

### **East Hawai'i Herbivore Scoping Meetings**

November 12, 2020, 5:30pm – 7:30pm via Zoom : 13 attendees

December 10, 2020, 5:30pm – 7:30pm via Zoom: 16 attendees

**Purpose of Meeting:** Statewide meetings were held to listen, learn, and collect input from various stakeholders about how best to manage key herbivorous species throughout Hawai'i. DAR presented concerns for climate change-induced threats to our coral reefs, such as warming ocean temperatures causing catastrophic coral bleaching events, and the key roles that healthy populations of herbivores contribute to reef resilience and recovery.

### **General Comments:**

Sparked by the discussion on surgeonfish, there was support for local subsistence fishing to feed families and neighbors, but participants shared it is hard to enforce without DOCARE having cooler inspection authority and with a lack of officers. Most participants agree that there should be more enforcement in regards to taking urchins as well as surgeonfish, but that public education and accountability should be of high focus. Some felt education to increase compliance was more important than increased enforcement. There was support for a ban on aquarium fishing, scuba spearfishing, and night spearfishing. Participants noted massive diving areas at Hamakua, South Kona, Kapoho have no life present (no fish, coral, algae, etc.).

### **Urchins:**

Wana and hā'uke'uke are most prized by communities. Communities will harvest long-spine wana in Keaukaha and Puhi bay and have seen a decrease in the hā'uke'uke urchin in North Kohala. Harvest typically occurs in August – October, when the urchins are full of eggs. It was shared that replenishment efforts should be taken and that urchin breeding and outplanting, similar to O'ahu, could be put in place on Hawai'i Island. Participants suggested limits on urchins be measured in volume of wana, not the individuals.

### **Nenu:**

Participants felt that nenu populations vary, but acknowledged their importance for controlling algae. They are heavily fished along South Point and the southeast portions of Hawai'i Island. It was expressed that rough ocean conditions benefit the populations and prevent them from being overharvested, but that there should be a size limit for the fish and management should be placed in common access areas. Participants emphasized a need for public education and enforcement in many common access areas.

### **Surgeonfish**

For surgeonfish, many of the participants supported bag limits, but some opposed them statewide due to the needs of different local families and communities. Yellow tangs and reef has noticeably declined (most likely due to aquarium trade). For kole, they suggested no take for aquarium purposes but keeping their bag limit to 20 due to size differentials and seasonal changes.



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**Uhu:**

Participants suggested banning night spearfishing on uhu and adopting Maui regulations, placing restrictions on uhu to prevent the take of males. They recommended a gear restriction on commercial take of the species, a quota due to its low population, and an adjusted slot limit of a minimum of 14" but the maximum be much larger.

Public feedback above was compiled and summarized by DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources. DAR will be considering the input from these meetings in the next steps of our process.