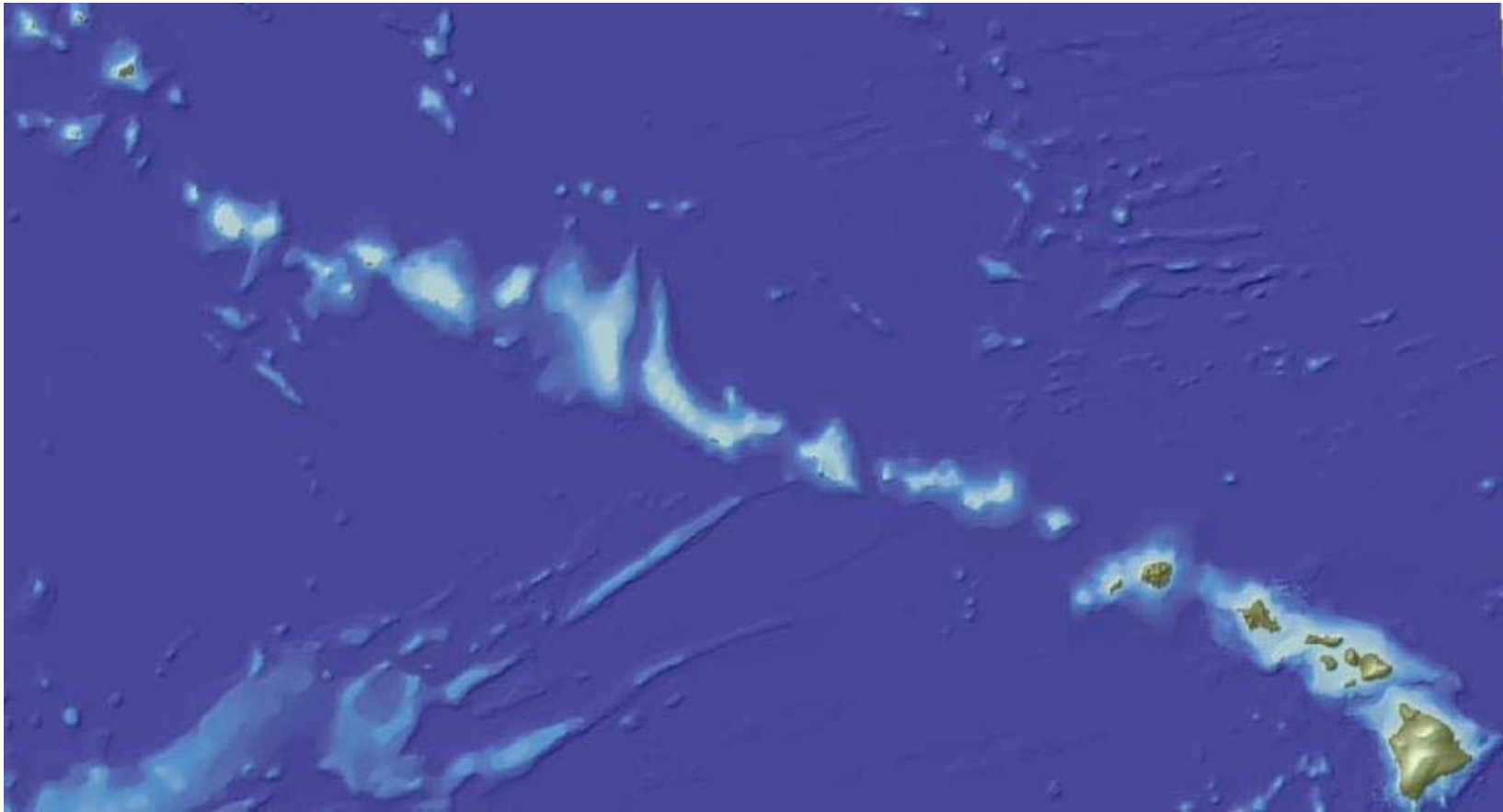
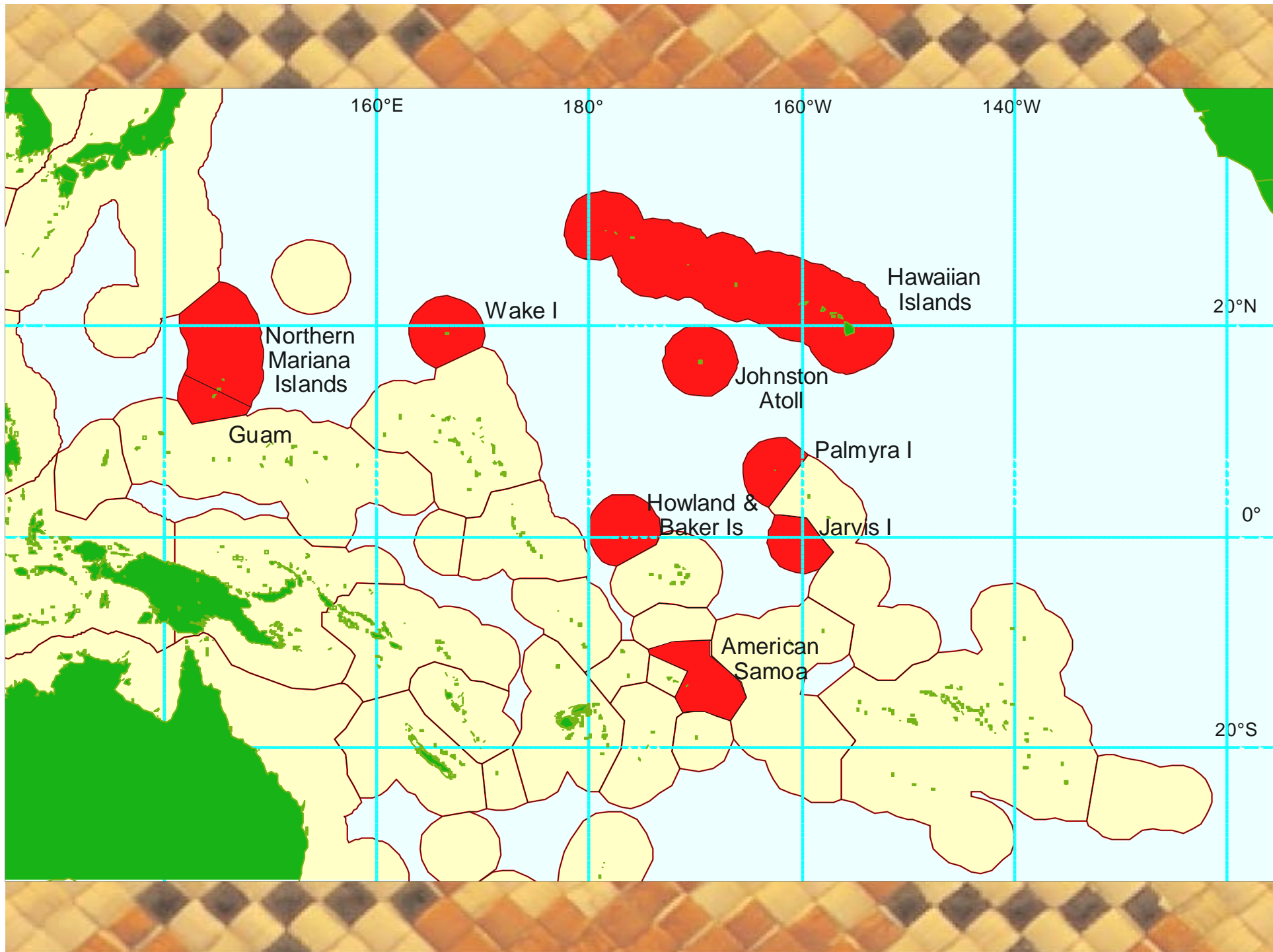


# Fisheries Management in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands



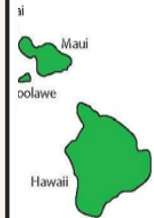
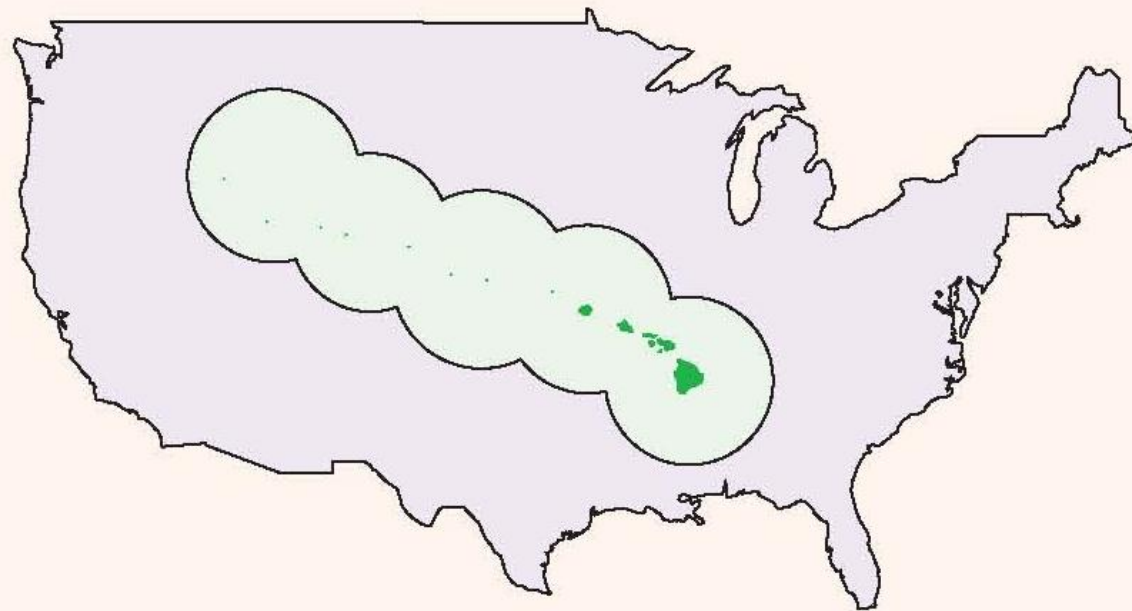
**Pacific Fishery Management Council**  
March 9, 2006





# Hawaiian Islands

Size of exclusive economic zone (EEZ), 3-200 miles offshore, around Hawaii in relation to US mainland



600 nm

# FMP Fisheries

- Lobster: Limited entry, quota fishery, closed in 2000
- Pelagic: Longline limited entry 1991, VMS, prohibited within 50 nm of NWHI, mandatory observer coverage
- Precious Corals: Exploratory, 1,000 kg limit, no permits issued

# FMP Fisheries

- Bottomfish:

- Active for 50+ years

- Limited entry 1986

- Mau & Hoomalu zones, 17 permits, 9 vessels  
60' capacity limit

- Opakapaka and Onaga are Hawaii's signature dishes and have cultural significance

- Provides half of fresh bottomfish in State

- All indicators show healthy fish stocks

# Executive Orders – NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

- Established by Presidential Executive Order 13178 (12/04/00) as amended by EO 13196 (1/18/01)
- 120,000 sq. nm
- Management Principles - “Reserve shall be managed **using available science** and applying a precautionary approach”
- Initiated process to designate the Reserve as a sanctuary under the NMSA

# Executive Orders – NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

- Established Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Council (Reserve Advisory Council (RAC))
- Established Reserve Preservation Areas where only fishing activities are prohibited
- Established caps on number of fishing permits and level of take based on historical participation, not on stock sustainability
- New fisheries prohibited, but non-fishing activities allowed

# Sanctuary Designation Process

- September 20, 2004, NMSP published its Advice and Recommendations

Prescriptive goals and objectives developed by RAC which close more areas and further restricted other existing fisheries

Included "model regulations"

# NMSP Evaluation of Fisheries

- NMSP concluded that the gear and methods used in the bottomfish fishery “are highly selective, minimizing habitat, impacts and unwanted by-catch”
- NMSP concluded that gear and methods used in pelagic troll fishing had “little or no impacts on the habitat and very low levels of bycatch”
- NMSP rated bottomfish and troll fisheries +3 and +2, respectively

# Science and the Fisheries

- Most recent assessment - 10% of the potential coral reef ecosystem in the US (EO says 3% of world's and 70% of US)
- NOAA's most recent BiOp concluded that the existing fisheries in the NWHI do not impact monk seals, sea turtles or sea birds
- NMSP's favorable evaluation of the fisheries

# Science and the Fisheries

- NWHI bottomfish fishery is one of the most sustainable and ecologically sound fisheries in the world and has been determined by federal scientists to have healthy stocks and no impact on Hawaiian monk seals, sea turtles, seabirds, fish habitat, biodiversity, or the health and the integrity of the coral reef ecosystem

**Presented at 3<sup>rd</sup> NWHI Science Symposium 2004**

- “Pristine” and “apex predator dominated”

# Public Relations

- **The Ocean Conservancy and Marine Conservation Biology Institute** (website): "The results show that in the years from 1988 to 2003, the bottom fish population was overfished in 11 out of 16 years."
- **Earth Justice** (from lawsuit against the NWHI bottomfish fishery): "NWHI bottomfish fishermen kill monk seals."
- **Kahea – The Hawaiian Environmental Alliance** (website): "...Wespac violation of the public's trust and continuing to allow overfishing in the NWHI." "The combined greed of Wespac and gross mismanagement of NMFS has led to the starvation of hundreds of monk seal pups."

# Positions on the Issue

- **WPRFMC:** NMSA requires that Council be given first opportunity to manage fisheries in the reserve; the existing fisheries as managed by the FMPs are science-based and fully comply with National Standards; existing fisheries are compatible and consistent with the Goals and Objectives for the proposed sanctuary; existing fisheries should be allowed to continue and be managed under MSA
- **NMSP/RAC:** Ban existing fisheries in 5 years, leave door open for non-fishing activities, e.g. eco-tours, cruise ships, etc.
- **Special Interests:** Immediate cessation of fishing

# Council's Actions ... Agency's Responses

- Council submitted draft regulations in April 2005 for continuation of the existing fisheries, moratoria on lobster and precious coral fisheries, etc. - Rejected by NOAA in October 2005 (but allowed Council an opportunity to continue developing fishing regulations under MSA)
- January 18, 2006: NOAA letter informs Council it must submit FMP amendments by May 1, 2006 if it wants to continue to manage fishing under MSA
- Verbally provided Council with "sideboards" that NOAA would consider acceptable limits to fishing

# Council's Actions ... Agency's Responses

- NOAA DEIS to be released in June 2006 includes three alternatives: (1) fishing allowed to continue for 5 years and banned thereafter; (2) fishing for 20 more years and; (3) fishing to continue indefinitely

# MSA vs. NMSA

- Despite the history of the existing fisheries and science supporting continuation, NOAA appears determined to close or further restrict the fisheries.
- Interpretation promoting consistency among EOs, MSA and NMSA.
- What's next?