

## **O'ahu Fishers Herbivore Scoping Event**

March 9, 2021, 5:30pm – approximately 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:**

Participants opposed regulations and had concerns with the data used to justify the presented rules. They expressed a need for DAR to incorporate fishers perspectives since they are out there every day, monitoring the reef, and living off the resource. Participants speculated that the data did not accurately represent nearshore resources and was adjusted to justify regulations. They expressed that the monitoring map was misleading. They recommended increased data collection and statewide studies because place-based science may not apply to statewide management - what works in one area may not work in another. For example, West Hawai'i data should only support a rule in West Hawai'i. Participants requested to be updated about CBSFA and place-based management efforts more regularly and that community-based management efforts be supported.

Participants emphasized that many other factors besides fishing affect the ocean, including land-based threats such as development, watersheds, water diversions, and tourism, and suggested management focus be shifted to alternative impacts. Participants shared that fishers (commercial and subsistence) have been historically blamed for declines, when they are typically fishing sustainably, taking only what they need, and managing the resource on their own; hence why there are still many fish. It was mentioned that DLNR targets commercial fishers, while commercial fishers are the only ones who can put food on the shelves in markets for the public that cannot fish. Generally, there is longwithstanding distrust between fishers and DAR from previous rulemaking efforts where management was not successful.

Participants believe herbivore regulations will target and restrict cultural practice. For instance, feeding kūpuna or providing kole for large cultural gatherings. They are concerned it would remove generational practices and the passing down of traditional and resource knowledge, in addition to hurting local fishing communities and taking away livelihoods. It was suggested that bag limits be made in accordance to number of people in each family. With this effort, participants voiced a need to balance management of valued native limu with harmful invasive limu.

Participants had additional recommendations to adjust regulations. They mentioned that if more species are limited, other species (turtle) or areas should be opened back up to fishing. They opposed slot limits because it is difficult for spearfishers to catch and release if the fish doesn't fall into the right size limits. Participants suggested fishing for recreational and commercial purposes have different bag limits. It was

also suggested that DAR create an annual bag limit list for each fisher per week. Few participants requested rules be implemented for more fish while others did not think other fish were targeted enough for rulemaking. For compliance, it was suggested that rules have a consistent unit of measure. Few expressed opposition for a ban on nightdiving.

Participants agreed that more regulation and enforcement is needed on new and existing rules. However, increased funding for enforcement was both supported and opposed. They questioned funding sources possibly being from biased conservation organizations. Participants think DAR makes management decisions based on social conflicts and are wary of the negative impacts that can be caused by regulations made without proper science. There was shared concern about the Holomua: Marine 30x30 plan.

#### **Urchins:**

Participants opposed wana regulations. They voiced that a bag limit of 5 wana would not be enough. A larger bag limit of 15 wana was proposed.

#### **Nenu:**

Participants opposed nenu regulations and requested that more data be collected about the species before creating rules. They expressed that many are still seen on the reef and a bag limit would eliminate commercial fishing for the species.

#### **Surgeonfish:**

Participants observe abundant populations of kole and manini and opposed bag limits of 20 for being too low. An alternative bag limit of 50 was proposed for kole. Participants opposed the bag limit of 2 for black kole and thought the data justifying the rule was not adequate. Some participants opposed pāku'iku'i regulations, but some proposed an increased bag limit to 10 per person per day. Participants differed in their observation of kala, some observing declines while some observing plentiful populations. There was opposition to kala bag limits as well as support for kala regulations with adaptive planning and a suggestion to implement a permit for harvesting large kala for cultural purposes.

#### **Uhu:**

Participants opposed the size minimums of uhu due to some not growing past 12 inches and smaller ones tasting better. Participants agreed that a ban on blue uhu would be reasonable because typically the red uhus taste better. Some participants opposed any uhu bag limit or opposed the bag limit of 2, while some supported uhu regulations, stating that they are an improvement from previously proposed rules. A bag limit of 5 was suggested in addition to a bag limit of 5 only applying to recreational divers.

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.