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International Certification for the Quality  
and Sustainability of Marine Aquarium Organisms ...  
from Reef to Retail

28 December 2005

Mr. Andrew W. Bruckner, PhD  
NOAA Fisheries  
Office of Habitat Conservation  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Andy:

Please find enclosed in triplicate the final Semi-Annual Performance Report for NA03NMF4630324, for the project titled "Wise Management and Sustainable Use of the Hawaii Aquarium Fishery through MAC Certification for Reef Management and Best Practices." This report covers the period 1 April 2005 to 31 September 2005.

Thank you,

Paul Holthus

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'P' followed by a series of loops and a final flourish.

Executive Director and President  
Marine Aquarium Council

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## **Semi-Annual Performance Report for NA03NMF4630324 For the period 1 April 2005 to 31 September 2005 Prepared for NOAA by the Marine Aquarium Council**

### **I. Summary of Results**

During the period of 1 April 2005 to 31 September 2005, the Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) and its partners continued efforts with marine aquarium stakeholders in Hawaii to promote the wise management and sustainable use of coral reef resources. Financial assistance provided by the NOAA Award NA03NMF4630324 aided efforts that supported the implementation of better industry regulation in West Hawaii and adoption of MAC Certification by industry members.

A final draft of the Kona Collectors' Agreement was prepared in this period. It is a vital document that asserts a new approach to area management of marine ornamentals collection in West Hawaii, and is supported by a collective agreement. The document provides a framework for Collection Area Management Plans, which are required for international certification of collectors in the West Hawaii industry. Ultimately the Kona Collectors' Agreement will provide the basis for a sustainable supply chain of high quality marine ornamentals.

Formal preparation for MAC Certification began in this period with a wholesaler-exporter in Kona. Collectors working for this exporter are also being prepared for certification. These first cases are proceeding very carefully because they must comply with the draft Kona Collector's Agreement and also meet the requirements of the MAC Standards for collection of reef organisms. The investment of time and effort is worthwhile because, with the Kona Collector's Agreement in place, this process will replicate and set the stage for a certified and sustainable industry in West Hawaii.

The work of the Species Identification and Suitability Committee is ongoing. This subcommittee to the MAC Standards and Certification Advisory Committee was established under NOAA Award NA03NMF4630324. A process for identifying 'unsuitable species' in relation to the implementation of MAC Certification was active in the April-September 2005 period.

A real achievement in this period was the hiring, following long advertisement, of a consultant to prepare West Hawaii industry members for MAC Certification.

## **II. Activities Completed**

### **A. Building Awareness of Management Alternatives for a Sustainable Marine Aquarium Trade in Hawaii through Multi-stakeholder Contact and Outreach**

1. The MAC team worked with the new MAC Hawaii Consultant to prepare a strategy for MAC Certification in West Hawaii. The new consultant, Katrina Nakamura, held discussions with industry members on their preparations and readiness for MAC Certification in order to put together a timeline and action plan for working with them. Together with MAC staff that previously worked with the West Hawaii aquarium industry, she also consulted with staff members of the Hawaii Department of Aquatic Resources (HDAR) to establish their priorities and concerns about sustainability in the West Hawaii marine aquarium trade.
2. A dialogue among MAC, the West Hawaii Fisheries Council, industry members and the State of Hawaii Department of Aquatic Resources continued throughout the period. Work with West Hawaii stakeholders to finalize the Kona Collectors' Agreement was a highpoint, as was educational outreach to science teachers in Hawaii by MAC's Mark Schreffler.

### **B. Facilitating Marine Aquarium Collectors and Companies to Understand and Achieve MAC Certification**

1. MAC provided assistance to a Kona exporter to prepare for MAC Certification to the MAC Standard for Handling, Husbandry and Transport (HHT). Additional resources were devoted to work with the exporter to prepare his collectors for certification to the MAC Standard for Collection, Fishing and Holding (CFH).
2. Follow up with West Hawaii collectors interested in MAC certification continued, and a strategy was set for certification preparation in 2005.
3. Communication and outreach to the Hawaii marine aquarium industry continued in order to improve awareness and sustain interest in certification as a wise management practice. Contact was retained through phone calls, emails and extensive personal contact/consultation with industry operators.

### **C. Developing Management of Marine Ornamentals Collection Practices through Stakeholder Participation**

1. The final draft of the Kona Collector's Agreement was completed.
2. MAC staff and MAC partners have collected the best available data and information on resource assessment and monitoring for West Hawaii. This information is critical to the formation of a baseline understanding of resource status among the parties to the Kona Collectors' Agreement. It is also a necessary component of the area management plans that are needed in order for collection to become MAC certified, according to the MAC Standard for Ecosystem and Fishery Management.
3. MAC staff has corresponded and met with HDAR with regards to management of the West Hawaii Aquarium Fishery and Collection Areas. HDAR expressed interest in how compliance with the MAC Standards by collectors will help in monitoring and management of the West Hawaii aquarium fishery.
4. The eight member Species Identification and Suitability Committee, (MAC SCAC SPIC), an international multi-stakeholder group chaired by a member of the MAC Board, is actively undertaking a process for identifying 'unsuitable species' in relation to MAC Certification. This list will then apply to those collectors and companies in Hawaii that are MAC Certified, i.e. they will not be allowed to be collecting or holding those species that have been determined to be 'unsuitable'.