

# New Licensing System for American Samoa-Based Purse Seine Fleet



*U.S. purse seine vessel in Pago Pago Harbor, American Samoa.*

**On April 6, 2023**, the Honorable Governor of American Samoa Lemanu Mauga signed House Bill 38-8 into law that requires purse seiners operating in territorial waters have a valid fishing license issued by the government, effective June 15, 2023.

The Department of Port Administration and the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources have identified a strong need to establish a local licensing system for U.S.-flagged purse seiner vessels that will aid the territory in seeking full Small Islands Developing State/Participating Territories benefits within the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. The American Samoa economy is highly dependent on the tuna industry and sustaining this sector is of critical importance. The development of this local licensing system enables the U.S. purse seiner fleet that supplies the StarKist Samoa cannery to be recognized as an American Samoa-based fleet, and to establish a record of locally based purse seiner vessels that regularly land tuna in the territory. 🐟



*American Samoa longliner (left) and purse seiners. Photo: D. Hamm*

