

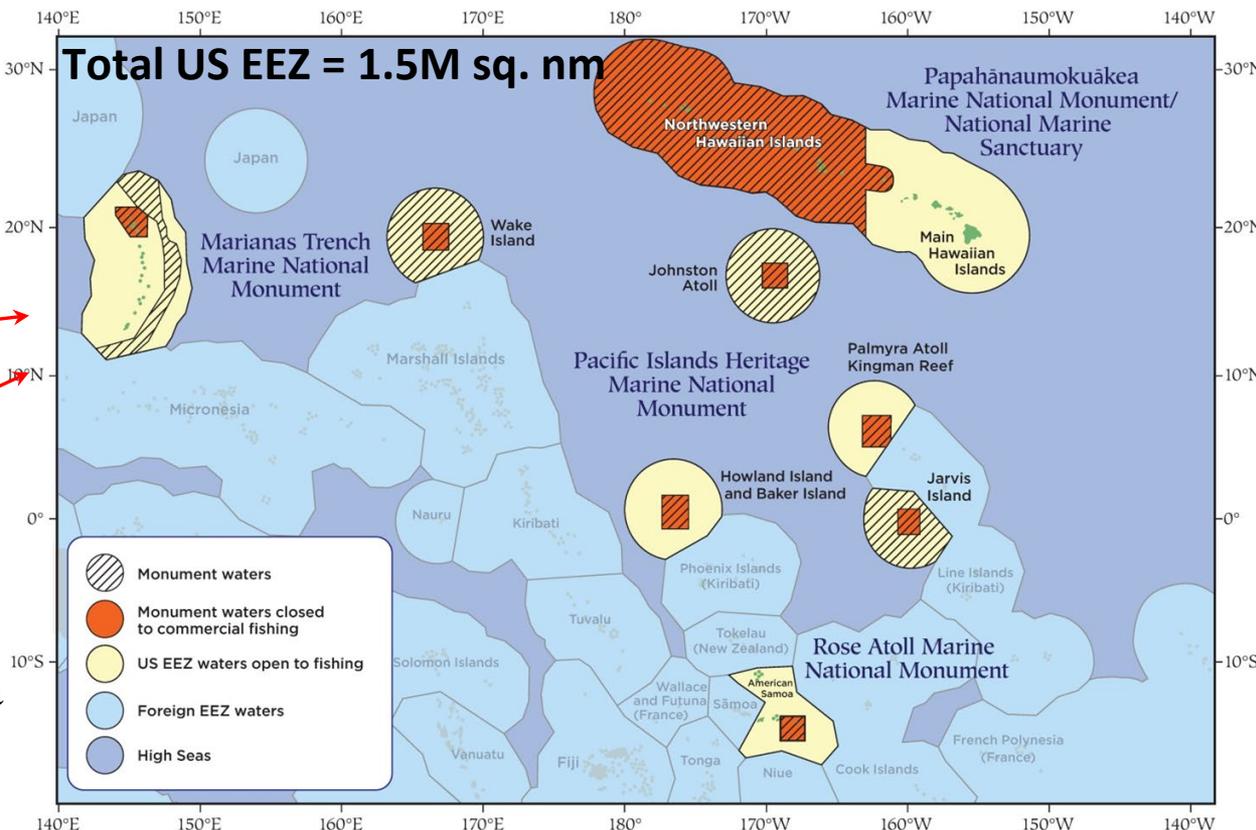


# PSMFC Annual Meeting Research Priorities Panel

Kitty Simonds, Executive Director  
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council  
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Boise, Idaho



# United States Exclusive Economic Zones of the US Western Pacific Region



Hawaii  
Pop. 1.446 million

CNMI  
Pop. 44,278

Guam  
Pop. 167,677

American Samoa  
Pop. 46,765

Diverse demographics: predominantly Pacific Islander, Indigenous, and Asian American  
→ Importance of community engagement and local food security

# Key Fisheries

- Pelagic longline fisheries
  - Hawaii: deepset bigeye tuna and shallow swordfish fleets
  - American Samoa: albacore
- Pelagic troll and handline fisheries
  - All island areas 'small boat' pelagic fisheries
- Hook-and-line fisheries
  - Bottomfish complexes and snappers (i.e., uku)
  - All island areas
- Other: Kona crab, deepwater shrimp, precious corals
- ACLs developed using P\* and SEEM analyses

Regional Standing in Top US Ports, 2023; in Million Dollars and Million Pounds

	Value (National Rank)	Volume (National Rank)
Honolulu, HI	\$112.9 (#6)	16.7 (#25)
Pago Pago, AS	\$97.2 (#7)	118.4 (#8)



# Key Policy and Management Issues

- Other applicable laws circumventing MSA Council process
  - MMPA /ESA
  - Executive Orders/Proclamations
- Fishery Performance and Human Communities
- Implementation of Electronic Technologies



# Overview of Current Top Research Gaps



(c) Daniel L. Webster/Cascadia Research

- Depredation mitigation
- Improved pelagic false killer whale assessments
- Evaluation of large closed areas
- Non-commercial and commercial data reliability



# Depredation Mitigation

- Shark depredation escalating across all fisheries and needs to be NMFS priority
- 20%-50% of small boat fishing trips include shark depredation
- SHARKED Act = National Problem
- Research has focused on species ID and prevalence
- Research Needs:
  - Develop mitigation measures that are cost-effective, practical and work



# Improve False Killer Whale Assessment



- False killer whale interactions in Hawaii longline fishery a major management issue are interactions, limited data
- Management govern by MMPA precautionary principle and associated NMFS policies & guidance
- Research Needs:
  - Improve assessments on high seas with a focus of delineating full stock range based on robust biological data
  - Develop tagging and other innovative approaches to improve species-specific postrelease mortality estimate



# Evaluating Large Spatial Closures

- MSA authority circumvented by other Acts
- Presidential Proclamation April 17, 2025 opening areas of Pacific Islands Heritage MNM to commercial fishing
- Executive Order 14276 Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness
  - Address barriers, which include Marine National Monuments; Papahānaumokuākea, Rose Atoll, Mariana Trench
- Research Needs:
  - Monuments and Sanctuaries need to be evaluated with respect to the intent of the Proclamation(s)
    - Impacts to target and nontarget species
    - Social and economic impacts



# Commercial and NonCommercial Data



- Pacific Islands data systems not built for MSA Requirements like ACLs
- Lack of understanding noncommercial fishing communities in Hawaii and Territorial small boat fisheries
- Program changes for data limited approaches
- Research Needs:
  - Need longterm socioeconomic monitoring programs
  - Current monitoring infrequent (~5 years)
  - Determine the proportion of commercial and non commercial catch and effort



# Other WP Region Research Need

- Ecosystem Status Reports
- Basic Monitoring
  - Costearnings surveys with more frequency
- Cooperative Research Program
  - ex: using fishing vessels to survey islands simultaneously for FKW vs. white ships
  - Expand CRP bottomfish surveys in the territories



# Mahalo, Fa'afetai, Si Yu'os Ma'āse



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