Western Pacific Stock Assessment Review of the 2025 Stock Assessment Update for the Bottomfish Management Unit Species Complex in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)

Short Description: A stock assessment update for the CNMI bottomfish complex.

Scientists from the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center updated the stock assessment of the CNMI bottomfish complex. Since this is an update there were no changes to the operating model and parameterization. The assessment update added more years of catch data from 2018 to 2023.

This assessment update maintained all components similar to the 2019 benchmark assessment including selection of datasets, data filtering, catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) standardization, stock assessment model, and model fitting. Estimated annual catch and catch variance for 2000–2017 were taken directly from the 2019 benchmark stock assessment, and the update years 2018–2023 were estimated using an identical approach and added to the existing catch time series. For the CPUE timeseries, the boat-based creel survey interviews from 2000–2017 that were used in the 2019 benchmark assessment were pooled with boat-based creel survey interviews from 2018–2023 and used to calculate the standardized CPUE index.

This update stock assessment provides estimates of annual exploitable stock biomass and harvest rate, both in absolute values and relative to the maximum sustainable yield-based management reference points specified for the BMUS of CNMI. The Bayesian 95% posterior density of 2023 stock status suggests BMUS in CNMI were not overfished and were not experiencing overfishing in 2023.

NOAA Fisheries and the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council announced the review of the 2025 Stock Assessment Update for the CNMI Bottomfish Complex in the Federal Register on March 20, 2025.

Additional Info:
Date: April 2 – 3, 2025 (HST) / April 3- 4, 2025 (ChST)
Time: 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm (HST) / 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Location: virtual

Schedule:

Wednesday, April 2, 2025 (1 – 5 pm Hawaii Standard Time)
Thursday, April 3, 2025 (9:00 am – 1 pm Chamorro Standard Time)

1. Introduction
2. Review objectives and terms of reference
3. Review of stock assessment updates
4. Summary of comments and analysis during desktop phase
5. Questions to presenters
6. Public comment

Thursday, April 3, 2025 (1 – 5 pm Hawaii Standard Time)
Friday, April 4, 2025 (9 am – 1 pm Chamorro Standard Time)

7. Panel presentation on the review results and recommendations
8. Questions to reviewers
9. Public comment
10. Closing comments and adjourn