

Aloha BLNR Members,

Testimony comments on F.1.

Sept. 27 th 2024 9 am

blnr.testimony@hawaii.gov

From Ron Tubbs B.S.N.D. 8 years UHM, 45 years diving.

The Achilles Tang, *Acanthurus achilles*, a surge zone-feeding fish, is a rare sight in the daytime, adding to its unique and intriguing nature. Unless you are in a calm seas surge zone with white water-blocks any views of the Pakuikui, Achilles Tangs.

It's crucial to consider the accuracy of the state's fish count data when it comes to the elusive Achilles Tang, which is rarely seen during the day. The current data might be missing a significant portion of the population.

Smaller ones will drop down and begin life at deeper depths, like 60 to 80 feet. In the open zones, the aquarium trade collected smaller, non-reproductive-size Achilles. The Aquarium fishery did not impact larger reproductive surge zone populations. Setting nets in white water near shore habitats cannot be done. There is no night diving in West Hawaii, so when the Achilles drop down deeper at night, they cannot be collected by the aquarium trade. It is too bad that misinformation has led to the non-inclusion of this fish species as a take species for West Hawaii.

Oahu still has very healthy fish populations of Achilles, which was recently noted and documented while aiding DAR in nenu fecundity studies. Achilles also seems to breed some years and not others like many other species. It can be decades between fish blooms. If they are like yellow tangs, which produce 1.14 million fry per year per pair, they can repopulate quickly, attaining breeding size within months. The aquarium fishery was considered a "Model fishery" because it left breeding pairs for repopulation while targeting more abundant smaller fish to ensure repopulation. Over 20 years of fish counts proved this. The FRA MPA fish replenishment areas of West Hawaii also ensured the "Model Fisheries" success.

Oahu, too, has decided to omit any of the Achilles as a take species. This is not due to population concerns but to a poor understanding of fish populations and a lack of accurate science.

The loss is the take of a highly renewable resource, currently valued at around \$5 as a food fish for adult large Achilles and at a current retail value of \$300.00 to \$650.00 each as an aquarium fish. Hawaiians could use this income!

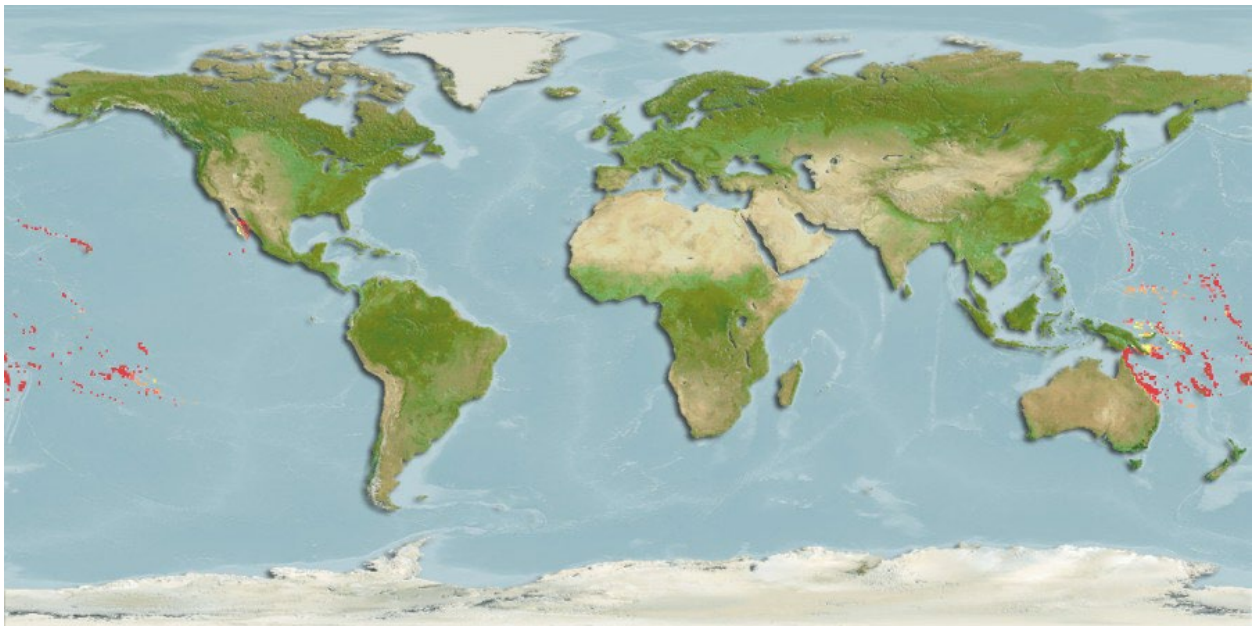
Spearfishing targets Achilles as food fish much more than the aquarium trade ever did. Larger breeding stock is taken for food purposes, unlike the proven sustainable aquarium

fishery. Recent reviews in global warming impacts to reef fish population studies discuss the shallow nearshore effects of global warming and individual fish species impacts. That article is a critical review.

Why do we need the aquarium fishery in West Hawaii, and why is your dislike of fishing, one-sided news reporting, and biased hype hurting ecology.

When managing its most renewable, sustainable resource, Hawaii's stupidity needs to change.

Many other South Pacific countries enjoy huge profits from their aquarium fish resources with high GDP returns. The wide distribution of Achilles throughout the Pacific below shows that all but Hawaii will benefit—fallacy tourism eco-terrorists hype needs to be put in its place.



<https://fishbase.se/summary/SpeciesSummary.php?ID=4306&AT=achilles+tang>

Achilles distribution map: Western Pacific: oceanic islands of Oceania to the Hawaiian and Pitcairn islands. Also known from Wake, Marcus, and Mariana islands. Eastern Central Pacific: southern tip of Baja California, Mexico (Ref. [9267](#)) and other offshore islands.

IUCN status of least concern! You can kill them all day long the breeding size but take a live one will continue to be illegal!

We must change.

Thanks, Ron Tubbs B.S.N.D. UHM 8 years