

U.S. All Islands
Coral Reef
Committee (AIC)

Chair's Report

February 2016
Washington D.C.

U.S. Coral Reef Jurisdictions
and Freely Associated States
PRIORITIES and UPDATES

AIC CHAIR'S REPORT

35th U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting
Washington D.C. | February 16-18, 2016

AIC Vision

Thriving coral reef ecosystems, effectively managed to protect their ecological, social, and economic value for future generations.

AIC Mission

To be a unified voice for the effective management of coral reef ecosystems in the U.S. and Freely Associated States.

Cover photo courtesy of NOAA.

Table of Contents

From the Chair	1
AIC Updates	2
AIC Priorities.....	2
Overarching Priorities.....	2
U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Strategy.....	2
Coral Reef Management Fellowship Program: Follow-up.....	3
Watershed Partnership Initiative: Follow-up.....	3
AIC Member Priorities & Accomplishments	4
American Samoa	4
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.....	4
Florida	5
Guam.....	6
Hawai'i	7
Puerto Rico.....	7
U.S. Virgin Islands.....	8
AIC Affiliate Member Priorities & Accomplishments	9
Federated States of Micronesia.....	9
Republic of the Marshall Islands.....	9
Republic of Palau	10
Acknowledgements.....	10
AIC Points of Contact and Secretariat	11

CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

From the Chair

Hafa adai, Talofa, Aloha, Hola, and Hello,

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC), to present this report on our activities, accomplishments, and emerging issues since our last meeting in Fajardo, Puerto Rico in October 2015. We would like to welcome our members and points of contact, and extend our sincere thanks to NOAA and U.S. Department of the Interior for coordinating and hosting us at this meeting.

In the three months since we last met, we have continued efforts to conserve and manage our coral reefs through the loss of a Governor and true supporter of coral reef conservation, and in preparing for POC changeover. Thankfully, the winter season brought cooler waters and a much needed reprieve for our coral reefs, many of which have suffered back-to-back years of bleaching. However, in areas like southeast Florida, the number of corals impacted by an unprecedented disease event continues to grow and the cause(s) of the disease has yet to be identified.

Coral bleaching from warming oceans, ocean acidification, Crown of Thorns Starfish outbreaks, ship groundings, coral disease outbreaks, invasive algae, land-based sources of pollution, and so many other things impact our coral reefs each day.

We must stretch beyond the 'status quo' and work together, as federal agencies and jurisdictions, to make a difference NOW.

The time is now and the opportunity lies with the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.

Task Force meetings are huge opportunities for jurisdictions and federal agencies to share information, strengthen partnerships, increase integration, and work to conserve and manage our coral reefs for present and future generations.

We are excited to participate in this 35th meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force as we work towards a final USCRTF Strategy that will serve as our roadmap for the next five years.

Sincerely,



Fran Castro
AIC Chair



CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

AIC Updates

We are deeply saddened by the loss of the **Honorable Eloy S. Inos, Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**. His support for the AIC and the islands as well as his leadership in the management and conservation of our nation's coral reefs will be sorely missed.

We would like to recognize and thank **Damaris Delgado**, Coral Reef Point of Contact for Puerto Rico and AIC member (on and off) since 1999, and former AIC Vice Chair, for her many years of service to the AIC and dedication to ensuring thriving coral reef ecosystems, effectively managed to protect their ecological, social, and economic value for present and future generations. Damaris will remain POC until February 29, 2016.

We would like to welcome (back) and introduce **Ernesto Diaz**, Director of the Coastal Zone Management Program in Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources and Executive Secretariat of the Puerto Rico Climate Change Council. Ernesto will take over as POC for Puerto Rico as of March 1, 2016.

We would like to recognize and thank **Minister Umiich Sengebau**, Coral Reef Point of Contact for the Republic of Palau since 2013, for his service to the AIC and dedication to ensuring thriving coral reef ecosystems for present and future generations.

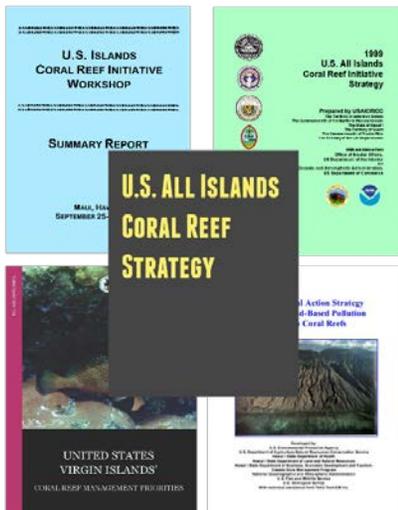
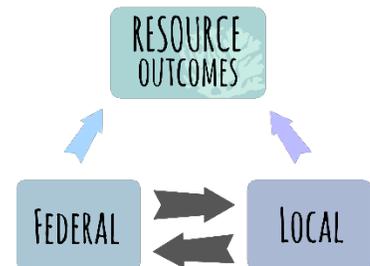
We would like to welcome and introduce **Dr. Yimnang Golbuu**, Chief Executive Officer of the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC). He has been designated as the new Coral Reef Point of Contact for the Republic of Palau representing Minister Sengebau.

AIC Priorities

Overarching Priorities

Our two overarching priorities cross-cut each of the seven jurisdictions' local priorities:

- **Achievable and shared site-based and resource-focused outcomes; and**
- **Integrated and strengthened federal-local partnerships.**



U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Strategy

The 1997 “Summary Report of the U.S. Islands Coral Reef Initiative Workshop” (aka Blue Book) and the 1999 “U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Initiative Strategy” (aka Green Book) reflected the islands’ visions for coral reef management strategies through projects and programs that were jurisdiction specific as well as regional, national, and international in scope. In 2002, the Local Action Strategy (LAS) format was adopted by the Coral Reef Task Force and this shifted the priority setting process to align with federal targets. In 2010, the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, working with jurisdictions, led to the creation of a set of Management Priority Setting Documents; one per jurisdiction.

CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

We believe that a document that captures local coral reef management priorities, led by jurisdictions and developed with input from partners, would be a critical asset to our combined efforts to make a difference for our coral reefs.

We envision this “U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Strategy” to be similar to the *Green Book* and include a section that describes the priorities of the AIC and projects that would benefit all seven jurisdictions. Developing such a Strategy offers a great partnership opportunity with Task Force federal agencies. The overall process to build this document will be coordinated and led by the jurisdictions. This document will be updated on a regular basis and once completed, will be presented to the Task Force and Task Force agencies.

This Strategy will help inform the efforts of Task Force agencies under the new USCRTF Strategy and be used to build partnerships and support for jurisdictional projects that result in place-based resource-focused outcomes. With the numerous impacts to our coral reefs each day, we keep saying that we must stretch beyond the ‘status quo’ and work together, as federal agencies and jurisdictions, to make a difference NOW. We see this Strategy is a key component to future of our nation’s coral reefs.

We realize that this is not a small undertaking; however we also know the critical need for and importance of a document like this. We kindly request Task Force and member agency consideration for support and engagement in the creation of the “U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Strategy” as described above.

Coral Reef Management Fellowship Program: Follow-up

We are pleased to report that fellows have begun their positions with coral reef management agencies in each of our jurisdictions. Work ranges from water quality monitoring to community and stakeholder outreach and engagement, a strategic marketing campaign to resiliency planning and more.

Thank you to the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program for leading the coordination of this program and to Nova Southeastern University for their administrative support. We are looking forward to the next two years and sharing the accomplishments and successes of this program in helping build management capacity in our jurisdictions. We appreciate the partnership and support of NOAA and DOI, which helped to revitalize this important program.

We continue to believe that this program should be one that is formally supported by the USCRTF, where federal agency members are engaged and working with the AIC towards a goal of building an institutionalized program with sustained funding.



We continue to request Task Force agency engagement, support, and ideas in keeping this important and beneficial program going.



Watershed Partnership Initiative: Follow-up

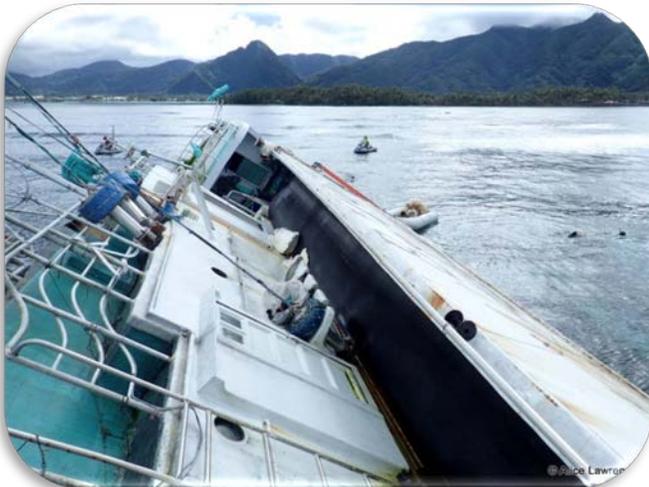
We appreciate the Steering Committee and Watershed Working Group’s consideration of our request to create a “graduation plan” for every USCRTF priority watershed as well as a “sunset clause” of forced graduation in 10 years. Again, we believe the graduation plans should include reviewing management plan

CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

implementation, progress, and accomplishments/metrics. In the sunset clause, emphasis should be placed on reaching meaningful ecological improvements in less time (within the 10 yrs).

We look forward to working with the team created to lead the drafting of these items and our Secretariat Executive Director will assist by drafting relevant language.

AIC Member Priorities & Accomplishments



The F/V Seahawk #68 continues to cause coral damage in shallow reef flats in Nuuli, American Samoa. Credit: A. Lawrence

American Samoa

American Samoa continues to face multiple ongoing major coral reef ecosystem threats. The Crown of Thorns Sea Star Outbreaks continue and potential for wide spread coral bleaching is still possible this season. Funding and assistance is still needed to remove a vessel that has been grounded on the reef in Nuuli since last May. Most recently, coral reefs were damaged during Cyclone Victor in January 2016. Again, a better mechanism to quickly respond to coral threats is needed to assist in faster response times to better protect these critical ecosystems.

Priorities:

- **Derelict Vessel Removal:** Removal of F/V Seahawk #68, which ran onto the reef last May in Nuuli. Vessel caused major harm to reef. Funding

and technical assistance still needed for removal.

- **Crown of Thorns Sea Star Eradication:** COTS outbreaks are still ongoing, causing extensive reef death throughout Tutuila Island.
- **Island-wide Clean-up Committee:** Land and water based cleanup efforts are dramatically reducing marine debris throughout the territory. Data collection is ongoing to support future management actions.

Accomplishments:

- **Monitoring of Faga'alu Quarry BMPs** are showing dramatic reductions in sediment loading onto the coral reefs in the watershed.
- **Coral bleaching in American Samoa** is being closely monitored, and so far, the bleaching has been minimal and only on shallow reef flats.
- **Crown of Thorns Sea Star Eradication** is ongoing in the territory.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Typhoon Soudelor directly hit Saipan on August 2, 2015. The whole island was without water and power for the first three weeks following the storm, and only in late November was the entire island reconnected. CNMI's Bureau of Environmental & Coastal Quality (BECQ) as well as partner agencies have had to focus on recovery efforts, which has delayed various projects and ongoing initiatives. Additional funding and logistical constraints have limited the CNMI's ability to conduct quantitative assessments of the damages incurred (particularly by Soudelor) in this past typhoon season.

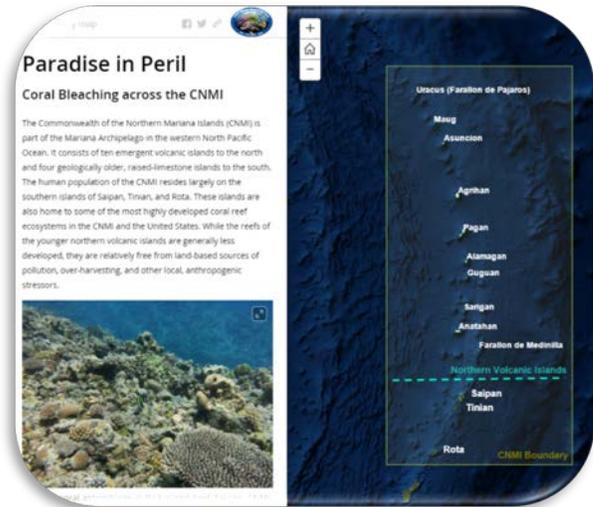
CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

Priorities:

- **Coral Reef Disturbance Response Plan:** In light of recent bleaching and typhoon impacts, a comprehensive, interagency coral reef disturbance response plan is necessary. Funding is required.
- **Derelict Vessel Removal:** Removal of F/V Lady Carolina, which ran aground during Typhoon Soudelor and was then knocked over during Tropical Storm Champi. The vessel continues to cause damage to an inshore patch reef in the Saipan Lagoon. Funding and technical assistance for the removal of this vessel are needed.

Accomplishments:

- **"Validation of Reef-Scale Thermal Stress Satellite Products for Coral Bleaching Monitoring" was recently published** by the CNMI Marine Monitoring Team in collaboration with NOAA Coral Reef Watch in Remote Sensing, vol 8(1):59, January 13, 2016.
- **Bill 19-105 passed the House of Representatives** in late December 2015. The Bill authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources to assess fees against tourists visiting Marine Protected Areas in order to fund conservation efforts, including the CNMI's Micronesia Challenge endowment.
- **In November 2015, CNMI won 1st place in ESRI's Ocean GIS Forum Digital Map Competition** for "Paradise in Peril: Coral Bleaching across the CNMI" created by CNMI Lead Marine Biologist Lyza Johnston and GIS Specialist Mark Stewart (see screen shot above).
(<https://dcrm.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=0e922ba26ba14a99867fd9bd72ee3ce0>)



Our Florida Reefs Community Meetings held to review 68 Recommended Management Actions. Credit: Florida DEP

Florida

One of the 68 actions that Our Florida Reefs stakeholders are recommending is the establishment of formal recognition for the northern portion of the Florida Reef Tract. This would allow for comprehensive regional management to balance use and protection of these resources by addressing local threats like land-based sources of pollution, coastal construction impacts, and harmful or illegal fishing practices. Their recommendation is to establish and implement a Marine Protected Area (MPA) zoning framework for the region that includes, but is not limited to no-take reserves, no anchor areas, restoration areas,

and seasonal protection for spawning aggregations to enable sustainable use, reduce user conflict, and improve coral reef ecosystem condition. Addressing public misperceptions and misinformation regarding benefits of marine ecological (no take) reserves has been challenging. Public comments are encouraged

CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

and will be accepted until March 1st. See more at: www.OurFloridaReefs.org/RMAcomment/ and www.OurFloridaReefs.org/place-based/

Priorities:

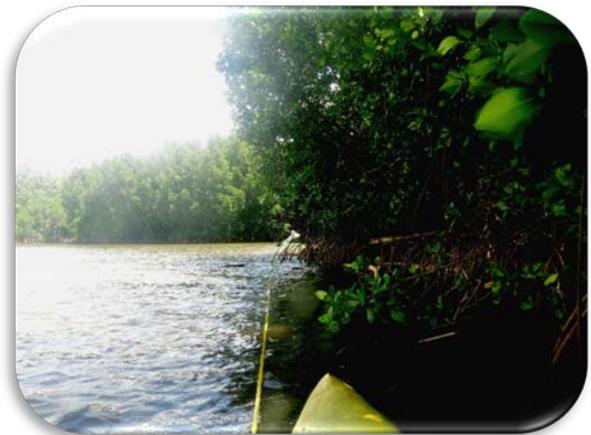
- **Coral Disease Outbreak:** Disease is killing 11+ coral species across approximately 45,000 acres of northern Florida Reef Tract likely resulting in millions of dead corals. Funding for causal research and restoration activities still needed.
- **Oldest Corals Dying:** Unprecedented disease outbreak and thermal (warm water) stress has led to death of 330+ year old coral near Ft. Lauderdale. 54 other large (3+ meter) corals observed with disease are likely to also die.
- **Reef Restoration:** Management action taken to restore non-recovering historic vessel grounding sites in SE FL. Physical restoration completed in December. Biological restoration will be conducted when funds can be identified.

Accomplishments:

- **The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary turned 25 years and Florida Reef Resilience Program turned 10.** Celebrations with local communities were held and accomplishments reviewed.
- **Community meetings were held to gather feedback on 68 Recommended Management Actions** developed by Our Florida Reefs Community Working Groups. Feedback will be incorporated, recommendations prioritized, and final report will be submitted to appropriate agencies for consideration.

Guam

Guam's continuing challenge is to make our island more resilient in the wake of a changing climate. Water quality continues to be a challenge for managers, particularly with erosion, runoff, and drought. Illegal fishing and poaching have also been occurring more frequently. The prevailing issue here is a lack of capacity to enforce existing regulations – erosion and stormwater control and Marine Preserve regulations. Adding more wildland fire crew will help address the fires down south, examining and enforcing stormwater regulations will help protect the reefs in the north, and more conservation officers are needed to address poaching and illegal fishing practices in the preserves. Updating and enforcing regulations would help managers and strengthen the health of our reefs.



American University graduate student Jonathan Cybulski mapping the Achang mangrove forest within the Manell-Geus Habitat Blueprint site, Guam. Credit: L. Raymundo

Priorities:

- **Water Quality and Climate Change:** Water quality continues to be a challenge for managers. Erosion in southern Guam from fires and stormwater runoff in northern Guam are contributing to poor water quality. Entering what is predicted to be a record drought year, Guam has already experienced major wildland fires in the south.
- **Mapping Coral Reefs:** Plans are being formulated for mapping and describing coral communities within the reef flat. Field sessions are planned for early May, with collaborators from American University and Hong Kong University.

CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

- **Guam LAS and Coral Reef Priorities:** The Coral Reef Initiative Coordinating Committee and Local Action Strategy groups will be meeting to update Guam's local action strategies and coral reef priorities.

Accomplishments:

- **Seagrass and mangrove habitats within the Manell-Geus watershed reef flats have been mapped** and quantitatively described in terms of community composition and density.
- **Established new permanent monitoring site in Fouha Bay**, in southwestern Guam (13 permanent transects).
- **A reference library of resources published or reported has been compiled** pertaining to the Manell-Geus watershed and associated coastal communities.



Ka'ūpūlehu, West Hawai'i. Credit: West Hawaii Today

Hawai'i

Priorities:

- **Coral Bleaching Plan:** Hawai'i has now witnessed damaging coral bleaching events in 2014 and 2015, and it is predicted that mass bleaching will become an annual phenomenon in Hawai'i by 2050. The Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) is working with experts and partners to create a strategy to prepare a plan to promote coral growth following bleaching and other damaging events.
- **Proposed Marine Preserve at Ka'ūpūlehu, West Hawai'i:** Proposed amendments to the Marine Reserve will provide a 10-year nearshore "no take" period to allow for the recovery of reef fish stock. The rules are going to public

hearing.

- **International Coral Reef Symposium:** Over 2,500 coral reef scientists, policy makers, and managers from 70 different nations will meet in June 2016 to present the latest research findings, case histories and management activities, and to discuss the application of scientific knowledge to achieving coral reef sustainability. DAR has many presentations and field trips planned.

Accomplishments:

- **Governor David Ige signed into law rules to limit sea cucumber over-collection** in response to unprecedented over-harvesting. Sea cucumbers play an important ecological role by removing nutrients and other materials from sediment, which can impact the health and resiliency of Hawaii's coral reefs.

Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is committed to the conservation of its coral reefs and has Local Action Strategies, a Capacity Assessment on and Strategic Management Plan for coral reefs as well as other guiding documents. We need to increase human resources dedicated to protect coral reefs in order to strengthen efforts and to be more effective.

Priorities:

- **Coral Farming:** Coral farming has been successful in several sites and is essential for coral restoration efforts. Through the NOAA Habitat Focus Area effort, some funding was secured for coral farming in Culebra, however additional funding is still needed.

CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

- **Coral Bleaching:** Mona Island Natural Reserve, Puerto Rico's largest protected area, continues to experience coral bleaching and disease. It is predicted that this year, Puerto Rico coral reefs will experience significant bleaching. Funding and technical assistance are needed to address this threat.
- **Extraction of Coral Organisms by Foreign Citizens:** Citizens from Asia have been extracting sea urchins and sea cucumbers from coral reefs in Puerto Rico in large quantities. Legal and technical assistance from NOAA International Office staff is requested.



mangroves, seagrasses and management of coral nurseries, in compensation for the damage caused by the spill.

- **Seagrass meadows damaged by boat propellers were restored** using the “Modified Compressed Succession, Wild Bird Fertilization, and Sediment Re-Grading” technique. Restoration of these seagrass areas in Cayo Matias Salinas also benefited exposed coral reef patches (see above figure).

U.S. Virgin Islands

The USVI continues to face the challenges from the invasive seagrass, *Halophila stipulacea*, and the episodic explosions of Sargassum seaweed. They continue to pursue research opportunities to better understand these invaders and their movements as well as development of management strategies to cope with their continued presence.

Priorities:

- **St. Croix MPA Stock Assessments:** There has been renewed focus on conducting research and monitoring within the park. Spiny Lobster and Queen Conch are the first two target species.
- **Environmental Enforcement:** MPA Enforcement International has been contracted to evaluate environmental enforcement capacity and develop a 5 year strategic plan to increase effectiveness.
- **MPA Connectivity:** Movement and connectivity between MPAs is being explored through modeling coral larval transport in the region, and ongoing acoustic fish tracking research.

Accomplishments:

- **Recruited a full time manager for the Canal Luis Peña in Culebra, La Cordillera Reefs and the North East Ecological Corridor Natural Reserves.** Contracted a Marine Specialist for management support at these three Reserves.
- **In October 2015, working with USFWS, an agreement was reached on a settlement** with the responsible party of an oil spill that affected three Natural Reserves on the south coast of Puerto Rico in 2007. The settlement will provide for restoration of



St. Croix East End Marine Park spiny lobster surveys. Credit: C. Pott. DPNR CZM

CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

Accomplishments:

- **Successfully completed a Spiny Lobster population update** in St. Croix East End Marine Park. We surveyed 22 reef locations and counted > 220 lobsters.
- **In the multi-agency St. Croix Acoustic Tracking work**, there have been over 21 million detections so far and over 700 tags currently being monitored.
- **USVI hired a full time Marine Park Manager**, Caroline Pott, for the St. Croix East End Marine Park.

AIC Affiliate Member Priorities & Accomplishments

Federated States of Micronesia

Accomplishments:

- **Post-Typhoon Maysak and Tropical Storm Dolphin recovery and rehabilitation efforts continue.**
- **Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP) Project:** The PROP Project is a regional oceanic and coastal fisheries management program that will be implemented incrementally in Pacific Island countries over a six to ten year period, based on country demand. FSM is one of four countries in the first phase of the PROP.

Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program

The PROP Project is a regional oceanic and coastal fisheries management program that will be implemented incrementally in Pacific Island countries over a six to ten year period, based on country demand. FSM is one of four countries in the first phase of the PROP. Oceanic fisheries management component of the PROP is to help participating countries strengthen the VDS for the sustainable management of the region's purse seine and long-line tuna fisheries. Coastal fisheries management component is to sustainably manage defined coastal fisheries, focusing on those value chains with the greatest potential for increased benefits that (i) can generate export earnings for the country, and/or (ii) support livelihoods, food security and dietary health.

Oceanic Fisheries Management

PROJECT Inputs: (\$5.2M)

- Fisheries information systems
- Fisheries Monitoring by Observers
- Fisheries surveillance & patrols
- Institutional strengthening & training

Coastal Fisheries Management

PROJECT Inputs: (\$0.3M to start)

- Coastal fisheries resource assessments
- Increased coastal fisheries monitoring
- New national regulations
- Expanded Community Based Resource Managers' programs

PROP PROJECT Results:

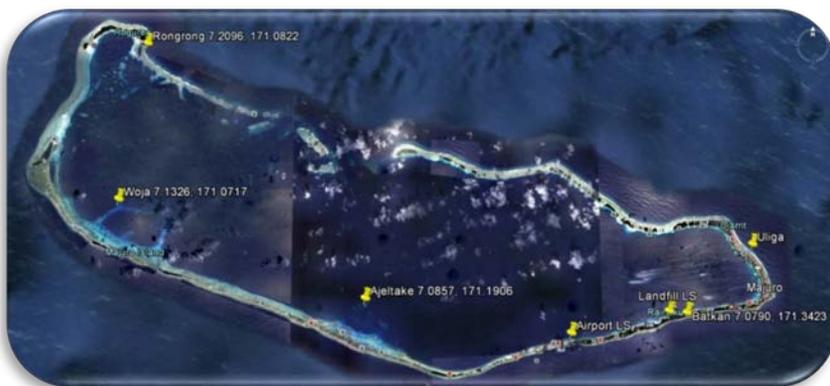
- Expanded VDS coverage
- Improved VDS compliance
- Enhanced VDS monitoring & transparency
- Increased VDS flexibility & efficiency
- Food Hygiene Competent Authority

VDS - VESSEL DAY SCHEME: About a quarter of the world supply of canning-grade tuna comes from the EEZs of the 8 countries Party to the Nauru Agreement. Each year the PNA countries set the total catch limit needed to maintain a healthy fish stock, and translate that catch limit into individual vessel fishing days, which are allocated to countries by a PNA Office based on an agreed formula, and then the countries sell the days to industry. 2015 benchmark is \$8,000 per fishing day. 2016 allocation is 7766 fishing days.

The coastal fisheries vary among the four FSM States. Governance and management arrangements. These involve various forms of traditional, local and state control and jurisdiction, with the national government playing a coordinating role through the FSM Dept of Resources & Development. Because of this diversity, there will be high transaction costs and thus this component will be in phases, beginning with Grant support for a feasibility and project design to identify where PROP funding can best add value in communities to sustainably manage defined fisheries and subsequently enhance production.

Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) tracking of fishing boats in the 200 nmi Exclusive Economic Zone of the FSM

Republic of the Marshall Islands



Coral bleach monitoring sites. Image produced by Karl Fellenius, UH/CMI Sea Grant Extension Agent

Accomplishments:

- **For the first time, a formal method of assessing bleaching was utilized.** The survey documented all bleached colonies from deep to shallow across the transect line as well as taking a benthic photo one meter adjacent to the bleached colony in each of four directions. This allows for analysis of bleached and unbleached colonies at the same depth.
- **Grant for National Geospatial Analytic Facility:**

Received a \$121k grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Coral Reef Initiative (DOI-CRI) Program. This grant will allow the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) to make the Conservation GIS accessible to the public as well as to allow CMI to partner with colleagues who can help optimize the integration of traditional Marshallese knowledge of wave dynamics and coastal change into the Conservation GIS.

CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

- **Wotho Atoll Survey:** The Coastal Management Advisory Council, led by the Marshall Islands Conservation Society, implemented Reimaanlok field-survey. This underwater survey used a Belt Transect Method to four sites in Wotho Atoll to determine the status of the coral and fish in those areas.

Republic of Palau



Fisheries Researcher (left) with two Northern Reef Kayangel State Rangers assessing fish sizes and maturity at Kayangel State on October 2, 2015. Credit: PICRC

Priorities:

- **Northern Reef Fisheries:** A combination of underwater surveys and landings fisheries surveys were conducted to inform management and improve and rebuild small-scale local fisheries in the Northern Reef of Palau.
- **Baseline Assessment of MPAs:** Ecological monitoring was conducted of all the MPAs that have coral reef or seagrass in Palau.
- **Super Typhoon Impacts & Reef Recovery:** A 2-year research project has begun to characterize the recovery potential of the eastern reefs of Palau following two sequential typhoons in 2012 and 2013. The project will look at protection status, coral recruits, water quality, and fish biomass among other factors, and follow the recovery of these reefs. More information in Gouezo et al., 2015 (Impact of two sequential super typhoons on coral reef communities in Palau).

Accomplishments:

- **Baseline data of underwater fish surveys using stereo-video** in the Northern Reef of Palau showed that most of the commercially-important species were bigger in size in marine-protected areas than outside.
- **Ecological monitoring of all the MPAs that have coral reefs and seagrass was completed.** All the data is compiled and uploaded into PICRC database.
- **All materials were purchased to start deploying**

settlement tiles before the major coral spawning event in March. Following the DOI grant award, a research proposal was drafted.

Acknowledgements

- To Governor Lolo Matalasi Moliga from American Samoa, Governor Ralph Deleon Guerrero Torres of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and our principals for participating in the Task Force meeting and showing your support of the islands and our coral reefs.
- To Task Force co-chairs Sobeck and Faeth, thank you for your leadership of the Task Force. We look forward to continued communications and collaboration.
- To Task Force members and member agencies, thank you for your support and partnership. We look forward to continued collaboration.
- Thank you to NOAA and DOI, particularly Liza Johnson, Jennifer Koss, and Cheryl Fossani, for organizing, coordinating, and hosting this valuable meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT | FEBRUARY 2016

- Lastly, thank you to our Executive Director, Carey Morishige Martinez, and our three Advisors, Gerry Davis, Mike Hamnett, and Bob Richmond, for providing guidance and advice to promote jurisdictional priorities that help ensure a future for our coral reefs.

AIC Points of Contact and Secretariat

Points of Contact

Ms. Fran Castro, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, AIC Chair
Mr. Jean-Pierre Oriol, Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands, AIC Vice Chair
Dr. Ruth Matagi-Tofiga, Territory of American Samoa
Mr. William Castro, Territory of Guam
Ms. Joanna Walczak, State of Florida
Mr. Ray Uchimura, State of Hawai'i (interim POC)
Ms. Damaris Delgado Lopez, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

Secretariat

Mr. Gerry Davis, AIC Resource Advisor
Dr. Michael Hamnett, AIC Policy Advisor
Dr. Robert Richmond, AIC Science Advisor
Mrs. Carey Morishige Martinez, Executive Director

Affiliate Members

Mr. Don Hess, Republic of the Marshall Islands
Ms. Alissa Takesy, Federated States of Micronesia
Dr. Yimnang Golbuu, Republic of Palau