

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Pacific Islands Regional Office**

**REPORT TO THE 205th
WESTERN PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) is responsible for assisting the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) in the development of fishery management plans and amendments, initiating Federal fishing regulations, issuing Federal fishing permits, and monitoring fisheries. Other major responsibilities include the conservation and recovery of protected species, conservation and restoration of marine habitats, including the Pacific marine national monuments, and coordination with international organizations to implement fishery agreements and treaties. The following information is provided to update the Council on NMFS activities since the 204th Council meeting held September 16-17, 2025.

SPOTLIGHT: FY26 Lapse in Appropriation

Discretionary funding for Fiscal Year 2025 expired on September 30, 2025. During the lapse in appropriation, NOAA Fisheries halted all activities funded by annual appropriations that were not excepted by law. Excepted activities allowed during a lapse in appropriation are limited only to emergency work involving the safety of human life or the protection of property. On November 12, 2025, Congress passed a continuing resolution to fund the government through January 30, 2026.

During the 44-day lapse in appropriations, NOAA Fisheries was unable to make progress on several activities planned for review at the 205th Council meeting. They include the following:

- Activities to support commercial fishing options in the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument and other monuments
- The biological opinion for the Hawaii Deep Set Longline Fishery
- Development of electronic monitoring vessel monitoring plans

PIRO lead staff will work with Council lead staff to update project work plans, milestones and timelines to clarify when work products associated with these activities will be available.

RULEMAKING

PIRO has no rulemakings to report since the September 2025 Council meeting.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Habitat Conservation

PIRO has no habitat conservation activities to report since the September 2025 Council meeting.

International Fisheries

On September 23-30, 2025, PIRO participated in the 21st Regular Session of the Western and Central Fisheries Commission's (WCPFC) 21st meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC21) in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. Details on the TCC21 Provisional Meeting Outcomes can be found [here](#).

In early November 2025, while still under a shutdown furlough, NMFS received approval to conduct a limited set of activities to prepare for the 22nd meeting of the WCPFC (WCPFC22) in Manila, Philippines on December 1-5, 2025. In addition to reviewing papers and proposals and finalizing delegation logistics, authorized activities included:

- On November 5, 2025, PIRO led the United States' participation at the WCPFC's 2nd South Pacific Albacore Management (SPAM) Workshop. The United States continued to advocate for a management procedure that ensures sufficient vulnerable biomass to support American Samoa's fisheries aspirations. Workshop participants were unable to significantly reduce the number of management procedures (MP) under consideration, so delegates will need to evaluate a wide range of candidate MPs at WCPFC22. Details on the SPAM workshop outcomes can be found [here](#).
- On November 18, 2025, PIRO staff both chaired and participated in the 7th meeting of the WCPFC Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring Intersessional Working Group (ER and EM IWG) via video conference. The Chair reminded members of the prioritized work plan for 2025–2026: developing an EM assurance and audit process; refining templates for EM program reporting; reviewing EM technical and data requirements and updating the Interim Standards, Specifications, and Procedures (SSPs) to align with other Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Project 93 outcomes; and initiating work on EM standards for carrier vessels. General IWG outcomes include broad support for simplifying the audit to a single authorization pathway, strengthening guidance on required documentation, adding a dedicated assurance section, and establishing a three-year audit cycle starting with an in-person review-center audit. Details on the ER and EM IWG meeting outcomes can be found [here](#).

Protected Resources

On September 19, 2025, PIRO Protected Resources Division reinitiated Endangered Species Act (ESA) section 7 consultation on the authorization of the Hawaii deep-set longline fishery at the request of PIRO Sustainable Fisheries Division. The reinitiation triggers were in exceedance of the incidental take statement in the 2023 biological opinion for oceanic whitetip sharks and leatherback sea turtles during the first and second quarter of 2025, respectively. The consultation is anticipated to be completed in March 2026.

Sustainable Fisheries

On November 14, 2025, NMFS published the 2024 Annual Seabird Report, which summarizes seabird interactions and mitigation efforts in Hawai'i longline fisheries. This report is required in the Terms and Conditions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2012 Biological Opinion on the operation of Hawai'i-based pelagic longline fisheries. The Annual Seabird Report can be found on the NMFS PIRO seabird [webpage](#).

During the lapse in appropriations, NMFS observer contract provider continued to deploy at-sea observers onboard Hawaii deep-set, Hawaii shallow set and American Samoa longline vessels to monitor protected species interaction limits.

No protected species workshops (PSW) were conducted during the lapse in appropriations. However, PSW outreach material, including protected species identification, handling and release instructions, and the long-form guidelines (downloadable PDFs in [English](#), [Tagalog](#), [Indonesian](#), and [Vietnamese](#)) remained available to fishermen on the PIRO PSW [webpage](#). A matching animated [video](#) is also available online. Translated captions for the video are available in Tagalog, Ilocano, Samoan, Indonesian and Vietnamese. Document links can be found on the PIRO PSW [webpage](#) and the NOAA [digital resource library webpage](#).

NMFS continues to update information on fish catch limits, available on the [website](#).

NMFS continues to assist fishermen with processing permit transactions electronically. Under the electronic application process, all applications must be submitted online through NMFS National Permit System or through the Kiteworks secure file transfer. Fee payments are processed in NPS or through the Department of Treasury's [pay.gov](#) secure online payment system. PIRO's permit website includes [instructions](#) for fishing permit applications and for 2025 Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) certificates. Applicants may contact NMFS for individual assistance at piro-permits@noaa.gov or (808) 725-5190. Applicants may also visit the [website](#) for current fishing permit status.

In 2025 through 2026, NMFS is migrating all Pacific Islands Region permit applications and processing to the online NMFS National Permit System (NPS) to improve public access, efficiency, and tracking. In addition to NPS system enhancements, NMFS may offer outreach events and educational materials to introduce the system to permit holders in all the islands, depending on funding. WCPFC Area Endorsement is now available via NPS. Additional

permits, including Western Pacific General Longline, American Samoa Longline and Northern Mariana Islands Bottomfish permit applications will be added in the next few months.

Permits as of November 24, 2025:

Permit	Number
Pelagic	
Hawaii longline (limited entry)	149 active, 15 inactive/no-vessel (164 of 164)
American Samoa longline (limited entry)	20 current, 40 available (60 of 60)
Western Pacific general longline	-
Receiving vessel	3
Pelagic squid jig	-
Experimental fishing permit	-
Hawaii	
Main Hawaiian Islands non-commercial bottomfish	2
Special coral reef ecosystem	-
Precious coral	-
Crustaceans	2 (shrimp)
American Samoa	
Special coral reef ecosystem	-
Precious coral	-
Crustaceans	-
Mariana Islands	
Guam large vessel bottomfish	-
Northern Mariana Islands bottomfish	5
Special coral reef ecosystem	-
Precious coral	-
Crustaceans	-
Pacific Remote Island Areas	
Pelagic Troll & Handline	1
Bottomfish	-
Special coral reef ecosystem	-
Precious Coral	-
Crustaceans	-
Marine National Monument	
Recreational Fishing	-
Recreational Charter	-