

Maui Fishers Herbivore Scoping Event

March 4, 2021, 5:30pm –7:30pm via Zoom: 7 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:

Participants requested land-based impacts on the nearshore be addressed and enforced, such as erosion and runoff, tourism, and sunscreen use. Within the presentation, they suggested adding a breakdown of other natural resource violations and investigations by DOCARE, in addition to the DAR-related ones shown. Participants did not think the HIMARC graphics reflected negative impacts accurately because it is hard to compare different data types, such as catch reports to erosion. They also recommended the graphs be separated by what negatively affects recruitment and what negatively affects adult herbivores. They pointed out how areas shown to exhibit low fish biomass could have multiple factors influencing the decline, such as lack of a reef structure to hold fish, runoff, or tourism. It was expressed that future messaging needs to be improved to communicate how the herbivore management effort is in response to climate change and coral bleaching, not declines in fish populations.

Some participants opposed all bag limits for restricting native gathering rights and subsistence fishing when land-based impacts are causing more damage. They vocalized that locals should be making their own rules for their places, emphasizing that they already self regulate and sustainably harvest around natural regulations like wave action. However, other participants supported bag limits to address take by fishers that do not exhibit pono behavior. A participant shared background from the previous rule-making effort for the Maui rules and how it was pushed forward by fishers who recognized the need for fishing regulations in addition to addressing land-based impacts. However, other participants did not agree with the process and felt other fishers should have been more involved.

With any new rules, participants requested they be kept simple and easy to remember for optimal compliance. It was said throughout the presentation that there were too many minimum sizes to remember. Participants opposed a ban on night diving or scuba spearfishing. They recommended a license requirement to fish. They suggested not creating regulations for additional fish such as pualu, naenae, and palani, to prevent overregulation.

Urchins:

Participants opposed a bag limit of 5 for wana.

Nenuë:

Participants opposed the size minimum for being too small, given that they typically take at 8 lbs. With a bag limit of 5, participants did not think a size minimum was necessary.

Surgeonfish:

Participants requested to keep the manini size minimum at 5 inches because Maui communities are already aware of the regulation and participants felt 6 inches is too big. There was a wide variety of opinions, with support for a bag limit of 20 manini, opposition to any bag limit on manini, and a proposal to have a larger manini bag limit for commercial fishing or 'ohana sharing. Opinions about kole regulations were also diverse, with support for a 20 kole bag limit, opposition for a kole minimum size, support for a "hand size" kole minimum size, and opposition for any kole bag limit. Participants thought that rules on black kole would be over-regulation. They acknowledged that pāku'iku'I populations are decimated and suggested making a no-take rule on the fish for commercial, aquarium, or spearing, or alternatively, to not regulate and allow the species to continue declining. Participants opposed a minimum size for umaumalei, but supported a bag limit of 2 due to frequent take for commercial markets and aquarium purposes. Participants opposed a slot limit for kala.

Uhu:

Participants suggested to eliminate the no-take rule on blue uhu for large bodied species. They supported a bag limit of 2 for the large-bodied species, but opposed the minimum size for the small-bodied. In addition, they proposed a ban on nightdiving for uhu.

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.