

The mission of the PIFSC is to conduct timely, high quality research to support the stewardship of fisheries resources, protected species, and ecosystems in the central and western Pacific Ocean.

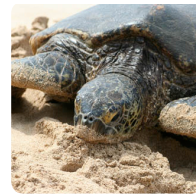


Research Focus

PIFSC research currently focuses on several areas of high priority:

- Monitoring and reducing fishery interactions with protected species
- Monitoring the status of Hawaiian monk seals and finding ways to increase their survival rates and population sustainability
- Monitoring the status of Hawaiian green turtles and other marine turtle populations in the Pacific Islands Region
- Assessing cetacean populations and the impacts of human activity on them
- Mitigating fisheries bycatch, particularly in multi-national pelagic longline fisheries
- Providing scientific advice in support of international and domestic management of fisheries for highly migratory species (HMS)—including tunas, billfishes, and sharks
- Assessing lobster populations in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and bottomfish populations in the Hawaiian Archipelago

- Assessing stocks of tunas, billfishes, and other pelagic fishes in the central and western Pacific
- Researching the use of barbless hooks by recreational fishers to reduce post-release fish mortality and risks of injury to protected species



- Expanding the understanding of socioeconomic and cultural aspects of living marine resource use and appreciation throughout the Pacific Islands Region
- Identifying and understanding the effects of ecosystem linkages and environmental processes on fish stocks, protected species, and other marine life and developing the scientific basis for ecosystem oriented management
- Assessing the physical and biological structure, dynamics, and health of coral reef ecosystems
- Monitoring and removing derelict fishing gear and other marine debris from reefs and nearshore waters of the Hawaiian Archipelago

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NOAA Fisheries Service PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER



As the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, we are carrying on a legacy of research in fisheries science, oceanography, and protected species recovery established by our predecessor of 50 years, the Honolulu Laboratory. Yet, as a new Science Center, we are stretching to meet new challenges of the 21st Century.

Fall 2006



Function and Mission

The Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) is one of six Science Centers in NOAA Fisheries. It was established in 2003 with the creation of the new Pacific Islands Region (PIR) within NOAA Fisheries and is headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The Center's research covers a wide range of scientific issues and topics requiring expertise in many disciplines. Our principal areas of research include coral reef ecosystems; ecosystems analysis and oceanography; fish biology and stock assessment; fisheries bycatch monitoring and mitigation; fisheries monitoring and socioeconomics; and protected species population monitoring and recovery.

NOAA's Ecosystem Mission Goal:
"To protect, restore, and manage the use of coastal and ocean resources through an ecosystem approach to management."

In providing the science to support an ecosystems approach to the conservation, management and recovery of living marine resources, the PIFSC has adopted a comprehensive, multidisciplinary strategy. The strategy involves integrated marine resource and environmental monitoring and data collection, including an extensive ecosystem observation system, and scientific research programs with activities focused on:

- near-shore and pelagic fisheries,
- coral reef species and habitats,
- marine mammals and sea turtles, and
- marine ecosystems and oceanography.



Science Center Organization

Scientific programs of the PIFSC are planned and carried out by five research divisions:

- Coral Reef Ecosystem Division (CRED)
- Ecosystems and Oceanography Division (EOD)
- Fishery Biology and Stock Assessment Division (FBSAD)
- Fisheries Monitoring and Socioeconomics Division (FMSD)
- Protected Species Division (PSD)

Although each research division focuses on different aspects of the PIFSC mission, many projects involve a significant degree of inter-divisional cooperation and scientific collaboration.



History

PIFSC has a long and illustrious history. The initial staff and facilities of PIFSC derived from the former Honolulu Laboratory, until 2003 a component of the NOAA Fisheries Southwest Fisheries Science Center in California. Before NOAA's establishment in 1970, the Honolulu Laboratory was part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, originating in 1948 as the Pacific Oceanic Fishery Investigations (POFI). In almost six decades of scientific studies, PIFSC staff and their predecessors have:

- engaged in fishery resource exploration,
- fisheries development,
- fisheries biology and ecology,
- protected species recovery research and conservation, and
- oceanographic research

throughout the Pacific and as far away as the Indian Ocean.



Geographic Area of Responsibility

Bounded by the Hawaiian Archipelago in the north, American Samoa and U. S. Pacific remote island areas in the south, and the Marianas Archipelago in the west, the Pacific Islands Region encompasses the largest geographical area

within NOAA Fisheries' jurisdiction. The U. S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) within the Region includes more than 1.7 million square nautical miles of ocean, roughly equal to the total EEZ of the continental U. S. and Alaska.

Budget and Staffing

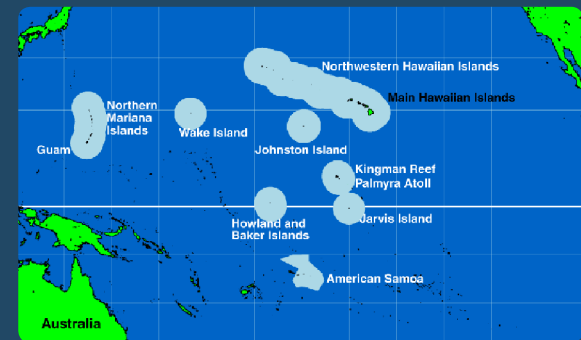
In fiscal year (FY) 2006, the PIFSC budget was \$22.8M and supported a staff of more than 175 researchers, technical personnel, and administrative employees. About 50% of PIFSC staff are federal employees and the rest include employees of the University of Hawaii (UH), Joint Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research (JIMAR), and Aquatic Farms. Several UH students are also employed at the Center or are engaged in research here.



Facilities and Vessels

The main PIFSC office facility is located on the University of Hawaii at Manoa campus. A smaller research and office facility at Kewalo Basin, on the Honolulu waterfront, has a seawater system enabling research on live, large pelagic fishes, monk seals, and sea turtles. Another research facility, with offices and a wet laboratory supporting fish biology work, is leased in Aiea.

The NOAA Ship *Oscar Elton Sette*, homeported in Honolulu, is the primary research vessel supporting the Science Center's extensive field activities. Center staff also conduct benthic habitat mapping and other research aboard the NOAA Ship *Hi'ialakai* in partnership with NOAA's National Ocean Service (NOS).



PIFSC's geographic area of responsibility