

### **Kaua'i Fishers Herbivore Scoping Event**

March 11, 2021, 5:30pm –approx. 11:00pm via Zoom: ~ 90 attendees

**Purpose of Meeting:** Targeted meetings were held with a key stakeholder group of fishers, and their close networks to receive feedback about the presentation materials representing herbivore species data, scientific justification for management, and potential rule options. The feedback received at this meeting is intended to help DAR improve messaging, better communicate the herbivore management effort, and facilitate effective discussions at the next round of scoping to a wider range of stakeholders.

### **General Comments:**

Many participants spoke about the need to address land-based threats to marine resources such as land-based sources of pollution, injection wells, septic systems, contaminated rivers and streams, and development causing erosion and runoff. They suggested the state expand collaborations to other land-based agencies, the City and County, the planning office, and other players to address these issues. Other threats such as tourism, invasive species, and sunscreen were also emphasized as examples of nearshore impacts that are unrelated to fishing and need regulation. Therefore, participants felt that it was unfair to regulate fishers and that by implementing management strategies affecting them the most, they are being blamed for the state of our reefs.

Participants expressed distrust with DAR and concerns that the science and data presented was inaccurate or misinterpreted to promote herbivore management. They are wary of data from environmental groups that may be biased towards conservation perspectives and wanted to see more data on decline of corals, given that ecological shifts also happen naturally. Fishers voiced a need for more local or species-specific studies and suggested biologists speak to more fishers to improve accuracy of data sets. In addition, they suggested bridging cultural and modern science by talking to kupuna.

The group shared a common sentiment that place-based science should not be used to justify statewide efforts, and that place-based rules would be a better option. They suggested that rules have a sunset clause and that areas are opened back up to balance out any closed areas. They shared how previous management strategies by the state have been unsuccessful, such as the BRFA's, and opposed closed areas. Participants emphasized a need for adaptive management, where rules should be less restrictive or closed areas opened back up if conditions improve. Restoration efforts were suggested, such as revitalizing fishponds or managing the native and invasive limu simultaneously.

Participants voiced how fishers already know how to sustainably harvest their marine resources and questioned why protections are being sought after for fish that are currently abundant. Some participants opposed all bag limits for restricting the gathering rights of Hawaiians and their ability to put food on the table. The group mentioned residents of Ni'ihau, who rely on the resources for survival.

A few opposed all bag limits, but were open to size restrictions. Some recommended that regulations be seasonal and not per individual per day. A few participants opposed night regulations because they single out a specific type of fisher, but a ban on nighttime spearfishing was also proposed. Some agreed that netting should be further restricted.

There were requests to clarify the purpose, intention, and messaging for this meeting and the broader herbivore management effort. Participants shared concerns with funding sources of Holomua: Marine 30x30, such as nonprofits and environmental groups, who could be being biased towards conservation. It was suggested that future slides be in 'ōlelo Hawai'i and English.

Turtles were also mentioned as herbivores needing protection, but there was no other fish to be added.

#### **Urchins:**

Participants opposed a bag limit for wana and emphasized that a bag limit of 5 would be too small since most are only taking one species, wana haula, and bringing them back for kupuna. A seasonal regulation was suggested, such as 30 wana for every 3 months, to account for how people do not eat wana every day, but will collect it occasionally as part of their heritage, tradition, and lifestyle. Setting a yearly take was also proposed. Some suggested the bag limit be increased to 25-50 per person. However, it was also brought up that 5 wana per person per day could work due to multiple people typically being in the water and participating in different parts of the gathering practice.

#### **Nenue:**

Most participants opposed regulations for nenue and suggested waiting until more local studies are done with stocks of nenue still being abundant. Some opposed a bag limit, while some supported an 8 inch size minimum. It was said that it wasn't worth it to just take 5 nenue at a time.

#### **Surgeonfish:**

Participants opposed the manini size minimum for being too large. They questioned why regulations are being made for kole when populations are currently sustainable. They opposed having any bag limits on kole, sharing that kole is frequently needed in large quantities for parties, funerals, and other cultural events and a bag limit would not allow fishers to provide for these types of gatherings. 60 kole per person per day was proposed for an alternative bag limit. It was suggested that kole bag limits be set depending on the size of the family. There was some back and forth about whether black kole can be found on Kaua'i, but it was said that a bag limit of 2 would be hard for throw netters when there's a school. A few supported size limits over bag limits for umaumalei, while some felt that bag limits were unnecessary due to a lack of decline in the fish stocks. Some opposed a maximum size and bag limit for kala, but there was support for a 12 inch size minimum. Participants had a difference in opinion about kala fish stocks, with some having observed no decrease, while others see less kala now than before. There was both support and opposition for pāku'iku'i regulations.



**Uhu:**

Uhu was an exception to most oppositional feedback, with support for a bag limit of 2 for the large bodied species and support for night regulations on the fish. It was agreed upon that there is a decline in uhu populations. However, some felt that 10 inch size minimums for the small-bodied species were too large and suggested an 8 inch size minimum instead. Despite support, there was a request to allow shooting on large-bodied blue uhu and a proposed increase in the bag limit to 5.

Targeted stakeholder 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.