

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

Herbivore Scoping Meeting Notes

December 15, 2021, 5:30-7:30 pm via Zoom: 90 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

Overall, those who provided comments were in support of bag limits rather than proposed increases in size limits. However, it was expressed that illegal fishers would not change and that these rules would hurt fishers that do follow the rules, which is not fair. Enforcement issues were brought up, and the need to create harsher punishments or consequences for illegal fishing was suggested. Participants expressed an interest to work collaboratively with DAR to more actively manage and protect our resources, and they wanted an increased focus towards sustainable practices. The need to increase outreach, specifically towards fishers and local markets, was identified as an opportunity. Comments included the possibility of allowing the harvest of turtles again, re-opening some of the Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas, and exploring the use of artificial reefs to create more habitats for fish. Concerns were also shared about the high populations of non-native fish such as ta'ape, roi, and to'au, commercial and aquarium fishing, and the need for DAR to improve announcements of public meetings. There was some confusion about what the Holomua: Marine 30x30 initiative is and the current status. There were also a variety of climate change and land-based pollution questions raised, which involved topics including coral bleaching, urban runoff, coastal development, and sewage input. The justification for these proposed new herbivore regulations and the scientific data available for support were also questioned; please refer to the [FAQ](#) for responses and more details. For more information on specific justifications and scientific data available for the proposed species, please review the [Sustainable Herbivore Management Plan](#).

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.

Suggestions given for kala included increasing the minimum size limit of kala (*Naso unicornis*) to match the current regulation for 'ōpelu kala (Sleek unicornfish, *Naso hexacanthus*), and to implement a slot limit in order to keep the larger kala in our oceans. There was also a suggestion to include umaumalei (Orangespine unicornfish, *Naso lituratus*) as part of the regulated species. Questions raised included how much of a difference an increase in one inch would really make on a reproductive scale, where the research suggesting a decrease in kala populations is coming from, and whether the proposed amendments would apply towards recreational and/or commercial fishers. Kala is one of the top species cited for undersized catch violations, and observations were shared that the majority of cases/violations occur at night. Some participants also shared that specific locations such as the north shore of islands still have healthy and sustainable populations of kala, due to high surf conditions preventing access, and some fishers stated that invasive fish species are eating juvenile kala.

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.

Banning the take of uhu at night was consistently brought up in all three scoping sessions, with emphasis that night diving should still be allowed for all other non-regulated species. Suggestions to prohibit the commercial sale of uhu in markets were discussed, and using weight in pounds rather than size in inches in the regulations was recommended, as fishers are generally more familiar with weight standards.

	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	Pōnuhunuhu	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.

Requests for further research were made, as currently there is no stock assessment for manini in Hawai'i. Questions included why DAR is proposing regulations on an abundant species (based on fisher observations), whether seasonal closures would work instead, the ability of amendments to be modified in the future, how throw net fishers would be affected, and what is the definition of a sustainable stock. Some participants expressed that catching manini is good practice for the keiki, and it is commonly used as a gateway in the beginning to learn how to spearfish and develop skills. A few supported bag limits instead of increasing the minimum size limit, and observations were shared regarding how low manini populations could possibly be due to food competition from turtles.

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.

There was opposition to the new minimum size limit proposed, and concerns for the impact to aquarium collectors were voiced. In general, there was support for bag limits on kole instead, with a recommended limit of 20-25.

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