

**JOB PROGRESS REPORT
RESEARCH PROJECT SEGMENT**

STATE: Territory of Guam

PROJECT NO.: F-1R-8
SUB-PROJECT NO.: F-1
STUDY NO.: 1
JOB NO.: 1

STUDY: Fisheries Participation, Effort, and Harvest Surveys

JOB TITLE: Offshore Fisheries Survey

PERIOD COVERED: October 1, 2000 to September 30, 2001

OBJECTIVE:

To perform 192 surveys over a one (1) year period at the three largest boat launching facilities on island to obtain information including boating activity, fishermen participation, catch per unit effort, and species composition.

RESULTS:

The Offshore fisheries surveys include eight (8) creel survey days and four (4) participation survey days per month. The creel surveys are conducted at the three most frequently used boat launching facilities: the Agana Boat Basin, the Agat Marina, and the Merizo boat ramp, while the participation surveys are conducted by driving along a prescribed route around the island to count vehicle trailers. Fisheries information acquired during the creel surveys include participation, effort, catch, and bycatch.

During FY/01, all surveys necessary for the offshore data expansion were completed. The data acquired by Fisheries staff is of high quality, with all staff able to identify over 90% of the fish caught to the species level. The Offshore expansion program continues to operate adequately with the assistance of the Honolulu Laboratory of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The database program has the flexibility to add new features to explore and analyse new trends in the fishery, and technical assistance by NMFS continues to be exceptional.

Problems, however, have occurred with data collection efforts. Negative feedback from the implementation of Guam's Marine preserves, attempts by DAWR to manage Guam's marine resources, and the amount of time necessary to adequately survey large catches have made it difficult this calendar year to obtain complete biological data with some fishermen, especially those considered highliners. This includes data on boat-based fisheries that are both economically important and experiencing significant fishing pressure: pelagic trolling, spearfishing, and bottomfishing. Staff, however, continue to

obtain the best possible data. Data summaries will be published in the FY/01 DAWR Annual Report.

There are several recommendations that would improve the ability of the offshore fisheries survey to estimate catch by boat-based fishermen. First, reconciliatory efforts by DAWR's management to the Guam's Fishermen's Coop and its membership should be pursued in the near future. The Coop and its 300-plus membership represent a significant group of fishermen, especially highliners, who have refused to voluntarily provide information. To continue on without their support could affect the reliability of the offshore creel survey data. Second, opportunistic sampling of Ylig should be considered since this port, although seasonal, represents a significant amount of effort and catch with spearfishing and bottomfishing that has developed recently. Lastly, effective efforts should be made to make fisheries data reporting mandatory. Mandatory reporting, especially by highliners, would provide a more accurate picture of the impact of fishing on a resource considered economically and culturally important. Further refusal by fishermen to provide information could possibly impact the reliability of the offshore data.

PROJECT COST: \$97,650

Report prepared by: Thomas Flores, Jr.