

## **Select United States Assistance Provided to Small Island Developing States and Territories Related to Obligations under CMM 2013-06 & 2013-07**

This paper provides examples of relevant U.S. support for the WCPFC and Small Island Developing States and territories during 2015. Additional support may have been provided for which data and information was not available at the time of preparation and submission of this report.

### **Selected Support for MCS and other Enforcement-Related Activities:**

- NOAA Office of Law Enforcement conducted trainings on fisheries enforcement, including vessel boarding, records management, interview techniques, and report and statement writing with authorities from the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. Agency involvement included the Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority, the Marshall Islands Police Department Sea Patrol, the National Oceanic Resources Management Authority, and FSM National Police, Marine Wing. Agents conducted at-sea boardings of U.S. flagged purse seine vessels with foreign partner agencies focusing on records review, and compliance with relevant U.S. laws and regulations.
- NOAA Office of Law Enforcement conducted a three-day training in Guam with officers from Guam and CNMI focused on building enforcement capacity to protect fishery resources and protected species. Topics included vessel boarding, records management, interview techniques, report and statement writing, and legal reviews of statutes and regulations.
- NOAA Office of Law Enforcement conducted joint boarding of a U.S. flagged purse seine vessel off Honiara with the Solomon Islands Fisheries. The boarding provided an opportunity to work together with the boarding officers of the Solomon Island Fisheries, and to share knowledge with their officers of matters relevant during a NOAA OLE boarding of a purse seine vessel.
- U.S. Coast Guard conducted two-week boarding officer training for Pacific Patrol Boat crews in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau and Samoa, with support from Australia's International Policy Division.
- U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy ships and aircraft provided coverage across Oceania through 10 major ship deployments, over 250 hours of dedicated maritime patrol aircraft support, and 190 hours of ship based aircraft support.
- The U.S. Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) completed six deployments with shipriders from numerous Pacific Island nations – including the Cooks Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa and Vanuatu. OMSI resulted in the boarding of 41 fishing vessels from four Navy ships.

- U.S. shiprider agreements provide a critical mechanism for cooperation on combating IUU fishing and the enhancement of maritime law enforcement. The U.S. government currently has shiprider agreements with nine PICs: the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu. Throughout 2015, the U.S. Coast Guard exercised U.S. Pacific-area bilateral shiprider agreements with 7 PICs on 13 occasions, resulting in 193 patrol days, and 58 boardings to help hosts enforce fisheries-related laws and regulations.
- U.S. Pacific Command and the Armed Forces of New Caledonia hosted a Maritime Security in the Pacific Workshop at the Naval Base in Noumea, New Caledonia 20-24 April 2015. The workshop provided a collaborative forum for legal advisors and military/law enforcement officers from Pacific Island countries to discuss issues relating to maritime security in the region. Representatives from the United States, France, Australia, and New Zealand presented on legal structures, enforcement operations, case package preparation, prosecutions, and collaboration between investigators and prosecutors for IUU fisheries cases. Attendees included attorneys, military, and law enforcement officers from the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Tonga.
- U.S. Coast Guard supported a wide range of exercises, programs, training symposiums, and simulations through the 2015 Pacific Partnership and Port Security Initiatives in order to promote regional maritime security capabilities in the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga.
- The United States has worked closely with the Federated States of Micronesia on maritime surveillance through the use of pilot projects and the development of Maritime Domain Awareness strategies. Sea Dragon II was a FSM-U.S. Maritime Domain Awareness demonstration of capabilities for the detection and deterrence of IUU fishing activities and other prohibited activities in FSM's Exclusive Economic Zone. It was sponsored by the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory and U.S. Pacific Command, and it built on lessons learned from the Sea Dragon I exercise that took place in 2014 in Palau's EEZ, demonstrating its effectiveness in a larger EEZ.
- NOAA's coral reef conservation program established the Pacific Islands Marine Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC) as a collaboration between Marine Protected Area managers, non-governmental organizations, local communities, federal state and territorial agencies. PIMPAC conducted compliance and enforcement training in Palau in 2015, and they are currently working to build Marine Protected Area training in Micronesia.

#### **Selected Direct Support to PICs on Projects of Interest:**

- NOAA Fisheries, responding to the request from local fishers and leaders and following a successful pilot project, funded a \$193,000 grant for Yap State outer islands, Federated States of Micronesia, to conduct surveys on reef-fish habitats to refine fisheries data

collection within local communities, and to provide outreach materials to build knowledge capacity and to enhance long-term community involvement.

- NOAA Fisheries funded \$236,000 to sponsor a project in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands to test marine-aquaculture technologies on a pilot and commercial scale and provide training for fishers in coastal communities in aquaculture-production methods. This project was funded to support the diversification of income for coastal fishing communities.
- NOAA Fisheries funded \$15,000 to develop ecosystem-based educational outreach to promote the sustainability of wild fisheries in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. This outreach will demonstrate how data is collected to determine the health of marine ecosystems and be aimed at encouraging youth in CNMI to pursue a career in marine science or fisheries.
- NOAA Fisheries funded \$31,599 to support community-based marine capture-mark-recapture program of sea turtles to assess mixed stock foraging dynamics to build conservation management capacity in Fiji. The program will conduct studies on key Fijian foraging grounds during the nesting and non-nesting seasons, with the use of satellite-tracking data and flipper-tagging data with the hopes of revealing clear links between the green sea turtle stocks originating from American Samoa and the foraging grounds of Fiji.
- NOAA Fisheries provided funding and support for a community-based pilot project to understand leatherback turtle nesting dynamics in the Solomon Islands by introducing monitoring techniques to villagers. This project will help quantify nesting activity in the Solomon Islands in an effort to fill information gaps related to leatherback austral summer nesting activity.
- NOAA Fisheries provided funding and support for a community-based project to monitor nesting activity of leatherback turtles at five index beaches in Vanuatu. This project was funded through the Wan Smolbag Theater Conservation Program to support conservation capacity building, data collection, and educational outreach within local communities in Vanuatu.

#### **Selected Development and Transfer of Fisheries Science and Technology:**

- U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) provided \$926,328 in grant assistance during FY15 under the Office of Insular Affairs' (OIA) Coral Reef Initiative Program to a variety of projects and initiatives designed to improve the health and management of coral reefs in American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the freely associated states of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, including:

- Palau International Coral Reef Center (Republic of Palau): \$110,000 to characterize and manage the recovery of Palauan coral reefs following recent catastrophic damage from super-typhoons Bopha and Haiyan.
  - Micronesia Conservation Trust (Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia): \$150,000 to work with local governments, non-governmental organizations, and communities to conduct a vulnerability assessment on Pohnpei's 5,500 hectares of mangrove forest to identify threats and specific adaptation actions; assess the feasibility of funding habitat conservation by marketing carbon credits; and share project results to catalyze similar projects throughout Micronesia and help achieve the goals of the Micronesia Challenge.
  - Micronesia Conservation Trust: \$175,000 to implement the goals of the 2013 - 2016 Strategic Action Plan of the Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Areas Community. Activities include implementing priority actions for addressing vulnerability and adaptation to climate change; conducting on-the-ground, community-based conservation projects; and training youth in marine resource management.
  - College of the Marshall Islands (Republic of the Marshall Islands): \$121,572 to establish a national, publicly-accessible, spatial analytics facility on the campus of the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI); to build capacity in participatory Geographic Information System (GIS) management by training CMI and government staff on building a national geospatial clearinghouse; to compile and augment the conservation database; and to conduct a short-course on GIS for use in sustainable coastal management.
- NOAA Fisheries Science Center provided assistance, training and upgrades for various IT and data collection systems for multiple fishery entities in American Samoa, Guam, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
  - NOAA Fisheries provided \$313,279 to support funding for a satellite-tagging study to identify "best handling practices" that reduce mortality in discarded sharks in sharks in American Samoa longline fisheries. Through quantitative assessments of the post-release mortality rates of sharks using different handling methods, in combination with empirical knowledge from skippers and crew, this project will obtain survival-rate estimates and develop and widely disseminate a set of standards for appropriate handling and release practices.
  - NOAA Fisheries provided \$395,402 to support funding for a collaborative tagging project with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to identify movements, behavior, seasonality and oceanographic association of juvenile and adult striped marlin. Researchers will coordinate the application of pop-up satellite tags and hundreds of conventional tags to create a cooperative tagging program network with longline and small boat fishing communities.

- NOAA Fisheries provided \$15,000 to support funding for Pacific Islander undergraduate students in fisheries science and other related fields at the American Samoa Community College to participate in an underwater-surveying course covering Quantitative Underwater Ecological Surveying Techniques. This program will develop students' technical skill and knowledge of marine resources that will enhance their academic portfolio and strengthen their desire to pursue a career in fisheries science or related fields.

### **Selected Support for Data Collection, Reporting, Verification, Exchange, and Analysis:**

- NOAA Fisheries provided \$95,000 to support funding for a pilot project in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to improve and implement an electronic reporting and electronic monitoring program for fisheries-dependent data and mandatory commercial-fish recording and reporting to provide critical information for conservation and management of its fisheries resources. This effort will streamline data collection and improve quality assurance from existing Fisheries Information Network field creel surveys and from mandatory recording and reporting of the commercial sale of fish within the CNMI.
- NOAA Fisheries provided \$11,209 to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to fund data collection and entry for the management of inter-jurisdictional fishery resources. This funding will assist CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife in an effort to collect, process and share important data during fishing tournaments for use in federal and local fisheries-management programs. This data will be the principal source of information for the analysis and management options for pelagic species landed.
- NOAA fisheries provided \$134,503 to support funding for an American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources project to assess and monitor fish catch in the American Samoa EEZ. This program will provide the fisheries information needed to develop, implement and evaluate fishery-management plans for American Samoa.
- NOAA Fisheries provided \$11,209 to support funding for a Guam Pacific Fisheries Data Program to develop management and conservation plans for Guam's inter-jurisdictional fisheries by monitoring and documenting transshipped species of fish that are offloaded by foreign longliners within Guam's commercial port.

### **Selected Capacity Building and Development, including Training and Related Efforts:**

- The U.S. State Department partnered with Fish 2.0, a sustainable seafood business competition, to develop Pacific Island entrepreneurs and connect businesses with investors in the sustainable seafood sector. Fish 2.0 hosted two workshops, in Pohnpei, FSM, and Nadi, Fiji to provide training to 47 Pacific Islander entrepreneurs on business planning and working with investors. 32 Pacific island businesses participated in the Fish 2.0 competition, through which they received additional mentoring and training. Five Pacific island businesses pitched their ideas to investors at the Fish 2.0 finals at Stanford,

CA, in November 2015. ALFA Fishing of Vanuatu was one of two winners in the growth-stage category at the competition finals, and came away with a \$5,000 cash prize.

- The U.S. Western Pacific Fishery Management Council hosted two workshops to discuss bigeye tuna management in the western and central Pacific Ocean Purse (WCPO), with funding support from NOAA Fisheries. Workshops were held April 8-10, 2015 in Honolulu, HI, and August 19-21, 2015 in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands. The workshops brought together representatives from Asian, U.S. and Pacific Island purse-seine and longline fishing industries, government officials of Pacific Island countries, and representatives from the Forum Fisheries Agency, Parties to the Nauru Agreement, Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and non-governmental organizations. The objective of the workshops was to identify options that could improve bigeye conservation and management in the WCPO.
- NOAA Fisheries provided \$140,250 to support funding for nesting surveys, beach monitoring activities, stranding programs, and educational outreach through conservation-education and public awareness to provide a strong foundation for science-based conservation and management of sea turtle populations throughout Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- NOAA Fisheries provided \$56,580 to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to support funding for a project to design, produce and distribute a short film for children about sea turtles to inform and build local capacity for marine turtle conservation in CNMI and Guam and around the Pacific. This effort will be supported by NOAA's Marine Turtle Conservation and Research Program, the Micronesian Island Nature Alliance, the CNMI DLNR Sea Turtle Program and other local partners.