

Hawaii Coral Reef Fishery Management Workshop Workshop Recommendations

The focus of the workshop was refining Hawaii's Coral Reef Fisheries Management Local Action Strategy. Workshop's participants were provided a copy of the draft Local Action Strategy and viewed a presentation about the Local Action Strategy development. The bulk of the workshop centered on current fishery management activities and hot topics including marine managed areas, species of special concern and invasive species. Resource managers and scientist provided background information via presentations followed by question and answer periods. Following these presentation sessions, participants broke into two groups to discuss topics related to fishery management and research efforts. These breakout sessions provided a forum for workshop participants to make recommendations for refining the draft Coral Reef Fishery Management Local Action Strategy.

Hawaii's Coral Reef Management Local Action Strategy Overview

Lead agencies for developing Hawaii's action strategy on coral reef fishery management include: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) and Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR). Initial steps in this process included developing a steering committee and holding local meetings to establish communication with interested parties and solicit input from the coral reef fishery stakeholders. The steering committee developed a number of objectives to guide development of the Local Action Strategy and held a series of local meeting throughout the Main Hawaiian Islands to gather information and ideas from local stakeholders.

By utilizing information from the local meetings and from steering committee meetings, DAR and NOAA PIRO were able to draft the initial iteration of Hawaii's Coral Reef Management Local Action Strategy. The goal of this Local Action Strategy is to work towards the development of an integrated fishery management plan to promote sustainable harvest using an ecosystem based approach. There are nine main objectives: 1.) Effective enforcement of current fishery regulations; 2.) Improve data acquisition, compilation, and rectification; 3.) Assessment of the effectiveness of current fishery monitoring regime; 4.) Assess the current status of key fish species utilizing comprehensive stock assessment methods; 5.) Develop ecosystem approaches and conduct pertinent research activities to assess overall ecosystem impacts; 6.) Improve communication and dissemination of information to stakeholders and decision makers; 7.) Assess socioeconomic and cultural impacts; 8.) Assess current and future management measures and adapt as data suggests; and 9.) Establish infrastructure for overall program implementation and coordination.

Recommendations

Improving Data Collection

The discussions that took place during this breakout session focused on three of the objectives of the draft Local Action Strategy. These objectives were: 2) Improve data acquisition, compilation, and rectification; 3) Assessment of the effectiveness of current fishery monitoring regime; and 7) Asses socioeconomic and cultural impacts.

Objective 2: Improve Data Acquisition, Compilation, and Rectification

Recommendations:

- “Recreational fisherman” needs to be defined. The distinction is not always clear between recreational and commercial fisherman. It is common for recreational fishermen (including divers) to sell their catch in Hawaii, which is illegal. – There needs more enforcement to stop illegal sales of fish from recreational fishers.
- Data needs to be collected for all the fisher groups – the State needs to collect data on the recreational and subsistence fishing.
- Incentives should be developed to entice both commercial fishermen and recreational fishermen to report catches. For example, the State could: educate fishermen and key stakeholders about the importance of reporting (the resource belongs to everyone; fishing is a privilege not a right), making reporting easier, or fine fishermen for not reporting.
- In terms of the aquarium fishery, data acquisition needs to also happen at the export end to verify catch reports.

Objective 3: Assessment of the Effectiveness of Current Fishery Monitoring Regime

Recommendations:

- DAR needs the authority to collect information, enforcement of current regulations should be improved, and more resources need to be allocated to the collection of information.
- Should be collecting more fishery independent data.

Objective 7: Asses Socioeconomic and Cultural Impacts

Recommendations:

- Need to educate fishermen and other stakeholders on the importance of the resource and why regulations/management is needed. Ultimate outcome is for fishermen to take responsibility and stewardship for the resources and to build effective collaboration among all stakeholders.
- Develop regional fishery management councils – community-based management.

Research Needs and Management Recommendations for Species of Special Concern

The discussions that took place during this breakout session focused on three of the objectives of the draft Local Action Strategy. These objectives were: 4) Effective enforcement of current fishery regulations; 2.) Improve data acquisition, compilation, and

rectification; and 5) Develop ecosystem approaches and conduct pertinent research activities to assess overall ecosystem impacts.

Recommendations:

- The projects listed under Objective 5 need to be a part of the work being conducted under Objective 4. This allows room for projects under Objective 5 to really develop an ecosystem approach.
- Need to combine fishery research/management with effort to understand/assess land-based sources of pollution and coastal development to get the whole picture.
- Should change wording in Objective 4 from “fish species” to “fishery species” or “resource species”

Enforcement, Community Outreach, and Stakeholder Involvement

The discussions that took place during this breakout session focused on three of the objectives of the draft Local Action Strategy. These objectives were: 1) Effective enforcement of current fishery regulations; and 6) Improve communication and dissemination of information to stakeholders and decision makers.

Objective 1: Effective Enforcement of Current Fishery Regulations

Recommendations:

- Develop community-based programs to assist with enforcement efforts – community watch programs – provide training to community members like the programs on the Big Island where enforcement officers teach community members how to recognize and document violations. Fishermen need to enforce the laws – peer pressure.
- Develop significant penalties and consequences as well as adequate enforcement. DAR needs to involve DOCARE earlier in the process when developing rules to ensure enforceability.
- Need to have deterrence. Right now fines are small and judges tend not to give sentences when violation is a natural resource issue; need to communicate the importance of natural resources to judges and prosecutors.

Objective 6: Improve Communication and Dissemination of Information to Stakeholders and Decision Makers.

Recommendations:

- Identify stakeholders before developing communication plans and be creative, use multiple messages and vehicles to get point across, and maximize use of media.
- Create a continuum of information –lead end users through the implications of research studies – do not throw material at people.

- Consider developing material in multiple languages to reflect all user groups.
- Need to incorporate land-based sources of pollution into information about fishery management activities. Show how the two activities are related.
- Encourage community-based management.

Assessing Current Management Initiatives and Developing Recommendations for Improvement

The discussions that took place during this breakout session focused on three of the objectives of the draft Local Action Strategy. These objectives were: 7) Assess socioeconomic and cultural impacts; and 8) Assess current and future management measures and adapt as data suggests.

Recommendations:

- Need to independently evaluate the entire range of current management objectives and to make recommendations (on what?).
- Need to improve enforcement and levy meaningful fines by creating civil penalties.
- Marine Managed Areas/Marine Protected Areas -- Involve the community in the design and ensure that all related issues (land-based pollution, recreational use, etc.) are address to maintain ecosystem integrity.
- Community-based management needs to be encouraged – support local resource councils (community-based watershed councils) and develop community watch programs.