



WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

November 10, 2020

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Kitty M. Simonds

SUBJECT: Summary of Action Items for the 184th Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

1. **Specification of Annual Catch Limit and Accountability Measures for the American Samoa Bottomfish Fishery for Fishing Year 2021-2022 (Initial Action)**
2. **Options for the American Samoa Bottomfish Stock Rebuilding Plan (Initial Action)**
3. **Options for the Guam Bottomfish Stock Rebuilding Plan (Initial Action)**
4. **Reasonable and Prudent Measures and/or Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives for the Hawaii and American Samoa Longline Fisheries (Initial Action)**
5. **Potential Catch Limits for North Pacific Striped Marlin (Initial Action)**

The 184th meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will convene December 2-4, 2020, by web conference (WebEx) with host sites at the following locations:

- Cliff Pointe, 304 W. O'Brien Drive, Hagatna, Guam
- BRI Building Suite 205, Kopa Di Oru St. Garapan, Saipan, MP
- Tedi of Samoa Building Suite 208B, Fagatogo Village, American Samoa.

The WebEx link is

<https://wprfmc.webex.com/wprfmc/onstage/g.php?MTID=e479b3b162194f927462374974bb8145f>
(if prompted, enter event number: 133 535 2182; password: CM184mtg).

The Council will consider and may take action on the issues summarized below, including any public comments on them. Written public comments on final action items should be received by the Council's executive director by 5 p.m. (Hawai'i time), Friday, November 27, 2020, by postal mail, fax or email as indicated below.

Instructions for connecting to the WebEx and providing oral public comments during the meeting will be posted on the Council website at www.wpcouncil.org/event/184th-council-meeting.

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3. Options for the Guam Bottomfish Stock Rebuilding Plan

The Council will consider taking initial action on the Guam Bottomfish Stock Rebuilding Plan. The Guam bottomfish stock is overfished but not subject to overfishing. At its 181st meeting in March 2020, the Council voted to specify the ACL for the bottomfish fishery at 27,000 pounds for Fishing Year 2020 to 2023. This annual catch level would allow the biomass to rebuild to MSY within four years (2024). The catch must remain below 27,000 pounds if the stock is to rebuild in four years. However, there are no measures that would guarantee that the catch would be kept below this level. The Council may increase or lower the annual harvest levels that may prolong or shorten the rebuilding period, respectively. Raising or lowering the annual harvest levels would also lower or increase the chances of exceeding the ACLs, which would trigger the rebuilding timeline extension.

The Council will consider the following options:

- 1) No Action. No rebuilding measures;
- 2) Status quo: Retain the ACL at 27,000 pounds to rebuild the stock in four years. Apply in-season accountability measures (AMs);
- 3) Reduce the ACL below 27,000 pounds to rebuild the stock in less than four years. Apply in-season AMs;
- 4) Increase the ACL above 27,000 pounds to rebuild the stock in between five to ten years. Apply in-season AMs;
- 5) Establish a Temporary Prohibition on Bottomfish Fishing in Federal waters around Guam;
- 6) Establish additional measures to control and monitor the catch like federal permit and reporting and bag limits

4. Reasonable and Prudent Measures and/or Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives for the Hawaii and American Samoa Longline Fisheries

The Council at its 181st meeting in March 2020 reiterated its recommendation to NMFS that it works with the Council to develop any necessary reasonable and prudent measures (RPMs) or reasonable and prudent alternatives (RPAs) under the ongoing Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 Consultations for the Hawai'i deep-set longline fishery and the American Samoa longline fishery to ensure that such measures are appropriate and practicable to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries. Prior to the 182nd meeting in June 2020, NMFS Pacific Island Regional Office (PIRO) Protected Resources Division (PRD) indicated to Council staff that it is not yet in a position to discuss development or RPMs or RPAs but encouraged the Council to work with PIRO Sustainable Fisheries Division (SFD) on the following:

- Consider any actions that the fishery could take to avoid adversely impacting listed species and, if impacts cannot be avoided, work to minimize impacts of incidental take;
- Start with Hawai'i shallow-set longline RPM applicability and offer new measures; and
- Focus on leatherback turtles (concern with species status), oceanic whitetip shark (taken in large numbers) and giant manta rays (demographic units poorly understood).

At its 182nd meeting, the Council reviewed available information regarding leatherback turtles, oceanic whitetip sharks and giant manta rays and recommended a range of considerations for the initial development of any draft RPMs and/or RPAs. The Council further directed staff to continue working with PIRO, PIFSC, advisory group members and industry to develop any

The Council at its 184th meeting may elect to adopt catch limits for North Pacific striped marlin, regardless of CMM adoption by the WCPFC in 2020, in order to comply with MSA 304(i) requirements. These catch limits may be consistent to proposed limits by the US to the WCPFC, past Council recommendations, or catch/effort limits that demonstrably reduce the relative impact of US fisheries on the internationally overfished stock. The Council may elect to take no action, thus proceeding with catch limits adopted by CMM 2010-01 under the auspices of Amendment 8, which is to be finalized by the March 2021 Meeting.