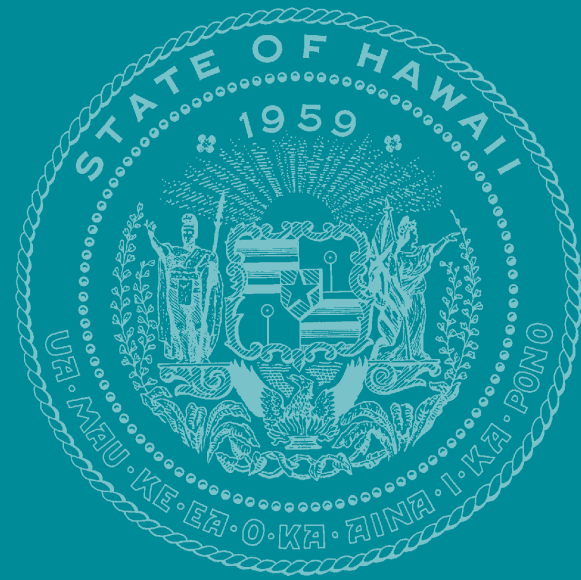




Photo: Ed Watamura



State of Hawai'i Solicits Input on New Fishing Licenses



In March and April 2023, Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) asked for input from fishing charter owners and operators on the new nonresident recreational marine fishing license (NRMFL) and proposed commercial marine vessel license (CMVL) implementation.



On June 8, 2021, Governor David Ige signed Act 48 into law, establishing a NRMFL requirement for visitors to Hawai'i who wish to fish from the shoreline or a boat in Hawaiian waters. DAR will administer the new program and implement rules for the license.

The NRMFL was created because Hawai'i residents pay taxes that support state fisheries management programs, but nonresident recreational fishers benefit from enjoying the state's marine fishery resources without directly contributing to the management of those resources. The fees collected from the NRMFL will be deposited into DAR's Sport Fish Special Fund, which can be used to access federal funds through the federal Sport Fish Restoration Program. DAR has a number of continuing sport fish restoration projects, including fish aggregating devices, artificial reefs, fish stocking and others which benefit recreational fishers. The State estimates 50,000 licenses will be sold annually, resulting in more than \$1 million in revenue.

The fees are \$20 for a one-day license, \$40 for a seven-day license and \$70 for an annual license. Active military and their spouses and minor children (18

and younger) are exempt. DAR is proposing to create an online system where the public can purchase the NRMFL. This could be done at the dock prior to departure or in the days leading up to a fishing trip.

DAR is also considering implementing a commercial marine vessel license (CMVL) that would allow multiple individuals to be covered under a single license attached to a particular vessel. This would mean that crew working on a charter vessel with an assigned CMVL will no longer be required to have individual commercial marine licenses (CMLs) in accordance with HRS § 189-2. The proposed fees for the CMVL are \$300 for non-longline CMVL and \$1,500 for longline CMVL.

The fishing charter fleet is expected to be a major access point for boat-based nonresident fishing opportunities, as well as a primary adopter of the non-longline CMVL.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is planning to engage the community on non-commercial data and small-boat fishery issues in Fall 2023. This will provide the fishing community with an opportunity to participate in the management of small-boat fisheries in Hawai'i by determining issues and developing management solutions. Stay tuned to www.wpscouncil.org for more details on these meetings. 🐟