



**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**RIN 0648-XF780**

**Pacific Island Fisheries; Western Pacific Stock Assessment Review; Public Meeting**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS and the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a Western Pacific Stock Assessment Review (WPSAR) of a 2017 Benchmark Stock Assessment for the Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) Deep 7 Bottomfish Complex.

**DATES:** See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for meeting dates and times and daily agenda.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the NMFS Honolulu Service Center at Pier 38, 1129 N. Nimitz Hwy., Suite 220, Honolulu, HI 96817.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Michael Seki, Director - Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, telephone: (808) 725-5360, or [michael.seki@noaa.gov](mailto:michael.seki@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Scientists from the NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) conducted a benchmark stock assessment of the MHI Deep 7 bottomfish complex. This benchmark assessment incorporated new data in the form of fishery-independent biomass estimates, and also followed data filtering recommendations from a series of five community workshops that involved fishermen, managers, and scientists on best practices for filtering bottomfish commercial catch and effort data from State of Hawaii commercial catch reports. Because of these workshops, PIFSC scientists are now able to better link individual fishermen's catch reports further back in time, and this linking is newly applied in this benchmark stock assessment.

This assessment used commercial data for the years 1948-2015, and assessed Deep 7 bottomfish by building on the modeling framework from the previous three assessments, but with improved data and data filtering as previously described, along with improvements to catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) standardization, and other modeling approaches. The assessment also estimates unreported catches using catch and effort data following methods similar to those applied in previous assessments. After applying best practices from the workshop recommendations for filtering for CPUE

calculation, PIFSC scientists applied model selection techniques to select the best structural form to standardize CPUE. CPUE in the model was split into two time series, fishing years 1948-2003, and fishing years 2003-2015) to accommodate new effort reporting from a change in reporting form by the State in October 2002.

**Meeting Agenda for WPSAR Review**

The meeting schedule and agenda are as follows (8:30 am - 5 pm every day):

*Monday, November 13, 2017*

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Background information - Objectives and Terms of Reference
3. Fishery
  - a. Operation
  - b. Management
4. History of stock assessments and reviews
5. Data
  - a. State of Hawaii Fisher and Dealer Reporting Systems
  - b. Life history information
  - c. Fishery-independent survey

*Tuesday, November 14, 2017*

6. Presentation and review of stock assessment

*Wednesday, November 15, 2017*

7. Continue review of stock assessment

*Thursday, November 16, 2017*

8. Continue review of stock assessment
9. Public comment period
10. Panel discussions (Closed to the public)

*Friday, November 17, 2017*

11. Continue panel discussions (Closed; morning)
12. Present results (afternoon)
13. Adjourn

The agenda order may change. The meeting will run as late as necessary to complete scheduled business.

**Special Accommodations**

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Please direct requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids to Michael Seki, Director - Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, (808)

725-5360 (phone) (808) 725-5360 (fax), at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: October 24, 2017.

**Emily H. Menashes,**

*Acting Director,*

*Office of Sustainable Fisheries,*

*National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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