

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION**

**TWENTY-THIRD REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES**  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 5-9 August 1991)

**COUNTRY STATEMENT - GUAM**

Fisheries has had historical significance throughout the development of Guam's social and economic structure. Prehistoric artifacts give evidence that the early Chamorros were skilled at fishing over the reefs for large fish, both demersal and pelagic. According to radiocarbon dating studies, the Mariana Islands, including Guam, were inhabited by 1327 B.C. (Jennison-Nolan, 1979).

Because fisheries has played a major role in Guam's past as a substantial part of the Chamorro people's way of life, the Government of Guam conducts a continuing program addressing the problems of development and management of fisheries resources around Guam.

The Guam Marine Fisheries Advisory Council (GMFAC), created in 1979 prioritised its programs on the grounds that the Territory of Guam, by virtue of its geographical location, its environmental richness, its social and cultural heritage, its level of economic development and its business labor, technical, and educational resources, has the potential for the development of a diverse, broad-based, and economically productive fishery industry. In 1980, the GMFAC was instrumental in the development of the Territory of Guam Fisheries Development and Management Plan.

More recently in 1988, as a result of Governor Joseph Ada's creation of the Guam *ad hoc* Committee on Fisheries Projects and Programs, headed by the Department of Commerce, solutions to pertinent fisheries issues are addressed in a forum comprised of government and private sector counterparts. In FY90, the primary focus of action by the *ad hoc* Fisheries Committee was on enforcement issues in Guam's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and the prevention of gear conflicts between various fishing activities around Guam's mounts and banks. Concerns from small boaters included the U.S. Coast Guard's inability to enforce foreign longline vessel fishing regulations within Guam's EEZ and the Territorial waters. As a result of these concerns, an action memorandum was forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service calling for the formulation of regulations to limit both foreign and domestic longline and purse seiner vessel activities from within 30 miles of the 100 fathom contour off Guam's sea mounts and banks. Another enforcement development taking place was the passage of Guam Public Law 20-185, effective on June 8, 1990, which prohibits the use, transshipment, importation or manufacture of pelagic drift nets, their components or products, and establishes penalties.

As noted in the above discussion, Guam's fisheries industry is generally categorised into two main types of activities, one being the small-scale fisheries which includes domestic small boat, commercial, sport and recreational, and subsistence fishing, and the large-scale fisheries, which consists of tuna offloading and transshipment at Guam's commercial port by longliner vessels.

In the area of small-scale fisheries, the Department of Agriculture's Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources (DAWR) conducts a creel census program which provides estimates for both offshore and inshore catches. According to the Division's monthly offshore fisheries surveys, conducted at the Agana Boat Basin and other boat launching locations, the offshore fisheries comprised the majority of the FY90 small-scale fishery harvest, accounting for 301,533.7 kg of the offshore and inshore combined total of 301,548.5 kg.

By gear, trolling continued to result in the greatest overall catch volume, with a total of 273,896.5 kg recorded for FY90. According to the DAWR, 'The usual five pelagic species accounted for the bulk of the catch (96.1%). Skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*; 24.4%) was the most highly caught, followed by blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*; 21.5%), wahoo (*Acanthocybium solandri*; 21.4%), mahimahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*, 18.7%), and yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*; 10.1%)'.

In terms of participation and effort in the troll fisheries, more person-trips were recorded in FY90 than during either of the two previous years (53,096.5 in FY90, and 39,672.8 and 41,374.5 for FY89 and FY88 respectively). AWR attributes the increase in person and person hours associated with trolling as a reflection of the rapidly expanding charter fishing industry in which more people participate in more numerous but shorter trips.

The most popular method by total participation for the inshore fisheries was hook and line fishing, which also yielded the greatest harvest in FY90 with 14.8 mt or 30% of the total inshore harvest. Gill net fishing and cast net fishing harvest total followed with 12.0 mt and 10.1 mt., respectively.

Public fisheries-related facilities completed in 1990 for Guam's small-scale boaters include the Umatac Small Boat Launching Ramp, which was completed in March. The new Umatac boat launching ramp project is the result of a cooperative agreement between the Government of Guam and the Pacific Fisheries Development Foundation (PFDP). Design and plans for the Merizo Boat Pier project were finalised last year and the Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources, Department of Agriculture, the administering agency, has issued a construction contract. The new pier will replace the existing deteriorated pier and extend further into deeper water and also provides for handicap access. The Agat Marina, administered by the Port Authority of Guam was officially opened to the public in September 1990. The Agat Marina includes 153 boat slips for 16 ft to 65 ft boats, gift shop/restaurant, administration building, ice house, fueling deck, and parking and landscaping. Available for public dissemination is the Guam Drydock Preliminary Feasibility Analysis, prepared for the Department of Commerce via a grant from the Saltonstall-Kennedy program administered by the Pacific Fisheries Development Foundation. The study provides analyses to determine the feasibility of constructing a dry dock facility for vessels in the 30 to 90-foot range. The Department of Commerce has also received a final draft study examining the feasibility charter boat fishing operations on Guam.

Two new events, the 1st Annual Z Best Fisheries Tournament, and the Guam International Billfish Tournament, were added to the island's schedule of offshore fishing contests in 1990. The Marianas Fishing Derby also held it's 14th annual competition in July 1990.

In the area of the large scale fisheries, the island also serves as home port for the world's largest purse-seining fleet, owned and operated by Z Enterprises. With the addition of the *Cassandra* and the *Chloe* in 1990, the vessels homeported on Guam now totals 11.

The longline transshipment industry that has developed on Guam has become a very large money earner for fisheries companies. The Guam Department of Commerce currently has available two studies, both completed in 1989, describing the fishery. A Study on Transshipment Practices in Guam and Tinian, was sponsored and prepared by the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency. The South Pacific Commission sponsored the Guam Fresh Tuna Longline Transshipment Study, Phase I, Fishery Description. In order to gauge the level of economic impact this industry has on Guam's economy and on the domestic fishery, Commerce has additionally initiated a socio-economic impact assessment project which is supported by funding from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Even though the reported fishing grounds are mainly within the EEZ of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the longline fishery is suspected of having a significant impact on Guam's fishery resources, since Guam's constricted southern EEZ border extends only approximately 100 miles to the south to the FSM EEZ. Furthermore, the charter boat fishery is concerned about the impact on the billfish population that the longliners may have even when they are fishing within FSM waters. The vessels range in size from 19-59 tons. The fish are usually brined and iced with the exception of the Taiwanese vessels that use only ice for a higher quality fish. The fish are for the Japanese sashimi market with the exception of the portion of the catch that does not meet the quality requirements. This latter portion of the catch is transshipped via ocean freight to various locations for canning or enters the local market.

The rapid growth of this fishery has caused concern among domestic fishermen that longlining has had a detrimental effect on their market. The marketing of rejected longline fish in the local market competes with the domestic fishery.

In response to the need to analyse and determine the impact on the quantity and size of yellowfin tuna and other prevalent longline species, the National Marine Fisheries Service, in 1990, initiated a new data collection program with the Guam Department of Commerce for gathering and analysing individual fish weights of transshipped species. The program will augment other fisheries data collected under the Western Pacific Fisheries Information Network.

Ongoing since 1988 is a large-scale fishery data collection system administered by the Guam Department of Commerce to monitor and study the volume of tuna offloading and transshipment activity taking place on Guam. The system receives funding from the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WesPac). In 1990, a total of 12,703 metric tons were transshipped from Guam. Yellowfin and bigeye tuna comprised 96% of the total catch. Of the total catch, 72%, or 9,101 metric tons were caught by Japanese longliners, with the balance coming from Taiwanese longline vessels. The value of the catch of 1990 is estimated at \$15.2 million. The value of the same shipment in Japan is estimated at 10 times the Guam value.

The vessels' catch is contracted to agents at the Guam Commercial Port who handle the dockside off-loading, inspection, weighing, boxing and shipping of the fish. There are currently six agents that handle this activity.

Guam is a participant in the Western Pacific Fisheries Information Network (WPFIN) operated through the NMFS in coordination with the Fisheries Data Coordinating Committee under the WPRFMC. The purpose of the network is to collect and compile data from offshore and inshore fisheries to assist in monitoring and managing the fisheries industry. While the data assists in monitoring Guam's domestic fisheries, the large scale fishery consisting primarily of tuna transshipment has been addressed only recently during FY90.

With the rapid growth in the longline fishery since the latter part of 1986, a large-scale fishery data collection system has been implemented by the Guam Department of Commerce to monitor and study the impact of the large-scale fisheries industry. The system receives funding from the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council (WPRFMC) and assistance from the South Pacific Commission and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Additionally, the Department of Commerce is expecting completion of study assessing the socio-economic impact of the longline fishery on Guam by September 1991.

Guam is also a member of the Pacific Fisheries Development Foundation along with representatives from Hawaii, American Samoa, the Republic of Belau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The role of the PFDF is to aid, encourage, promote and support the discovery, conservation, management, development and harvest of tuna resources in the Central, South and Western Pacific Areas. This is done primarily through a grant assistance program. As a result of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, a law which establishes exclusive U.S. jurisdiction over all fish in the federal waters of the Fishery Conservation Zone (FCZ) extending 200 nautical miles outward from the territorial sea, Guam participates in the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. Fourteen members from American Samoa, Guam and Hawaii, representing the fishery community, governmental bodies and the scientific community comprise the Council whose main task is to manage the fisheries within the FCZs to prevent overfishing while encouraging economic development.

With the signing of the Compact of Free Association (CFA) between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in 1982, a large number of data collected by the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) were transferred to the FSM. The USFWS is currently working with the FSM to develop a management plan for the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRMFC) and assistance from the South Pacific Commission and the Pacific Islands Fisheries Service (PIFSC) is also being sought. The USFWS is currently working with the FSM to develop a management plan for the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRMFC) and assistance from the South Pacific Commission and the Pacific Islands Fisheries Service (PIFSC) is also being sought. The USFWS is currently working with the FSM to develop a management plan for the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRMFC) and assistance from the South Pacific Commission and the Pacific Islands Fisheries Service (PIFSC) is also being sought.