

# HAWAII Bottomfish

Informational Brochure



► **What if I accidentally catch one of the prohibited Deep 7 bottomfish while I am fishing for other species?**

You must release the prohibited species back into the water immediately, regardless of its condition. Bottomfish that come up showing signs of barotrauma—bloating, bulging eyes, stomach protruding through mouth and/or popped scales—should be treated and/or released in a manner that quickly returns them to higher pressure depths. This can be done through venting and/or weighted release.

**(1)** Venting the fish's swim bladder before returning to the water allows gases to escape. Puncture the swim bladder using a 1/8 inch hollow tube with one side sharpened or a syringe needle.



*Demonstration of venting an onaga using hollow tube.*



Photos courtesy of Pacific Islands Fisheries Group (PIFG).

**(2)** Weighted release of the fish using a release weight. A barbless hook attached to a release line is mounted to a 5-lb lead weight and the fish is lowered, head first to approximately 25 fathoms and released. If the stomach protrudes from the fishes' mouth, use a dowel to push the stomach back into the stomach cavity prior to using the drop weight.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service)**  
808.944.2200

**Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council**  
808.522.8220

**Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources**  
808.587.0100



- Reasons for seasonal closure
- Information on new regulations and how to comply with them
- Availability of bottomfish during the closure
- Information on releasing bottomfish
- Next steps, including how to get involved and who to contact

For more information on release techniques, contact PIFG at 808.265.4962 or visit [www.fishtoday.org](http://www.fishtoday.org).

# FAQs

## DEEP 7 BOTTOMFISH

Opakapaka  
(Pink Snapper)



Onaga  
(Scarlet, Red or  
Longtail Snapper)



Hapuupuu  
(Hawaiian Grouper,  
Sea Bass)



Ehu  
(Squirrelfish Snapper)



Kalekale  
(Von Siebold's Snapper)



Gindai  
(Flower or  
Brigham's Snapper)



Lehi  
(Ironjaw or  
Silverjaw Snapper)



### ► What are the regulations for the 2007 seasonal closure?

The new regulations prohibit fishing for the seven deepwater bottomfish species (Deep 7) in the main Hawaiian islands (MHI) from May 15 through September 30, 2007. During the closure, fishing for, and possession of Deep 7 bottomfish is prohibited in waters 0 to 200 nautical miles around the MHI. Only fish legally caught in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) fishery or legally imported into Hawaii may be sold.

### ► What is the scientific basis for closing the fishery?

NOAA Fisheries Service determined through existing data that overfishing is occurring for the Hawaii archipelago bottomfish multispecies complex, with the primary cause being excessive fishing effort in the MHI. This means that the amount of fishing for bottomfish currently occurring in the MHI is not sustainable in the long term. Federal law requires that fisheries managers take action to address overfishing. NOAA Fisheries' scientists determined that fishing-related mortality of MHI bottomfish must be reduced by 24 percent from 2004 levels.

### ► Who must abide by these regulations?

The closure applies to both commercial and non-commercial (e.g., recreational and subsistence) fishermen who fish for the Deep 7. The regulations also directly affect seafood dealers/marketers/restaurants that purchase or sell Deep 7 bottomfish species.

### ► Who is enforcing the closed season?

These rules will be cooperatively enforced by the State of Hawaii's Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement, NOAA's Office for Law Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard.

### ► Can I sell or purchase a bottomfish during the closed season?

It is legal to sell Deep 7 bottomfish caught during the closed season if you can document that the fish was 1) caught in the MHI prior to May 15, 2007; 2) caught legally in the NWHI; or 3) imported.

### ► Will there be any local Hawaii bottomfish available during the closed season?

Yes. The NWHI bottomfish fishery is healthy and managed under a Federal limited-entry program and catch quotas. NWHI bottomfish can still be caught, sold and consumed; doing so will help support the local seafood industry. Existing seafood dealer reporting will enable tracking of NWHI bottomfish from their point of origin.

### ► How can I tell if a bottomfish is local?

Recent federal law requires that fish sold in the United States include a "country of origin" label. These labels allow consumers to make informed choices.

### ► What is being done to improve our understanding of the bottomfish stock?

The 2007 bottomfish closure in the MHI is an interim management measure to address overfishing while a more long-term management program can be developed. Key to this long-term management regime will be additional data from fishermen, both commercial and non-commercial. Efforts that don't involve collecting information from fishermen, like additional habitat mapping, are also being planned. Finally, tagging projects, like the current one being undertaken by Pacific Islands Fisheries Group (PIFG), will help managers learn more about bottomfish movements within and between banks.

### ► Is the State of Hawaii still planning for its area closures when the season opens?

Yes, the State of Hawaii has 12 bottomfish restricted fishing areas (BRFAs) around the MHI which will remain closed after the summer closure. Coordinates of the BRFAs can be accessed at [www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dar/bottomfishing.htm](http://www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dar/bottomfishing.htm).

### ► What potential long-term management measures are being considered?

Management measures under consideration include a total allowable catch (TAC), refined reporting requirements for commercial fishermen, a licensing program and modified reporting program for seafood dealers, and a permit and reporting program for non-commercial fishermen.

### ► How can I become involved in deciding future regulations?

Your input is critical to ensuring that the management regime for bottomfish is successful. There will be opportunities to comment as proposed regulations are being considered and developed. Public meetings and comment periods will be announced in newspapers and/or the Federal Register. For more information, visit [www.hawaiibottomfish.info](http://www.hawaiibottomfish.info).