

Dates and Times

Committee Meetings

The following Standing Committees of the Council will meet on February 11, 2003. Enforcement/Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.; Fishery Rights of Indigenous People from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.; International Fisheries/Pelagics from 9 a.m. to 12 noon; Bottomfish from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.; Ecosystem and Habitat from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.; and Executive/Budget and Program from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

In addition, the Council will hear recommendations from its Scientific and Statistical committee (SSC), and other ad hoc groups. Public comment periods will be provided throughout the agenda. The order in which agenda items are addressed may change. The Council will meet as late as necessary to complete scheduled business.

Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 12, 2003, on the issuance of Community Development Program (CDP) Mau Zone bottomfish permits; at 11 a.m. on Thursday, February 13, 2003, on line clippers/bolt cutters, turtle mitigation, southern area closure, seabird mitigation, and longline setting chute; and at 2 p.m. on Thursday, February 13, 2002, on managing Guam's offshore bottomfish fishery. The order in which agenda items are addressed may change. The Council will meet as late as necessary to complete scheduled business.

The agenda during the full Council meeting will include the items listed here:

Wednesday, February 12, 2003

1. Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of 115th and 116th meeting minutes
4. Island reports
 - A. American Samoa
 - B. Guam
 - C. Hawaii
 - D. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)
5. Federal fishery agency and organization reports
 - A. Department of Commerce
 - (1) NMFS
 - (a) Southwest Region, Pacific Island Area Office (PIAO)
 - (b) Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla and Honolulu Laboratories
 - (2) NOAA General Counsel, Southwest Region
 - (3) National Ocean Service (NOS), National Marine Sanctuaries
 - (4) NOS, Pacific Services Center

- B. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
 - C. U.S. State Department
 6. Enforcement and VMS
 - A. U.S. Coast Guard activities
 - B. NMFS activities
 - C. Enforcement activities of local agencies
 - D. Status of violations
 - E. Report on safety workshop
 7. Observer and monitoring programs
 - A. NMFS, PIAO
 - (1) American Samoa longline fishery
 - (2) Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) bottomfish fishery
 - (3) Hawaii longline fishery
 - B. Native Observer Program
 8. Crustaceans fisheries
 - A. Report on CNMI crustacean fisheries
 9. Ecosystems and Habitats
 - A. CNMI reef fish commercial catch data
 - B. Report on U.S. Coral Reef Task Force
 - C. Marianas coral reef survey
 - D. Report on marine protected areas working group
 10. Fishery rights of indigenous people
 - A. Review Hawaii marine conservation plan
 - B. Report on Community demonstration projects program
 - (1) Report on first solicitation
 - (2) Report on second solicitation
 - C. CDP, Mau Zone bottomfish permits
 - D. Public hearing on issuance process for Mau Zone bottomfish permits
- The Council will consider alternatives to take initial action on a process for issuing NWHI Mau Zone bottomfish CDP permits. Three alternatives to be considered for selecting participants for the program include a random selection process (lottery), a weighted point system, and evaluation criteria. Each alternative will be used in concert with the Western Pacific Community eligibility criteria as published in the **Federal Register** on April 16, 2002 (67 FR 18512). The Council's preferred alternative adopted by the Council will be incorporated into the existing draft framework amendment "Measure to Establish Eligibility Criteria for New Entry into the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Mau Zone Limited Access System". A revised framework regulatory amendment, incorporating a CDP permit issuance process, will be presented to the Council for final action at a subsequent Council meeting in 2003.

Thursday, February 13, 2002

11. Pelagic Fisheries
 - A. Quarterly 2002 Hawaii and American Samoa longline reports
 - B. American Samoa limited entry program

- C. Recreational fisheries
 - (1) CNMI recreational fisheries
 - (2) RECFISH 2003
 - D. Bycatch conservation and management
 - (1) Honolulu lab mitigation turtle research
 - (2) Southern longline closure
- On June 12, 2002, a final rule was published that implemented the reasonable and prudent alternative (RPA) of a Biological Opinion issued by NMFS on March 29, 2001. The Biological Opinion concluded that the actions of the Hawaii-based longline fleet were likely to jeopardize the continued existence of Pacific populations of green, loggerhead and leatherback turtles. One of the measures included in the reasonable and prudent alternatives for the fishery to operate without jeopardy was a closure of southern fishing grounds below 15° N. lat. during the months of April and May. The April and May closure denied access to the Hawaii-based longline fleet to grounds at a time when tuna were seasonally abundant. While some form of seasonal area closure may need to remain in effect, there may be options for a more limited closure that would have the same turtle conservation effects as the current large-scale closure, but be less onerous for the Hawaii-based longline fleet. The Council will consider alternatives for modifying the seasonal area closure and may take preliminary action at this meeting. Public comment will be solicited from the public prior to the Council's decision.

(3) Line clippers/bolt cutters

On November 15, 2002, NMFS issued a new Biological Opinion for the operation of pelagic fisheries in the Western Pacific Region and interactions with turtle and marine mammal species protected under the Endangered Species Act. The 2002 Biological Opinion does not contain any new requirements for pelagic fishing vessels, however it does appear to remove requirements for non-longline vessels to carry line clippers and bolt cutters, as well as adjusting handling requirements for longline vessel operators that encounter sea turtles. A range of options are available to the Council in response to the change in requirements that has resulted from the issuance of this new Biological Opinion. These include maintaining the current non-longline vessel requirements for line clippers, bolt cutters, and sea turtle handling procedures for longline vessels; or adjusting the non-longline requirements for line clippers and bolt cutters, and the sea turtle handling procedures for longline boats. At the 116th Council meeting, the Council took preliminary