

# Archipelagic Fisheries: Progress Through Management



**As new scientific information becomes available on a specific fishery**, there needs to be a conduit to ensure the data are incorporated into the fishery management process. This is done through the Archipelagic Plan Team (APT), which is comprised of scientists and managers from the NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and Pacific Islands Regional Office, state and territorial agencies, and other select advisory groups.

The APT monitors the performance of the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plans through production of an annual report that provides information on the status of archipelagic fisheries and other components of the ecosystem, which in turn informs the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report. The APT also recommends conservation and management adjustments to the Council to better achieve management objectives. The APT typically meets annually in April or May, with intersessional meetings held if pressing issues arise. Each APT member provides insight on fishery data and management issues from the myriad of archipelagic fisheries in the region.

The APT met in April 2023 to discuss updates to the annual SAFE reports.

Various action items were also addressed including the refinement

of uku essential fish habitat (EFH) in the main Hawaiian Islands, establishment of status determination criteria and annual catch limits (ACL) for Kona crab, ACLs for CNMI bottomfish, and revisions to the American Samoa bottomfish management unit species list.

This busy meeting resulted in the APT developing eight recommendations and 20 work items to advance towards completion of the action items. Much of this work is done through subgroups and committees of subject matter experts. Behind the scenes, these subgroups work diligently to prepare options papers, draft amendments and other documents that support the Council's mission of ensuring sustainable and climate-resilient fisheries for years to come. Notably, the APT recommended the uku EFH working group develop an additional option to refine this parameter by using novel research on presence/absence and abundance of uku around the main Hawaiian Islands. The proposed option combines the alternatives presented in April with fishery-independent catch per unit effort data. The APT endorsed this recommendation as it adds necessary context to the proposed maps where known "hotspots" for uku were not being captured in the model due to being outside the model-defined depth ranges.

The APT also made recommendations to the Council to set ACLs for Kona crab and CNMI bottomfish. These recommendations built upon previous work the APT conducted when stock assessment information was made available in 2019. Since there is no new information and the last assessment represents the best scientific information available, the APT recommended status quo ACLs for these stocks.

## What's Next?

At the June meeting in American Samoa, the Council will hear the APT meeting outcomes as well as input from the SSC and other advisory groups. The Council will then select preferred options and alternatives and direct staff to develop amendments that will adjust future management measures. Council staff has the ability to reengage with APT subgroups for guidance to develop any required actions to meet the needs of the Council. 🐟

## For more information, visit:

**Council Advisory Groups**  
[www.wpcouncil.org/about-us/advisory-groups](http://www.wpcouncil.org/about-us/advisory-groups)

**Council Fishery Ecosystem Plans**  
[www.wpcouncil.org/fishery-ecosystem-plans-amendments](http://www.wpcouncil.org/fishery-ecosystem-plans-amendments)

Gray Snapper (Uku)

