

HAWAII FISHER COMMUNITY MEETING OCT 28 - NOV 8 2025







Moving toward a better future

by listening to fishermen

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

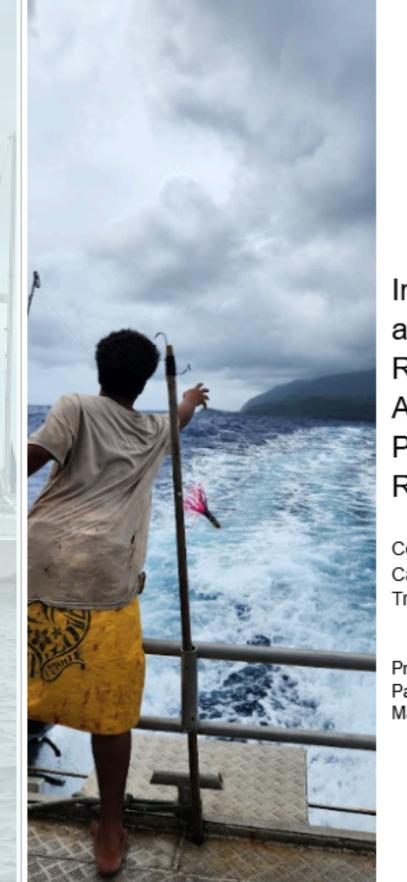
the perceived impacts and issues communities face as they adapt to evolving ecosystems and changing climate.





WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

The Community's voice and feedback is <u>recorded</u> and is <u>shared with management</u>. This helps shape future decisions and actions.



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





AGENDA

- Overview of the Community Meetings' Purpose
- Community Feedback from Round 1
- Fisheries Specific Data
- Shark Depredation
- · Cultural use of Honu
- What Reopening the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands needs are
- Other Topics





MEETING EXPECTATIONS

- Please be considerate of each other
- Make space for many voices
- There can be multiple experiences
- Keep the dialogue to the group, <u>avoid side</u>
 <u>conversations</u>





COMMUNITY FEEDBACK - LANAI

- Started limu project 15 years ago, trying to get kids involved
- Want to raise limu and fish in brackish tanks for education
- Turtle overpopulation—tumors, imbalance. Need to harvest or relocate
- Sediment erosion and sewer changes affecting limu
- Disconnect between empirical knowledge and DAR
- After COVID, fewer fish; DAR rules forced targeting of bigger breeding fish
- Post-Lahaina fire, more fishers; Lāna'i sustaining its own community is getting harder





COMMUNITY FEEDBACK - MAUI

- Bottomfish grounds shifting more rocks, less sand and mud
- Increased shark depredation; changing currents and seasons
- Loss of fishing access due to closures, regulations, private development
- Changing landscape leading to runoff, reef degradation, and decline in limu
- Unsafe, overused harbors like Mala ramp; need better infrastructure
- Changing fisher identity from livelihood to social media
- Stronger community stewardship and voice in fisheries decisions
- Cultural importance of limu and potential turtle management discussions





COMMUNITY FEEDBACK - KAUAI

- Military still bombing Ka'ula Rock impacts to fish and birds noted
- Homelessness, drugs, and access loss making fishing unsafe
- Too many turtles interest in a cultural take system
- Shark and monk seal populations increasing; monk seals taking shibi
- Regulations not adaptive every moku faces different challenges
- More fish offshore, fewer nearshore fewer fishers remaining active
- "Instagram fishing" changing motivations and market dynamics
- Loss of local buyers; dependence on Costco and bulk supply chains
- Interest in reopening the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) bottomfish fishery





COMMUNITY FEEDBACK - OAHU

- Harbor access and slip availability remain major challenges for small fishers
- Rising costs and unclear licensing rules make it difficult to stay commercial
- Younger generation disconnected from traditional fishing knowledge
- Frustration with management processes that limit local decisionmaking





COMMUNITY FEEDBACK - OAHU

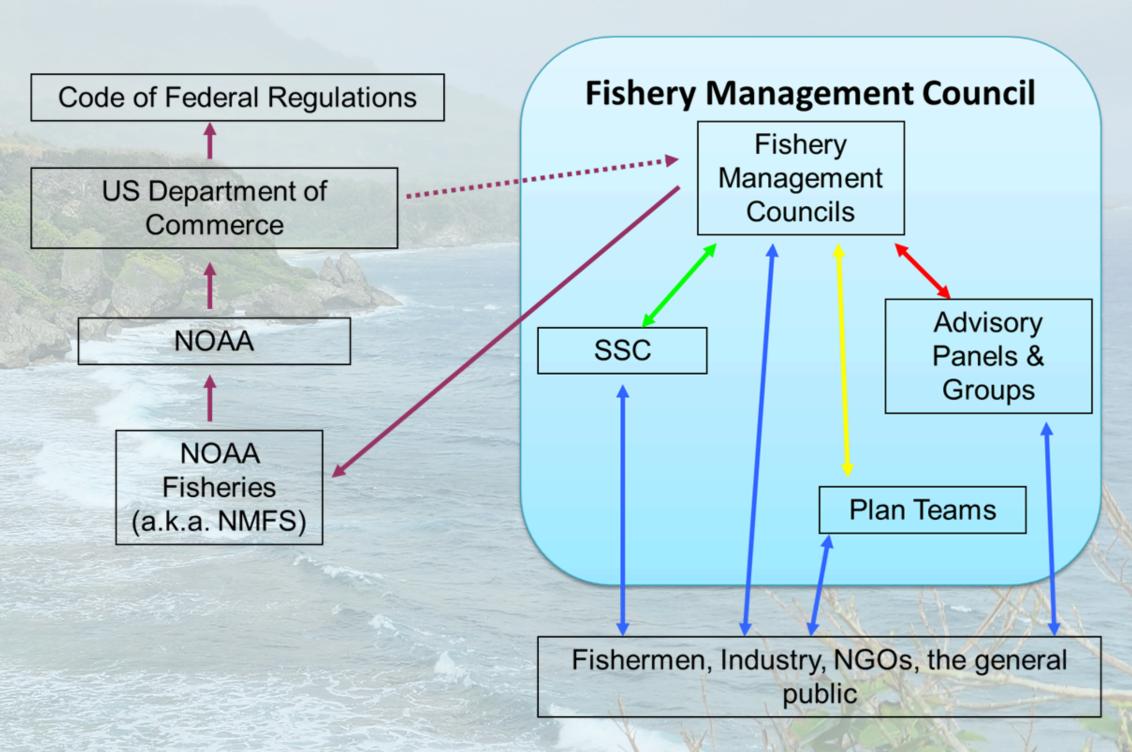
- Interest in reopening the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) fishery
- Shared desire to balance conservation with community food security and culture
- Increasing monk seal and predator (shark) populations and impact
- Importance of Limu and freshwater on nearshore fishery





WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

- The Fishery Council Process is a bottom-up approach to Government Resource Management
- Input and recommendations from community have already led to action (i.e., shortline in HI)
- Listening to the Community helps resource managers develop a focused approach to building long-term resilience measures for identified problems





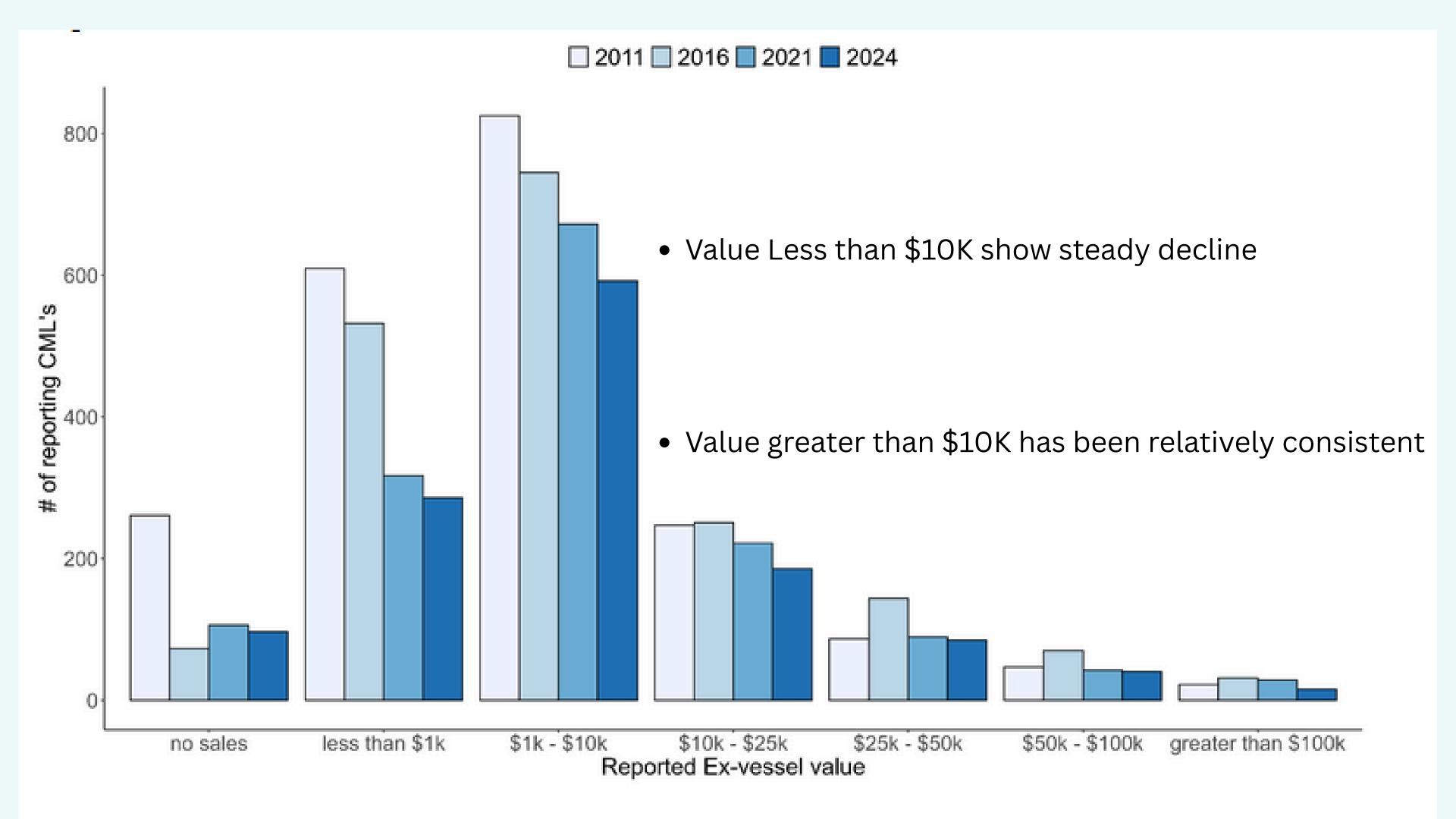


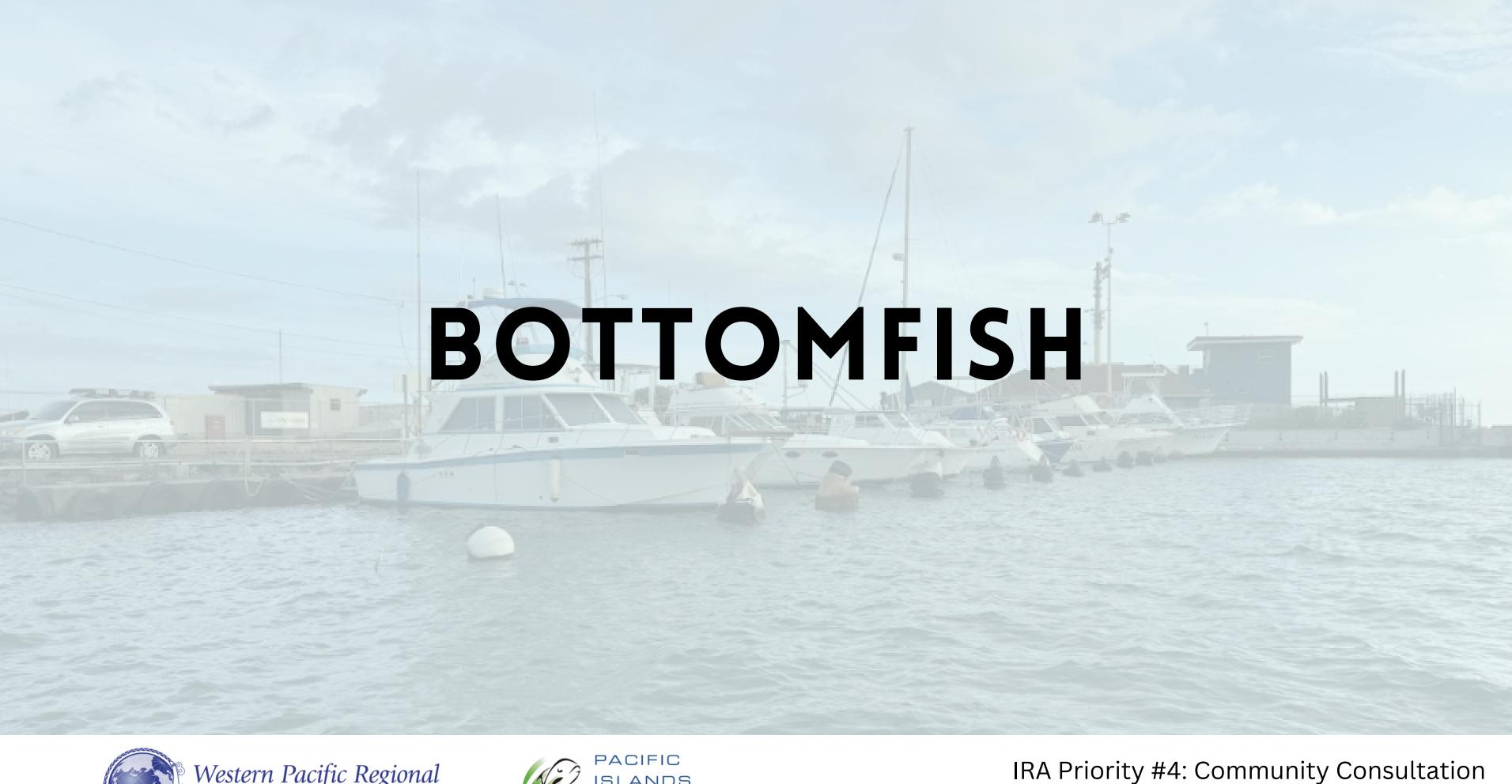
FISHERIES DATA

Overview of the latest State-wide and Oahu fishery trends Summary of participation and landings over the past 15 years



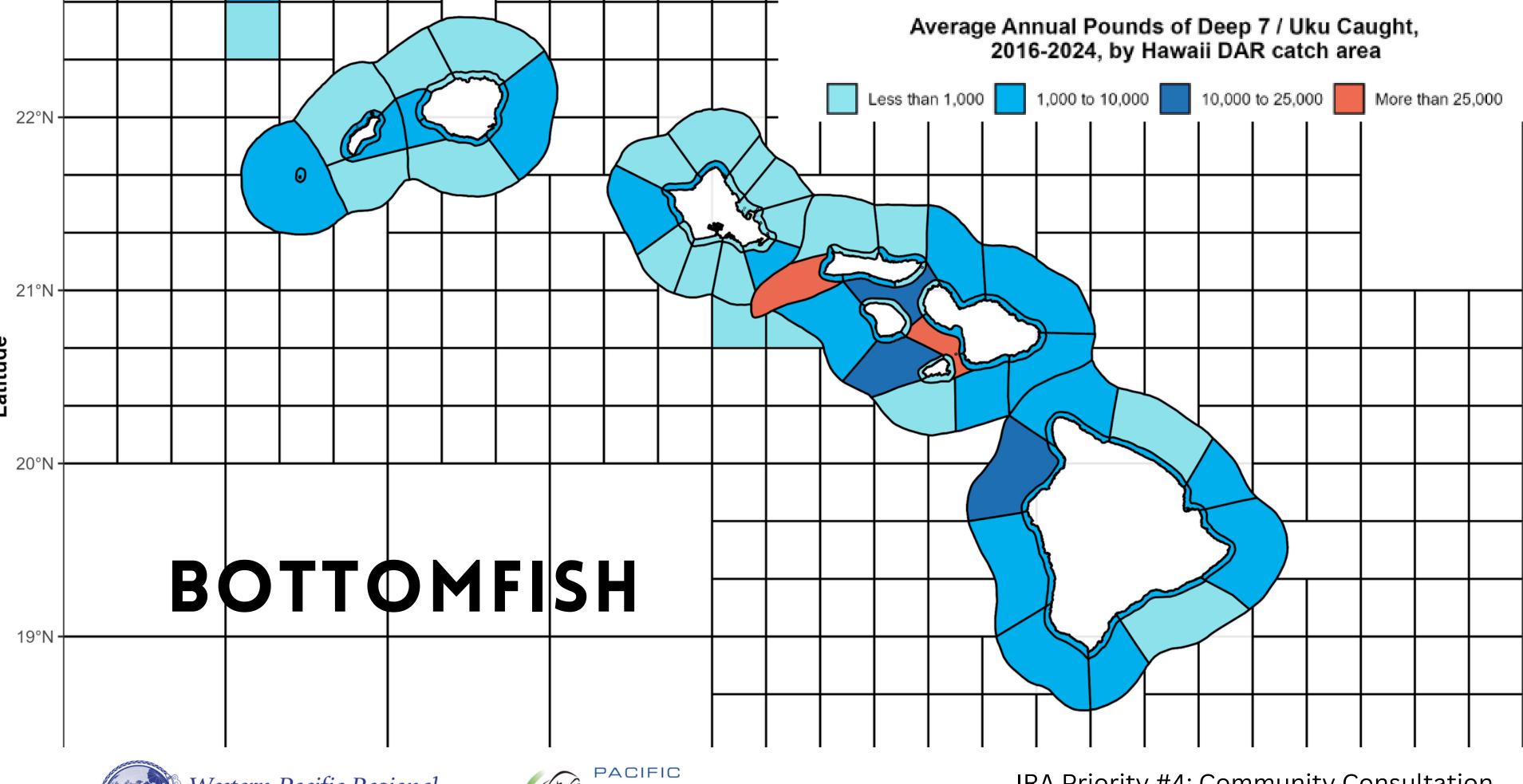












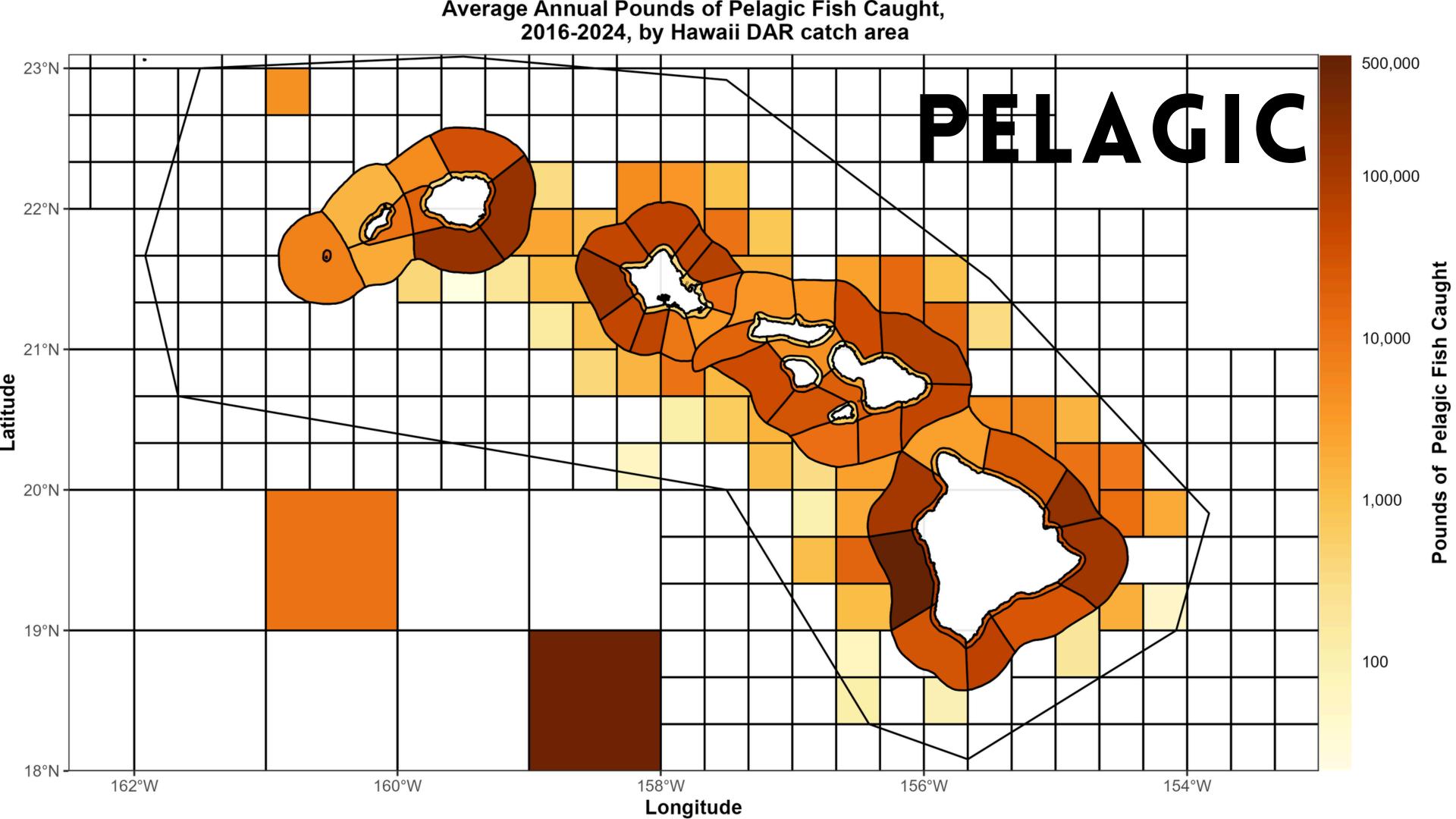


















Shark Depredation and Mitigation

- Common issue raised throughout Hawaii and the Pacific Islands during the first round of meetings earlier this year
- Information from DAR CML reporting program
- Many factors influence shark presence and depredation:
 - Water Temperature
 - Seasonality
 - Geographic Location
 - Fishing Method
 - Other????

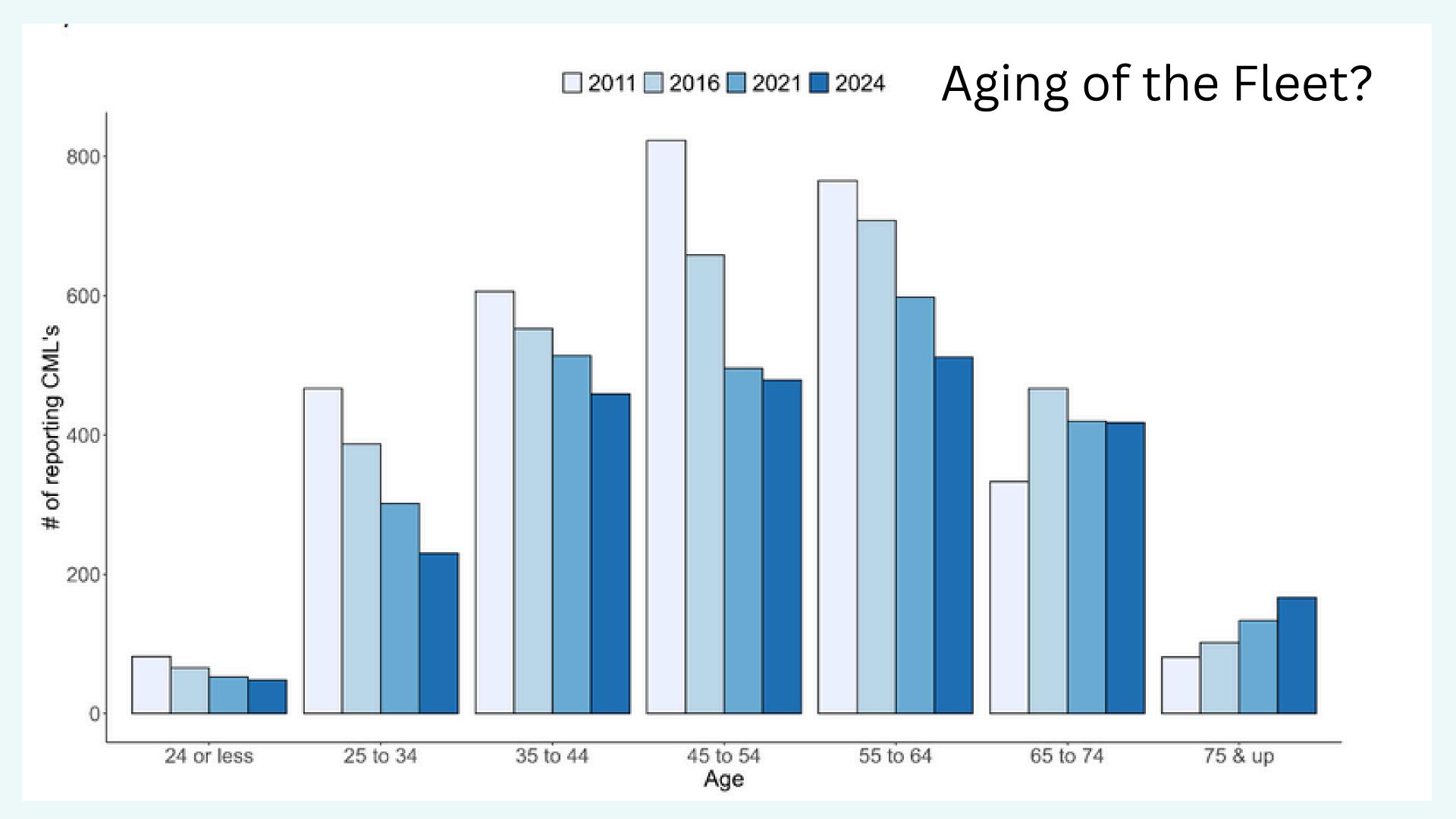
Bottomfish Fisheries

- Trips with at least one fish reported lost to sharks
- 2024 depredation at PB represents loss of \$250-\$900 per trip depending on species, size and market price

	Reported Rates of Shark Depredation	2015-2019	2020-2024	Average lost	Highest lost
	Penguin Banks	32%-52%	42% to 61%	9	23
N. W. W. W. W. W. W. W. W.	Big Island - The Grounds off Kona	19% - 37%	35% to 52%	5	15

Pelagic - Small Boat Fisheries

- Common pelagic fishing methods/gears w/reported shark depredation - troll w/lure, troll w/bait, palu ahi and at FADs
- Generally less depredation than seen in the bottomfish fishery
- Penguin Banks is a hotspot for shark occurrence and depredation
- Palu ahi at West Hawaii FADs
 - 15%-30% of commercial trips w/one fish lost to shark (2020-2024)
 - Compared to 2%-9% in 2015-2019
- Trolling w/bait high rate of depredation
 - One fisher lost 32 shibi/ahi on 7 Kona trips (value lost \$10-\$17K)
 depending on species, size and market)
- Trolling w/lure generally have a lower rate of depredation









Status of Honu

- Honu still listed as "threatened" under Endangered Species Act
- Council explored limited take exemption under the ESA through the 4(d) provision (used for allowing harvest of ESA-listed salmon)
- Biggest barrier: U.S. is a signatory to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), which **prohibits take**
- IAC has a provision to allow limited exemptions for "economic subsistence" use, but **U.S. government made determination in 1985 that Hawaii has no subsistence** need because people are not dependent on turtles for survival
- Green sea turtles now globally considered "least concern" under IUCN Red List (not the same as ESA listing in the U.S.)
- Overgrazing of seagrass associated with increasing green sea turtle populations becoming more common across Pacific (e.g., Okinawa, Vanuatu)





What's Next for Honu?

- Council requested NMFS to initiate a green sea turtle status review to evaluate ESA listing revision is warranted
- Council supporting workshop on sustainable use at the International Sea Turtle Symposium in Kailua-Kona in 2026
 - Growing interest in discussing sustainable use among sea turtle researchers and conservationists globally (Australia, Japan, Latin America, Caribbean, Pacific Islands)
 - Case studies from various countries that have turtle harvest/use
 - Explore best practices for sustainable use that can be adapted at national, regional and local scales













First protected by 1909 Theodore Roosevelt

- Hawaiian Islands Bird Reservation -Protection for seabirds
- FDR later converted it to a National Wildlife Refuge (1940)

NWHI Management History

MSA (1976) and Fisheries

Lobster

1981

- Bottomfish
- Precious Corals
- Pelagics
- Coral Reef
 Ecosystems

2016

2000



Continued

Management

NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

Clinton EOs 13158 develop a plan for additional NWHI Protections

13178 and 13196 –
 established reserve;
 transition to a
 sanctuary



Monument Expansion Area

- Proclamation 9478;
 Expanded from 50
 to 200 nm
- Allows for noncommercial, Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing

Marine National Monument

- Proclamation 8031 (amended in 2006)
- Commercial fisheries phased out and prohibited by 2010
- Sustenance fishing allowed (catch and consume); Midway recreational

National Marine Sanctuary

- Overlays entire monument
- Defers fishing regulations to NMFS; doesn't allow cost recovery

2006



2025

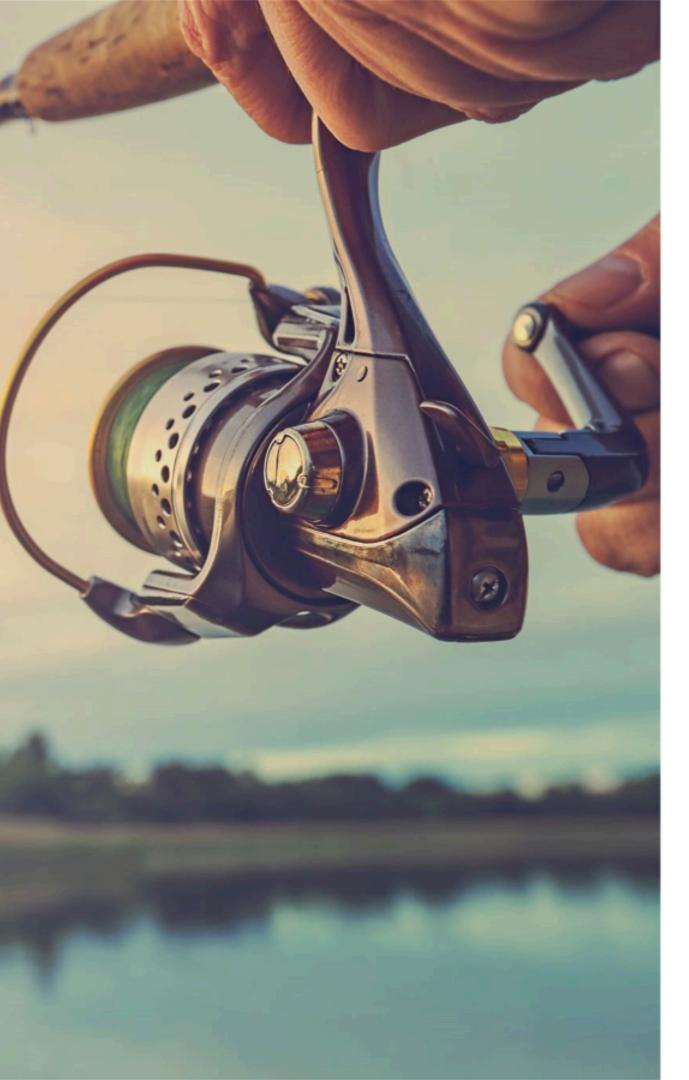
Why are we talking about this now?

NMFS still in the process of developing fishing regulations for the MEA/Sanctuary

EO14276 required a review of monuments to remove commercial fishing prohibitions

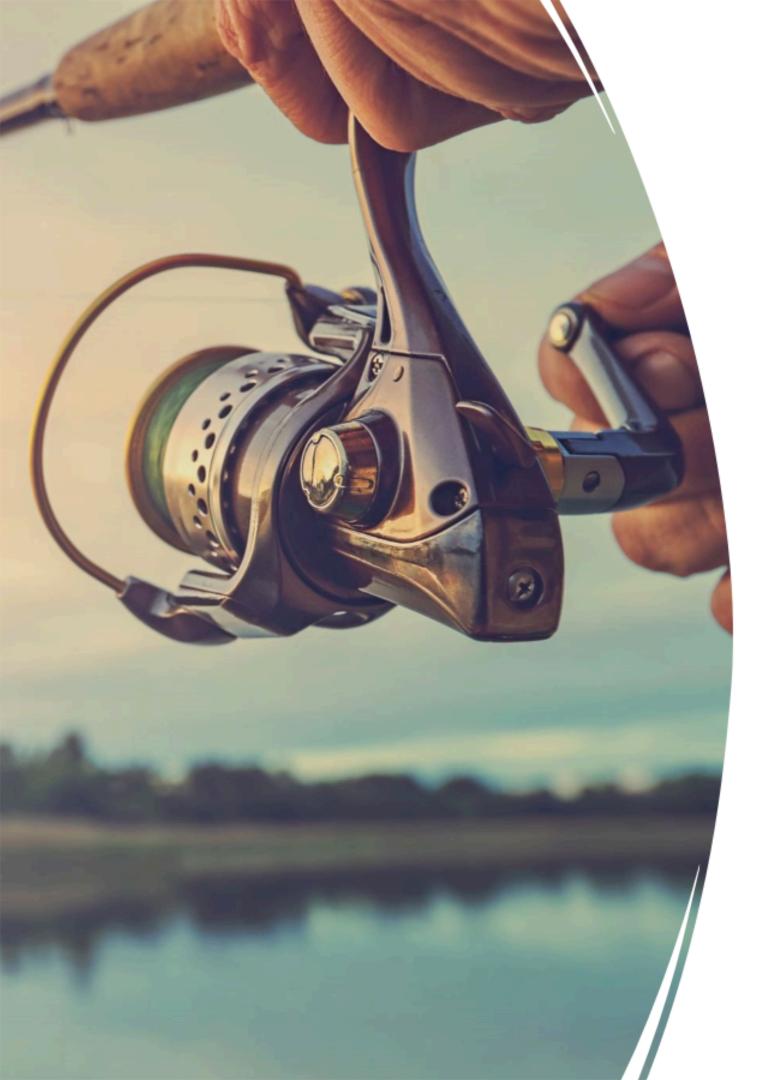
Council discussing commercial fishing in Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument

Preparing for potential action in order to expedite rulemaking



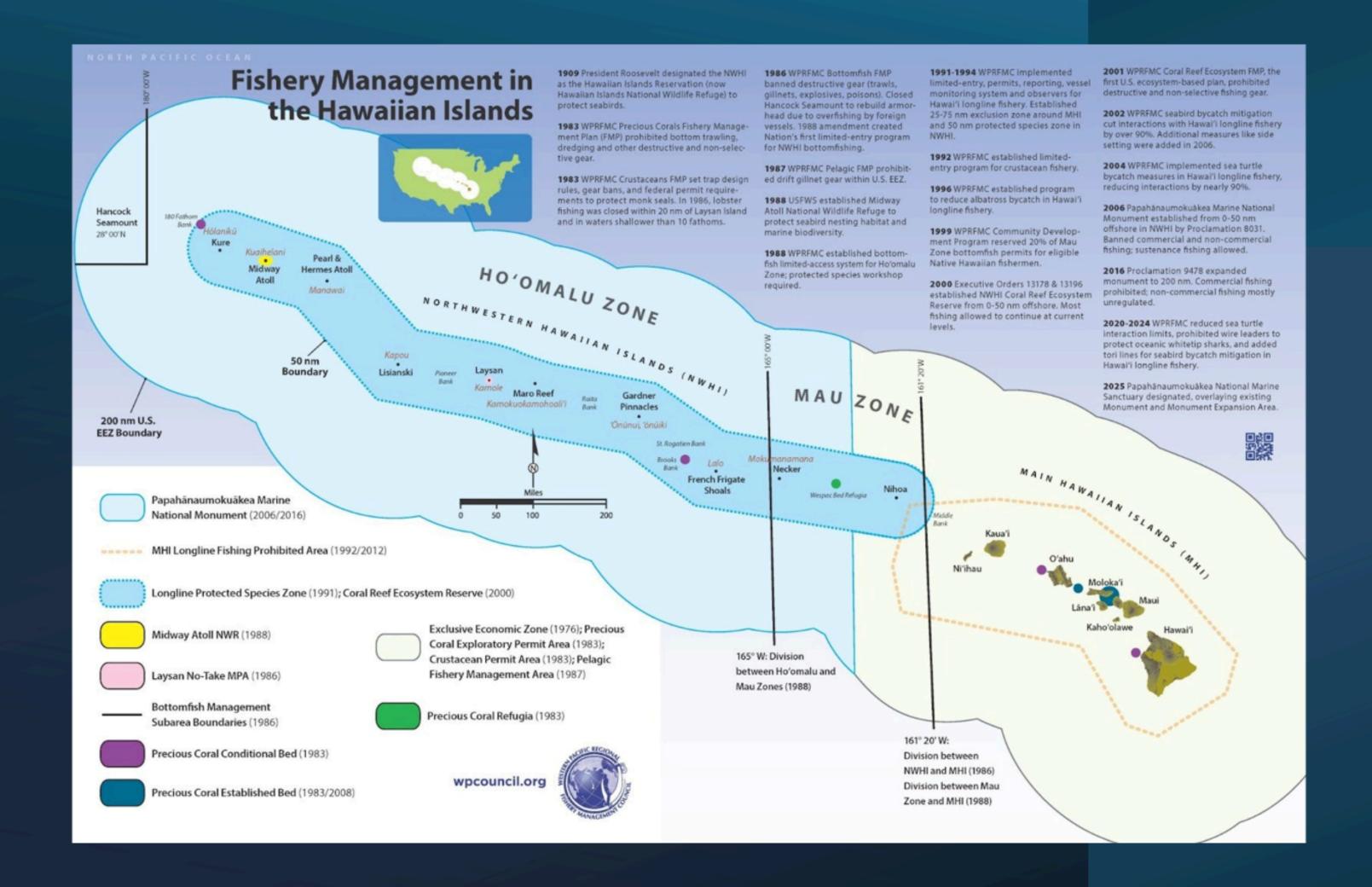
What we are not here to do...

- Vote on whether to open commercial fishing in PMNM
 - Commercial fishing is currently prohibited and can only be opened by federal actions
- Debate the ability of the President to open commercial fishing
- The Council has been continuously on record supporting commercial fishing in the NWHI
 - Why? Because it is the mission of the Council and MSA to promote sustainable fisheries



What we DO want to hear from you about...

- If commercial fishing were to be restored in the NWHI, how would you like it managed?
- What management tools that are not in place should the Council be thinking about using?
- Which fisheries should be permitted?
- Which fisheries probably should be more tightly regulated or may not be appropriate?
- What other ideas do you have for sustainably managing fisheries?



Existing Fishing Regulations in the NWHI

- Precious Corals 1981
 - Area restrictions
 - Conditional Beds: Brooks Bank, 180-fathom Bank
 - Refugia: Westpac Bed
 - Exploratory Areas
 - Permits required
 - Use of selective gear only
 - Minimum height requirements (black coral 1" diameter/48" height; pink coral 10" height)
 - Gold coral moratorium
 - Annual Catch Limits/Harvest Quotas



Existing Fishing Regulations in the NWHI

Crustaceans – 1983 (TRAP FISHERY)

Permits and VMS required

 Limited Access Fishery (15 max; 1 per vessel; only 1 permit area; transferrable)

 Gear restrictions (trap or hand only; escape vents; max 1200 traps; vessel marking; gear identification)

Closed Season (Jan-Jun)

 Closed Areas (within 20 nm of Laysan; landward of 10 fm curve)

Required to notify before landing (24-36 hours); 6-12 hours before offloading

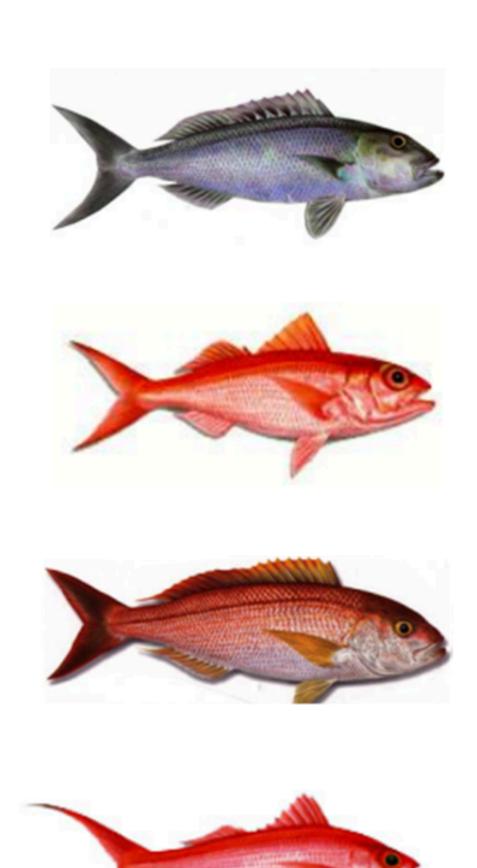
 Monk seal protective measures (reporting to RA)

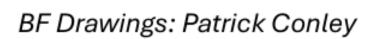
Harvest guidelines (quotas set annually)

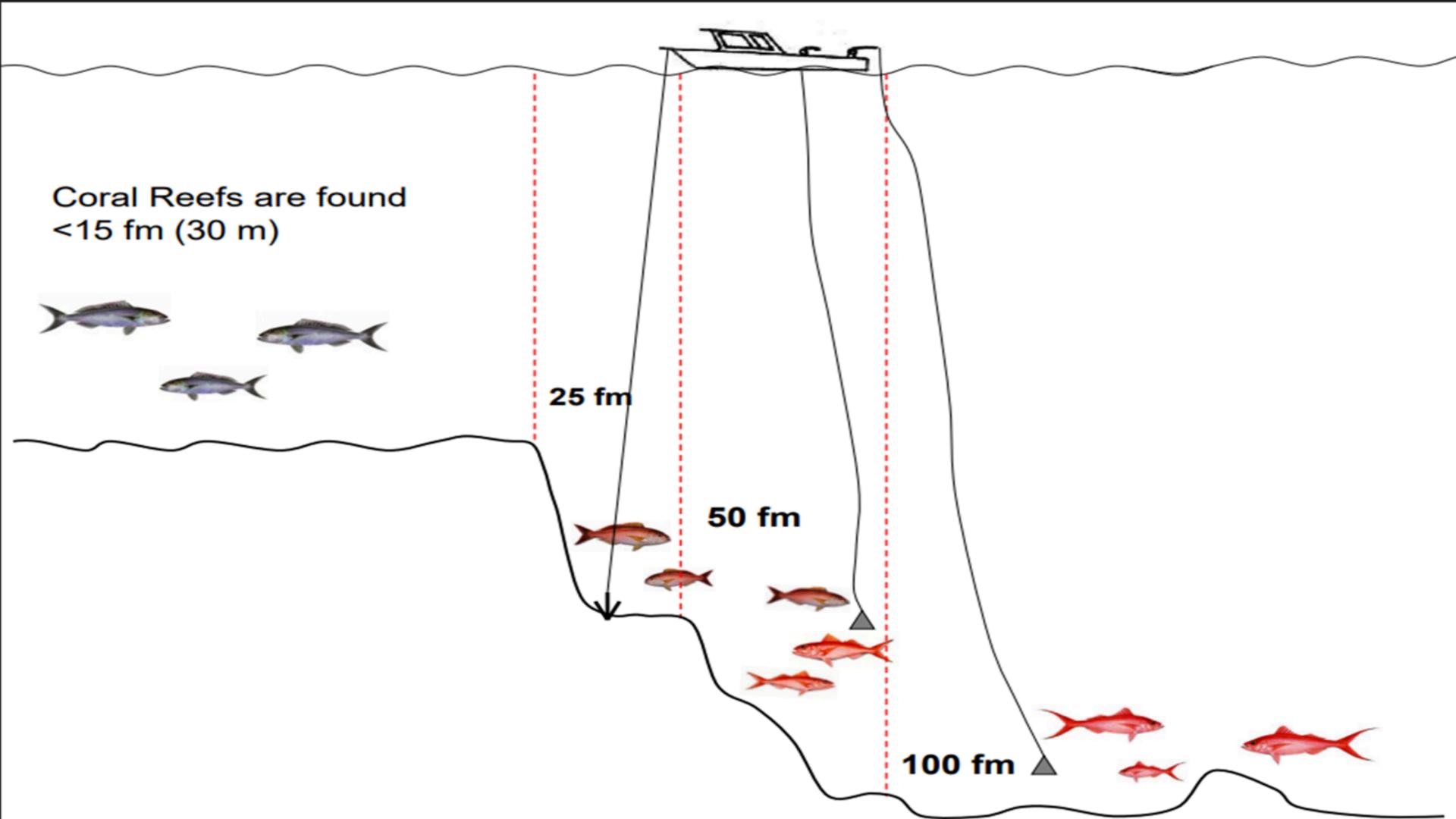


Existing Fishing Regulations

- Bottomfish 1986 (HOOK AND LINE FISHERY)
 - Area-based management (Mau, Ho'omalu, Hancock)
 - Permits and Reporting Required Max 17 permits (7 for Hoʻomalu, 10 for Mau)
 - CDP-provides for 20% of permits (2) to be set aside for Native Hawaiians
 - Limited Access (qualifications to fish in each zone; permit not transferrable; Use it or lose it (2,500 lb. in Hoʻomalu, 500 lbs. in Mau))
 - Required notifications of landing (24 hours prior to USCG)
 - Gear Restrictions-no bottom trawls, bottom set gillnets, poisons, explosives; Max vessel length of 60'
 - Must carry observers when directed by RA (in 50 nm protected species study zone)
 - Annual Catch Limits
 - Protected Species Workshop requirement

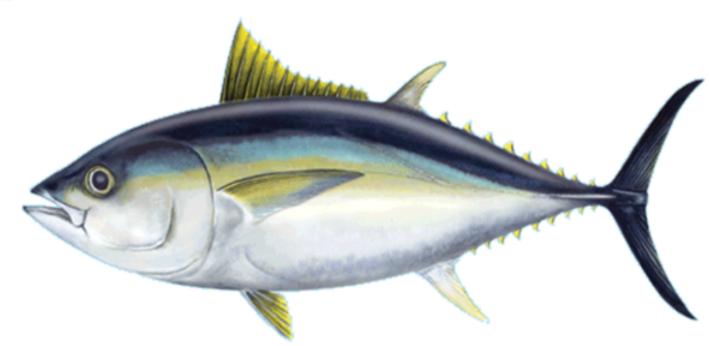




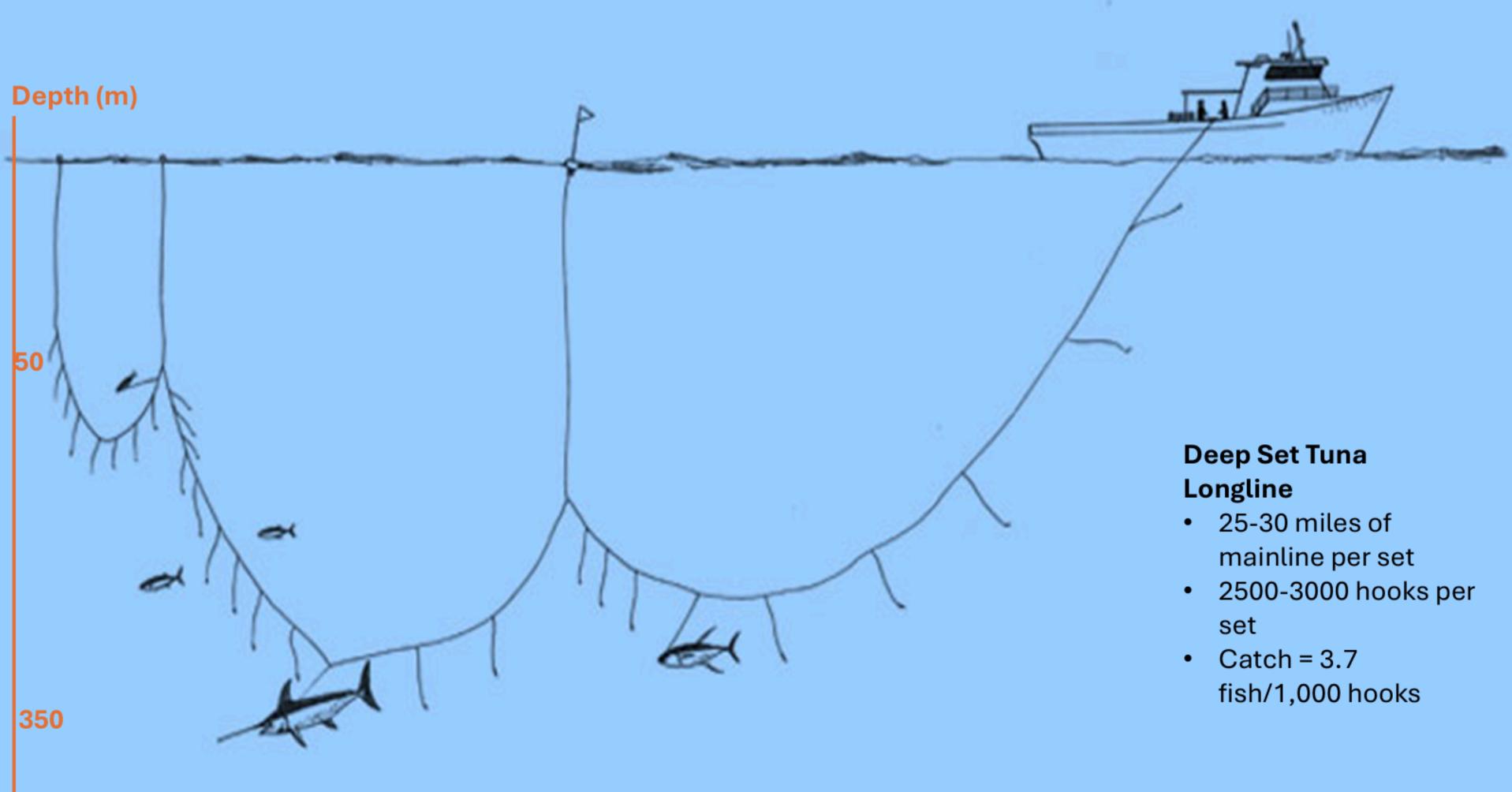


Existing Fishing Regulations

- Pelagics 1987 (HOOK AND LINE FISHERY)
 - Permit and reporting
 - Limited Access-101 ft vessel limit; Max 164 permit
 - Gear Restrictions (circle hooks, mono leaders, side setting, tori lines, blue-dyed bait); Vessel size limits; gear identification
 - Area restrictions (prohibited from 0-50 nm around NWHI)
 - Protected Species mitigation (workshops, crew training, side setting, handling/releasing, etc)
 - Observers/electronic monitoring
 - Quotas/limits-tuna, sea turtles, fleet limits, trip limits
 - International measures



Artwork: Les Hata @ Secretariat of the Pacific Community





Previously proposed fishing regulations for the NWHI

- Coral Reef Ecosystem 1999 2004
 - Low-use and No-take MPAs
 - Gear restrictions (prohibiting the use of destructive and nonselective fishing gear)
 - Prohibiting the harvest of coral and live rock
 - Federal permitting and reporting



We are overfishing!

NWHI provides spillover!

Council mismanaged lobster fishery!

Not protection from, but protection for!

Climate change

Fishing = a gateway for more taking

Hawaiians are not commercial fishers

Fishing cannot occur where it is sacred

Protected Species will get killed!

The Council is in the pocket of commercial industrial fishing

What are we asking?

- If commercial fishing were to be restored in the NWHI, how would you like it managed?
- What management tools that are not in place should the Council be thinking about using?
- Which fisheries should be permitted?
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QUESTIONS OR FEEDBACK?

Western Pacific Regional

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