



WESTERN  
PACIFIC  
REGIONAL  
FISHERY  
MANAGEMENT  
COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

November 4, 2021

TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Kitty M. Simonds  
SUBJECT: Summary of Action Items for the 189th Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council

## 1. Modification of Seabird Interaction Mitigation Measures in the Deep-set Longline Fishery

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The 189th meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will convene on December 7-9, 2021, by web conference (Webex) with host sites at the following locations:

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

The Webex link is <https://tinyurl.com/189CouncilMtg> (if prompted, enter event number: 2465 972 4878; password: CM189mtg).

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. (HST), Friday, December 3, 2021, 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 <https://www.wpcouncil.org/event/189th-council-virtual-meeting/>.

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## Summary of Action Items at the 189th Council Meeting

### 1. Modification of Seabird Interaction Mitigation Measures in the Deep-set Longline Fishery (Final Action)

The Council is considering a regulatory amendment to the Pacific Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) to modify seabird interaction mitigation measures in the Hawaii deep-set longline fishery. At the 184<sup>th</sup> Meeting in December 2020 directed staff to initiate development of a regulatory amendment to evaluate options for allowing the use of tori lines (also known as bird scaring lines or streamer lines) in lieu of blue-dyed bait and removing the strategic offal discharge requirement in the Hawaii deep-set longline fishery, and schedule further action when the results of a second tori line field trial was available.

Two field trials to develop and test tori lines in the Hawaii deep-set longline fishery were conducted in 2019-2021 under a joint Cooperative Research Project by the Council, Hawaii Longline Association, NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) and PIRO. The studies show that tori lines are significantly more effective in preventing longline gear interactions with black-footed and Laysan albatrosses than blue-dyed bait, which is currently required as part of the seabird interaction mitigation measures implemented under the Council's Pelagic FEP. Discharge of offal and spent bait is also required under the existing measures, but available information suggest that this practice may increase interactions over time by attracting more seabirds to the fishing vessels.

The Council at the 187<sup>th</sup> meeting in September 2021 considered initial action on the regulatory amendment, and recommended as preliminary preferred alternatives 1) replacing blue-dyed bait with tori line; and 2) removing strategic offal discard from the regulatory requirement, with the addition to include best practices training on offal management as part of the required annual protected species workshop. The Council directed staff to consider a contingency that would allow vessels to continue fishing if a tori pole breaks during a trip. Additionally, the Council directed staff to work with the Action Team to develop the necessary documentation including draft regulations for consideration of final action at the December 2021 meeting.

The Council at the 189<sup>th</sup> Meeting will consider final action on the regulatory amendment. The purpose of the action is to improve the overall operational practicality and mitigation efficacy of the required seabird mitigation measures for the Hawaii deep-set longline fishery. The Council will consider the following alternatives:

- 1) No Action (Status Quo)
- 2) Replace blue-dyed thawed bait and strategic offal discharge measures required for stern-setting vessels with a new tori line requirement (*preliminary preferred alternative*)
- 3) Replace blue-dyed thawed bait with a new tori line requirement, and modify strategic offal discard requirement to an offal management requirement