

**NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS CORAL REEF
ECOSYSTEM RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

April 25, 2005

Ms. T. Aulani Wilhelm
Acting Reserve Coordinator, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands
Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve
6600 Kalanianaʻole Highway
Honolulu, Hawaii 96825

Dear Aulani:

At the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council ("RAC") meeting on January 26-27, 2005, Mr. Kevin Busscher gave an excellent presentation on the National Marine Fisheries Service bottomfish fishery observer program. Mr. Busscher noted that these observers record protected species sighting data as part of their assigned duties.


The RAC discussed the importance of these data as the National Marine Sanctuaries Program pursues development of an environmental impact statement for the designation of the proposed Northwestern Hawaiian Islands National Marine Sanctuary. The RAC concluded that such observational data would help delineate the distribution of protected species within areas of concern in the proposed Sanctuary.

At the conclusion of its January 2005 meeting, the RAC voted to request from the Regional Administrator a summary of these data from the current and past observer programs for this fishery. For all species for which observer reporting is required, the RAC requests the following data: species sighted, date, location, number of individuals, circumstances of the encounter (e.g., fishing, transiting, at anchor, etc.), and any other information on the individuals seen that may have been noted (e.g., size, age, sex, condition, tag or bleach numbers, etc.).

In addition, if similar data are available in the logbooks of individual bottomfishers and these notations can be summarized so their confidentiality is not compromised, we request these data as well.

We ask that you forward this request to Bill Robinson, Pacific Islands Regional Administrator. Thank you for your assistance in gathering these data.

Very truly yours,


Timothy E. Johns