

Country statement: Palau

Original: English

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Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

11th SPC Heads of fisheries Meeting, 11–15 March 2019, Noumea, New Caledonia

11^e Conférence des Directeurs des pêches de la CPS, 11–15 mars 2019, Nouméa, Nouvelle-Calédonie



Palau would like to thank SPC for its generous support in the preparation and printing of the Bureau of Marine Resource's (BMR's) 2017 Annual Report, the development of the National Anchored FAD Strategic Plan, and its assistance with a socio-economic survey done in partnership with The Nature Conservancy.

One of Palau's primary concerns is the successful implementation of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS) by 2020. While substantial progress has been made, much work remains to be done including:

- Pilot projects for, and the development of, an ecologically and socio-economically sustainable domestic pelagic fishery, which may include small-scale fishing around anchored FADs, sports & tourism fishing, pole and line, and a locally-owned and operated longline fishery;
- The development of the Oceanic Fisheries Management Plan (underway, due for completion in Sept 2019), including the future of electronic monitoring in Palau;
- The development of revised regulations concerning fishing in the PNMS (domestic fishing zone) from 2020 onwards (due Sept 2019);
- Addressing public concerns about the loss of revenue that will result from the significant decrease in longline tuna fishing by both locally based, foreign-owned companies and distant water fishing nations.

Regarding Coastal Fisheries, the following priorities have been identified for the next year:

- New regulations and updates to the Marine Protection Act (draft by late March, pass by June 2019):
 - Update aquarium fish licensing, reporting, collection and export regulations
 - Update licensing and reporting for all coastal commercial fisheries, including purchase reporting
 - New size limits and limits on landings based on recommendations from TNC
 - 10-year ban on collection, harvest, sale and export of giant clam, *Tridacna gigas*
 - Ban on collection, harvest, sale and export of black-lip pearl oyster (*Pinctada margaritifera*), precious coral (*Corallium elatius* and *C. konojoi*) and black coral (*Antipatharia* spp.)
- Aquaculture development:
 - Rabbitfish Pilot Project: with assistance from partners, cages have been deployed and stocked in 4 States for 6 farmers. This year, 3 more cages each will be deployed in 2 more States.
 - Palau Mariculture Demonstration Center: *Tridacna deresa* and *T. crocea* – larval tanks are currently full. The goal is to harvest the larval tanks by Fall and distribute the seedlings to local farmers
 - Enable agreement to target mangrove clam as a new aquaculture species
- Assessing effectiveness of FAD network:
 - Assess the effectiveness of the Anchored FAD network and to target other pelagic species (in addition to tuna) near FADs