



WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

ACTION MEMORANDUM

204th Council Meeting September 16-17, 2025

Ala Moana Hotel
Honolulu, Hawaii

AGENCY REPORTS

Regarding Potential Obstacles to U.S. Participating Territories Enjoying Privileges as a Small Island Developing State or Participating Territory within the WCPFC, the Council:

1. Requested General Counsel and NMFS to provide an updated briefing to the Council on potential legal challenges for U.S. Pacific Island Territories from utilizing privileges afforded to SIDS/PTs within the WCPFC Convention.

Regarding the US Coast Guard, the Council:

2. Requested the USCG to continue to work with American Samoa to address their difficulties with procuring US masters for the American Samoa longline fishery, including the issues identified with the Jones Act.

Regarding USFWS Report, the Council:

3. Requested the USFWS Pacific Islands work with American Samoa to assist with issues in providing permits for work in the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument.



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Hawaii Archipelago and PRIA Fisheries

Regarding shortline fishing, the Council:

1. Directed staff to continue to work with NMFS, the State of Hawaii and the affected fishing community on stakeholder engagement meetings on other Hawaiian Islands to address the gear conflict issue between the Hawaii shortline and small-boat fishers and explore management options and report back to the Council at its next meeting.

Regarding Hawaii non-longline fisheries, the Council:

2. Requested the State of Hawaii explore alternative and reliable offloading points for commercial vessels in Honokohau Harbor in Kona.



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Program Planning and Research

Regarding Commercial Fishing Prohibitions in the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument Expansion Area, the Council:

1. Selected Option 3 as a preliminarily preferred option and directs staff to work with NMFS to identify monument resources that may be impacted by the restoration of commercial fishing in the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument expansion area around Jarvis Island, Wake Atoll, and Johnston Atoll; Further, the Council directed staff to prepare an analysis of management options to implement Presidential Proclamation 10918, “Unleashing American Commercial Fishing in the Pacific,” and ensure sustainable harvest of fishery resources and reduce imported seafood while conserving protected species and monument resources for the Council’s consideration at its December meeting.

Regarding the Fishing in the Other Marine National Monuments, the Council:

2. Endorsed the review letter sent to the Secretary of Commerce on July 24, 2025, responding to EO 14276 section 4(h) and directed staff to initiate an analysis of options to remove commercial fishing regulations and impacts to resources in the remaining Marine National Monuments for Council discussion at its December meeting.

Regarding the Seafood EO Recommendations, the Council:

3. Directed staff to finalize the updated Seafood EO recommendations for transmittal.
4. Directed staff to work with NMFS to develop a plan and schedule for considering Council actions identified in the Seafood EO recommendations, and provide a report at the December 2025 meeting.

Regarding Shark Depredation and Research, the Council:

5. Directed staff to work with NMFS and industry to add development of shark depredation mitigation strategies and deterrents as a priority for Cooperative Research Programs.

Regarding the SOPP and Strategic Plan, the Council:

6. Directed staff to work with agency members of the FDCRC to review the strategic plan to provide comments by October 5, 2025. The review may also consider moving towards

making the strategic plan a higher-level document that deals with goals, objectives, and strategies.

Regarding alternative data collection approaches, the Council:

7. Requested NMFS PIFSC and the territorial agencies work together on “right-sizing” the data collection efforts for those fisheries with low participation such as a full census of the boat based fisheries and collecting additional length composition data from tournaments and derbies.
8. Directed staff to work with the territorial agencies to continue pursuing mandatory license and reporting.
9. Directed staff to work with NMFS PIFSC and the territorial agencies to address interest in developing electronic technologies that minimize the burden on fishers and maximize data collection, such as tablets, fishmats and cameras for length measurements.
10. Requested NMFS PIFSC coordinate with the Pacific Community (SPC) in scoping the feasibility of using the IkaSavea app to collect fishery dependent information in the US territories.

Regarding the Fishery Management Plan development and implementation, the Council:

11. Encouraged the territorial agencies to complete their respective territorial FMPs by December 31, 2025.

Regarding the SSC Report, the Council:

12. Requested NMFS PIFSC to provide a full presentation on the main Hawaiian Islands insular false killer whale abundance estimate publication as well as information on evidence of fishery interactions at the December SSC and Council meetings. The Council further requested NMFS PIFSC to provide an update on the genetic sampling of the green sea turtle nesting population at Marine Corp Base Hawaii Kaneohe when the information becomes available.
13. Endorsed the nomination for Milani Chaloupka to represent the Council at the CIE review for the Fisheries Integrated Modeling System, and directs staff to send the nomination to NMFS.
14. Endorsed the SSC’s conclusion that the recent NMFS PIFSC publication provides empirical evidence that the Southern Exclusion Zone closure can have potential unintended effects of effort displacement on protected species interactions, and directed staff to incorporate the SSC’s findings and recommendations into the Seafood EO updated recommendations.
15. Endorsed the SSC’s guiding principles for developing recommendations.
16. Endorsed the proposed Workflow for Selecting Stock Assessment Strategies in the Pacific Islands Region.

17. Directed staff to work with the SSC to explore next steps for the follow-up projects for the BMUS special projects working group, subject to availability of funds.

Regarding the SEEM Process Review, the Council:

18. Directed staff to review the ACL process including P* and SEEM, taking into account the SSC recommendations on these processes.

Regarding the Update to the 2025-2029 MSRA Research Priorities and 2026 annual priorities, the Council:

19. Directed staff to work with advisory groups and the SSC to update the Five Year Research Priorities Plan in 2026 to consider and focus on the following:
 - a. Research to facilitate fishery development and capacity-building for Pacific Island fisheries;
 - b. Evaluation of the efficacy of MMPA Import Provisions on conservation and economic impacts to U.S. fisheries;
 - c. Research to improve efficiency of Western Pacific fisheries noting current challenging economic conditions; and
 - d. Research needs emerging from Council IRA Projects.
20. Recommended among the current 2025-2029 MSRA Research Priorities Plan, as the highest priorities for NMFS and other entities to address in 2026:
 - a. Mitigation of depredation to reduce incidental interactions in U.S. Pacific Island fisheries (PF5). The SSC notes this priority should also include fishery operational characteristics that could reduce depredation. NMFS could improve information on depredation events for incorporation in stock assessments;
 - b. Improved pelagic false killer whale assessments on the high seas with a focus of delineating full stock range based on robust biological data (PS2.2.1). Inclusion of other available data, including tagging and acoustic data can fulfill this priority to better discern information beyond the EEZ and among the range of the species where it overlaps with U.S. fisheries; and
 - c. Understanding the effects of spatial closures and large-scale marine protected areas on fisheries, island communities, and population dynamics on target and non-target species (PF2); which complements the priority to Assess the human dimensions of US Pacific Marine managed areas (such as area closures or marine protected areas) regarding procedural and distributive justice, transferred economic, social and ecological effects, and safety. (HC 3.1.2)



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Mariana Archipelago Fisheries

Regarding the CNMI Bottomfish ACL Specifications, the Council:

1. Selected Option 3 as the preliminary preferred alternative, that would specify a CNMI Bottomfish Annual Catch Limit of 72,000 lbs. with an Annual Catch Target of 66,000 lbs. for the fishing years 2026-2029. Further, the Council directed staff to work with the Action Team to finalize the supporting analysis for the ACL specification for final action at the December 2025 meeting.

Regarding CNMI Fishery Issues, the Council:

2. Directed Council staff to work with CNMI Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to provide education and outreach to the commercial fishermen and vendors on the importance of mandatory licensing and reporting to better monitor and understand CNMI's commercial and non-commercial fishery performance.



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American Samoa Archipelago Fisheries

Regarding Deep Sea Mining, the Council:

1. Directed staff to continue monitoring deep sea mining developments in American Samoa and work with the Council's advisory groups to provide information and analysis of impacts to fishing and fishery resources as available.
2. Requested BOEM require its potential lessees to provide translation support ahead of, and during, public meetings in American Samoa.
3. Directed staff to invite NOAA to provide an overview on the proposed commercial recovery permit applicants in the Clarion Clipperton Zone

Regarding American Samoa Fishery Issues, the Council:

4. Encouraged ASG to reconstitute its Fisheries Task Force to address ongoing fishery issues in the territory.
5. Requested NMFS PIFSC work with DMWR to develop a research and monitoring program to better understand bull shark presence and behavior in American Samoa waters.



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Pelagics and International Fisheries

Regarding U.S. Positions in Pacific International Fisheries, the Council:

1. Requested Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries ensure that U.S. positions on all issues follow provisions of the Ensuring Access to Fisheries Act.
2. Requested NOAA and the Department of State make fishery development funds for the U.S. Pacific Territories a high priority.

Regarding Implementation of Electronic Monitoring, the Council:

3. Requested the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and NMFS to contract a person in American Samoa locally to install/remove electronic monitoring (EM) system hard drives and to provide servicing of EM systems when needed.

Regarding MMPA Import Provisions Comparability Findings, the Council:

4. Requested NMFS evaluate the amount of tuna imports affected by the MMPA Import Provisions Comparability Findings Report through the harmonized tariff codes in the report.
5. Requested NMFS provide a mechanism for stakeholders and the public to identify any inconsistencies with MMPA Import Provisions Comparability Findings
6. Requested that NMFS increase the rigor of standards for the MMPA Import Provisions Comparability Findings.

Regarding WCPFC Fishery Issues, the Council:

7. Requested U.S. to work towards ensuring that a management procedure for South Pacific albacore is adopted at the next Commission meeting with target reference point that controls total catch that can lead to improved economic conditions for the American Samoa longline fishery
8. Requested NMFS to liaise with territorial agency leads before the December 2025 WCPFC with the purpose of reviewing current issues and processes for territories to take full advantage of their status as a Small Island Developing State and Participating Territory within the WCPFC.

9. Requested the U.S. to continue working with American Samoa to attribute catch of purse seine vessels identified by American Samoa as integral to their local tuna economy, and to consider domestic rulemaking if needed to distinguish U.S. Pacific territorial purse seine fisheries.
10. Requested NMFS and the SPC to provide an analysis of pricing structure of cannery markets in American Samoa compared to those in Bangkok and Manta, or other markets.
11. Requested the U.S., at the WCPFC subsidiary meetings, work to ensure that spatial stratification is included as a condition for the next oceanic whitetip shark stock assessment.



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Administrative Matters

Regarding Administrative Matters, the Council:

1. Accepted the 204th Council meeting financial and administrative reports.

Regarding Council Family Changes, the Council:

2. Made the following changes to its advisory groups:
 - a. Appointed Ray Tulafono as a member to the American Samoa Advisory Panel (AP) to replace Nathan Ilaoa
 - b. Appointed Louis Solaita as an alternate on the American Samoa AP to replace Edgar Feliciano
 - c. Appointed Audrey Toves as a member to the Guam AP to replace Jesse Rosario
 - d. Appointed Dre Lizama as a member to the CNMI AP to replace Michael Fleming
 - e. Appointed Anthony Guerrero as a member to the CNMI AP to replace Lino Tenorio
 - f. Appointed James Roberto as an alternate member to the CNMI AP
 - g. Appointed Brett Taylor (UOG) to replace Terry Donaldson (UOG) on the FDCRC Technical Committee Research Subpanel
 - h. Appointed Felipe Carvalho and Marlowe Sabater (PIFSC) to replace Hongguang Ma and Eva Schemmel as members on the FDCRC Technical Committee Data Subpanel
 - i. Removed John Brodziak (PIFSC) from the FDCRC Technical Committee Research Subpanel
 - j. Appointed Fernan Asalele as the DMWR member on the APT to replace Domingo Ochavillo
 - k. Appointed Domingo Ochavillo as the DMWR member on the PPT to replace Sean Felise

Regarding Cultural Take of Green Sea Turtles, the Council:

3. Directed staff to send a letter to the Administration:
 - a. To explore changes to IAC to allow for the sustainable cultural take of green sea turtles in the Western Pacific region; and
 - b. To initiate a status review of the green sea turtles distinct population segments in the Territories of Guam and American Samoa and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and evaluate whether their listing status may be revised.