

# F I S H E R I E S F A C T S H E E T

## COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS



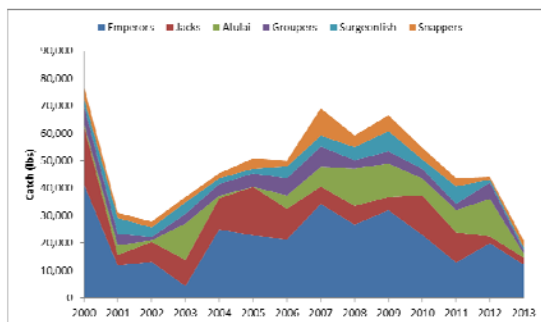
Fisheries in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) consist of shore-based and boat-based catches of coral reef and bottomfish species.

### Coral Reef Fisheries

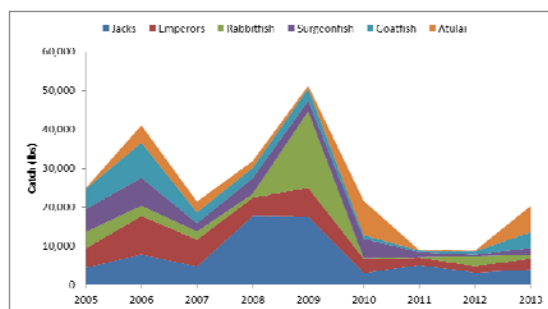
- Small-scale and important for subsistence, social and cultural purposes for food, trade and recreation
- Common shore-based fishing techniques include spearfishing, cast netting, hook and line, and gleaning
- Common boat-based fishing techniques include trolling, bottom-fishing, spearfishing, octopus hooking, cast netting
- Common shore-based reef fish caught: Surgeonfish, parrotfish, goatfish, groupers, wrasse
- Common shore-based techniques: hook and line, spearfishing, cast netting

### Bottomfish

- Occurs primarily around the islands and banks from Rota to Zealandia Bank north of Sarigan
- Primarily consists of small-scale local boats engaged in local commercial and subsistence fishing ( a few larger vessels do participate in the fishery)
- Two sectors: Deep water (>500 ft) and shallow water (100-500 ft)
- Deep water: commercial, targeting snappers and groupers
- Shallow water: commercial and subsistence, targeting the redgill emperor
- Gears: hand lines, home fabricated hand reels, electric reels (more common with the larger vessels)

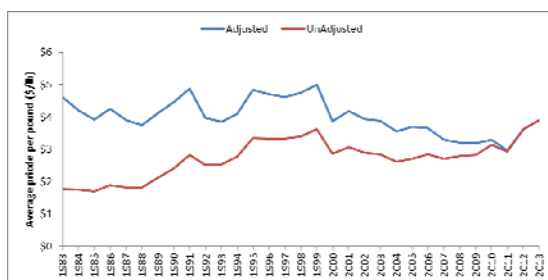
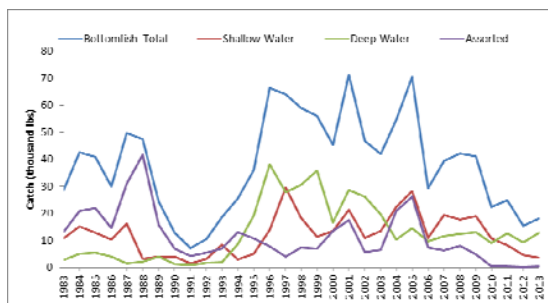


Catch composition of shore-based coral reef fisheries



Catch composition of boat-based coral reef fisheries

Catch composition (top) and average prices (bottom) of bottomfish fisheries



- Number of bottomfish fishermen has varied widely over the last 26 years but has ranged from a high of 100 fishermen in 1983 to a low of 21 fishermen in 2012.

Data Source: Draft WPRFMC 2014 Annual Archipelagic Fishery Ecosystem Report (in press)



## Management

### FEDERAL

- Bottomfish permit, logbooks and reporting
- Closed areas for bottomfish by vessel size
- Annual Catch Limits
- Essential Fish Habitat and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
- Special Coral Reef Ecosystem Permits
- Mariana Trench Marine National Monument



### Current Fishery Issues

- Effects of Typhoon Souledour
- U.S. Military Training
- Marianas Trench Marine National Monument



**Annual Catch Limits:** The reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 2006 required the Regional Fishery Management Councils to specify annual catch limits (ACLs) for species described in the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plans. ACL is a quota-based management to regulate catches to sustainable levels estimated by stock assessments conducted on various stock under Council management. There are 115 species and species complexes specified for the Western Pacific Region. For more information, browse the Council website

([www.wpcouncil.org](http://www.wpcouncil.org))

| Management Unit Species                                | 2015 ACL                 | 2016 ACL                 | 2017 ACL                 | 2018 ACL                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bottomfish                                             | 228,000                  | 228,000                  | 228,000                  | TBD                      |
| <b>Coral Reef Species Complex</b>                      |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| <i>Selar crumenophthalmus</i> – atalai or bigeye scad  | 77,400                   | 77,400                   | 77,400                   | 77,400                   |
| Acanthuridae – surgeonfish                             | 302,600                  | 302,600                  | 302,600                  | 302,600                  |
| Carangidae – jacks                                     | 44,900                   | 44,900                   | 44,900                   | 44,900                   |
| Crustacean – crabs                                     | 4,400                    | 4,400                    | 4,400                    | 4,400                    |
| Holocentridae – squirrelfish                           | 66,100                   | 66,100                   | 66,100                   | 66,100                   |
| Kyphosidae – chubs/rudderfish                          | 22,700                   | 22,700                   | 22,700                   | 22,700                   |
| Labridae – wrasses <sup>1</sup>                        | 55,100                   | 55,100                   | 55,100                   | 55,100                   |
| Lethrinidae – emperors                                 | 53,700                   | 53,700                   | 53,700                   | 53,700                   |
| Lutjanidae – snappers                                  | 190,400                  | 190,400                  | 190,400                  | 190,400                  |
| Mollusks – turbo snail, octopus, giant clams           | 9,800                    | 9,800                    | 9,800                    | 9,800                    |
| Mugilidae – mullets                                    | 4,500                    | 4,500                    | 4,500                    | 4,500                    |
| Mullidae – goatfish                                    | 28,400                   | 28,400                   | 28,400                   | 28,400                   |
| Scaridae – parrotfish <sup>2</sup>                     | 144,000                  | 144,000                  | 144,000                  | 144,000                  |
| Serranidae – groupers                                  | 86,900                   | 86,900                   | 86,900                   | 86,900                   |
| Siganidae – rabbitfish                                 | 10,200                   | 10,200                   | 10,200                   | 10,200                   |
| All Other CREMUS Combined                              | 7,300                    | 7,300                    | 7,300                    | 7,300                    |
| <i>Chelinus undulatus</i> – humphead (Napoleon) wrasse | 2,009                    | 2,009                    | 2,009                    | 2,009                    |
| <i>Bombomtopon muricatum</i> – bumphead parrotfish     | 797 (CNMI & GU combined) | 797 (CNMI & GU combined) | 797 (CNMI & GU combined) | 797 (CNMI & GU combined) |
| Carcharhinidae – reef sharks                           | 5,600                    | 5,600                    | 5,600                    | 5,600                    |
| <b>Crustacean complex</b>                              |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Deepwater shrimp                                       | 275,570                  | 275,570                  | 275,570                  | 275,570                  |
| Spiny lobsters                                         | 7,410                    | 7,410                    | 7,410                    | 7,410                    |
| Slipper lobsters                                       | 60                       | 60                       | 60                       | 60                       |
| Kona crab                                              | 6,300                    | 6,300                    | 6,300                    | 6,300                    |
| <b>Precious coral complex</b>                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Black corals                                           | 2,100                    | 2,100                    | 2,100                    | 2,100                    |
| Precious corals in the exploratory beds                | 2,205                    | 2,205                    | 2,205                    | 2,205                    |

### Council's Fishery Development

- Co-hosted an aquaculture workshop in Saipan to assist the CNMI in developing a sustainable aquaculture fishery
- Provided funding to start up a fishermen's cooperative and fish market
- Conducted projects to improve fishery data collection through creel surveys and biosampling
- Developed a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a longline dock in Saipan
- Provided master fishermen workshop training to CNMI fishermen

### Future Priorities for CNMI Fisheries

- Develop the infrastructure needed for fisheries
- Improve the aids to navigation at harbors and waterways
- Develop a sustainable aquaculture fishery in the CNMI

