, bottom fishing, and a combination of bottom and trolling. These surveys are conducted three to four days a week and on two weekends a month. The hours for these surveys are from 0500-1330 hrs., 1300-2130 hrs., and 2100-0530 hrs. During this quarter, the program collected 2,053.22 pounds from the creel surveys. A total of seventeen interviews were documented during this quarter, nine interviews were from spearfishing, 5 interviews were from trolling, and three interviews were from bottom fishing.

TABLE 1. The following table shows the most dominant species by method landed this quarter.

<i>SPEAR</i>		<i>BOTTOM</i>		<i>TROLL</i>	
SPECIES	POUNDS	SPECIES	POUNDS	SPECIES	POUNDS
<i>BLUE-BANDED SURGEONFISH</i>	37.99	<i>BLUE LINED SNAPPER</i>	16.33	<i>SKIPJACK TUNA</i>	1,499
<i>ORANGESPINE UNICORNFISH</i>	66.41	<i>WHITE-EDGED LYRETAIL</i>	15.23	<i>YELLOWFIN TUNA</i>	171.66
<i>BLUESPINE UNICORNFISH</i>	94.8	<i>AMBON SNAPPER</i>	11.67	<i>RAINBOW RUNNER</i>	17.82
<i>BIGSCALE SOLDIERFISH</i>	9.71	<i>REDGILL EPIMEROR</i>	12.66	<i>KAWAKAWA</i>	3.2
<i>REDTAIL PARROTFISH</i>	31.03	<i>HUMPBACK SNAPPER</i>	11.08		
<i>REDLIP PARROTFISH</i>	47.31	<i>TWINSPOOT/RED SNAPPER</i>	11.25		
<i>SPINY LOBSTER</i>	22.1	<i>FLOWER SNAPPER</i>	8.39		

SOURCE: WPacFIN & DMWR DATABASE

COMMERCIAL MONITORING LANDINGS:

Under the American Samoa Administrative Code (A.S.A.C.) 24.0905, seafood dealers in American Samoa are required to document specific information on invoices provided by the Department of Marine & Wildlife Resources. This regulation ensures the transparent and accurate recording of market sales for various fishing methods, including nearshore, spearfishing, bottom fishing, and pelagic catches. All 76 registered vendors under the commercial monitoring system were visited, and all the invoices were successfully entered into the WPacFIN & DMWR database.

During this reporting period, a total of 24,682.32 pounds was recorded with a market sale of

\$71,068.34 according to the commercial monitoring system. Below is the breakdown of local sales and methods.

TABLE 2. Below is a breakdown of the locally caught species in the creel database.

SPECIES	METHOD	POUNDS	VALUE
<i>BLUE-BANDED SURGEONFISH</i>	SPEAR	389.50	\$1,655.38
<i>PARROTFISH</i>	SPEAR	318.80	\$1,706.65
<i>SPINY LOBSTER</i>	SPEAR	21	\$89.25
<i>WAHOO</i>	LONGLINE	6,713.77	\$13,589.80
<i>BLACK MARLIN</i>	LONGLINE	4,833.01	\$11,598.06
<i>SAILFISH</i>	LONGLINE	3,793.00	\$9,103.20
<i>SWORDFISH</i>	LONGLINE	267.20	\$1,068.80

SOURCE: WPacFIN & DMWR DATABASE
\$38,811.14

TOTAL: 16,336.28 lbs. TOTAL:

TABLE 3. The table below shows the dominant resale species documented on the commercial monitoring system.

SPECIES	POUNDS	VALUE
<i>BLACK MARLIN</i>	2,044.20	\$7,597.77
<i>BLUE MARLIN</i>	1,304.51	\$5,364.17
<i>TILAPIA</i>	1,010.43	\$2,154.85
<i>SWORDFISH</i>	997.80	\$4,995.50
<i>SNUBNOSE POMPAÑO</i>	920	\$3,558.55
<i>SWAI</i>	680	2,489.75
<i>PARROTFISH</i>	649.19	\$3,843.96
<i>MILKFISH</i>	340	\$1,055.10
<i>YELLOWFIN TUNA</i>	220	\$363.00
<i>WAHOO</i>	50	\$175.00

SOURCE: WPacFIN & DMWR DATABASE TOTAL: 8,216.13 lbs. TOTAL: \$31,597.65

A total of 8,346.04 pounds is recorded of resale species with a total market sale of \$32,257.20.

COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE:

To comply with ASCA 24.0981, the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources requires a commercial fishing license from fishermen to sell their catch. The department will oversee the license process and provide a regulatory briefing to applicants. For this reporting period, only two fishermen applied and were issued a commercial fishing license.

DISSEMINATION INFORMATION ON THE AMERICAN SAMOA FISHERIES & DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS:

- A quarterly visit to the Manu'a islands took place in May/June to evaluate and support the resident technicians. The visit focused on assessing their progress towards program objectives and addressing challenges encountered in their engagement with local fishers. During the visit, we also had the opportunity to meet with several local fishers. This allowed us to directly explain objectives of the creel survey to them, fostering better understanding and collaboration.
- Constant communication between NOAA and DMWR team the trial phase of the SELL it Log it/Metabase application. Efforts are currently focused on identifying and implementing new methodologies to enhance the existing web-page application. The primary objective of these enhancements is to enable the development of comprehensive reporting.



6. Community-Based Fisheries Management Program:

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES:

CFMP staff participated in the *Sacred Islands of Polynesia* meetings on the 11th and 25th April 2025 that brought together relevant government agencies to discuss the feasibility of introducing a tourist boat service to Manu'a. CFMP and other Department staff attended to support concerns on the potential risks such development poses to the island's pristine and fragile marine ecosystems. The Department emphasized that increased tourist traffic could lead to habitat and endangered coral species disturbance, stressing the importance of thorough assessment with direct input from local communities who rely on the ocean for their livelihoods.

Ongoing monitoring of the giant clam nursery in Faga'alū continued this quarter on the 2th April, 8th April, 2nd May and 26th June 2025 to ensure optimum growth, disease prevention and reducing predatory activities on the giant clams. The cage structure was cleaned and rebars were tightly secured again to ensure sturdiness and stability underwater. From the last count included in last quarter's report, there are currently 512 giant clams remaining at the nursery site as at end of this quarter with average size of clams at 17 centimeters.



The stable conditions at Faga'alu village MPA offer a sheltered and ideal habitat for the giant clams with ample sunlight for food production and nutrient growth for filter feeding. Plans are currently underway for clam translocation to other active and potential CFMP sites for reef restocking and habitat improvement by introducing filter-feeding clams that contribute to water clarity and nutrient cycling. More details of this work will be reported in

next quarter's report.



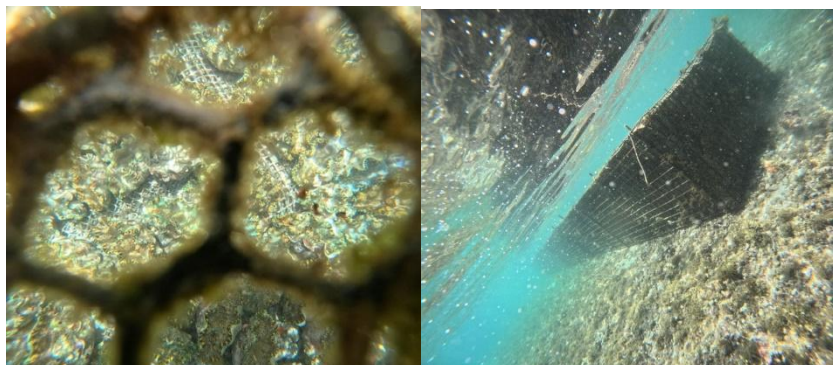
CFMP participated in the recent PNRS meeting on the 4th June 2025 at the Department of Commerce conference room. This involvement on behalf of the Department aligns with environmental regulations and community interests particularly those that may impact coastal and marine resources. The Department's presence allows for early input on projects and advises sustainable resource use. There were no projects of major concerns at this round of development applications from the community.

CFMP met with Sa'ilele Mayor on June 24th 2025 to discuss future meetings for the village MPA. Chief Ulimasao replaces the late Chief Tuiagafotu Topeto who was the previous Mayor working actively with the program. The discussion focused on continued work with the village and the need for a village meeting to explore potential projects and more active participation from the youth and village people.

As at confirmation of village council availability, a follow up meeting will be held at the church hall in the upcoming month of July to discuss village development priorities and involve more community members in discussions of managing and monitoring their village MPA.



Discussions for the development of the Jurisdictional Coral Reef Fisheries Management Plan continued this quarter on the 20th and 28th May 2025 with NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office. There is a growing need for the management plan to be developed to align



strategies and strengthen partnerships in reef conservation and sustainable fisheries management in the CFMP villages and other fishing communities amongst existing efforts. Progress on this plan is now currently on hold due to limited allocated fundings to continue this work in this fiscal year. Continuation of this work and its achievable

outcomes will resume in the new fiscal year.

CFMP attended the Fisheries supervisor's meetings held on the 29th April and 17th June 2025, bringing together program leads to share updates, review ongoing projects and discuss upcoming priorities.

The meetings served as an opportunity to strengthen coordination across sections, share and address challenges in carrying out Fisheries programs and projects. These regular check-ins improve communication and transparency in the Division to support overall objectives of the Department.

CFMP participated in two events hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. The *Voices from the Sea* meeting held on the 27th June 2025 focused on concerns raised by fishers and community members on topics such as climate change, overfishing, shark depredation, fish sightings, harbor access and market challenges. CFMP also attended the American Samoa regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee meeting on the 30th June 2025 to observe discussions and recent updates on the proposed deep sea-bed mining in the EEZ of American Samoa, bottom fish management plan, sand mining, sedimentation, shark regulations and recent bottom fish and pelagic species stock assessments. These opportunities help CFMP stay aligned with ongoing efforts and ensure community voices are heard in future management planning and inform management efforts.

CFMP conducted reef flat monitoring surveys together with Key Reef Program and CRAG in this quarter, practicing streamlined monitoring efforts across programs and supporting each other due to staff shortages and building monitoring capacities. All 3 CFMP villages in the program are also covered under Key reef monitoring program. Surveys in this quarter were conducted together on reef flats of Sa'ilele on the 3rd April 2025, April 10th 2025 at Fagasa and May 16th 2025 for Faga'alu. More information and data is available with Fisheries division on benthic and fish census surveys using belt transects, contributing to a more accurate and integrated understanding of reef health, fish populations and ecological trends on the surveyed sites. Challenges exist in data management, consistency and use of monitoring data for each program objectives and streamlining survey methods and results especially with overlapping sites across programs. This continues to be one of the ongoing priorities for Fisheries division in this fiscal year to address; with more data analysis training and staff development capacity to generate well-informed management measures for the coastal fishing communities.



7. Program Management:

- a. Chief of Fisheries in coordination with the supervisors drafted the FY26 SFR proposals
- b. Regularly reviewed budget status of various grants with the finance team

- c. Chief of Fisheries prepared the American Samoa Annual Reports Part 1 and 2 with NOAA PIFSC and NOAA PIRO staff for submission to WCPFC.

8. Technical Guidance

- a. Chief of Fisheries and FAD staff attended the SPC Tuna Biosampling Workshop in Tonga (April 2025)
- b. Fisheries and various staff attended the Council's IRA and REAC meetings in July 2025
- c. Chief of Fisheries has been coordinating with the Council island coordinator and the MCP coordinator on SFF projects' implementation.

2025 JOINT ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENT

Execution Priority 1: Port Site Measures Agreement (PSMA)

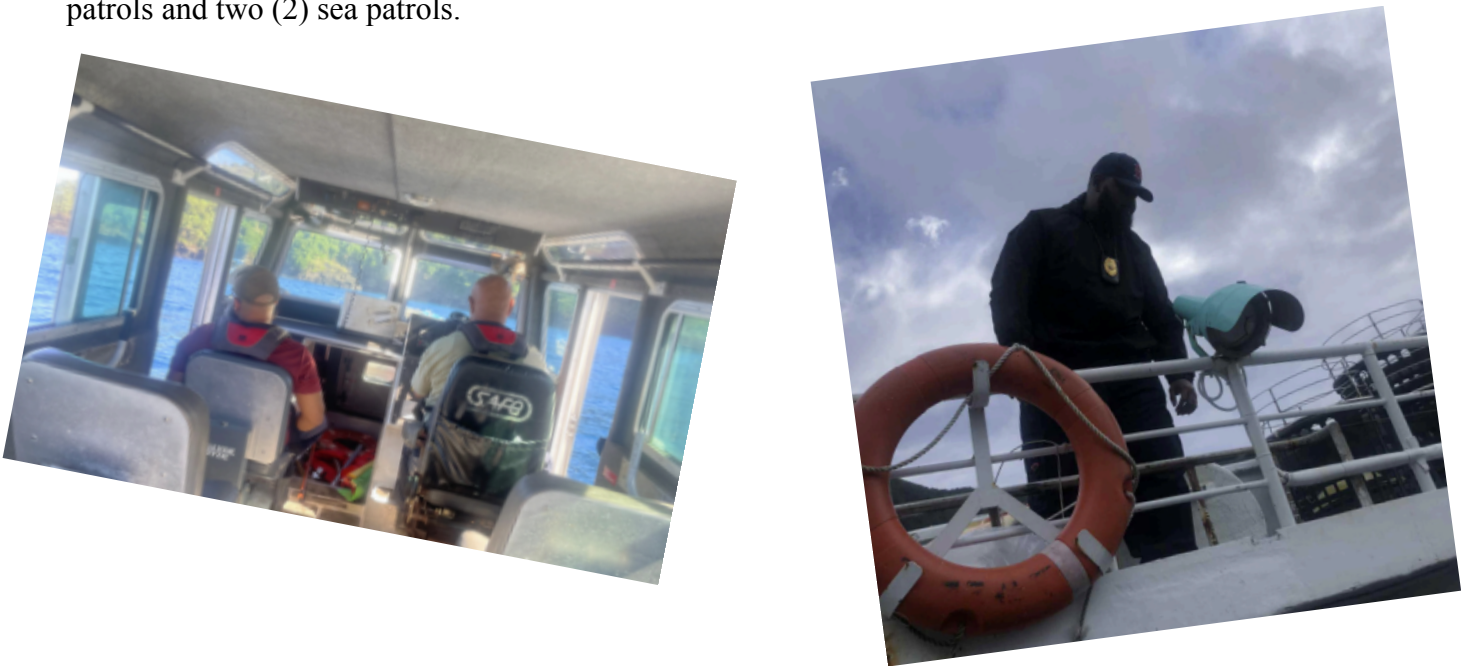
DMWR officers conducted vessel boardings, inspections, and monitored offload activities to ensure all documentation matched the actual offload and shipping documentation was complete.



Boarded and inspected 29 vessels this quarter to ensure PSMA compliance.



Execution Priority 4: National Marine Sanctuary Act (NMSA): DMWR conducted three (3) land patrols and two (2) sea patrols.



General Enforcement Protected Species:

Chief Hanipale, along with Officers Crawley, Ah-Mu, and Travers, made a significant impact this quarter by conducting an outreach program for students at St. Theresa Elementary, Tafuna Elementary, and Tafuna High School. Their presentations covered crucial topics such as: Boating Safety and the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Students gained valuable knowledge on the different kinds of Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) and how to use them effectively to prevent drowning, in addition to learning about other essential safety gear such as EPIRBs and radar. The officers also highlighted the importance of protecting endangered species.



