

# **AMERICAN SAMOA OVERFISHING WORKSHOP 2005 SUMMARY REPORT**



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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I apologize if I am missing any name from the list, but many thanks for the collaboration and support into this event.

# **American Samoa Overfishing Workshop**

## **March 22-24, 2005**

### **SUMMARY**

The American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG) which comprises five environmental government agencies conducted three Overfishing Workshops funded by NOAA Fisheries. A fisheries planning committee was established to plan, coordinate, facilitate, and organize the workshop in an approach that would gain the support and participation of the community and reef fishers. Similar fisheries workshops were held before in Guam and Hawaii for their communities, however there was little support and participation from the communities and local fishers. American Samoa wanted to utilize the lessons learned from previous local community workshops to create a workshop that would drive the participants in a collaborative and more informative meeting on fisheries issues, resulting in feasible and effective actions.

After a year of planning, the fisheries committee decided to hold three series of workshop at three village districts on the main island of Tutuila. The target audience was village communities, including local reef fishers, with open invitation to any interested persons. The workshops were then scheduled to be conducted in the eastern district on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the village of Alofau, the central district on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at the village of Pago Pago, and the western district on March 24<sup>th</sup> at the village of Pavaia'i. Advertisements and public notices of the workshops were delivered two weeks prior to the event with pre-meetings conducted at the Office of Samoan Affairs for village leaders.

The first workshop for the eastern district at the village of Alofau brought 32 community participants of mostly men, few women and children. The workshop focused on the main topic of how to protect and conserve the reef fisheries with issues brought up by participants on declining catches of fish and shellfish, damaged corals, increase of algae growth, and limited or small catches of big fish. The participation from the audience in the discussions and breakout groups was supported by all participants who worked to collaborate on decisions and actions to restore and improve the fisheries resources.

The second workshop for the central district at the village of Pago Pago brought 20 community participants. The main topic of the workshop was to protect and conserve the reef fisheries with the focus on issues of Overfishing and the increased pressure on the reef resources.

The third workshop for the western district at the village of Pavaia'i had 12 community participants. Similar to the second workshop, the western district workshop focused on the problem of Over-fishing while discussing ways and strategies to protect and better manage the reef fisheries.

After each workshop, a debriefing meeting with the organizing committee and invited NOAA representatives helped improve the facilitation of the following workshop by

refining the information and directing participants' feedback to specific issues to achieve the workshop's goals and expectations.

During all three workshops, participants learned and became aware of the state of the fisheries in the Territory, ongoing government projects and programs to improve the fisheries, and village fisheries management initiatives through the Department of Marine and Wildlife's (DMWR) Community-based Fisheries Management Program (CFMP). In addition, representatives from Samoa shared their experiences and management measures with the similar vision of improving sustainable development of fisheries resources through collaborative effort and effective management approaches.

### **Summary of Inputs from the Participants**

Participants' input and feedback were obtained through discussions on fisheries issues by using a Problem-Solution Tree tool to identify the causes and effects of the overfishing problem. The tool then was used to identify the solutions to the causes, actions, and *who* should work together on the solutions to the problem.

Appendix III in this report shows the results from the Problem-Solution Tree exercises for each of the three workshops. As a result, participants strongly voiced and proposed the following comments and thoughts to assist in improving the sustainable development of the fisheries in the Territory.

1. Participants recognized the need of collaborative management and would like to have community play an important role in planning and facilitating best management approaches to improve coral reef fisheries
2. Several comments were made on establishing protected areas to restore fish populations. These varied in range recommending the following options: no-take permanent, rotating preserves, spawning area closures and seasonal closures.
3. Village leaders (mayors and chiefs) would like to like to assist the government enforcement officers by issuing citation
4. Some concerns were expressed about the government's ability in enforcing their regulations in the villages. Participants suggested that the government assist villages in enforcing or improving village regulations.
5. Participants were concerned about the lack of education and awareness in villages on fisheries issues and management tools. They would like to see more workshops and trainings in villages to better educate and inform the community on ways to better manage the resources.
6. Participants agreed that the fish are smaller and fewer and they were disappointed that so many small common reef fishes and shellfish are not seen or found in their reefs because of over-fishing.

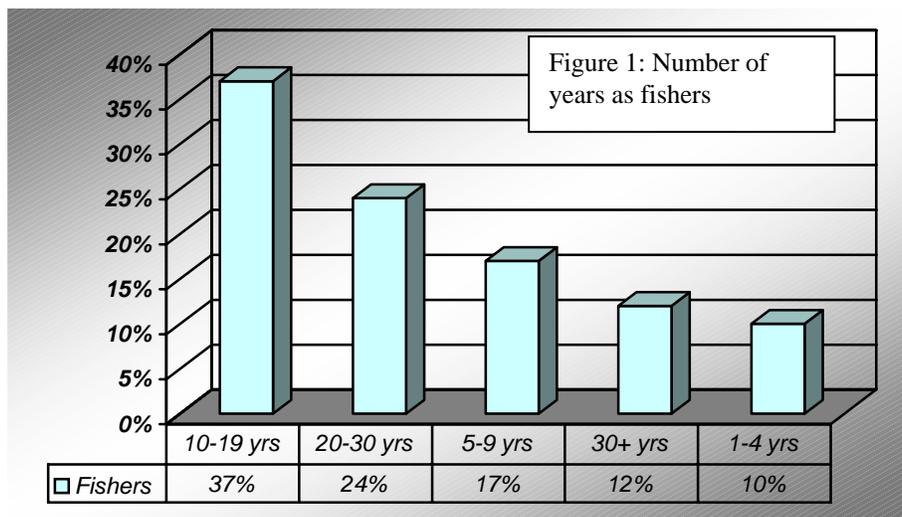
7. The fishermen wanted stricter fines, gear confiscated, and new laws that would give government a greater ability to restore resources. Also expressed concern for double penalty system, one within the village and one within Government.
8. Participants recognized the need to protect and conserve their fisheries but also felt the need to provide for their elders or village matters.
9. Participants were concerned about stopping fishing given the effect it will have for those depending on the resources for their source of income and food. Some suggested that the use of destructive fishing activities such as avaniukini (plant derived poison), chlorox, and high number of outsiders fishing illegally in village reefs might be the larger causes of the problem.
10. The participants supported the bottom-up approach used in Samoa in establishing marine protected areas and encouraged government to continue using this approach.
11. Several suggestions to develop a license system were proposed. Some wanted all fishing licensed while others wanted just commercial or only offshore fishermen or select methods.
12. Participants recognized the changes in the number of fishes found and seen in their reef areas now and 10 or more years ago. They believed that is because other village people are not respecting the resources and most village councils are not well organized in enforcing their regulations.
13. A general concern that some of the net fishing was contributing significantly to the decline of the reef fisheries and that bans or buy-outs should be considered.
14. The increase in population was raised and participants suggested that too many people and the high demand for fish have resulted in the problem of over-fishing.
15. There was concern for pollution, mostly associated with the cannery as well as land based problems.
16. There were a couple comments that a hatchery program should be used to restock coastal waters.
17. There were also some concerns about the large fishing vessels and the impacts they have on fisheries.
18. Strong recommendations from the participants for a network of fisheries communities to be established in building and enhancing management activities to support government management efforts.

19. A general concern was for the waste from the canneries that are dumped too close to our coastal areas.
20. Participants agreed that regional cooperation with Samoa, other outside organizations, and Federal partners on fisheries management issues would assist American Samoa in its management efforts.

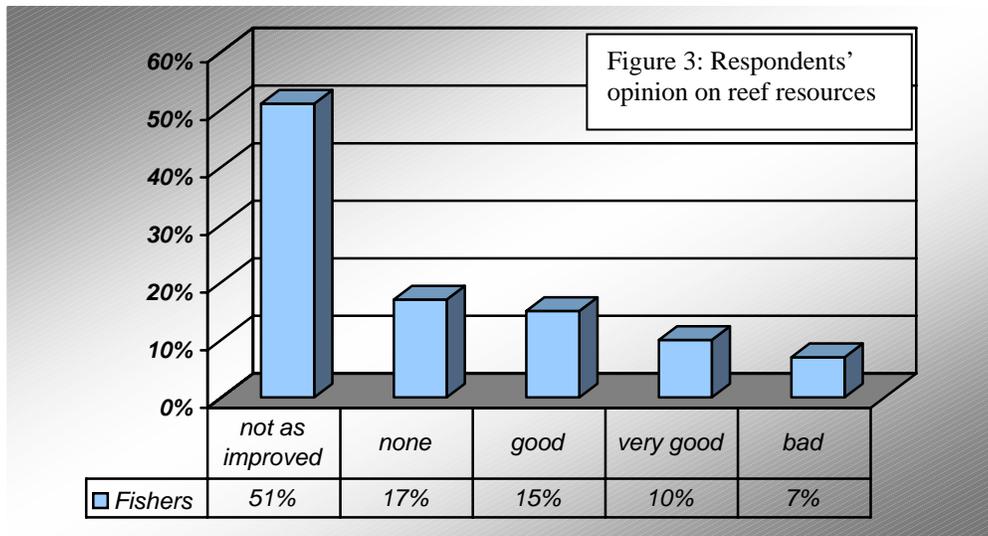
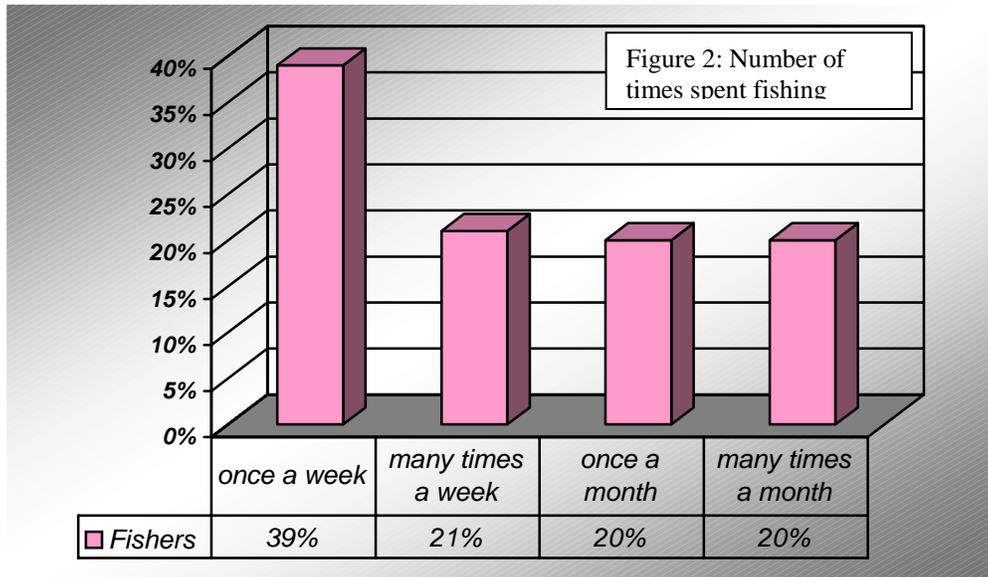
**Results from the Questionnaire:**

The participants completed a Fisheries Questionnaire to help CRAG gain a better understanding of how they utilize the reefs, their opinions about the fisheries, and ways they could assist with the management of the resources.

There was 64 total number of participants to all 3 workshops comprising of mostly men with few women and children. From this number, only 53 responded to the Coral Reef Fisheries Questionnaire. The questionnaire showed 77% of the total respondents are fishers. From this percentage, 37% have been fishers from 10 to 19 years, 24% have been fishers from 20 to 30 years, 17% from 5 to 9 years, 12% for over 30 years, and 10% were those who have been fishers less than 5 years (Figure 1).



When asked about how many times in a week or month do they go out fishing, 39% responded once a week, 21% indicated many times in a week, 20% replied once month and the other 20% responded many times in a month (Figure 2). With the number of times the fishers spent on fishing in the reefs, 76% indicated that one of the major changes with the reef resources now compared to their first time as fishers is fish size. They are not catching or finding any big fish now. For this, 51% of the respondents agreed that the reef resources are not as abundant as they were many years ago. However, 15% of the respondents indicated that the resources are still good and 10% found no problem with the fisheries viewing it as very good (Figure 3).



### **Evaluation Results**

An evaluation was given to the participants of the workshop to assess their opinions about the workshop and to measure our success in organizing and implementing the event. Out of 64 participants, 57 filled out and submitted their evaluation. As a result 91% of respondents appreciated and were very pleased with the facilitation of the workshop. In addition, 95% of respondents strongly recommended more community meetings such as this in the future. About 84%, would like to see more collaboration with the government on fisheries management through the establishment of a community fisheries network.

## Appendix I

### **American Samoa 2005 Over-fishing Workshop**

#### **Guiding Principles**

- The Local Action Strategy would be used as a guide for the workshop
- The fishery resources in our near-shore and offshore banks have been in decline and have not shown any improvement
- Community-based management of the fisheries is an important and crucial piece in ecosystem conservation, and elements of that management will extend farther than the reefs, must also include the land
- Community leaders must buy into a stewardship model that includes their full participation, and a lessening dependence on government support
- Have a buy-in from all CRAG agencies in the process and the decisions evolved

#### **Goals**

- Development of a plan to decrease fishing effort
- Revise the LAS as needed
- Have full buy-in by the community leaders that the resources are in decline, and develop some solutions
- Villages will develop a private organization (network) that will enable them to find the resources needed to support their conservation and management efforts

#### **Expectations**

- Coordination of community members for participation in a network/private organization
- Facilitate strong partnership between communities through their network with key partners such as the CRAG member agencies
- Support the development of American Samoa Local Action Strategy (LAS) by facilitating and implementing activities and projects in collaboration and guidance with existing plans from local and federal governments, as well with village fisheries management plans. Also distribution of information and materials for public awareness
- Capacity building and fostering stewardship through CRAG activities with support and assistance from federal agencies

Each of these guiding principles, goals, and expectations were developed to encourage village communities to take part in the decision-making process for fisheries management, to co-manage the resources, and to enhance community understanding of the science that may support the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

## Appendix II

### **The American Samoa 2005 Over-fishing Workshop Agenda**

- 8:00 Welcoming and introduction – Ufagafa Ray Tulafono, DMWR Director
- 8:10 Presentation from Community (Selected speaker from a village representative will speak on issues and problems, as well as village management, from a community perspective)
- 8:30 Status of Fisheries in American Samoa and DMWR regs – Ufagafa Ray Tulafono
- 8:45 Fisheries Problems and Issues: Discussion
- 9:30 Break
- 9:45 MPA Presentation – Magele Aitaoto/Fini Aitaoto
- 10:00 Samoa Delegation presentations (panel)  
*South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP)*
  - Miriam Philip*Samoa Fisheries*
  - Nofoa'iga Tausa*Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) Conservation*
  - Pulea Ifopo
- 10:20 Questions and Discussion
- 11:00 Discussion in Breakout Sessions  
-- Use fish population and size to develop themes
- 11:45 Working Lunch
- 12:15 Presentation of results, comments, present major themes
- 12:30 Develop action themes
- 1:00 Closing

## Appendix III

### **Am. Samoa 2005 Fisheries Workshop “Puipui le Gataifale Mo A Taea” April 22, 23, 25, 2005 Summary Report**

#### **Tuesday, April 22, 2005 – Eastern Side, Alofau**

**Number of Participants: 32**

#### **Problem & Solution Tree:**

**Protect and Conserve our Reef Fisheries**

#### **Problems:**

- Declined catches of fish and shellfish
- Corals have been damaged
- Increase growth of algae
- Limited or small catches of big fish

#### **Causes:**

- The use of chemicals such as avaniukini, bleaching agents
- The use of scuba gears for fishing
- Over-fishing or high pressure on reef fisheries
- Litter/Trash washed out from streams into the near-shore areas

#### **Effects:**

- Not enough fish for food consumption
- Unhealthy reef
- People will lack protein for their health

#### **Solutions:**

- Clean-Ups in villages
- Village regulations
- Awareness and Education
- Improve enforcement on fish size limit (eg. Lobster, seasonal fish)
- Regulations for outsiders
- Collaborative Management

#### **Actions:**

- Have clean-ups in villages in streams and beaches
- Improve village regulations for the protection of the environment and reef areas through well-organized village council
- Improve regulations and enforcement on fish size limit
- Develop and improve regulations to protect resources from outsiders
- Need to have village, government, and all stakeholders to work together

#### **WHO?**

- Village mayors, Office of Samoan Affairs, Public Health, Am. Samoa Power Authority, Environment Protection Agency, Coral Reef Advisory Group, Legislature, everyone

## Wednesday, April 23, 2005 – Central Side, PagoPago

**Number of Participants: 20**

### **Problem & Solution Tree:**

### **Protect and Conserve our Reef Fisheries**

#### **Problems:**

- Over-fishing/Increase pressure on the reef resources

#### **Causes:**

- Declined catches of fish and shellfish
- Corals have been damaged by fisheries
- The canneries' waste and oil
- The use of chemicals such as avaniukini and bleaching agents
- The use of destructive fishing methods
- Outsiders fishing in reef areas using destructive fishing methods
- Increase number of fishers and fish markets and their demands on resources
- Streams with litters and trash
- Village council not well organized in enforcing village regulations
- Lack of enforcement

#### **Effects:**

- Unhealthy reefs
- Fish such as the bigeye scad and lo are not common as before
- Palolo worms are contaminated
- People's health are affected
- Many resource users lack the information and knowledge on what is happening to the reef resources

#### **Solutions:**

- Develop regulations to control fishing
- Awareness and Education
- Develop regulations to control the amount of time spend in fishing (eg. license to fish)
- Develop regulations on the type of gears used for fishing
- Village regulations
- Improve enforcement from government and village
- Scientific research and study on fish and reef resources

#### **Actions:**

- Need to have villages and government work collaboratively on developing, managing, and facilitation activities in protecting our reef fisheries
- Need to develop and facilitate awareness and education programs in schools and villages
- Need to improve enforcement of village regulations with the assistance from the government (DMWR)
- Utilize the Community-based Fisheries Program to assist villages in establishing MPAs and management plans
- Need to establish a community network to work collaboratively with the government on resource management
- Need to identify authorities from each group of stakeholders to better understand the level of involvement in resource management

#### **WHO?**

- Everyone, government, Coral Reef Advisory Group, Legislature, villages, Office of Samoan Affairs, Public Health, Am. Samoa Power Authority, Police Department, Education Department, NOAA, SPREP, all stakeholders

## Thursday, April 24, 2005 – Western Side, PagoPago

Number of Participants: 12

### Problem & Solution Tree:

### Protect and Conserve our Reef Fisheries

#### Problems:

- Over-fishing/Increase pressure on the reef resources

#### Causes:

- The use of illegal and destructive fishing techniques/methods
- Trash in the streams washing out into the reefs
- Villages not enforcing village regulations
- Too many people fishing the reef areas
- Outsiders/ fishermen from other villages fishing illegally in village reefs
- Corals and other fish habitats have been damaged
- Lack of enforcement from both village and government
- Not enough education and awareness programs in villages or for fishermen

#### Effects:

- People's health are affected
- Unhealthy reefs
- Lack of financial support for those who depend on the resources for income
- People will continue with the problem on other resources because the declined fishery resources

#### Solutions:

- Establish marine protected areas through the assistance of the Community-based Fisheries Management Program
- Improve enforcement
- Improve education and awareness programs for fishermen and villages
- Develop regulation to control the amount time spent on fishing and the type of gears used
- Have government assist villages in improving enforcement

#### Actions:

- Community-based Fisheries Management Program should developed more activities on MPAs to have village buy-in to their program
- Villages need to have their leaders work together to improve enforcement of their regulations
- Fishermen and village should be informed and educated constantly on the status of the resources and management tools to improve the fisheries
- Government and villages should work together to develop and implement regulation that will control the amount of time spent on fishing and the type of gears used
- Need more government and villages collaboration on management efforts

#### WHO:

- Village mayors, Office of Samoan Affairs, Public Health, Am. Samoa Power Authority, Protection Agency, Coral Reef Advisory Group, NOAA, Samoa partners, Legislature, everyone