



Pacific Islands Region

Media Release

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January 21, 2010

NWHI Compensation Program for Commercial Lobster and Bottomfish Fishermen Complete

NOAA Fisheries Service announces the completion of a program that compensates Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) commercial bottomfish and lobster fishermen who were displaced by creation of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

Congress, under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008, appropriated \$6.5 million to provide relief to these fishermen. NOAA Fisheries Service compensated all of the fishermen who were authorized to fish for lobster or bottomfish in the NWHI when the Monument was created in 2006. The compensation was based on the economic value of their fishing permits.

The terms of accepting the compensation required all seven bottomfish and 15 lobster permit holders to surrender their federal fishing permits to reduce fishing capacity in the Monument. As a result, beginning in January 2010, the commercial fisheries for bottomfish and lobsters are permanently closed in the Monument.

According to State of Hawaii fisheries statistics, last year five fishing vessels were active and landed a total 63,249 lb of bottomfish from the NWHI. This was down from the annual average of roughly 250,000 pounds, which represented roughly 25% of the bottomfish consumed in Hawaii. The amount of bottomfish imported into Hawaii has steadily increased since 1990. The NWHI lobster fishery was closed from 2000 by the NOAA Fisheries Service due to the scientific uncertainty of the status of spiny and slipper lobster stocks, and it has remained closed since 2006, as a result of fishing prohibitions in the Monument.

In 2006, the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council recommended that displaced fishermen managed under the bottomfish and crustacean fishery management plans be compensated for lost income resulting from the establishment of the Monument. The recently-completed NOAA Fisheries Service compensation program implements that recommendation.

Papahānaumokuākea is cooperatively managed to ensure ecological integrity and achieve strong, long-term protection and perpetuation of Northwestern Hawaiian Island ecosystems, Native Hawaiian culture, and heritage resources for current and future generations. Three co-trustees – the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, and State of Hawaii, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Department of Land and Natural Resources – joined by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, protect this special place. For more information, please visit www.papahanaumokuakea.gov

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