

**Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)  
Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR)**

**Herbivore Scoping Meeting Notes**

December 11, 2021, 9:00-11:00 am via Zoom: 20 attendees

**Purpose of Meeting**

Statewide meetings were held to listen and collect public input on proposed changes to the Statewide Herbivore Management Strategy, which included amendments to existing regulations and new proposed regulations. DAR addressed the degradation of our nearshore coastal areas and reefs, and emphasized the importance of abundant herbivore populations for both the people of Hawai'i and the health of coral reefs. The proposed amendments to herbivorous fish species included kala (Bluespine unicornfish, *Naso unicornis*), several species of uhu (parrotfish), kole (Goldring surgeonfish, *Ctenochaetus strigosus*), and manini (Convict tang, *Acanthurus triostegus*).

**General Comments**

Concerns were raised about whether slot limits for the larger species might be more effective as opposed to just minimum size limits, as larger adults have more reproductive output and can remove larger quantities of algae from reefs. Participants asked about how they can actively help maintain reefs, such as physically removing invasive limu (algae), as the majority agreed that community involvement and support will be critical for the protection and conservation of our reefs and fish populations. General questions included why seasonal or rotational closures were not proposed, how these new regulations would be enforced, and what were the factors causing reef degradation and lower fish populations here in Hawai'i (please refer to the [FAQ](#) for responses to these questions). Several supported the prohibition of aquarium collecting and felt that subsistence fishers should be prioritized over aquarium/commercial fishers, while some argued that the minimum size limits proposed for manini and kole would essentially shut down aquarium fishing because consumer demand for smaller fishes (under the size limit) drives aquarium collection. There were also suggestions to ban SCUBA spearfishing, prohibit the commercial sale of all reef fish, and to increase engagement with local markets that sell nearshore reef fish.

## Kala

DAR proposed a minimum harvest size limit of 15 inches and a bag limit of 2. The size limit proposed is an increase from the current minimum size limit of 14 inches.

Participants asked questions relating to the life history characteristics of kala, including their maximum sizes, how long it takes to reach maturity, growth rates, spawning seasons, and reproductive output differences at different sizes. Some supported slot limits (a combination of minimum and maximum size limits) for kala, and there were also comments suggesting that place-based rules might be more appropriate than statewide regulations. One participant from Maui stated that kala populations are really low there, and that it is only commonly observed at 'Āhihi Kīna'u Natural Area Reserve.

## Uhu

DAR proposed to align statewide regulations with the current Maui regulations for uhu. This includes increasing the minimum harvest size limit for large-bodied species from 12 inches to 14 inches (please refer to the table below for a species list) and a ban on the take of blue large-bodied uhu. A decrease in the minimum harvest size limit for small-bodied uhu from 12 inches (current statewide minimum) to 10 inches was also proposed, and a bag limit of 2 which would apply to all species combined.

Comments on uhu included whether a no take rule of blue uhu would be permanent or if it would be lifted when populations become sustainable, and whether research has shown any success or changes in uhu populations on Maui as a result of their unique rules. Participants also expressed that social media seems to have taken on an influential role on promoting the overfishing of uhu, due to fishers posting photos and boasting their catch.

	Hawaiian Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
Large-bodied uhu	Uhu 'ele'ele (male) or pālupaluka (female)	Redlip parrotfish	<i>Scarus rubroviolaceus</i>
	Uhu uliuli (male) or 'ahu'ula (female)	Spectacled parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus perspicillatus</i>
Small-bodied uhu	Pōnūhūnūhū	Star-eye parrotfish	<i>Calotomus carolinus</i>
	Uhu	Yellowbar parrotfish	<i>Calotomus zonarchus</i>
	Uhu	Bullethead parrotfish	<i>Chlorurus spilurus</i>
	Lauia	Regal parrotfish	<i>Scarus dubius</i>
	Uhu	Palenose parrotfish	<i>Scarus psittacus</i>

### **Manini**

DAR proposed raising the minimum harvest size limit from 5 inches to 6 inches, based on updated life history information on the size at maturity. DAR is not currently proposing a statewide bag limit for this species; this will be reassessed once a stock assessment is completed.

Proposed regulations for manini were questioned and most were hesitant to support because there is currently insufficient data and no stock assessments available for manini. While there was little comment on the proposed minimum size limit amendment for manini, there was a suggestion for a bag limit of 20-25.

### **Kole**

DAR proposed a minimum harvest size limit of 5 inches for kole. DAR is not currently proposing a statewide bag limit; this will be reassessed once a stock assessment is completed.

Questions raised for kole included why there was a difference between the minimum size proposed and the size at sexual maturity, whether slot limits might be more effective since the larger adults are able to reproduce more, and why DAR is proposing new rules on a previously unregulated species. A comment was provided regarding how most people prefer the smaller-sized kole for consumption, and therefore a minimum size limit would affect those with that preference. There was also a suggestion to ban the taking of kole using SCUBA or hookah, and only allow take while free diving.

For more species specific information such as life history traits, spawning periods, and other details for kala, uhu, manini, and kole, please visit the Holomua Marine 30x30 [Importance of Herbivores](#) webpage.