

**Information Exchange Summary & Notes: September 24-26th, 2024**  
**Facilitation Team: Anuhea Arakawa, Teilana Akre, Angela LaRose, & Sabrina Tahauri**  
with Karey Kapoi LLC, a small, woman-owned consulting business with the  
mission to uplift & advocate for our community

*Summary and notes written by Karey Kapoi LLC*

## **East Maui Summary**

The community feedback highlighted the need for broader participation, particularly from local fishers and their families, as only one fisherman attended the meeting. This gap in representation makes it challenging to gather comprehensive input from those directly affected by fishing regulations. Although, rest assured, the folks may not have shown up because they are on board with the initiative or implementing regulations already that are specific to their moku. Concerns were raised regarding the export of Maui's fish to other islands by commercial fishers and buyers, which impacts local availability. Cultural pressures and the influence of social media were also seen as contributing to unsustainable fishing practices, often glorifying large catches.

A significant issue identified was the lack of education around sustainable fishing practices, particularly among parents, which has led to younger generations engaging in overfishing. Fishers have observed dwindling populations of specific fish species, underlining the urgency for better education. Additionally, the impact of overfishing is taking a toll on Maui's limited shorelines and ecosystems, which are struggling to sustain current fishing pressures.

The community called for collective action and support to help monitor fish populations, suggesting that legal experts could assist in addressing on-the-ground issues. However, enforcement of existing fishing regulations remains a challenge, with inadequate resources and insufficient legislative support hindering effective implementation. There is a strong need for legislators to be more involved in these discussions to ensure proper enforcement of sustainable fishing practices.

Empowering the community to manage natural resources was seen as crucial, with many emphasizing that without local involvement, the government would likely take over these responsibilities. To promote long-term sustainability, integrating education on sustainable fishing and conservation into school curricula was proposed, ensuring that future generations grow up with an understanding of how to preserve Maui's ecosystems.

## **West Maui Summary**

The community feedback raised several important points about fishing practices and management. There is no specific net soak time for ula/ula pāpapa (lobsters), but nets should not be left in the water overnight. Fishing is highly territorial, requiring permission before entering certain areas. Concerns were voiced over the proposed bag limit for 'opihi, as many divers gather for their families, making the limit seem overly restrictive. Additionally, ocean pollution from shoreline condominiums and hotels is affecting fish populations and limu, prompting suggestions for seasonal shoreline access restrictions.

## Maui Holomua Marine Initiative

The need for a realistic monitoring plan was emphasized, particularly in determining sustainable limits for ula/ula pāpapa (lobsters). Better research and management of the waters is essential, as expressed by commercial fishermen who noted that fishing is not solely responsible for the decline—it's a broader community issue. A representative of commercial fishers highlighted the importance of collaboration, particularly in degraded habitats like the south shore. The disconnection between watersheds and ahupua'a was identified as affecting fish biomass.

Other participants suggested regulating catches for fish species like ulua and pāpio, and proposing bag limits for nabeta, though it's challenging to regulate. Overfishing for bragging rights was criticized as leading to unnecessary waste. There were also comments on kala and nenu population, with recommendations to allow catches up to ten fish while adhering to state regulations. The decline in nenu habitat and its impact on communities reliant on fishers was noted, stressing the importance of balancing regulations with the needs of local families.

There was support for exploring grants or subsidies to assist both commercial and subsistence fishers, alongside increased monitoring efforts to ensure sustainability. A data-driven approach, with community members contributing information during their fishing trips, was suggested to improve oversight. Despite the challenges, participants felt the system was better than previous efforts and could lead to positive change. However, distrust remains an obstacle, as many fishers are reluctant to engage until regulations are in place. Nonetheless, attendees agreed that the meeting was valuable, recognizing that fishing and ecosystem health are pressing issues, and these limitations are meant to protect cultural and environmental heritage.

## Central Maui Summary

The community meeting highlighted a deep concern for the state of Maui's ocean resources, with discussions centering on declining fish populations, invasive species, and ineffective management practices. Participants stressed the noticeable reduction in fish and limu compared to previous years, which many attributed to issues with water rights and insufficient efforts to support fish reproduction. A recurring theme was the urgent need to introduce educational programs in schools, teaching younger generations about sustainable fishing practices and conservation efforts to ensure the future health of marine ecosystems.

A respected community member expressed gratitude for the Maui Navigation Team's efforts, but emphasized that local community needs must take precedence over commercial interests. He voiced concerns about outsiders entering local waters with different cultural practices and fishing methods that have already damaged the reefs, noting that a lack of monitoring and enforcement has allowed this exploitation to continue. Recent incidents of outsiders diving and damaging reefs during the night were discussed, underscoring the need for more effective regulation and community-based solutions. He also pointed out that local stores, such as Seafood City, might be sourcing fish from Maui's waters, further contributing to reef damage. He advocated for public participation in legislation that affects fishing regulations, believing that local voices need to be part of the decision-making process.

## Maui Holomua Marine Initiative

The impact of invasive species on the local ecosystem was also a key topic, with several participants noting that turtles are consuming the limited growth of limu, which families rely on for food. The discussion expanded into legislative obligations, as some participants called for stronger legal frameworks to address these issues. A proposal was made to create legislation or an act of Congress to restore access to water and fish resources for local communities, with a focus on addressing invasive species and the effects on the reef.

Fishermen highlighted the challenges they would face in providing for their families under proposed regulations. There was a strong sentiment that proposed bag limits, particularly for 'opihi and ula/ula pāpapa (lobster), are too restrictive, making it difficult for families to rely on these resources for sustenance. Some participants advocated for increasing the daily bag limit for 'opihi to 100 per person, arguing that the current regulations fail to consider the cultural and community-based nature of local fishing practices. Concerns were also raised about how regulations would be enforced, especially when people from other regions come to fish or collect 'opihi, suggesting that a community-based approach to sharing catches and teaching young people to fish should be prioritized over punitive measures. Frustration with the legal system was expressed, highlighting the disconnect between local practices and court regulations, especially when it comes to the preservation of cultural traditions.

There was also discussion about the need for better transparency and accountability from the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) in managing ocean resources. Several participants questioned whether DLNR was fulfilling its responsibilities in regulating fishing activities and whether current enforcement efforts were adequate. Some suggested rewarding those who follow the rules as a way to encourage responsible behavior. The importance of public engagement in the monitoring process was emphasized, with the idea that data collected by local fishers and community members during their fishing trips could contribute to better management decisions.

The conversation also touched on the limitations of existing regulations, with suggestions for periodic reviews to ensure they remain effective. Fishermen stressed that regulations should not remain static but must be adaptable to changing environmental conditions and community needs. Specific recommendations were made for proposed bag limits on certain species like ula/ula pāpapa and 'opihi, as well as exploring potential grants or subsidies to support both commercial and personal fishing activities. Additionally, there were calls for better monitoring and research to assess the impact of fishing on the ecosystem and to develop more sustainable practices.

Other participants raised concerns about the commercial fishing industry's impact on fish populations, particularly the depletion of species like uhu, and questioned whether commercial fishing should continue at its current levels. The need for a more balanced approach that considers both the needs of the local community and the sustainability of fish populations was emphasized. There were also discussions about invasive species, such as ta'ape and the possibility of implementing a bounty system to encourage their removal.

## Maui Holomua Marine Initiative

Finally, the community voiced a strong desire for proactive action. Suggestions included the development of a comprehensive monitoring program to track fish populations and ensure regulations are working as intended. Participants expressed hope that future legislation would prioritize the needs of local communities, protect their rights to access natural resources, and support sustainable fishing practices. The meeting underscored the importance of ongoing collaboration between fishers, local residents, government agencies, and lawmakers to address the complex challenges facing Maui's ocean ecosystems.

The overarching message was clear: if the community does not take control of its natural resources and advocate for sustainable practices, the government will make decisions on their behalf. Therefore, it is critical to engage in continuous dialogue, education, and community-driven initiatives to protect the ocean and ensure that local families can continue to rely on its resources for generations to come.

## Hāna Meeting - Tuesday September 24th, 5PM to 7PM Helene Hall

### Attendance Issues:

- Lack of visibility- Previous meetings lacked information on bulletin boards, leading to low attendance
- East side- various moku on board or implementing their own initiative and rules already for their area, such as Maui Hikina Huliāmahi group

## Community Feedback and Questions

### Bag Limits:

Cultural permit- Who and what is this permit for?

- They are looking to do a registration process for permits but there isn't anything finalized
- The Holomua Marine Initiative doesn't want to limit any cultural practices

### Water Quality:

- What is the discharge in the water coming out of the drain in the photo from Don McLeish?

### Community Engagement:

- Only one attendee identified as a fisherman; we need to encourage broader participation
- Involve local fishers and their families in providing feedback and sharing opinions

### Commercial Fishing Concerns:

- Commercial fishers and buyers are exporting Maui fish to other islands, impacting local availability
- Cultural issues and social media promote unsustainable fishing practices, highlighting large catches

### Education and Overfishing:

- Many parents lack knowledge about sustainable fishing practices
  - This leads to overfishing among younger generations

## Maui Holomua Marine Initiative

- Ongoing dialogue among fishermen highlights the dwindling populations of specific fish species

### Ecosystems Impact:

- Maui's shorelines are limited and cannot sustain overfishing
- Our local ecosystems are struggling to cope with the effects of overfishing

### Community Action and Support:

- There is a need for community commitment and support to help residents monitor fish populations
- Propose bringing in legal experts to address questions and issues on the ground

### Enforcement Challenges:

- Enforcement of fishing regulations is inadequate
- We need to discuss how to implement and enforce these rules effectively
- The enforcement budget depends on legislative support; we need officers to ensure compliance

### Legislative Involvement:

- Are legislators invited to participate in these discussions?
- The community advocates for pono fishing practices and needs to reach out to legislators for better enforcement

### Empowerment and Education:

- It's crucial for the community to take control of natural resources; otherwise, the government will
- Sustainable fishing practices and conservation should be integrated into schools for better education

## West Maui Meeting - Wednesday September 25th, 5PM to 7PM Lahaina Intermediate School

### Community Feedback and Questions

#### Monitoring and Adaptive Management:

- Is there a specific netting set soak time for ula/ula pāpapa?
  - Answer: No, there is not a set soak time
- Fishing is very territorial and permission needs to be asked before just going anywhere
- How can we reconsider the proposed bag limit for 'opihi, given that divers often gather for their families and not just for themselves?
- The proposed limit seems too restrictive for those who rely on this resource to provide for multiple people
- The shoreline condominiums/ hotels contribute to ocean pollution, which affects fish populations and limu
- Certain parts of the shorelines should only be available to individuals certain parts of the year (even/odd)
- Will this process and its limits be subject to future review, or are they likely to remain unchanged

## Maui Holomua Marine Initiative

- DAR will implement a monitoring plan that will allow for evaluation of management strategies and adaptive management as needed
- What is a realistic bag limit for ula/ula pāpapa? How can we monitor something efficiently?
- There needs to be better management and research on our waters and what it looks like

### Comments from a Commercial Fisherman:

- Supports most of the points talked about but it will affect him
- It's not only the fishers that are a part of the issue, it's an entire network of people
- There needs to be a collaborative effort within the community in and out of the water
- Don't surround net in the south shore area because of the degraded habitat
- Disconnection of watersheds and ahupua'a affects the biomass of our fish

### Additional comments from participants:

- Nabeta is unregulated
- Ulua, pāpio, nabeta: the aggregate bag limit should be 10 to 15 per person
- There should be a regulation on ulua
- It's difficult to put a regulation on nabeta
- Nabeta could be set to 20 per day
- People will catch larger fish just to brag about it and the fish goes to waste

### Comments on Kala and Nenuē:

- A participant shared the opinion that they believe Honolulu, O'ahu boasts coral reefs that extend nearly three miles, teeming with a diverse array of fish
- It was mentioned that four fish is a reasonable catch for kala, though the abundance of fish varies from island to island
- Someone suggested allowing a bag limit of up to ten kala, while still adhering to the state's regulations
- The houses for the nenuē are located behind the mountain, these houses are down to 10% compared to what it was before
- Families rely on fishers to provide for their local communities & to support those who are unable to fish for themselves
- When you regulate the amount of fish locals can get it makes it difficult for fishers to provide for their families

### Potential grants or subsidies:

- Explore opportunities for grants or subsidies to support both commercial and subsistence fishers
- Increase the number of individuals monitoring fishing activities to ensure sustainability
- Stakeholders seeking to make changes will require evidence, so it's essential to incorporate a data-driven approach
- Encourage citizens to contribute data during their fishing trips to enhance this monitoring process
- Needs to be education and monitoring of spaces with the help of community members and fishers

### Additional Questions:

- Is this Holomua Initiative Process productive and do you think it can make change?
- If we did another meeting like this, do you think you could get more fishers to participate?
- There is a lack of trust which makes things difficult

## Maui Holomua Marine Initiative

- There is a lot of fishers in Lahaina and Kihei and they won't show up to speak out until regulations are in place
- It is not a waste of time coming to this meeting because fishing here is an issue and our ecosystems are suffering
- These limitations are made to protect cultures and homesteads

## Central Maui Meeting - Thursday September 26th, 5PM to 7PM Maui Waena Intermediate School

### Questions and Comments from Participants:

- Do you know of any 'ohana that would take care of ko'a on Maui - No one knew
- There used to be a plethora of fish prior to someone's family member going away to school
- Someone expressed witnessing the decline of fish/limu
- There is something fundamentally wrong with water rights and not helping the fish reproduce
- There needs to be an educational aspect implemented in school so that the younger generation can learn
- We need to be more proactive and introduce a plan to put more fish back into the ocean

The following are comments/questions that were shared by participants during the meeting. Names have been redacted and replaced by initials to protect their privacy.

### U.K.

- He expressed gratitude to everyone for their efforts on the Maui Navigation Team
- Prioritize community needs over commercial interests; profit motives should be removed from the equation
- Outsiders are entering our waters with different cultural practices and fishing methods
- The reef has already suffered damage due to exploitation
- Locals recently caught outsiders diving and damaging the reef overnight
- Monitoring is a significant issue; effective solutions need to be implemented
- Stores like Seafood City may be sourcing fish from our waters, contributing to reef damage
- When a fisherman is caught breaking the law, the fish are placed in a freezer for examination, often leading to waste
- Many families depend on the fishing industry for their livelihoods, making responsible fishing practices essential
- Non-fishing families and older generations benefit from the efforts of responsible fishers
- Recommendation when you go to legislation, they should not be on the panel, the public should be included as well

### K.S. (from a non-profit organization)

- Are these rules restricted to areas within 25 fathoms?
- Suggesting a permit be made for ta'ape would be great
- Initiated a grant program with a bounty on reef fish
- Secured a one-year grant to support this initiative
- Proposal: Consider allowing exceptions for traps to enable sustainable harvesting of ta'ape
- Suggested for Maui Nav Team to access DLNR statistics in uhu fishing as it relates to commercial fishing, there is a decline in uhu



## Maui Holomua Marine Initiative

### D.P. (fisherman and hunter)

- Will fish and hunt to provide for those in his community
- Proposed 'opihi bag limit- how will you feed a family with the bag limit that is set in place
- Increase bag limit? 100 'opihi a day should be acceptable per person
- Maybe 40 to a QT bag ; for (4) Moku - Kaupo, Kīpahulu, Ke'ānae, Hāna
- 'Opihi is a delicacy to this individual, eaten as a pupu not a main dish
- To'au & ta'ape OPEN bounty to back the issue - Nav Team agrees

### K.H. (fisherman and diver)

- Shared that the government is responsible for protecting Native Hawaiian rights
- Invasive species present a significant issue affecting local ecosystems
- Limited growth of limu is being consumed by turtles, impacting food sources
- The state of Hawai'i has an obligation to address these challenges
- Proposed the development of legislation or an act of Congress to restore access to water and fish resources
- Turtles are consuming the limu that families rely on for sustenance
- DAR can address and share the issue about invasive species and turtles that affect reef with legislature

### U.J.K. (net fisherman of Nāhiku)

- How are you going to regulate people that are coming from other places to fish and pick 'opihi?
- Regulation: Catch what you will share with those around you
- The net can be big or small, that will depend on what you can and can't catch
- If you are a fisher and you go down to the ocean, observe the water around you
- How do you regulate someone that is just trying to provide for their family?
- TV commercials about saving the monk seals are not helping
- There shouldn't be any fines to catch fish to feed the family
- How can we get fined for teaching young kids how to fish, part of our culture
- The reason kanakas have a hard time, we don't belong in the court system, and don't know anything about kingdom law. Sen. Inouye reminded him that he cannot intervene in kingdom law because it still exists. Separation of jurisdiction recommended.

### J.C

- Frustrated that we are only addressing the symptoms of the problem rather than the root causes
- Many of these issues originated with the Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR), leading to a complicated situation. The federal government often exacerbates these issues.
- The DLNR should recognize that everything affecting the ocean originates from the land
- When people go to collect resources from the ocean, they find little to nothing available
- Legislative representatives should attend these meetings to hear these issues firsthand
- Believes the legislature is part of the problem, and that we are an incomplete equation in addressing these challenges
- Enforcement- How not working, can maybe come up with a proposal that rewards good behavior or an honorarium of where families can give support for the lawai'a

### W.C.K.

- Lobster proposal: How did we get the proposed bag limit that we have?
- Suggested bag limit, what does it take to feed the family?



## Maui Holomua Marine Initiative

- He doesn't believe that the lobster should be sold

### R.I.

- How are we going to know if DLNR is doing what they are supposed to be doing?
- How do we keep law enforcement accountable?
  - Transparency- Sen. Lynn Decoite proposing for more officers - contacting our government officials
- As far as people who are laying nets and disobeying the law, will everyone get punished?  
Answer: Yes

### R.B. (Spearfisher)

- There are people that catch lobster everyday. Is there anything in place to limit those people?
- When you make regulations you need to revisit them frequently

### K. (Haiku)

- If you are planning on making rules on catch limitations, you should have one on possession
- DLNR will need to manage people who are catching lobster/'opihi between the water and their vehicles

### O.K.

- The purpose of this meeting is to address the issues concerning fish and ocean resources
- Are we overfished? No more nearshore? What is the problem? Nav Team is tasked to manage depleted number of shoreline fish
- There is ongoing blame directed at fishers; we need to question whether the fault lies with fishers or all ocean users
- It's essential to involve all ocean users, as everyone is connected to the ocean in some way
- Development and debris from mauka to makai are contributing to problems in our oceans
- We must protect the rights of our fishers and the rights of the community
- Addressing issues at mauka will help improve conditions at makai

### S.G. (Spear Fisherman)

- Suggested increase the proposed bag limit for lobster to either 5-10

### D.T.

- The resources have changed over time and that is why these suggested rules are in place
- The result of doing nothing is nothing, there are changes and we need to do something
- What are the future plans for the monitoring program?
- Will you be using data to make changes that are necessary, seeing what does and doesn't work
- Are there triggers of certain milestones when monitoring is done to change the rules ?
- What are the future plans for monitoring these changes?
  - DAR: Will most likely monitor every 5 years and re-evaluate as needed

### B.W.

- Will these proposals be an addition to the 30X30 restrictions? Fishing areas?
- Are these proposals specific to the island of Maui or applicable to the entire State of Hawai'i?
- Are yellow spot and uku included in the rules and regulations regarding bag limits?
- If we could take invasive species using unlimited net/traps, would we be able to modify the net rules?
- The proposed rules regarding nets in the management plan are difficult to understand

## Maui Holomua Marine Initiative

- How can we leverage funding for managing invasive species?
- Will there be new ACL's (annual catch limits) proposed for Maui?
- There will not be enough fish to provide for everyone on the islands
- According to DLNR statistics, there is a decline in uhu populations linked to commercial fishing activities

### D.O.

- None of Hawai'i Community Foundation funds are designated for closed fishing areas
- The funding is intended for the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) to support management efforts
- A total of \$14 million is being allocated for this initiative
- More information can be found on the Hawai'i Community Foundation website
- A participant asked D.O. "What is the justification for needing \$14 million to implement this plan?"

## Further Questions Shared on Post It Boards:

- Please consider a "NO TAKE" or "KAPU" area between Shaw St. & Dicken St. due to historical/cultural sensitivity. Area of 505 was a significant fishpond of royalty and the capital of Hawai'i. At the least Shaw St. to Wall of Lahaina Harbor
- Implement the Lahaina Conservation Action Plan
- Instead of more Fisheries Management Areas, create more regulations on coastal/nearshore development or NO DEVELOPMENT in certain areas to improve nearshore fisheries
- Should have a minimum size for lobster, lobster bag rule should be 10
- BAN scuba spearfishing
- What are the gathering requirements for hā'uke'uke, if any?
- No need for closed seasons on kala, kole, and manini
- Separate rules for fishing and spearfishing
- Bag limit for mu (2) for fishing & (4) for spearfishing. Mu so hard to catch spearfishing, they should be allowed to at least 50-150 feet.

- ★ Next steps are to get further feedback on the proposal. Smaller talk story sessions specific to spearfishers, commercial fishers, cultural practitioners, etc. should be hosted. Continued outreach to folks via the sign in sheets – sending the QR code for Google feedback forms and contact information of Nav Team.