

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

ELEVENTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES

(Noumea, New Caledonia, 5-10 December 1979)

COUNTRY STATEMENT - AMERICAN SAMOA

The foreign fleet supplying tuna to the Starkist and Van Camp canneries has increased in size to approximately 80 Korean longline vessels, 70 Taiwanese longline vessels and six U.S. purse seiners. Additional fish are landed by carrier vessel from Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Palau. Last year the cannery fleet landed about 60,000 tons of tunas and 4,300 tons of miscellaneous species.

The domestic commercial fleet consists of about 11 vessels 20-40 ft in length. This fleet landed about 50 tons of fish last year of which tuna were the predominant species but which also included a substantial catch of bottomfishes.

Four ongoing programs are carried out by the 14 Samoans and two expatriates comprising the staff of the Office of Marine Resources:

1. Topminnows (*Poecilia mexicana*) have been cultured for the past six years and have been used for polyculture of this species in conjunction with rabbitfish and penaeid shrimp.
2. Technical assistance is provided to assist local fishermen through specialized training programs and with the acquisition and maintenance of gear and vessels. Hydraulic line haulers and electric bottom fishing reels have been supplied with the understanding that the gear will be purchased by the fishermen if significant catches result. A Western Samoa-built "Alia" is available for loan to fishermen for a three-to-six month period to enable them to earn enough to purchase their own boat.
3. The Fishery Investigation Program has resulted in the collection of catch-effort data from subsistence and recreational fishermen, a survey of pelagic sportfish resources, the preparation of a checklist of Samoan fishes and the characterization of shallow-water fish communities associated with major marine habitats.
4. Catch-effort data are collected from the foreign and domestic commercial fleets.

Fish aggregation bouys were recently anchored in ten locations and will be monitored to determine their effectiveness. Future projects include the acquisition and operation of a 56 ft fiberglass vessel to be used for training and development of new fisheries, and the design and construction of a fisheries complex to include docking, processing and marketing facilities.