

■ FISHERIES MANAGEMENT SECTION

US Coral Reef Task Force meeting in American Samoa

SPC's Coastal Fisheries Management Adviser (CFMA) was invited, on behalf of SPC's Coastal Fisheries Programme, to participate as a panel member and make presentations on three major topics discussed during the meeting of the US Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF)¹. The meeting was held in American Samoa from 19–26 August 2007. The following highlights the topics and presentations during the sessions.

1. Exploring opportunities for future regional collaboration with the US Islands Coral Reef Committee. Presentation covered statements of how SPC's Coastal Fisheries Programme can be of assistance to the three US territories (American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands – CNMI).
2. Translating traditional knowledge into management — Sharing traditional knowledge regionally. Presentation focussed mainly on how communities are empowered to spearhead resource management through the use of community/village fisheries bylaws as a tool for marine conservation and fisheries management.
3. Regional approaches to conserving coral reef ecosystems — Management implications, applications and capacity building opportunities. Presentation was mainly focused on a regional, community ecosystem approach to marine conservation and fisheries management.

Participation and meeting objectives

In addition to its members the meeting attracted over 150 participants mostly from the US federal government, NGOs, US territories and affiliated states, international and regional organisations, and various representatives of American Samoan communities.

From a regional perspective, and the work of SPC's Coastal Fisheries Management Section, the meeting addressed the following objectives:

- Share information on how traditional management could be integrated into new or existing regional networks;
- Discuss opportunities and current needs in sharing information, staff exchange, funding, and engaging communities to support regional efforts;
- Identify effective management tools that other programmes have used that reflect traditional practices;
- The application of the ecological connectivity concept to management;
- Translate the importance of ecological and regional connectivity into community-based resource management approaches;
- How traditional knowledge, management practices and science can be merged to support management on a larger scale;

- Ways of applying the diversity of approaches in the region as key tools to support the ecosystem based management for conservation and sustainable use of nearshore marine resources, particularly coral reef and associated ecosystems;
- Identifying the barriers to effective marine resource management between and among island nations and territories; and
- How to use traditional practices and culture to enhance social, cultural and ecological connectivity.

From SPC's view point the meeting was a success because the Coastal Fisheries Programme worked closely with most, if not all, of the US territories and affiliated members of the USCRTF. Future collaboration with the USCRTF will undoubtedly assist the Coastal Fisheries Management Section not only with sharing knowledge and technical assistance to countries, but co-funding some of the activities in resource management programmes.



¹ The Coral Reef Task Force was established in 1998 through a US presidential executive order. The Task Force comprises 18 members.

Refresher workshop on community-based fisheries management for the two Samoas

American Samoa's Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) established its community-based fisheries management (CBFM) programme in 2001 with technical assistance provided by SPC. The programme is now in need of revising its strategy in dealing with local communities given new developments and improved approaches to involving communities in ecosystem management of inshore fish stocks. The programme has now attracted the participation of 10 village communities since its inception.

Samoa's CBFM programme was established in 1995 through an AusAID-funded Fisheries Extension and Training Project. The project involves a community-focussed extension process, and the development of alternative sources of seafood. The extension process culminates in a fisheries management plan for each participating village. Each plan sets out the resource management and conservation undertakings of the community and the support and undertakings of the Fisheries Division. Over 80 coastal villages have now joined the programme with each village community developing its own fisheries management plan.

Because the two Samoas have similar approaches to imple-

menting their respective programmes, a joint refresher workshop was run in Apia. The workshop was requested by the two Samoas earlier in this year as a means to analyse the performance of each programme, give new staff hands-on training on the facilitation process, provide staff with a basic understanding of CBFMP, and address the ecosystem approach to coastal fisheries management.

At the end of the workshop, programme staff were able to assess their respective programmes, highlighting weaknesses and strengths. A very interesting outcome of the workshop was the attempt by the two programmes to introduce and integrate the ecosystem concept into the current CBFM models. Some participants felt that the ecosystem concept has already been incorporated into current practices, with some pointing out that existing models are

ecosystem approaches but go by a different name. The establishment of community fisheries reserves serves not only to increase fish stocks in adjacent areas, but protect the marine ecosystem. All discussions were based on current experiences and lessons learned over the years.

Participants

The refresher programme was attended by 26 participants from Samoa's Division of Environment, Samoa Fisheries Division and American Samoa's DMWR. The Executive Director of DMWR, Afioga Ufagafa Ray Tulafono, and the Assistant Chief Executive Officer Susuga Mulipola A. Mulipola of the Samoa Fisheries, also attended the workshop

The one-week refresher workshop was conducted from 3-7 September.



Left: Susuga Mulipola A. Mulipola (far left) and staff at the refresher workshop in Apia.

Right: Participants at the refresher workshop in Apia. Afioga Ufagafa Ray Tulafono (far left) (DMWR Director) and staff from DMWR.

Preliminary study for the development of management plans for Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

A preliminary assessment of the need for a coastal fisheries management programme was carried out in response to a request from Pohnpei State's Office of Economic Affairs through the Federated State of Micronesia's Department of Foreign Affairs.

The request was mainly for advisory assistance from SPC in developing viable programmes and fisheries management plans that promote the sustainable management and use of coastal fisheries resources. References were made to the following key areas.

- Undertake preliminary study to find out how such management plans may be developed;
- Assess the level of resources available, both at the govern-

ment and community levels with particular attention to personnel and finance;

- Make recommendations as to how the management of the local pearl industry may be facilitated by local communities;
- Provide assistance for future management of inshore fisheries; and
- Present findings of the preliminary study to local government at the end of the assignment.

The assessment was carried out for two weeks in July. It involved a literature review and consultations with key stakeholders, including meetings with Marine Resources Development staff, NGOs, state gov-

ernment agencies, staff of the Land Grant Programme of the College of Micronesia, municipal authorities, and representatives from the island communities. The State Office of the Attorney General was heavily involved in determining a legal framework necessary for the programme's development.

A draft report was submitted to state authorities and a presentation on major recommendations for programme implementation given to representatives of the municipal governments, Pohnpei state officials, national government, NGOs and the community at the. Activities highlighted in the report will be implemented after comments and endorsement by the state government and relevant authorities.



Upcoming events

TRAINING: FISHERIES STATISTICS AND STOCK ASSESSMENT PHASE II, 14–25 JANUARY 2008, APIA, SAMOA

This training is a follow-up course to Phase I, which was carried out from 27 November–8 December 2006, at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Suva, Fiji. The course is designed to partially fulfil the needs of national fisheries agencies for training in the use of basic fisheries data in assessing the status of coastal fish stocks. These needs were detailed in the document the "Strategic plan for fisheries management and sustainable coastal fisheries in Pacific Islands" (Strategic Plan). This strategic plan was produced by SPC with funding from the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec), FAO, the Western

Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council (WPRFMC) and the Government of France. The document was endorsed at the SPC Heads of Fisheries meeting in August 2003 in Noumea, New Caledonia.

HEADS OF FISHERIES TRAINING ON FISHERIES POLICY AND PLANNING, 28 JANUARY–8 FEBRUARY 2008, APIA, SAMOA

This is a high level fisheries training course designed to enhance the skills and experiences of heads of fisheries and senior fisheries managers in developing national fisheries policies and project planning that is in line with the goals and objectives to be achieved under national development plans. Achieving such goals and objectives require heads of fisheries and senior fisheries managers,

as well as decision-makers to have a clear understanding of the principles of fisheries policy and planning, and the ability to design and implement such policy successfully. Through the provision of this training, senior management staff of PICT fisheries agencies would have the excellent opportunity to improve their understanding of the principles and acquire related skills. The training is to partially fulfil one of the regional training needs requested under the "Strategic plan for fisheries management and sustainable coastal fisheries in Pacific Islands."

SPECIAL SESSION OF HEADS OF FISHERIES, 11–13 FEBRUARY 2008, APIA, SAMOA

The Special Session of the Heads of Fisheries meeting is to review and endorse the revised

Strategic Plan for fisheries management and sustainable coastal fisheries in the Pacific Islands. The special session is scheduled to coincide with the completion of the training on Fisheries Policy and Planning where all heads of fisheries are also the invited participants.

The need to review the Strategic Plan for fisheries management and sustainable coastal fisheries in the Pacific Islands

During the fifth Heads of Fisheries meeting, held at SPC, Noumea in 2005, SPC was instructed to undertake a comprehensive review of the plan. This is due to changing circumstances as well as the need to better reflect the current needs and priorities of PICTs.

The dynamic nature of fisheries and the ongoing economic and socio-political changes taking place in the region are raising new challenges that affect the relevancy of the plan's focus.

Pacific Island heads of fisheries acknowledged that the strategic plan lacks scope and depth, and expressed their strong support for the plan to be reviewed. Based on concerns raised by the Heads of Fisheries participants, the following issues will be incorporated in the review:

- establish fisheries management as pivotal to all domestic fishing operations, whether they be subsistence, artisanal or commercial and accordingly, to pay more attention to the seriousness of the region's coastal fisheries management problems;
- broaden the scope and depth of its coverage beyond purely coastal fisheries management to include research and development, and use the broad ecosystem approach to fisheries to manage environmental impacts on the land and marine environment;

- directly address political directives emanated from Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' decisions that are reflected in regional policy instruments, such as the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP), Pacific Islands Ocean Framework for Integrated Strategic Action (PIROF-ISA), the Pacific Plan, and other international policy instruments such as the Millennium Development Goals and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
- assign full ownership of the strategic plan to PICTs with the responsibility for its implementation coordinated at a regional basis by SPC; and
- discuss the role of the different sections of SPC's Coastal Fisheries Programme in implementing this Plan.



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