



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XF563]

Western Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold its 159th Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Program Planning Standing Committee (SC), Executive and Budget SC, and 206th Council meeting to take actions on fishery management issues in the Western Pacific Region.

DATES: The meetings will be held between March 17 and March 26, 2026. For specific times and agendas, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**. Written public comments on final action items at the 206th Council meeting should be received at the Council office by 5 p.m. HST, Thursday, March 19, 2026, see **ADDRESSES**.

ADDRESSES: The 159th SSC, Program Planning SC, Executive and Budget SC and 206th Council meetings will be held as a hybrid meeting for members and the public, with a remote participation option available via Webex. In-person attendance for the 159th SSC, Program Planning SC, and Executive and Budget SC meetings will be hosted at the Council office, 1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813. In-person attendance for the 206th Council meeting will be hosted at the Ala Moana Hotel, Hibiscus Ballroom, 410 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu, HI 96814.

Specific information on joining the meetings and connecting to the web conference will be posted on the Council website at <https://www.wpcouncil.org>. For assistance with the web conference connection, contact the Council office at (808) 522-8220.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director, Western Pacific Fishery Management Council; phone: (808) 522-8220.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The 159th SSC meeting will be held between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time (HST) on March 17, 2026, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. HST on March 18, 2026, and between 8:30 a.m. and 12 p.m. HST on March 19, 2026. The Program Planning SC meeting will be held between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. HST on March 23, 2026. The Executive and Budget SC meeting will be held between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. HST on March 23, 2026. The 206th Council meeting will be held between 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. HST on March 24, 2026, between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. HST on March 25, 2026, and between 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. HST on March 26, 2026. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items will be held between 4:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. HST on March 24, 2026.

Background documents for the 206th Council meeting will be available at <https://www.wpcouncil.org>. Written public comments on final action items at the 206th Council meeting should be received at the Council office by 5 p.m. HST, Thursday, March 19, 2026, and should be sent to Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director; Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813, phone: (808) 522-8220 or fax: (808) 522-8226; or email: info@wpcouncil.org. Written public comments on all other agenda items may be submitted for the record by email throughout the duration of the meeting. Instructions for providing oral public comments during the meeting will be posted on the Council website.

Agenda items noted as “Final Action” refer to actions that may result in Council transmittal of a proposed fishery management plan, proposed plan amendment, or proposed regulations to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, under Sections 304 or 305 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). In addition to the agenda items listed here, the Council and its advisory bodies will hear

recommendations from Council advisors. An opportunity to submit public comment will be provided throughout the agendas. The order in which agenda items are addressed may change and will be announced in advance at the Council meeting. The meetings will run as late as necessary to complete scheduled business.

This meeting will be recorded (audio only) for the purposes of generating the minutes of the meeting. As public comments will be made publicly available, participants and public commenters are urged not to provide personally identifiable information (PII) at this meeting. Participation in the meeting by web conference, or by telephone, constitutes consent to the audio recording.

Agenda for the 159th SSC Meeting

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. HST

1. Introductions
2. Approval of Draft Agenda and Assignment of Rapporteurs
3. Status of the 158th SSC Meeting Recommendations
4. Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center Director's Report
5. Island Fisheries
 - A. American Samoa Bottomfish Management Unit Species (BMUS) Stock Assessment Update Western Pacific Stock Assessment Review (WPSAR) Terms of Reference Review
 - B. Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) Kona Crab Acceptable Biological Catch for 2027-2030 (Action Item)
 - C. Marine Recreational Information Program Update
 - D. Guam Territory Fishery Management Plan
 - E. Public Comment
 - F. SSC Discussion and Recommendations
6. Program Planning and Research

A. Commercial Fishing in the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument

(Action Item)

B. Council Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Project Updates

B.1. Scenario Planning for the American Samoa and Hawaii Longline Fisheries

B.2. Regulatory Review Status Report

C. Shark Depredation Workshop Report

D. Alignment of Science and Management Priorities

E. SSC Special Projects

E.1. Summary and status of 2025 Special Projects Working Groups

E.2. Review of Special Projects List for 2026

F. MSA Research Priorities Update

F.1. Southwest Fisheries Science Center Research Activities Report

F.2. Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center Update on Research Plans and Progress
on Addressing Council's Research Priorities

F.3. SSC Discussion on MSA Research Priorities Update

G. Public Comment

H. SSC Discussion and Recommendations

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. HST

7. Protected Species

A. SSC Special Projects Protected Species Working Group Report

B. MHI Insular False Killer Whales Abundance Estimates

C. Deep-set Longline (DSL) Endangered Species Act (ESA) Reconsultation for
Oceanic Whitetip Shark and Leatherback Turtles

D. IRA Protected Species Workshop Report

E. HICast: Dynamic Fishing and Bycatch Avoidance Tool

F. Public Comment

- G. SSC Discussion and Recommendations
- 8. Pelagic & International Fisheries
 - A. Electronic Monitoring Updates
 - A.1. Review of the Revised Vessel Monitoring Plan (VMP)
 - A.2. SSC Electronic Monitoring Special Projects Working Group Review of the VMP
 - B. Secondary Pelagic Species
 - B.1. Mahimahi Catch Patterns Across Hawaii Fisheries
 - B.2. Secondary Pelagic Species Assessment and Indicators Project
 - C. Public Comment
 - D. SSC Discussion and Recommendations

Thursday, March 19, 2026, 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. HST

- 9. Other Business
 - A. SSC Meeting Schedule and Potential Working Groups
- 10. Summary of SSC Recommendations to the Council

Agenda for the Program Planning SC Meeting

Monday, March 23, 2026, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. HST

- 1. Introduction and Approval of Agenda
- 2. Report on Implementing the Seafood Executive Order (EO) Recommendations
- 3. Alignment of Science and Management Priorities
- 4. Update on IRA Projects
 - A. Report on Shark Depredation Workshop
 - B. Update on Regulatory Review
 - C. Report on Protected Species Workshop
 - D. Update on Community Consultations
- 5. Advisory Body Recommendations
- 6. Other Business

7. Public Comment
8. Discussion and Recommendations

Agenda for the Executive and Budget SC Meeting

Monday, March 23, 2026, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. HST

1. Introduction and Approval of Agenda
2. Financial Reports
3. Administrative Reports
4. Council Family Changes
5. Meetings and Workshops
6. Other Business
7. Public Comment
8. Discussion and Recommendations

Agenda for the 206th Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. HST

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approval of the 206th Agenda
3. Approval of the 205th CM Meeting Minutes
4. Executive Directors Report
5. Agency Reports
 - A. National Marine Fisheries Service
 - A.1. Pacific Islands Regional Office
 - A.2. Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
 - B. NOAA Office of General Counsel Pacific Islands Section
 - C. US Coast Guard
 - D. Enforcement
 - D.1. NOAA Office of Law Enforcement

- D.2. NOAA Office of General Counsel Enforcement Section
- E. US State Department
- F. US Fish and Wildlife Service
- G. Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
- H. Public Comment
- I. Council Discussion and Action
- 6. Hawaii Archipelago and Pacific Remote Island Area (PRIA)
 - A. Moku Pepa
 - B. Division of Aquatic Resources Report
 - C. MHI Kona Crab Annual Catch Limit (ACL) Specification for 2027-2030 (Initial Action)
 - D. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - D.1. Advisory Panel (AP)
 - D.2. Fishing Industry Advisory Committee (FIAC)
 - D.3. Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)
 - E. Public Comment
 - F. Council Discussion and Action
- 7. Program Planning and Research
 - A. Marine National Monuments (MNM)
 - A.1. PMNM Status
 - A.2. Recommendations on Commercial Fishing in the PIHMNM (Final Action)
 - A.3. Recommendations to Restore Commercial Fishing in the RAMNM, MTMNM, and PMNM (Final Action)
 - A.4. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations on MNM
 - A.4.a. AP
 - A.4.b. FIAC

A.4.c. SSC

A.5. Public Comments on MNM

Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 4:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. HST

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. HST

7. Program Planning and Research Continued
- B. Report on Implementing the Seafood EO Recommendations
- C. Aligning Science and Management Priorities
- D. IRA Project Updates
 - D.1. Regulatory Review Status Report
 - D.2. Report on Year 2 of Community Consultations
- E. Report on Shark Depredation Workshop
- F. Council Education and Outreach Report
- G. Social, Economic, Ecological and Management (SEEM) Process Review Report
by the Social Science Planning Committee (SSPC)
- H. Pacific Remote Island Area (PRIA) Marine Conservation Plan (Final Action)
- I. WPSAR Steering Committee Report
- J. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - J.1. AP
 - J.2. FIAC
 - J.3. SSPC
 - J.4. SSC
- K. Program Planning SC Report
- L. Public Comment
- M. Council Discussion and Action
8. American Samoa Archipelago

- A. Motu Lipoti
 - B. Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) Report
 - C. American Samoa Data Collection
 - C.1. Modifications to Boat-based Fishery Data Collection
 - C.2. DMWR Participation Point System
 - D. Terms of Reference for American Samoa Bottomfish Stock assessment
 - E. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - E.1. AP
 - E.2. FIAC
 - E.3. SSC
 - F. Public Comment
 - G. Council Discussion and Action
 - 9. Pelagics and International
 - A. Review of Electronic Monitoring VMP
 - B. NMFS Reports on Pelagic and International Fisheries
 - B.1. Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Workshop
- Planning
- B.2. South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO) Updates
 - B.3. Report from Southwest Fisheries Science Center
 - C. IRA Longline Scenario Planning Report
 - D. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - D.1. AP
 - D.2. FIAC
 - D.3. SSC
 - E. Public Comment
 - F. Council Discussion and Action

Thursday, March 26, 2026, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. HST

10. Protected Species
 - A. MHI Insular False Killer Whale Abundance Estimates
 - B. DSLL ESA Reconsultation for Oceanic Whitetip Shark and Leatherback Turtles
 - C. IRA Protected Species Workshop Report
 - D. Sustainable Use of Sea Turtles Workshop Report
 - E. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - E.1 AP
 - E.2 FIAC
 - E.3 SSC
 - F. Public Comment
 - G. Council Discussion and Action
11. Mariana Archipelago
 - A. Guam
 - A.1. Isla Informe
 - A.2. Department of Agriculture/Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources Report
 - A.3. Guam Marine Conservation Plan (Final Action)
 - B. CNMI
 - B.1. Arongol Falú
 - B.2. Department of Lands and Natural Resources/Division of Fish and Wildlife Report
 - B.3. Offshore Mining
 - B.4. CNMI Marine Conservation Plan (Final Action)
 - C. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - C.1. AP
 - C.2. FIAC
 - C.3. SSC

- D. Public Comment
- E. Council Discussion and Action
- 12. Administrative Matters
 - A. Financial Reports
 - B. Administrative Reports
 - C. Council Family Changes
 - D. Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
 - E. Meetings and Workshops
 - F. Executive and Budget Standing Committee Report
 - G. Public Comment
 - H. Council Discussion and Action
- 13. Other Business

Non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before the Council for discussion during its 206th meeting. However, Council final decisions will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document and any regulatory issue arising after publication of this document that requires emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations:

These meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kitty M. Simonds, (808) 522-8220 (voice) or (808) 522-8226 (fax), at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: March 3, 2026.

Rey Israel Marquez,

Acting Deputy Director,

Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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