

BOTTOMFISH NEWS



MHI Bottomfish Updates:

SSC Meeting:

The 99th Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Meeting took place on October 8-10, 2008. An updated Hawaiian Archipelago Bottomfish stock assessment was presented by a Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) biologist. The SSC decided on a TAC recommendation of 254,000 pounds to be presented to WESPAC council based on past catch data. PIFSC scientists believe that a TAC of 249,000 would have a 50% risk of overfishing of Deep 7 bottomfish in the MHI.

Fisher's Forum:

During the 143rd Council meeting there was a public fisher's forum to discuss the MHI bottomfish fishery. Fishermen from both Oahu and neighbor islands attended the meeting. PIFSC scientists presented the new stock assessment and a possible TAC. Fishermen voiced their concerns about using both restricted fishing areas and a closed season as a management tool and multijurisdictional management of the fishery. They also emphasized that there needs to be more communication between the fishers and managers.

TAC for 2008-2009 Bottomfish Season:

On Thursday October 16, 2008 the Council recommended a proposed TAC of 241,000 pounds.

ATTENTION: COMMERCIAL BOTTOMFISH FISHERS AND DEALERS, A REQUEST FOR YOUR KOKUA.

Dear Commercial Fishers and Fish Dealers:

At the 143rd meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council (WESPAC), of which the State is a voting member, the Council recommended a TAC of 241,000 pounds for the main Hawaiian Islands commercial bottomfish fishery during the upcoming fishing period, which begins on November 15, 2008 and extends to August 31, 2009. Fishing for Deep 7 bottomfish will be allowed until the TAC is attained, or the end of the fishing period, whichever comes first. Although NMFS recently determined that the entire archipelagic bottomfish stock is no longer in a state of overfishing, their analysis indicates that the main Hawaiian Islands portion of the fishery continues to experience overfishing. As a result, State and Federal managers have concurred that there is still a basis for exercising caution in regard to management of the main Hawaiian Islands stock. Beginning in 2007, the fishery has been managed via a total allowable catch (TAC) that is set on an annual basis. A new fishing year will then begin on September 1, 2009. The TAC for the new fishing year will be set by the Council at its meeting in July 2009.

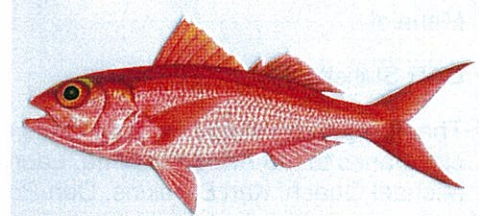
When the bottomfish fishery re-opens this year on November 15, 2008, state waters around the main Hawaiian Islands will be open to bottomfish fishing **EXCEPT** those waters within the **12 bottomfish restricted fishing areas (BRFAs)**. The 12 BRFAs remain unchanged, with the same coordinates and locations as in the previous two years. Additionally, the State's non-commercial bag limit for bottomfish also remains the same: 5 onaga or 5 ehu, or a combination of onaga and ehu not to exceed 5 fish in total.

Commercial fishers and marine dealers are reminded to submit your commercial catch and dealer reports on time. **All reports are due by the 10th day of the following month.** If you are able to submit your reports sooner, your kokua would be greatly appreciated. This will enable NMFS and DLNR-DAR to monitor the cumulative increase of bottomfish harvests towards the TAC more efficiently, and closer to a real-time basis. To facilitate report submission, fishers may fax their reports to the Statistical Unit in Honolulu at (808) 587-0115.

All non-commercial bottomfish fishers who fish in Federal waters are required to obtain a Federal non-commercial bottomfishing permit. For more information call the Pacific Islands Regional Office or email PIRO-permits@noaa.gov.

Commercial fishers and dealers, please contact the DAR Statistical Staff at (808) 587-0594 if you have any questions or require report forms.

Yours truly,
DAN POLHEMUS
Administrator



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Dear Commercial Bottomfish fishers and dealers-

Please let us know what kind of information you would like to see in future newsletters. We welcome your feedback! **WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN FUTURE NEWSLETTERS? PLEASE CALL statistical staff member, Jessica Phelps, (808) 587-0594 or e-mail jessica.phelps@hawaii.gov.** Any feedback about the newsletter, positive or negative, is greatly appreciated!

Mahalo!

DAR Statistical Unit

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