

# Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority



# MIMRA

## Annual Report FY2017

Marshall Islands  
**Marine**  
**Resources**  
Authority



# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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Cover photo: Francisco Blaha.

Inside and back cover photos: Benedict Yamamura, Emma Kabua-Tibon, Lyla Lemari, Karen Earnshaw, Francisco Blaha, Rebecca Lathrop, Hilary Hosia, and Kelly Lorennij.

# Acting locally benefits the Marshalls internationally

Management and sustainable development of our ocean resources took a big step forward in 2017 with the holding of the First National Oceans Symposium. This event brought together national government leaders and officials, mayors and other local government representatives, students, non-government organization representatives, and members of the public. The National Oceans Symposium outcomes represent wide stakeholder input into national oceans governance issues and commitments to addressing these issues.

The Symposium led to formulation of the first National Oceans Policy, which lays the foundation for sustainable management and use of our marine resources and the fragile eco-systems on which these are based.

The Marshall Islands' National Ocean Policy starts with our "Governance Vision," which states: "As a large ocean nation with a rich history in sustaining and being sustained by the resources of the sea, we commit to ensuring that our resilience in the face of global oceans challenges endures for generations to come."

The National Oceans Policy focuses in four main areas: Sustainable Fisheries, Climate Change Impacts, Marine Pollution, and Coral Reefs and Marine Protected Areas. Critical to the success of our National Oceans Policy is the "Implementation Plan for the National Guiding Principles to Sustain and be Sustained by Our Ocean and Coral Reefs" that was developed in tandem with the National Oceans Policy. This lays out our roadmap for implementing and enforcing sustainable development practices in the Marshall Islands.

The Policy and the Implementation Plan are the essential guides to a healthy future for our marine resources, which translates directly into a healthy nation that depends on these resources. These two documents help the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority and

Message from Dennis Momotaro, Chairman of the MIMRA Board of Directors and Minister of Natural Resources and Commerce.



## BOARD MEMBERS

**Permanent:** Minister of Natural Resources and Commerce Dennis Momotaro, Vice-Chair Bobby Muller, Tommy Kijiner Jr., Danny Wase, Moriana Philip, Rina Keju, and Sa'ane Aho.

its many partners to focus actions and resources in key areas of need.

At the regional level, the National Oceans Policy is an essential guide to our ongoing membership in and benefits from the fisheries rights-based organization Parties to the Nauru Agreement. Our National Oceans Policy also guides us as we engage with fisheries management organizations including the Forum Fisheries Agency, Pacific Community (SPC),

and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

At the international level, our National Oceans Policy is part of a call by Pacific Island nations for global action on our oceans with particular focus on eradicating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing that undermines sustainable management of these resources. It supports implementation of many of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals endorsed by world leaders as part of Agenda 2030: SGG 14 "Life Below Water," SDG 16 "Climate Action," SDG 2 "Zero Hunger," and SDG 3 "Good Health and Well-Being" as well as others.

Our Oceans roadmap clearly defines our sustainable management and development goals for the Marshall Islands. To effectively implement the National Oceans Policy, MIMRA and its partners outlined the six essential areas in need of focus and funding:

- Legal and Regulatory.
- Human Resources/Capacity Development.
- Public Awareness and Education.
- Data Collection, Management and Information Sharing.
- New Projects/Conservation, Management and Livelihoods.
- Networking and Establishing Partnerships.

We encourage our partners and donor countries and agencies to engage with MIMRA to increase the pace of implementation of our National Oceans Policy. Implementing these objectives domestically will bring many benefits to the Marshall Islands and its people, as well as contribute to supporting important global Sustainable Development Goals.

This year's annual report includes additional information on the 2017 First National Oceans Symposium, as well as the numerous programs and activities of the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority during the year

**Dennis Momotaro**

# Making coastal 'right'

The Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority's engagement in the commercial tuna industry generated another year of record-breaking revenue. This is the result, principally, of membership in the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) and management of the purse seine industry through its Vessel Day Scheme (VDS). Simply put, we would not be where we are in terms of sustainable management of the purse seine fishery and the financial benefits this is bringing were it not for PNA. In 2017, PNA nations continued to progress implementation of a VDS for the longline industry, a fishery that for decades has been in need of management and control.

There are still uncertainties in the Oceanic fishery due to deficiencies in provision of catch data by distant water fishing nations and ability to collect data in certain sectors of the Oceanic fishery. These, however, have been greatly reduced over the past several years through ongoing improvements in management of the commercial tuna fishery.

While there are still areas in the Oceanic fishery in need of improvement, the foundation through VDS management is in place. This guarantees sustainable use and revenue streams to the Marshall Islands and other PNA members.

The hosting by MIMRA of the First National Oceans Symposium in 2017 helped to focus attention on marine resources and needs generally — and in particular, domestic fisheries development and marine conservation needs of our atolls and islands. The establishment of a National Oceans Policy and Implementation Plan from the Symposium is probably the most important development in fisheries and oceans management since passage by Nitijela (Parliament) of the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Act of 1997.

The National Oceans Symposium

Message from Glen Joseph, Director, Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority.



'An essential element for implementing action in the Coastal fishery is translating surveys and analysis of ocean and marine resource health into management decisions.'

put the spotlight on marine resources and management, with domestic development and sustainability a focus of the discussions. It is essential that we begin to effectively manage our domestic marine resources. In late

2015, Nitijela adopted the Protected Areas Network (PAN) Act. But this important plan for managing our domestic ocean resources, particularly on remote outer islands, has not been implemented. The National Oceans Implementation Plan identifies six areas for action on the new National Oceans Policy, which includes plans to put the PAN legislation into action.

An essential, but largely missing element, for implementing action in the Coastal fishery at the domestic level is translating surveys and analysis of ocean and marine resource health into management decisions. We need to more effectively bridge the gap between science and management.

This is particularly important in light of ongoing climate-related coral bleaching events or development-related events such as algae blooms on our reefs.

# is the key to success



Coastal staff Emma Kabua-Tibon and Kalena deBrum conducting regular coral reef monitoring in Majuro under a NOAA Coral Reef Monitoring Grant. Right: MIMRA hatchery technician Clyde extracting zooxanthellae from a clam's mantle.



Coastal fisheries is increasingly gaining a higher profile, not only within MIMRA but nationwide. Our Coastal Division increased the number of outer islands visited this year in line with implementing the Reimaanlok (Looking to the Future) Process of developing and implementing sustainable marine resource management plans with local governments and the remote communities they represent. This has been an under-resourced area of activity, but in 2017 began receiving greater attention, through such developments as the First National Oceans Symposium and MIMRA's outer islands visits.

A key element in developing sustainable management plans and activities is collecting quality data and linking this data to management decisions. MIMRA has started this process. But more work is needed to generate a steady flow of quality data that can

'A key element in developing sustainable management plans and activities is collecting quality data and linking this data to management decisions.'

be used to produce sound management that sustains our resources for future generations, as well as benefiting the current generation.

MIMRA believes that the National Oceans Policy and Implementation

Plan sets out a roadmap for successful management of our marine resources. As was emphasized during the First National Oceans Symposium in 2017, implementing sustainable oceans management is not alone the responsibility of MIMRA.

This requires the active participation of everyone in the Marshall Islands, from elected national and local leadership, to national and local government agencies, non-governmental organizations, students, businesses, and the community as a whole.

The National Oceans Policy and action plan are in place, as is the Protected Areas Network legislation. Now it's time for all of us to push ahead with the important work of implementing these important plans. Our future depends on it.

Glen Joseph



# Communities involved in

# running coastal fisheries

**M**IMRA's Coastal and Community Affairs Division carries out a wide range of activities in support of sustainable management and development of the domestic fishery, including aquaculture, particularly focused on remote outer islands. These activities include:

- Engagement with local governments and the communities they represent to develop marine resource management plans as part of the Reimaanlok (Looking to the Future) process, a major initiative of MIMRA over recent past years to engage with and activate local communities to take ownership of their marine resources through sustainable fisheries management plans.
- Outreach education to schools in Majuro to increase elementary and high school students' awareness of the importance of protecting and enhancing marine resources.

'Outreach education to schools in Majuro increased elementary and high school students' awareness of the importance of protecting and enhancing marine resources.'

- Support for national engagement programs such as the first National Oceans Symposium held in 2017.
- Conduct of a wide-range of research activity, from underwater surveys to determine the condition of coral reefs and their eco-systems and community surveys to gauge awareness of the community and

knowledge of traditional practices, to specific research on ciguatera fish poisoning and developing a "National Radioactivity Monitoring Capacity" through a program supported by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

- Provision and maintenance of targeted fish aggregating devices (FADs) around Majuro Atoll for the benefit of local fishermen.
- Management of two fish markets on Majuro and Kwajalein that link with outer island fishers and fish bases to deliver fish to these markets in the two urban centers of the Marshall Islands.
- A maintenance and repair program for MIMRA's fleet of ocean transport vessels; Majuro and Ebeye fish markets; Arno and Likiep giant clam hatcheries and a hatchery in Woja, Majuro; a radio network system; fish bases on Wotje, Arno and Ine, Arno sub-fish base; small fish-

ing boats provided to support local commercial fishing on remote islands; and MIMRA vehicles.

- Supervision and regulation of marine ornamental exports from the Marshall Islands, which include live fish and corals for overseas aquarium markets.
- Oversight of harvests and exports of sea cucumbers and aquarium fisheries based on policies adopted by the Marshall Islands national government.

The Coastal Division's partnership with the Coastal Management Advisory Committee (CMAC) brings together a broad range of agencies and people involved in all aspects of fisheries, marine resource management and climate programs. This collaborative approach is essential to developing successful and effective sustainable management of domestic marine resources.

Community-based consultations

'The World Bank's Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP) assisted the Coastal Division to expand its Reimaanlok work on the outer islands in 2017.'

leading to development of sustainable marine resource management plans continued in Majuro Atoll and expanded to new outer islands in 2017, building on successful engagement with outer islands in previous years. The Coastal Division's step-by-step process of engaging with local communities is the core program

of Reimaanlok. The partnership that develops over time between MIMRA and these communities through the Reimaanlok process helps empower local communities to identify needs, problems and solutions for sustainable resource management.

The Reimaanlok process links directly to Marshall Islands commitments to the Micronesia Challenge, a regional effort to ensure that 30 percent of near-shore marine resources and 20 percent of land areas are under effective conservation management by 2020.

The World Bank's Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP) assisted the Coastal Division to expand its Reimaanlok work on the outer islands in 2017. PROP is a multi-year capacity-building program for fisheries management in the Marshall Islands and three other Pacific nations.

With support of the International



The Arno and Likiep giant clam hatcheries are now back in action thanks to assistance from OFCF.

# Clam hatcheries revived

Atomic Energy Agency, Coastal staff continued research on causes of ciguatera fish poisoning on outer islands. In response to a request from the local government at Ailinglaplap Atoll, Coastal staff undertook a survey to sample fish in the atoll, which were subsequently brought to Majuro for laboratory analysis. This allowed MIMRA to share information with the Ailinglaplap community about fish containing ciguatera toxins in their lagoon.

Marine ornamentals — primarily aquarium fish, but also including coral and giant clams — were exported by three companies in the Marshall islands to Asia, Europe and the United States.

The Flame Angel continues to be the highest-demand fish in the aquarium trade, accounting for 62 percent of the ornamental fish ex-

‘The Outer Islands Fish Market Center (OIFMC) in Majuro made over 40 trips to outer islands to purchase fish from outer island fishers, about the same number as in 2016.’

ported in the FY2017 period. For the first time, the amount of aquarium fish exported topped the 100,000 mark.

The Outer Islands Fish Market Center (OIFMC) in Majuro made over 40 trips to outer islands to purchase fish from outer island fishers,

about the same number as in 2016.

Trips to outer islands from the Kwajalein Atoll Fish Market Center (KAFMC) were limited, but the KAFMC was able to purchase fish from several outer islands and engaged with Kwajalein fishers to purchase their catches.

Through extensive maintenance work, in cooperation with the Japan Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation (OFCF), the Coastal Division was able to return the Arno and Likiep giant clam hatcheries to operation.

In addition, the maintenance program worked to keep the small fleet of vessels operational to facilitate fish-purchasing trips to outer islands.

In addition, ongoing maintenance continued to keep various outer island fish bases functioning, including ice-making capacity.



# Marketing fish in Majuro

## FISH MARKETS

The Coastal Division in Majuro conducted 41 trips to outer islands to buy fish, nearly the same as in 2016, when 43 trips were made. The fish purchased from different outer islands is sold by MIMRA’s Outer Islands Fish Market Center (OIFMC) in Majuro.

The volume of fish brought in from outer islands increased in 2017 compared to the previous year, as did payments to outer island fishers. OIFMC revenue from fish sales increased 19 percent over the previous year, from \$140,130 to \$166,904. Payments to all of the outer islands providing fish to OIFMC have averaged \$130,185 annually 2015-2017.

The visits by OIFMC vessels not only picked up fish and injected significant amounts of money into these remote island communities, the trips also provided transportation options for islanders going to and from the seven outer atolls served during 2017.

OIFMC purchased fish from Arno (26 trips), Aur (6 trips), Maloelap (5 trips), and Jaluit, Likiep, Namu, and Wotje (one trip each). Arno fishers received \$90,303 for 99,938 pounds of fish; Jaluit fishers received \$2,819 for 3,821 pounds of fish; Maloelap fishers received \$13,443 for 12,985 pounds of fish; Aur fishers received \$16,655 for 15,855 pounds of fish; Likiep fishers received \$1,939 for 1,867 pounds of fish; Namu fishers received \$2,000 for 2,905 pounds of fish; and Wotje fishers received \$3,743 for 2,495 pounds of fish.

The monetary benefits that the fishermen of these eight atolls received directly totaled \$130,905 for the 139,866 pounds of fish purchased.

The OIFMC continues to enforce quality and size limits on the fish that are brought in from the outer islands and



An elementary class visits the Outer Islands Fish Market Center in Uliga.

Atoll	Lbs. Purchased	Price	Lbs. Sold	Sales \$
Arno	99,938	\$90,303	52,262	\$113,658
Aur	15,855	\$16,655	10,268	\$23,836
Maloelap	12,985	\$13,443	7,899	\$15,477
Namu	2,905	\$2,000	2,801	\$4,201
Jaluit	3,821	\$2,819	1,397	\$2,858
Likiep	1,867	\$1,939	1,796	\$3,353
Wotje	2,495	\$3,743	1,715	\$3,521
<b>Total</b>	<b>139,866</b>	<b>\$130,902</b>	<b>78,138</b>	<b>\$166,904</b>

with fuel costs remaining high, OIFMC has also initiated grouping atolls in one trip to maximize the amount of fish per trip landed on Majuro. Although the number of trips to individual atolls has decreased for some, the total number of trips made by OIFMC vessels totaled 41 in 2017, nearly equal to the 43 in 2016.

Improvements are ongoing to pro-

mote efficiency throughout the entire cycle of the OIFMC’s outer islands fish system, including fish collection and distribution activities on trips to the outer islands, transportation to the OIFMC, sorting and re-weighing, value adding to products, facility security and safety, accounting procedures, and sales to customers.



# Fuel costs hurt Kwajalein

## FISH MARKETS

Trips to purchase fish from outer islands have remained limited for the Kwajalein Atoll Fish Market Center (KAFMC). Although the KAFMC has a vessel to use for trips to its fish base partners in the outer islands, due to limited availability and high cost of fuel on Ebeye, visits have been inconsistent. Another constraint faced by KAFMC is that maintenance on its vessel must be performed in Majuro, which increases time out of service.

Nonetheless KAFMC continues to supply limited amounts of fish to the Ebeye community through direct purchase of fish and local produce from Namu, Ailinglaplap, Ailuk, Likiep and Ebeye fishers as well as providing assistance in fuel and ice provisions.

During FY2017, KAFMC picked up fish and local produce from Namu (2 trips) and from Likiep and Ailinglaplap (one trip each). It also made 12 trips to purchase fish from Kwajalein fishers. Fishers on Namu received \$3,304 for 3529 pounds of fish and \$1,251 for local produce; fishers on Likiep received \$1,259 for 1,347 pounds of fish and \$183 for local produce; and fishers on Ailinglaplap received \$390 for local produce.

In addition, Kwajalein fishers received \$13,107 for 9,264 pounds of fish and \$1,902 for local produce. The financial benefit to these communities from KAFMC totaled \$17,670 for 14,140 pounds of fish and \$3,727 for local produce.

KAFMC continued operations in a limited capacity in 2017 by selling fish and local produce purchased from various outer islands, as well as ice and other commodities.

It continues to look for avenues to secure fuel purchases to allow for regular trips to the outer islands to purchase fish and local produce from the fish base communities of Likiep, Ailinglaplap, Namu and Ailuk.



The Kwajalein Atoll Fish Market Center.

### Kwajalein Atoll Fish Market Center

Atoll	Lbs. Purchased	Price	Local Produce Purchased
Namu	3,529	\$3,304	\$1,251
Likiep	1,347	\$1,259	\$184
Ailinglaplap	0	0	\$390
Kwajalein	9,264	\$13,107	\$1,902
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,140</b>	<b>\$17,670</b>	<b>\$3,727</b>

### Outer Islands Fish Bought and Sold by OIFMC\* Majuro 2015-2017

Year	Lbs. Purchased	Price	Lbs. Sold	Sales \$
2015	109,874	\$129,306	81,914	\$157,924
2016	102,992	\$130,349	68,088	\$140,130
2017	139,866	\$130,902	78,138	\$166,904

\*Outer Islands Fish Market Center, Majuro;



# Japan alliance key to servicing

The Coastal Division oversees a significant amount of infrastructure that supports domestic fisheries and aquaculture development. The Coastal Division oversees a significant amount of infrastructure that supports domestic fisheries and aquaculture development. Regular maintenance and repair work is essential to the operation of Coastal Division fish market vessels, MIMRA-provided fishing boats on remote outer islands, fish bases that support coastal commercial fishing on outer islands, radio communications linking the OIFMC and KAFMC with outer islands fishers, and outer island aquaculture hatcheries.

FY2017 was no different from the previous year, with ongoing work to maintain this domestic fishing infrastructure.

A key for MIMRA for over 25 years has been its partnership with the Japan Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation (OFCF). OFCF launched a Fisheries Development Assistance for Pacific Island Nations (FDAPIN) project in 1992 in the Marshall Islands. Starting in 1995, FDAPIN II was implemented for five years, consisting of assistance ranging from repairs and restoration of fisheries related facilities to skills, technology and knowledge being transferred to MIMRA staff. Each year, during the annual OFCF Japan/Pacific Island Nations Fisheries Directors Meeting on Fisheries Cooperation, OFCF receives requests from each country for FDAPIN projects.

After conducting field surveys and consultation with each government, the



A Japan Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation mechanic works with MIMRA.

## OFCF PARTNERSHIP

scope of the projects are developed and are followed by a drafting and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding and Implementation Plan.

In 2017, the following MIMRA requests were implemented:

- Replacement and repair of KAFMC radio network system
- Maintenance and repair of MIMRA transport vessels
- Maintenance and repair of MIMRA ice plants
- Provision of advise for management of MIMRA fish bases on outer islands.

In addition to maintenance work on ice plants and transport vessels, MIMRA requested assistance for repair of its crane truck, and maintenance and repair of Arno Atoll Giant Clam Hatchery.

In addition to OFCF support for needed maintenance programs, MIMRA's budget provided funding to ensure that dry-dock and maintenance service for all MIMRA fish transport vessels was conducted in 2017. This included the vessels Jolok, Timur, Jebro, Lentanir and Laintok.

The Coastal Division assisted with numerous other maintenance needs in support of local fishing operations:

- Repairs to three community boats on outer Islands
  - Maintenance and repair on the Wotje and Namu fish bases
  - Maintenance and repair of ice machines and outboard engines for outer islands
  - Maintenance and repair on Arno Island fish base and Ine Island sub-fish base
  - Building repairs to Majuro facilities
  - Maintenance and repair at OIFMC, including ice machines and refrigeration
  - Regular OIFMC equipment maintenance and inspection
  - Maintenance and repair on Loto Giant Clam Hatchery on Likiep Atoll, including raceway tank maintenance
  - Assistance to Likiep Atoll Aquaculture Association with raceway tank construction
  - Maintenance and repair on Woja Hatchery in Majuro including building repairs and ground clearing for proposed new tanks
  - Maintenance and repair on Arno Giant Clam Hatchery.
- In addition, Coastal Division mechanics provided vehicle maintenance and repairs for eight MIMRA vehicles.



Participants at the First National Oceans Symposium held in Majuro in 2017.

# Talks result in policy guide for sustainable oceans use

## NATIONAL OCEANS SYMPOSIUM



Many presentations and exhibits during the First National Oceans Symposium generated interest and attention from participants.



The First National Oceans Symposium was held April 3-5, 2017 at the International Convention Center in Majuro. This was an initiative of President Hilda Heine to gather stakeholders from all levels of government and civil society to inform National Leadership on priorities, key areas of concern, and desired outcomes arising from the Marshall Islands' ongoing participation in international ocean and marine-related meetings.

The four themes of the Symposium were Sustainable Fisheries, Climate Change Impacts, Marine Pollution, and Coral Reefs and Marine Protected Areas. These were organized into two con-

current sessions: Community meetings open to the general public and Leaders' Summit limited to the mayors and council members from local governments and representatives from the National Government.

The Symposium was attended by hundreds of people in the community — traditional leaders, teachers, students, representatives of non-government organizations, government departments and businesses, and national and local leaders.

The National Oceans Symposium produced a policy guide for sustainable use of the nation's oceans: "National Guiding Principles to Sustain and

be Sustained by Our Ocean and Coral Reefs." This document provides a set of policy directives to the national government and communicates priorities and activities of the Marshall Islands at the international level.

An implementation plan for the National Oceans Symposium "National Guiding Principles" was drafted by MIMRA and its key partners and stakeholders.

Following the National Oceans Symposium, MIMRA continued working with its many partners on the National Oceans Summit Implementation Plan, which is expected to be built into relevant agency and department work plans.



# United Nations summit focus on sustainable development

## CALL FOR GLOBAL ACTION

Representatives of MIMRA joined with the Marshall Islands delegation to the United Nations Oceans Conference held June 5-9, 2017. This important international summit focused on identifying ways and means to mobilize action to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 — "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources."

The UN conference included plenary meetings, partnership dialogues and a special event commemorating World Oceans Day. Outcomes of the event included:

- Adoption of a "Call for Action" reconfirming commitment to the implementation of SDG 14 within the context of 2030 Agenda and resource mobilization.
- 1,300 voluntary commitments, which included four from the Marshall Islands, that cover a wide range of topics including creation of marine protected areas, action on plastic pollution, scientific research and capacity building.
- Key messages from partnership dialogues, which facilitated knowledge and experience sharing related to SDG 14.

The four voluntary actions registered by the Marshall Islands during the United Nations conference were:



The Marshall Islands ramped up its local and international work in 2017. Left: The then-Minister Mike Halferty speaks on oceans at the United Nations. Below, MIMRA staff Eunice Bolero with oceans writing contest winner Kelly Lorenij.



- Implementation of outcomes from the Marshall Islands First National Oceans Symposium.
- Participation in the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's Vessel Monitoring Scheme and broader regional cooperation on fisheries management.
- Implementation of a "Blue Fee"

to fund sustainable management of coastal and marine resources in the Marshall Islands.

- Action on marine debris and ghost gear through a conservation management measure at the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission annual meeting in December 2017.



## AQUARIUM EXPORTS

The colorful Flame Angel (*Centropyge loricula*) was the most in-demand tropical fish in 2017.

# Aquarium fish exports explode

After dropping off in 2016, exports of marine ornamentals picked up in 2017 to set an all-time record for aquarium fish collected and shipped from the Marshall Islands. A total of 103,439 fish were exported from the Marshall Islands by three companies in the Marshall Islands — two on Majuro (TSL Enterprises and ARRO Corporation) and one on Ebeye (Kwajalein Fish Exports). This was a 24 percent increase over the 83,199 fish exported in 2016.

In addition, 15,200 invertebrates were exported in 2017. These commodities were exported to aquarium markets in Asia, Europe and the United States. MIMRA's Coastal Division is responsible for supervision and regulation of marine ornamental exports.

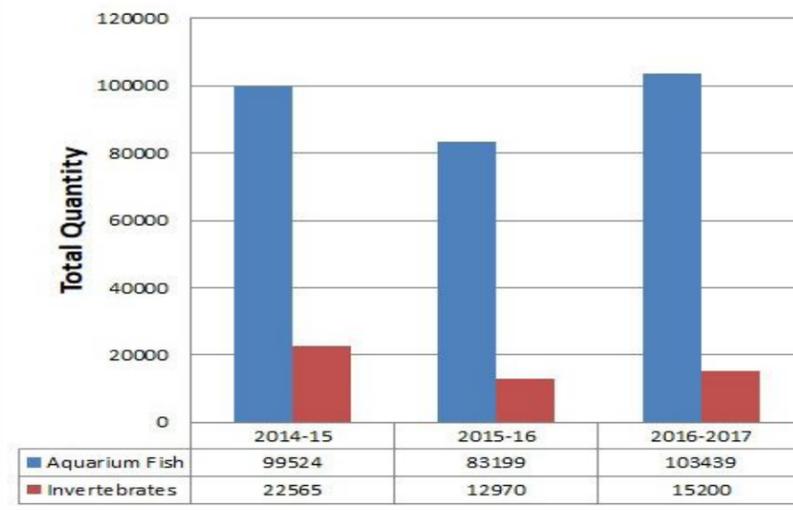
By far, the Flame Angel (*Centropyge loricula*) was the most in-demand fish. It accounted for 62 percent of the ornamental fish exported, with 64,032 Flame Angel fish shipped out of Marshall Islands in 2017.

Indicating the growth in marine ornamental exports, in 2014, only 16,818 aquarium fish were exported.

### Top 10 Aquarium Exports 2015-17

Common Name	2015	2016	2017
Flame angel	56684	40367	64032
Multicolor angel	683	8377	9315
Helfrich's firefish	7126	5994	7803
Bartlett's anthias	5914	4153	5793
Lemon Peel	2689	4055	4855
Golden wrasse	4879	3656	3652
Assorted anthias	6887	3124	3128
Mystery wrasse	3694	1831	2694
Fire Goby	530	632	1617
Dispar Anthias	830	118	550

### Marine Ornamental Exports



MIMRA staff regularly give talks to students to spread awareness on marine issues.

# Community outreach expands in Majuro in 2017

## REIMAANLOK PROCESS

The endorsement of resource management plans for Majuro's newly added marine protected area (MPA) sites at Bokanbotin and Ene Kalamur islands by Majuro Atoll Local Government (MALGov) was confirmed during a MIMRA/MALGov meeting in November 2016. This MPA initiative increased interest in conservation among members of the MALGov Council, particularly from Councilman Boaz Lamdrik of Ajeltake and Councilwoman Lina Amsa for a northern islets of Majuro. MIMRA awaited official request letters from the stakeholders to initiate the Reimaanlok process for these respective areas.

In late 2016, MIMRA became a new recipient of the Micronesian Conservation Trust/US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) monitoring grant that was previously

managed by the College of the Marshall Islands. This supports yearly coral reef monitoring on Majuro to collect new coral reef data, continue to analyze and translate previously collected data, and share specific management recommendations from the research. In support of the Reimaanlok/Micronesia Challenge, the program funded installation of billboard signs in Bokanbotin and Ene Kalamur to portray the MPA rules for these conservation areas.

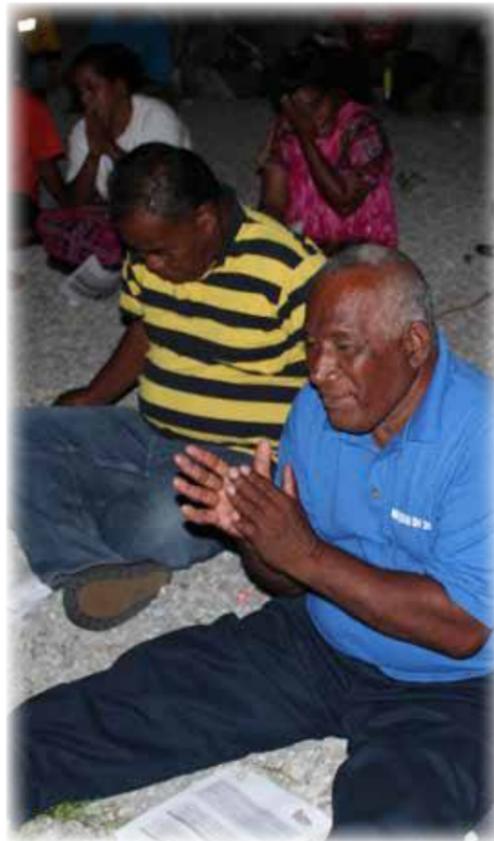
Additionally, a baseline survey on fish, macro-invertebrate, and benthic community was completed in November 2016 on another newly proposed MPA site, Buruon Islet, which is currently in Reimaanlok Step 4 (Data

Collection and Management). As part of its effort to routinely share data and recommendations with political and traditional leaders, resource managers, communities and students in Majuro, the latest update on the status of reef resources was delivered by MIMRA and University of Guam researchers in April 2017 during the First National Oceans Symposium.

The Coastal Division continues to conduct school visits as part of MIMRA's ongoing public education and awareness activities. MIMRA attempts to visit one to two schools per month to spread awareness on marine issues such as pollution, coral reefs, and marine economics.



At Tarawa (above) and Kaben (right) in Maloelap Atoll, Coastal Division staff engaged with the local communities on the Reimaanlok process to develop resource management plans. Wotje Atoll residents (below) joined with Coastal staff for Reimaanlok consultations.



## 6 atolls implementing program

Throughout 2016, the Coastal Division began implementing the Reimaanlok process on Ebon, Ujae and Lae atolls in addition to work in the capital, Majuro.

So far, the 2016 sites have reached Step 5 of the Reimaanlok Process (drafting sustainable management plans). All three atolls have a draft resource management plan in place ready for further review by the local government and traditional leadership. Areas to review include zoning of protected areas and rules before endorsement.

The Reimaanlok team needs to return to these sites in 2018 to continue moving the resource management process forward.

In 2017, MIMRA worked with three new outer atolls to implement the Reimaanlok process: Maloelap, Wotje and

### REIMAANLOK PROCESS

Utrik atolls. The process was initiated on each of the atolls by spreading awareness about the need for conservation and sustainable use of resources. Next steps included setting up local resources committees (LRCs), conducting household surveys and marine baseline surveys. Data collection through socio-economic household surveys and baseline marine surveys were also carried out as part of Step 4 (Data Collection and Management) to feed into resource management planning.

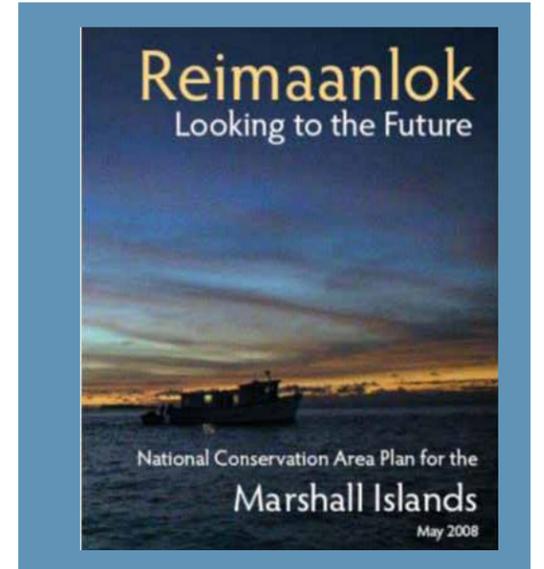
MIMRA conducted survey work but is waiting for the communities to name candidates to the local resources committee on each of the atolls. Due to lim-

ited members of the councils present at the time of the visits, the communities decided to postpone establishment of the LRCs. All three atolls are on Step 5 of the Reimaanlok process. The Reimaanlok team will return to these Reimaanlok sites to start drafting Management Plans once the LRC for each atoll is in place and data for each atoll have been analyzed. A draft management plan for each of the sites is expected to finish by November 2018.

Marine surveys were also carried out in Aur Atoll and Mejit Island, where the Reimaanlok process is being facilitated by MIMRA partner the Marshall Islands Conservation Society.



### REIMAANLOK PROCESS



A member of the Ujae Atoll Local Resources Committee reviews objectives during a Reimaanlok visit by MIMRA. Above, the Reimaanlok Plan. Below, MIMRA's Kyotak Ishiguro and IOM's Mavrick Francis talk with local residents at Kaben, Maloelap to collect information to help with the development of a resource management plan.





Members of the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) during a three-day Reimaanlok Review Workshop in Majuro.

# CMAC looks at 'big picture'

## REIMAANLOK PROCESS

A Reimaanlok review workshop was convened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and MIMRA as the Secretariat of the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) February 1-3, 2017 in Majuro. This workshop started the process for a review of the Reimaanlok program.

A wide range of presentations on different aspects of the Reimaanlok were delivered and participants shared past experiences, lessons learned and ways

to enhance the Reimaanlok process.

CMAC also updated the Reimaanlok status table for all the atolls and provided recommendations, which were discussed at the end of the workshop to guide future work.

The review workshop agreed that IUCN would lead on revisions to the overall Reimaanlok document while

CMAC would work on revising a Reimaanlok facilitator's guide. A follow-up retreat was scheduled for late 2017 to review progress.

CMAC brings together MIMRA partner agencies, institutions and non-government organizations that work in the field of marine resource research, conservation and sustainable resource use.



A CMAC retreat brought together representatives of many agencies and non-government groups for useful consultations.



# Developing important radiation monitoring skills

Two MIMRA Coastal Division staff attended a three-week fellowship at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California in January 2017 to acquire introductory skills for radiological assessment through a laboratory and web-based training.

The laboratory training included initial preparation of vegetation and fish samples from Utrik, Rongelap, Bikini and Enewetak atolls. Preparation of the samples included dissection, weighing and 'ashing' of samples. Other preparatory methods also include freeze drying operations; sample homogenization of vegetation; canning of sample materials for gamma spectrometry; observing how to analyze water, juice and other fluids for measuring of cesium isotopes; and most importantly practicing laboratory safety.

Computer based training was a crucial part of this fellowship and it was mandatory to pass each course in order to advance to the next level. The passing of the following courses resulted in achieving a Radiological Technician One certification. These courses included:

- Radiological Worker Training
- General Employee Training
- Chemical and Laboratory Safety
- Lead Awareness
- Health Hazards Communication for Supervisors
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Contamination Control
- Waste Management Overview
- Beryllium Awareness.

This fellowship is part of an International Atomic Energy Agency Technical Cooperation Project, "Developing a National Radioactivity Monitoring Capacity." It is a joint project with MIMRA and Marshall Islands Environmental Protection Authority that continues until 2020. Future activities include Expert Missions to the Marshall Islands to carry out training courses, fellowships to international laboratories to expand skills of MIMRA and Marshall Islands EPA personnel, procurement of laboratory equipment, and additional training on sampling strategies.



MIMRA Coastal staff Lyla Lemari (left) and Candice Guavis at the training at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory performing work on samples from the Marshall Islands undergoing radiological tests.





CIGUATERA

Seaweed samples collected at Ailinglaplap Atoll are preserved by a filtration process as part of collecting data on ciguatera.

# MIMRA team investigates atoll ciguatera breakout

A team consisting of MIMRA Coastal Division, Marshall Islands EPA and Marshall Islands Conservation Society staff was dispatched to Ailinglaplap Atoll in November 2016 in response to requests from Ailinglaplap Atoll Local Government for a Ciguatera Fish Poisoning survey.

On arrival at Ailinglaplap, the team conducted a meeting with the local government and council members to discuss the purpose of the visit. The primary purpose of the visit was to conduct a Ciguatera Fish Poisoning survey on the northern side of Ailinglaplap with the objectives of determining:

- what causes ciguatera poisoning
- is there anything we can do to prevent further outbreaks of fish poisoning.

Four artificial substrates were deployed on each site at the islands of Jeh, Airok, Buoj, and Woja for a 24-hour

period. These artificial substrates are to collect benthic macro algae.

After collecting samples the team inserted Lugol solution to preserve the samples. During community consultations, it was suggested that the team should return and do more ciguatera surveys on the northern part of the atoll.

Another issue raised was that ciguatera was not only found on certain fish species but also from the giant clam family, specifically *Tridacna maxima*. Local residents wanted MIMRA, EPA and MICS to collect samples to analyze but there is a different method for detecting ciguatera poisoning in clams.

The team was able to come back with samples and through laboratory analysis was able to identify the dinoflagellates causing poisoning of fish at Ailinglaplap: *Prorocentrum*, *Coolia*, and *Gambierdiscus*.



The ciguatera-causing toxin, *Gambierdiscus*.



# Expansion of fish and coral farming in outer islands

MIMRA continued to develop and promote aquaculture for atolls and islands within the Marshall Islands as a source of food security, economic development and alternative income.

During 2017, four atolls were actively involved in aquaculture:

- Namdrik Atoll with its pearl oyster farming managed and operated by the Namdrik Atoll Local Government
- Aquaculture Technologies of the Marshall Islands (ATMI), a company established by Rongelap Atoll Local Government to operate Moi fish farming.
- Likiep and Arno atolls, where local residents are engaged in giant clam farming.

In addition, a private company, Marshall Islands Mariculture Farm (MIMF) located in Majuro Atoll, is culturing giant clams and corals.

An Aquaculture Unit team met with Majuro Atoll Mayor Ladie Jack to discuss implementation of giant clam farming in Majuro Atoll. The Mayor expressed interest and support. Although MIMRA's pearl oyster hatchery in Majuro has been out of operation for several years, plans are underway to construct new raceway tanks to produce giant clam juveniles for grow-out by local giant clam farmers in Majuro.

In an effort to expand aquaculture to the outer islands, the Aquaculture Unit during 2017 conducted aquaculture awareness activities, interviews with local residents and habitat assessments on the outer islands. Different sites within various atolls were investigated for potential aquaculture activity.

The aim of this work is to develop an aquaculture profile of each atoll and island throughout the Marshall Islands to facilitate future development. In future,



Fish-farming cages in Majuro's lagoon operated by Aquaculture Technologies of the Marshall Islands (above) and corals cultured in Majuro lagoon by Marshall Islands Mariculture Farm.

AQUACULTURE



if a local government requests technical support for implementing an aquaculture program, a new baseline assessment would not be necessary with the availability of an already-completed aquaculture profile.

Additionally, to limit the inter-island transfer of live marine animals for aquaculture purposes, existing viable species within the various atolls and islands are

also being recorded. In follow up to work done in 2017, the Aquaculture Unit is planning to review and finalize a Biosecurity Protocol and Guidelines for aquatic animals, carry out biosecurity and animal health training for staff members, and conduct research and pilot grow-out of different species such as sponge, sea cucumber, edible seaweed, trochus and some finfish species.



FAD PROGRAM

# Ongoing FAD project a big

MIMRA, in collaboration with Majuro Atoll Local Government, deployed five sets of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), known as “kajoke” in Marshallese, in May 2017. The aim of this project was to compliment national food security, sea safety, and sustainable fishing practices by benefiting small scale fishermen throughout Majuro Atoll.

With technical assistance provided by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Fisheries Development Officer William Sokimi, 18 participants from the Ajeltake to Laura area of Majuro, and MALGov and MIMRA staff were able to construct and deploy these float-

ing structures about three to four miles off the ocean sides of Delap, Peace Park, Ajeltake, Woja and Laura districts.

This is MIMRA’s second training on making and deploying FADs for local fishermen, with plans underway to assist more local fishermen in other atolls by providing similar FAD training and monitoring.

To ensure longevity of the FADs, MIMRA publicly announced through various media their availability after deployment and used these announcements to request that fishermen and boat operators:

- Refrain from tying boats onto the

surface floats

- Report any suspicious activities (floating of loose ropes, missing floats, and vandalism)

- Provide FAD catch data to support the continuity and longevity of this program

- Do not cut the ropes.

**The specific FAD positions:**

- **Bridge FAD:** 07° 01.890’N 171° 21.818’E; Depth: 2000m

- **Peace Park FAD:** 06° 59.874’N 171° 14.613’E; Depth: 2000m

- **Ajeltake FAD:** 06° 59.861’N 171° 09.856’E; Depth: 2000m

- **Woja FAD:** 07° 03.834’N 171°



Above, MIMRA Coastal staff joined with Majuro Atoll Local Government personnel to build several fish aggregating devices. Left, the FADs were placed around Majuro Atoll. Right, fisherman John Alefaio spear fishes near one of the FADs.



# hit with Majuro fishermen

04.907’E; Depth: 1900m

- **Laura FAD:** 07° 10.696’N 171° 00.395’E; Depth 1600m

As part of the on-going Majuro FAD project, a submerged FAD was rigged and deployed in September 2017. It was deployed two miles outside the Majuro bridge in ocean water at 1,130 meters depth. Its highest peak is 30 meters below the surface.

This is the first of its kind to be deployed under Majuro’s FAD Program. This design is to test its suitability in Marshall Islands waters as many FADs have been lost or damaged in the past. A single FAD unit is costly and the need

to come up with a better, cost-effective design is of high priority.

A trio of spear fishermen were the first to make use of the FADs installed in 2017. For a number of years, John Alefaio, Travis Clark and Natnael Teshome have been free diving at the main pass, outer reefs and pinnacles. After placement by MIMRA of the new FADs, they found these to be excellent locales for spear fishing.

The FADs are popular with fishermen who go trolling in their boats eager to catch schools of tuna, marlin and other trophy fish. But with this trio, it is another story. They bravely free dive using

spear guns to hunt for catch, an unusual fishing technique practiced around FADs.

With the ocean side swells calm during one period in 2017, the fearless spear fishermen spotted wahoos at both the Peace Park and Ajeltake FADs. The aggregators floating freely serve its main purpose of attracting baby fish, which attract bigger fish.

Natnael was able to spear a wahoo at the Peace Park FAD, while John and Travis each lost bigger wahoos at the Ajeltake FAD. No doubt, FADs around Majuro will continue to attract spear fishermen as well as anglers.

Tuna being transferred from the purse seiner Jin Hui 9 to the transshipment vessel Yun Run 1.



## MIMRA engages in the big picture of the tuna industry

The dramatic increase in revenue from the commercial tuna fishery in the region is what most people see when they look at the Pacific's tuna fishery. Behind the revenue gain of the past several years is an equally significant increase in engagement by MIMRA in all aspects of the tuna fishery.

This engagement requires MIMRA Oceanic Division staff to:

- Manage statistical data for domestic and regional fisheries reporting requirements
- Manage the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) Vessel Day Scheme (VDS) for both purse seine and longline vessels
- Train fisheries observers, dispatch fisheries observers on fishing vessels and debrief them on return, ensure 100 percent observer coverage of purse seine fishing trips and tuna transshipments in

'MIMRA's Oceanic Division is fully engaged in the many activities required to effectively manage fishing within the Marshall Islands' 200-mile exclusive economic zone.'

### Majuro Atoll

- Increase independent verification of catches on longline vessels
- Promote local participation in the commercial tuna fishery
- Manage arrangements with locally-

based fish processing plants and Marshall Islands-flagged or registered vessels

- Coordinate monitoring, control and surveillance programs with domestic and regional law enforcement partners
- Participate in regional fisheries management organizations and international fisheries conferences to promote sustainability of the Pacific fishery.

MIMRA's Oceanic Division is fully engaged in the many activities required to effectively manage fishing within the Marshall Islands' 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ). It also works with regional and international organizations such as the Majuro-based PNA Office (PNAO), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), and the Pacific Community (SPC) and their respective members to manage the

## Working closely with SPC on data

western and central Pacific tuna fishery.

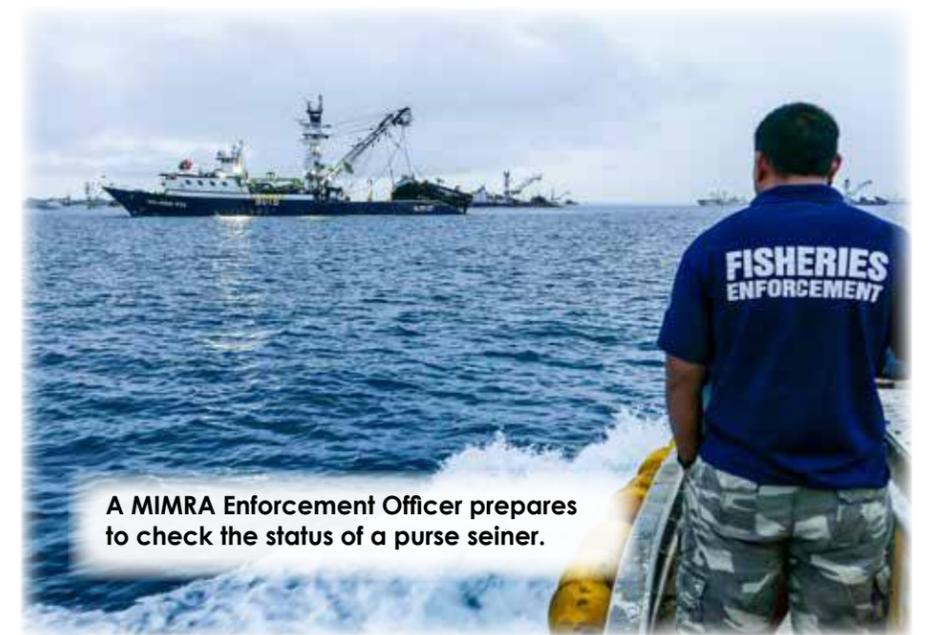
The Oceanic Division, in collaboration with the Legal Division, devotes a large portion of staff time to engagement with PNA in management of the VDS. It also works with FFA members on monitoring and enforcement of the regional fishery as well as coordinating with FFA members on policy proposals to submit to the WCPFC that governs fishing on the high seas.

The Oceanic Division works closely with SPC on data collection and analysis, and stock assessment activities. Additionally, the Division oversees monitoring and data collection of all purse seiners fishing in Marshall Islands waters, including the domestic fleet, and monitors to a limited extent longline vessels operating in the country's EEZ.

The Division also engages with Marshall Islands Ports Authority, Marshall Islands Police Department's Sea Patrol, Majuro Atoll Local Government Police, Marshall Islands Environmental Protection Authority and others involved in monitoring and enforcement of laws and regulations governing tuna transshipment operations in Majuro Port.

### VDS impacts the purse seine fishery

PNA's VDS is the most important management tool for the Pacific fishery. Through the VDS, PNA limits fish-



A MIMRA Enforcement Officer prepares to check the status of a purse seiner.

'PNA's revenue generation and sustainability initiatives demonstrate the economic and management power of this resource rights-based organization.'

ing days for the purse seine fishery to about 45,000 per year and maintains a minimum benchmark price of \$8,000 per fishing day. Within this number, fishing days are allotted to each of the PNA members. In addition, the VDS system requires 100 percent fisheries observer coverage of all purse seiners fishing in the region, in-port transshipment for additional verification, annual moratoriums for use of fish aggregating devices (FADs), and other conservation and management measures.

The VDS is a management tool that allows PNA members to sustainably

manage the vast tuna fishery in the western and central Pacific, while increasing revenue generated from the purse seine tuna fishery. The numbers speak for the revenue generating success of the VDS for PNA members. In 2012, MIMRA received \$5,936,978 in VDS and fishing rights revenue. Five years later, in 2017, the amount increased 380 percent to \$28,532,685 for the Marshall Islands. For all PNA members, they've seen VDS revenue rise from \$60 million in 2010 to an estimated \$470 million in 2017.

Although the EEZ of the Marshall Islands is on the fringe of the main tuna fishing zones in the western and central Pacific, the Marshall Islands has benefited by its membership in PNA. PNA's revenue generation and sustainability initiatives demonstrate the economic and management power of this resource rights-based organization and the cooperative arrangement to control the fishery.

MIMRA operating and non-operating total revenue shows a similar increase. In 2012, the total operating and non-operating revenue generated by MIMRA was \$10,506,958. Five years later, in 2017, this figure jumped to \$36,104,511, a 243 percent increase. The commercial fishery accounts for nearly all of this



# Record MIMRA support for RMI

revenue. In addition to the VDS and fishing rights, other revenue is generated from the fishery through fishing licenses, transshipment fees, fishing violation fines, and observer fees. In addition, MIMRA's joint venture purse seine vessel with Koo's Fishing Company injects significant revenue annually.

Sales of fishing days under the VDS to purse seiners that are not Marshall Islands-flagged or based generated over \$8,000 per day in 2017. Fishing days sold to Marshall Islands-flagged or based purse seiners were priced at either \$5,000 or \$6,000 each. Days not sold to various fishing companies were put into a regional "pool" that commanded a higher price, generating over \$10,000 per fishing day sold.

The continuing expansion of fisheries revenue produced an all-time record in 2017 for MIMRA transfers to the national government for budget support. In 2017, fisheries revenue provided to the national government amounted to \$40,129,700 — a 53 percent increase over the \$26,285,938 provided the previous year.

## Tuna transshipments and exports

The requirement of in-port transshipment of tuna for purse seiners operating in the western and central Pacific fishery has seen Majuro develop into



A transshipment vessel takes care of a purse seiner's catch in Majuro lagoon.

the world's biggest tuna transshipment hub. Although the number of transshipments was lower in 2017 than the previous year, transshipment activity was still strong.

There were 423 purse seine transshipments in Majuro Port in 2017 with a provisional total of 292,552 metric tons (mt) transshipped. Each of these tuna transshipments averaged 692mt. This compares to 573 transshipments in 2016 for 410,948 tons, an average of 717mt per transshipment. In 2017, Majuro Port averaged 35 tuna transshipments each month.

The majority of the tonnage was skipjack tuna, which accounted for 223,419mt. A total of 63,161mt of yellowfin tuna and 5,972mt of bigeye tuna rounded out the total transshipped at 292,552mt.

Additionally, most transshipments by the national purse seine fleet are carried out in Majuro, although at times other ports in the region are utilized.

Taiwan-flagged vessels accounted for the largest number of transshipments with 132 — 31 percent — of the total. These purse seiners transshipped 93,933mt tons of tuna. Taiwan purse seiners also accounted for the largest percentage of transshipments in 2016.

China-flagged vessels were next with 72 transshipments for 48,059mt of tuna, followed by US-flagged purse seiners that conducted 60 transshipments with 38,429mt of tuna.

Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia-flagged vessels were the next largest users of Majuro Port with 48, 44 and 25 transshipments, respectively. Other purse seiners that used Majuro to transship in 2017 included Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Vanuatu, S. Korea, Philippines and Tuvalu.

Tuna transshipments in 2017 generated \$596,000 in revenue for MIMRA, down from the 2016 transshipment revenue of \$799,000.

MIMRA monitored almost 100 percent of the in-port transshipments in 2017 with Fisheries Officers or Fisheries Observers.

There is significant spinoff benefit to the Marshall Islands economy from these purse seine vessels and the carrier vessels that anchor in Majuro's lagoon waiting for purse seiner transshipment. Crewmembers regularly buy from local retail and wholesale stores, and use restaurants, bars and hotels. The vessels often re-provision and refuel in Majuro, further benefiting the local economy.

# Fisheries officials monitor all ships

With Pacific International Inc. opening its Majuro Net Yard in 2017, this now offers purse seiners the ability to repair their nets while in the fishing grounds, saving them long trips back to Asian or other ports for repairs. In 2017, the Majuro Net Yard provided services to 15 purse seiners, with heavier usage toward the second half of the year as fishing companies became aware of the newly opened facility.

In addition to purse seine vessel transshipments, MIMRA Fisheries Observers and Officers monitored almost all off-loading of catches by the 31 longline vessels associated with the Marshall Islands Fishing Venture (MIFV), a Majuro-based company, in 2017. MIFV is a subsidiary of Luen Thai. The MIFV longline fleet off-loaded a provisional total of 4,067mt, most of it bound for export markets. Most of this total — 3,410mt — was exported to markets in the US, China and Canada. Frozen fish (rejects and bycatch), designated as "Local," are shipped to Asia via transport containers and/or sold locally. The Local portion accounted for 657mt in 2017. The 2017 total tuna tonnage offloaded by MIFV's 31 longliners is slightly above the 3,826mt recorded in 2016.

The breakdown of the MIFV longline catch in 2017 was bigeye tuna 2,154mt and yellowfin tuna 1,495mt. Blue marlin, wahoo, mahi mahi, swordfish, sailfish and Opah accounted for the balance of tonnage.



MIMRA staff monitored almost all transshipment and off-loading of catches in 2017.

In 2017, MIFV also purchased purse seine-caught fish, mostly whole frozen skipjack (1,777mt), which were included with container shipments destined for Asian markets.

The Pan Pacific Foods tuna loining plant in Majuro, which in 2017 had three Marshall Islands-flagged and two chartered purse seiners supplying tuna to it, exported 2,398mt of processed tuna loins. This was less tonnage than 2016, when PPF exported 3,132 processed tuna.

## Tuna caught in RMI EEZ

The number of foreign fishing vessels licensed to fish in Marshall Islands EEZ increased for the second straight year after a modest decline in 2015. Virtually all fleets showed small increases in the number of vessels licensed to fish in Marshall Islands waters. Not all vessels licensed were active in the Marshall Islands EEZ during 2017.

The number of purse seiners licensed to fish increased from 190 in 2016 to 192; longliners increased from 41 in 2016 to 49, and pole-and-line vessels went from

11 in 2016 to 16 in 2017. In total, 257 foreign flagged vessels were licensed to fish in Marshall Islands waters in 2017.

The biggest fleet was the FSM Arrangement purse seine vessels, which are domestically registered vessels in the Pacific Islands and by joining the FSM Arrangement gain multiple zone access. FSMA purse seine vessels registered totaled 76, the same as in 2016. The next largest fleet was Japan's, a mix of purse seiners (25), pole-and-line vessels (16) and longliners (6). China had 36 vessels that included 30 longliners and six purse seiners. The United States licensed 31 purse seiners to fish in Marshall Islands waters in 2017, while Taiwan had 27 purse seiners and S. Korea had 26 purse seiners. FSM-flagged longliners accounted for 13 vessels and Tuvalu had one purse seiner.

The only fleets that reduced in 2017 compared to the previous year were US purse seiners, which dropped from 33 to 31, and Japan purse seiners, which declined from 30 to 25. All other increased or stayed the same from 2016.

Commercial catches within the Marshall Islands EEZ are taken predominantly by the purse seine fishery but longline and pole-and-line operations also occur. In 2017, estimated total catch



Boarding officers at work on a ship.

## Weather changes affect catch data

for all types of commercial fishing combined was 26,383mt, with purse seine vessels accounting for 86 percent (22,707mt), followed by longline 14 percent (3,604mt), and pole-and-line less than one percent (72mt).

Catch tonnage for the three types of fishing vessels operating in Marshall Islands waters in 2017:

- Purse seine catch in the Marshall Islands EEZ decreased significantly from the 78,767mt caught in 2016 to 22,707 in 2017. This year-to-year change primarily reflects environmental conditions affecting location of skipjack tuna. Higher catches are generally recorded during or immediately following strong El Niño periods — an El Niño began building in 2015 and peaked in the first half of 2016. Available logsheet

### Total Catch Purse Seine Fleets\* in the Marshall Islands EEZ 2012-2017

Year	BET	SKJ	YFT	OTH	Total
2012	416	22,977	835	14	24,242
2013	538	40,113	1,514	6	42,171
2014	668	66,196	3,477	18	70,359
2015	126	21,923	4,295	0	26,344
2016	569	70,172	5,643	0	76,384
2017	670	19,573	2,446	18	22,707

Figures are metric tons.

\* FSM, Japan, Kiribati, S. Korea, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Taiwan, United States.

Key: BET=Bigeye Tuna, SKJ=Skipjack Tuna, YFT=Yellowfin Tuna, OTH=Other

### Total Catch Pole-and-Line Fleets\* in the Marshall Islands EEZ 2012-2017

Year	BET	SKJ	YFT	Total
2012	3	3,578	15	3,596
2013	3	1,719	4	1,726
2014	3	3,317	21	3,341
2015	0	615	2	617
2016	0	429	1	430
2017	0	72	0	72

Figures are metric tons.

\* Pole-and-line fleet is exclusively Japan.

Key: BET=Bigeye Tuna, SKJ=Skipjack Tuna, YFT=Yellowfin Tuna

### Total Catch Longline Fleets\* in the Marshall Islands EEZ 2012-2017

Year	ALB	BET	YFT	OTH	Total
2012	254	4,027	1,372	737	6,390
2013	237	2,972	2,014	738	5,961
2014	172	4,680	2,346	680	7,878
2015	122	2,286	1,380	359	4,147
2016	67	1,522	1,127	420	3,136
2017	71	1,698	1,389	445	3,604

Figures are metric tons.

\* China, FSM, Japan, Marshall Islands.

Key: ALB=Albacore, BET=Bigeye Tuna, YFT=Yellowfin Tuna, OTH=Other



# Longline figures up in 2017

data for purse seine fleets operating in the Marshall Islands EEZ show that Marshall Islands purse seine vessels accounted for 7,252mt — 32 percent — of the 22,707mt catch in 2017, followed by Taiwan vessels that brought in 6,759mt. US, Papua New Guinea, S. Korea, Kiribati, Japan and FSM vessels accounted for the rest of the purse seine catch in 2017.

- Meanwhile, pole-and-line fishing by Japan vessels continued a three-year tonnage decline to 72mt, compared to 430mt in 2016. The short-term trend continues to show catch reduction between years. Skipjack has always been

the main species making up the pole-and-line catch composition. From 2015 through 2017, skipjack accounted for 100 percent of the total tonnage caught. Japan is the only country using pole-and-line in Marshall Islands waters.

- The 3,604mt longline catch in 2017 increased from the previous year's 3,136mt. The domestically-based foreign longline fleet comprises vessels from China, FSM and previously Taiwan that are managed and operated under MIFV. These three accounted for most of the 3,604mt caught by longliners in 2017, with Marshall Islands-chartered vessels bringing in 2,379mt, FSM

vessels 921mt, and Chinese vessels 7mt. Japan longline vessels, which offload their catch in Japanese ports, reported an additional 297mt of tuna caught in the Marshall Islands EEZ in 2017. Bigeye and yellowfin catches continued to account for the major part — 86 percent — of the target catch composition for longliners in 2017.

In the purse seine fishery, most fishing takes place in the southern portion of the Marshall Islands EEZ. Longline fishing effort also occurs in the southern areas of the EEZ but is more widely distributed throughout the Marshall Islands zone.

## Koo's partnership benefits the RMI

The Marshall Islands continued to benefit from its joint venture fishing arrangement with Koo's Fishing Company of Taiwan. In 2017, revenue generated by the joint venture with Koo's amounted to \$910,234. This is an increase over the 2014-2016 three-year annual average of \$718,000. Through the Marshall Islands Fishing Company, Koo's and MIMRA operate the "Marshalls 201" purse seiner.



The Jaluit-registered Marshalls 201.

# Observer fees up to \$815k

The Marshall Islands Fisheries Observer Program carried out 153 purse seine and 39 longline trips during 2017. This is the most longline vessels monitored by Marshall Islands Fisheries Observers in one year.

Additionally, 44 longline fishing trips were electronically observed in an e-Monitoring trial with domestically-based vessels.

Observers were also utilized to moni-

tor transshipment activity in Majuro port since the initiative started in late 2015.

The Marshall Islands has yet to place observers on board pole-and-line vessels and as a result observer coverage for validation purposes on these vessels has not been achieved.

Observer fees increased to \$815,987 in 2017 compared to \$544,040 in 2016. This reflects the increasing number of

fishing trips Fisheries Observers are engaged in annually.

Two observer trainings were conducted in both 2016 and in 2017. This added 32 newly trained observers to the MIMRA Fisheries Observer team. The Observer Program in collaboration with the College of the Marshall Islands, which manages observer training programs in partnership with MIMRA, took a new approach toward targeting unem-



## Video cameras deployed on fishing vessels

employed youth and high school dropouts. The program is promoting Fisheries Observer opportunities to encourage the younger generation to see the fisheries sector as a career path they can achieve by going through the Observer Program.

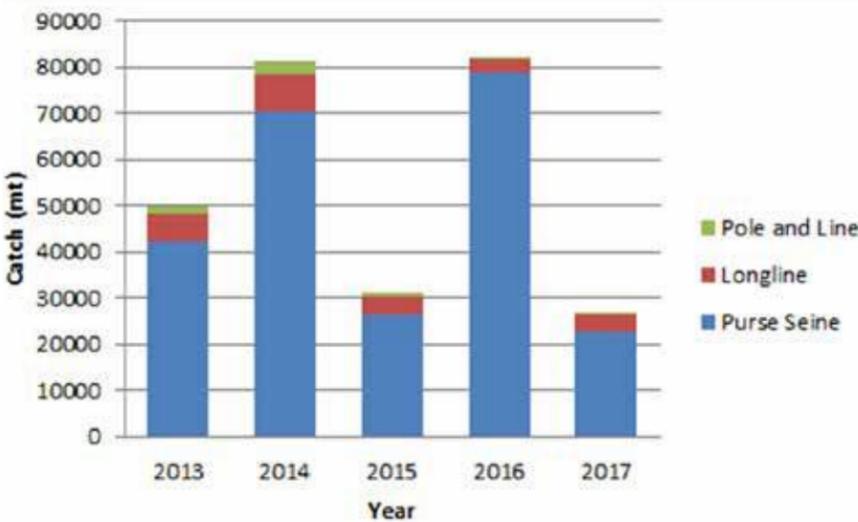
In 2015 MIMRA and CMI entered an agreement to have a full time Pacific Islands Regional Fisheries Observer (PIRFO) Trainer. This resulted in bringing in a new PIRFO Trainer, helping to increase the number of training programs annually. The PIRFO Trainer is now tasked to deliver full time Fisheries Observer training programs aimed to build capacity in the MIMRA Observer Program.

A total of 55 Fisheries Observers were active in 2017, down from 65 the previous year. This reflects the ongoing “dropout” rate among observers, which saw 41 leave the program from 2014-2017.

In 2017, MIMRA Fisheries Observers and their debriefers were successful in completing and submitting 100 percent of their data collected to the Pacific Community (SPC), which coordinates catch data for fisheries stock assessments.

Essential to the Fisheries Observer process is the debriefing that takes place after every fishing trip. This includes review of fisheries data collected and reviewing any issues that developed during the fishing trip. To effectively accomplish this process, MIMRA had six

**Total catch by different fishing gear-types operating in the RMI EEZ, 2013-2017**



certified observer debriefers and four debriefer trainees on its staff in 2017.

Fisheries Observers were also utilized to monitor transshipment activity in Port Majuro, an initiative started in late 2015. Coverage of this in-port transshipment activity was almost 100 percent during 2017.

In addition to providing observers for 192 fishing trips of purse seiners and longliners, MIMRA launched a trial for e-monitoring of locally-based longline fishing vessels in 2017. This involved placing video cameras on six longline vessels associated with the Marshall Islands Fishing Venture in Majuro. Because longliners have a five percent or lower rate of being monitored by Fisheries Observers, the use of video cameras for monitoring their fishing operations is being trialed the Marshall Islands and three other Pacific island member nations of the PNA. During 2017 44 longline fishing trips were electronically observed by nine Fisheries Observers trained in e-monitoring as part of an e-monitoring trial with domestically-based vessels. MIMRA anticipates that

e-monitoring of longline vessels will expand in the future. Training of Fisheries Observers in e-monitoring will encourage them to adapt and upgrade their skills by using new tools and technology for gathering data in an efficient and timely manner.

MIMRA’s Observer Program continues to expand and upgrade its collection and use of digital fisheries data. Data management and handling capacity is a vital tool for MIMRA. Work was ongoing in 2017 to improve direct importation of in-port tuna unloading data into the TUFMAN II database. The port samplers along with other staff collate the data and enter it into the TUFMAN II database. This continued to progress with assistance from SPC. Developments and improvements to in-house data management systems is another area of focus to streamline MIMRA’s overall management and monitoring efforts.

The SPC’s Oceanic Fisheries Program has been instrumental in expanding and improving data collection efforts. Joint assistance from SPC and FFA allowed



**Provisional purse seine transshipments in Majuro port in 2017**

Flag	Number of PS Transshipment	SKJ	YFT	BET	TOTAL
China	72	37,460	9,815	784	48,059
FSM	25	12,159	3,473	223	15,855
Kiribati	8	4,795	426	10	5,231
Korea	5	3,055	646	434	4,135
RMI	44	29,555	3,970	124	33,649
PNG	48	25,293	8,930	1,146	35,369
Phillipines	5	2,580	1,393	567	4,540
Solomon Islands	14	6,635	2,355	48	9,038
Tuvalu	2	1,575	90	-	1,665
CH-Taipei	132	69,295	23,100	1,538	93,933
USA	60	28,916	8,490	1,023	38,429
Vanuatu	8	2,101	473	75	2,649
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>223,419</b>	<b>63,161</b>	<b>5,972</b>	<b>292,551</b>

## Fisheries databases

for considerable improvements in data collection and management during 2017.

The aim is an integrated fisheries information management system that will streamline MIMRA’s reporting obligations to regional and international fisheries organizations.

Going forward, MIMRA is shifting its focus toward the PNA Office’s fisheries information management system as the standard for managing its fisheries data. This will be complemented by existing databases such as the TUFMAN II currently in use.

**Number of foreign purse seine, longline and pole-and-line vessels licensed to fish in RMI EEZ by year and flag, 2013-2017.**

FLAG	GEAR	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
CHINA	LL	23	26	26	27	30
	PS	2	6	7	0	6
FSM	LL	11	14	14	12	13
	PS	38	57	54	76	76
JAPAN	LL	1	8	8	2	6
	PL	15	20	13	11	16
	PS	24	28	29	30	25
KOREA	PS	27	26	5	25	26
NZ	PS	0	0	2	0	0
CH-TAIPEI	LL	2	2	2	0	0
	PS	6	25	25	26	27
TUVALU	PS	1	1	1	0	1
USA	PS	39	39	39	33	31
VANUATU	PS	3	3	0	0	0
TOTAL	LL	37	50	50	41	49
	PL	15	20	13	11	16
	PS	140	185	162	190	192



## Intensive observer training



Fisheries Observers receive water safety training and classroom instruction at the College of the Marshall Islands Arrak Campus. A MIMRA-CMI partnership sponsored two observer trainings in both 2016 and 2017.



Fisheries Observer trainees receive hands-on experience during boardings of fishing vessels in Majuro, including checking net sizes and sonar buoy fish aggregating devices (FADs), and other data collection on board.



# Oceanic highlights in 2017

- In 2012, MIMRA received \$5,936,978 in VDS and fishing rights revenue. Five years later, in 2017, the amount increased 380 percent to \$28,532,685 for the Marshall Islands. MIMRA operating and non-operating total revenue shows a similar increase. In 2012, the total operating and non-operating revenue generated by MIMRA was \$10,506,958. Five years later, in 2017, this figure jumped to \$36,104,511, a 243 percent increase. The commercial fishery accounts for nearly all of this revenue.

- Continuing expansion of fisheries revenue produced an all-time record in 2017 for MIMRA transfers to the national government for budget support. In 2017, fisheries revenue provided to the national government amounted to \$40,129,700 — a 53 percent increase over the \$26,285,938 provided the previous year.

- There were 423 purse seine transshipments in Port Majuro in 2017 with a provisional total of 292,552 metric tons (mt) transhipped.

- The top five purse seine flag states using Port Majuro to transship tuna in 2017 were Taiwan (132), China (72), United States (60), Papua New Guinea (48) and Marshall Islands (44).

- In 2017, eight Marshall Islands-flagged and two chartered purse seine vessels operated throughout the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The total estimated catch by the national purse seine fleet in 2017 was 64,527mt. Skipjack is the prominent species caught comprising 79 percent of the total followed by yellowfin at 13 percent and bigeye at eight percent.

- The number of foreign fishing vessels licensed to fish in Marshall Islands EEZ increased for the second straight year after a modest decline in 2015. In total, 257 foreign flagged



A Fisheries Observer adds to his data sheet. Below, the PII net facility.



vessels were licensed to fish in Marshall Islands waters in 2017.

- Marshall Islands Fisheries Observers went on 153 purse seine fishing trips and 39 longline trips, the most longline fishing trips ever monitored in one year. In addition, 44 longline fishing trips were electronically observed through an e-monitoring pilot project.

- The joint venture with Koo's Fishing Company for operation of "Marshalls 201" purse seiner netted MIMRA \$910,234 in 2017.

- Pacific International Inc. opened the first net repair facility in Majuro

for purse seiners and provided services to 15 purse seiners in 2017.

- Preliminary data for observed interactions with species of special interest by the Marshall Islands purse seine fleet included one sea turtle interaction reported, which was released alive. In addition, a total of 41 marine mammal interactions were reported. This included 38 individuals unintentionally caught, with all but three (rough-toothed dolphins) released alive. Three interactions with whale sharks resulted in all being released alive. No seabird interactions were observed during 2017.

# LEGAL

## Enforcement of regulations brings in \$715,000 in fines



A Fisheries Officer monitors a tuna transshipment in Port Majuro.

**M**IMRA, with the support of the Marshall Islands Police Department's Sea Patrol and the Attorney General's Office, actively monitored commercial tuna fishing operations in Marshall Islands waters.

Three fishing vessels/companies paid fines ranging from \$15,000 to \$500,000, with a total of \$715,000 collected by MIMRA during FY2017.

Fishing vessels were fined for various violations, including Interference with a Fisheries Observer in the Performance of his Duties, violating the terms of their licenses, and illegal export of spiral shell trochus.

All three fishing vessels/companies paid fines during this period.

## New domestic regulations

**T**wo new MIMRA domestic fishery regulations were completed and put into effect. These are:

- **Sea Cucumber Regulations:** In December 2015, MIMRA submitted the Sea Cucumber Regulations along with supporting documents to the Marshall Islands High Court for public access online. The regulations were approved by Cabinet. The new regula-

tions provide for significant penalties for anyone exporting sea cucumbers without a license. A violation of the licensing provisions can result in a fine of up to \$100,000 in addition to the value of sea cucumbers harvested for export.

- **Aquarium Fisheries Regulations:** MIMRA submitted the Aquarium Fisheries Regulations to the Marshall Islands High Court for public access

online. The regulations were approved by Cabinet. MIMRA has authority to regulate the holding, purchase, sale and export of marine ornamentals. The regulations also provide measures to control and support local governments' capacity to regulate the collection of marine ornamentals, which has developed as a small but significant industry in the Marshall Islands.

# LEGAL



Above, Marshall Islands District Court Presiding Judge Milton Zackios deputizes the eight MIMRA officers. Below, Attorney General Filimon Manoni attended the ceremony with MIMRA Director Glen Joseph.

## Fisheries Officers deputized



**E**ight MIMRA officers were deputized by Marshall Islands District Court Presiding Judge Milton Zackios at the Marshall Islands Police Department's Sea Patrol Conference Room on February 10, 2017. These MIMRA staff are now deemed to be Authorized Officers under the Fisheries Enforcement Act, which is tailored to support fisheries officers to carry out their duties and responsibilities to boost enforcement and compliance.

This involves identifying and investigating potential infringements by fishing vessels and/or fishing companies within the Marshall Islands. MIMRA's eight Authorized Officers are from the Coastal and Oceanic Divisions. All have had formal trainings in fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance work. Witnessing the deputizing ceremony was Marshall Islands Attorney General Dr. Filimon Manoni MIMRA Director Glen Joseph.

## Enforcing the Niue Treaty

**M**IMRA collaborated with the Attorney General's Office to draft a Cabinet Paper for the domestic ratification of the Niue Treaty. Action for domestic approval of the Niue Treaty followed from the signing of the treaty by the Marshall Islands.

A Cabinet Minute approved the ratification of the Niue Treaty, and directed the Minister of Foreign Affairs to deposit the instrument of accession/ratification with the Director General of the

Forum Fisheries Agency in the Solomon Islands. In tandem with the Cabinet Minute, a resolution to ratify the treaty was introduced to Nitijela (Parliament) in the second half of 2016 and was unanimously adopted on September 20, 2016. As a positive milestone, the RMI has now joined with other Niue Treaty Member Parties strengthen efforts in fisheries surveillance and law enforcement within the region to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated

(IUU) fishing activities. On February 20, 2017, the Marshall Islands officially submitted its instrument of ratification of the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (NTSA) to the FFA Director General. This signifies that the Marshall Islands has completed all requirement for achieving full membership.

To develop understanding of the Niue Treaty in the Marshall Islands, the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), in con-

Continued next page

# LEGAL

MIMRA Fisheries Observers monitor the off-loading of tuna in Majuro for Pan Pacific Foods loining plant.



## National workshop a bonus

### From previous page

junction with MIMRA, conducted a national workshop on the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement (NTSA) from February 27 to March 2, 2017. FFA legal advisor Tion Nabau presented topics related to the NTSA and how the newly developed standardized information system (NTIS) applies at the national

level. The FFA developed its NTIS as a secured searchable system accessible only by Parties to the NTSA. It contains critical information and also authority to allow any of the Parties to plan and conduct cooperative activity within the region. The aim of the workshop was to review the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) component of the

current national fisheries law in the Marshall Islands, and to address loopholes affecting MCS. Participants at the workshop comprised mainly boarding and inspection officers (from the Marshall Islands National Police Sea Patrol Division, Majuro Atoll Local Government officers, Customs officers, Immigration and MIMRA).

## RMI active at WCPFC talks

The Marshall Islands delegation actively engaged at the 14th Annual Meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC14) in 2017.

Among important developments:

• **Marine Pollution Measure:** The Marshall Islands, on behalf of FFA members, introduced a Proposal for a Conservation and Management Measure to limit marine pollution from fishing vessels (WCPFC142017-DP15). This new conservation measure was designed to address concerns that certain activities associated with fishing may affect the marine environment in the Western and Central Pacific. In addition, the measure is a response to these activities that may negatively affect the WCPFC's efforts to minimize incidental mortality of non-target species and impacts on marine ecosystems. Abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear in the marine environment

'This new conservation measure was designed to address concerns that certain activities associated with fishing may affect the marine environment.'

proposal encouraged Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories to more effectively implement the International Maritime Organization's legal instruments on marine pollution to which they are a party. The proposal also encourages other countries to become a party to these instruments at the earliest opportunity. The Commission adopted this proposal as Conservation and Man-

agement Measure 2017-04 on Marine Pollution, with an implementation date of 1 January 2019.

• **Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS):** The Commission also decided that the Marshall Islands would lead the Intersessional Working Group for the Compliance Monitoring Scheme, chaired by MIMRA Director Glen Joseph.

• **14th Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC14):** The Commission agreed that TCC14 would be held from 26 September to 2 October 2018 in Majuro.

• **Election of Officers of WCPFC:** MIMRA Director Glen Joseph and MIMRA Legal Advisor Laurence Edwards, II were appointed by the Commission to key positions for 2018. Edwards was appointed Vice Chairman of the Technical and Compliance Committee, and Joseph was appointed to lead the Review of the Compliance Monitoring Scheme by the Intersessional Working Group.

# FINANCE

## AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS

## Highlights of FY2017: Increasing revenue for RMI

The Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority continued to maintain a high-level of accountability in financial operations during fiscal year 2017. MIMRA's FY2017 audit by Deloitte was "unqualified," demonstrating that MIMRA performed its financial operations satisfactorily and in compliance with "accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

Completing its audit in a timely manner, while preparing and maintaining all required financial documentation, is an essential part of MIMRA's commitment to financial transparency and accountability.

FY2017 continued the upward trend in fishery revenue. Overall, net operating revenue increased from \$31,666,145 in FY2016 to \$34,057,294 in FY2017 — an increase of eight percent. The majority of MIMRA's operating revenues are related to the Marshall Islands membership in the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), which operates the successful Vessel Day Scheme (VDS) for the purse seine fishery. FY2017's operating revenue amount is 72 percent higher than the FY2014 level, showing the impact of PNA's VDS and MIMRA's engagement in the commercial tuna fishery.

The two main sources of revenue come from the commercial tuna fishery are the VDS and fisheries rights. The



'The majority of MIMRA's operating revenues are related to the Marshall Islands membership in the Parties to the Nauru Agreement.'

latter includes a successful partnership with other PNA member nations to sell "pooled" fishing days that generate high revenues mainly because they allow fishing fleets multi-zone access. In FY2016, MIMRA generated \$26,970,078 from the VDS and fishing rights. In FY2017, this increased nearly six percent to \$28,532,685.

License fees paid by purse seine and longline vessels to fish in Marshall Islands waters also increased. Licenses generated \$2,508,792 in FY2017 compared to \$2,202,988 the previous year, a 14 percent increase.

Tuna transshipment revenue dropped from FY2016, which was

a record-setting year in terms of the number of purse seiners using Majuro for transshipment and revenue generated at \$799,000. FY2017 saw \$596,000 brought in by transshipment fees for 560 transshipments in Majuro.

Vessel charter revenue remained stable at \$700,000 following the revenue level of the previous three years.

Enforcement of fines for violations of fisheries regulations generated \$715,000, nearly double the \$380,000 during the previous year. Fisheries observer fees also rose significantly, from \$544,040 in FY2016 to \$815,987 in FY2017.

Non-operating revenue added \$2,047,217. This included \$910,234 from the joint venture purse seiner arrangement with Koo's Fishing Company, up from the FY2016 return of \$794,704; grants of \$642,939; and interest income of \$264,104.

MIMRA's total revenue for FY2017 was \$36,104,511, a seven percent increase over the previous year. Because of a record transfer of \$40,129,700 to the national government in FY2017, MIMRA experienced its first net loss since 2007. The \$40,129,700 transfer to the national government was 53 percent above the FY2016 transfer amount. With expenses at \$44,898,690 for the year, this caused a deficit of \$8,294,049. The deficit saw MIMRA's net assets decline for the first time in a decade, from \$41,229,375 in FY2016 to \$32,435,326 in FY2017.

# FINANCE

## MIMRA: Management's Financial Condition and Operations for FY 2017, 2016 and 2015

MARSHALL ISLANDS MARINE RESOURCES AUTHORITY  
P.O. BOX 860, MIMRA/R&D Bldg., Delap Majuro MH 96960  
Tel. No. (692) 625-8262; Fax No. (692) 625-5447

### Financial Condition and Operations of MIMRA

This table summarizes the financial condition and operations of MIMRA for fiscal years 2017, 2016 and 2015. This appears in the FY2017 audit.

#### Statements of Net Position

	2017	2016	Change(%)	2015
<b>ASSETS:</b>				
Current and other assets	\$25,170,217	\$ 35,141,562	(28%)	\$32,741,649
Capital assets	1,965,793	1,183,609	66%	202,955
Investment in JV	6,209,153	5,298,919	17%	4,811,417
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$33,345,163</b>	<b>\$ 41,624,090</b>	<b>(20%)</b>	<b>\$37,756,021</b>
<b>LIABILITIES:</b>				
Current liabilities	\$ 909,837	\$ 394,715	131%	\$ 508,003
<b>NET POSITION:</b>				
Investment in capital assets	1,965,793	1,183,609	66%	202,955
Restricted	636,077	423,049	47%	-
Unrestricted	30,333,456	39,612,717	(25%)	37,045,063
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$32,345,163</b>	<b>\$41,624,090</b>	<b>(20%)</b>	<b>\$ 37,756,021</b>

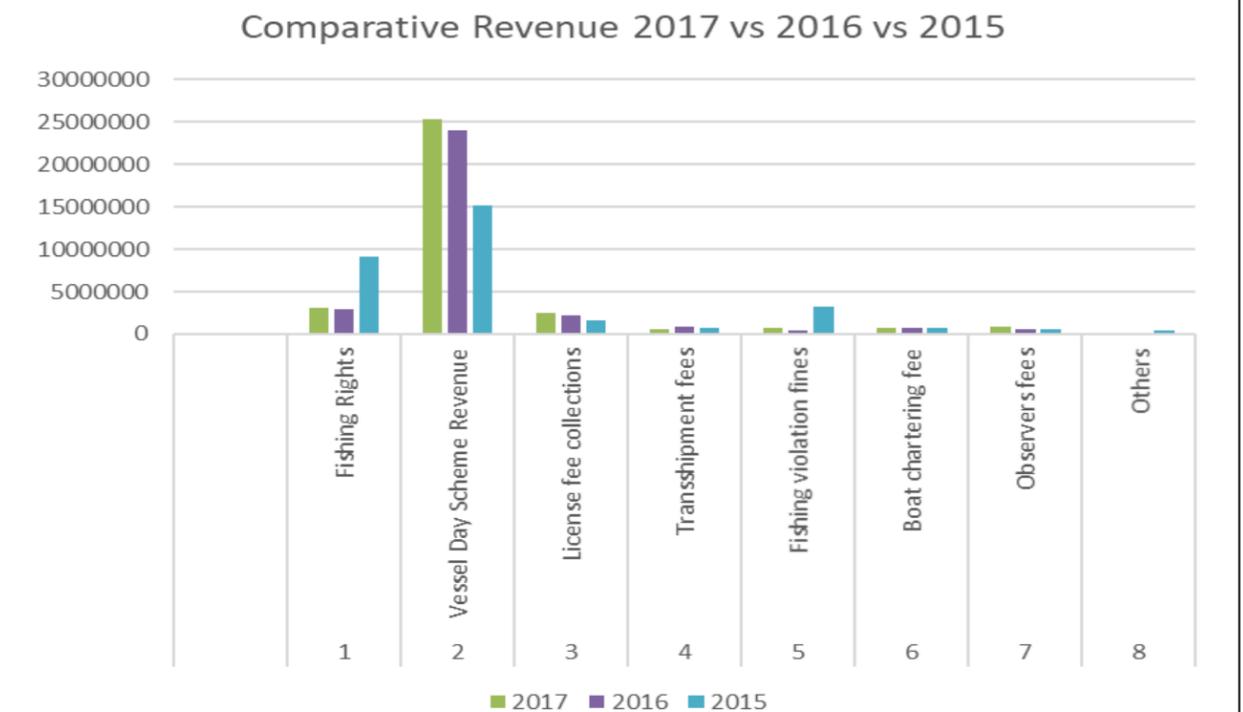
#### Statements of Revenue, Expenses and Changes in Net Position

	2017	2016	Change(%)	2015
<b>REVENUES:</b>				
Operating Revenue	\$ 34,057,294	\$31,666,145	8%	\$31,569,468
Non-Operating Revenue	2,047,217	2,122,087	(4%)	608,612
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>36,104,511</b>	<b>33,788,232</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>32,178,080</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>				
Operating Expenses	4,759,761	3,520,937	16%	3,821,084
Non-operating expenses	40,138,929	26,285,938	53%	15,773,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>44,898,690</b>	<b>29,806,875</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>19,594,084</b>
Changes in net assets	(8,294,049)	3,981,357	(321)%	12,583,996
Net assets at beg. of year	41,229,375	37,248,018	11%	24,664,022
Net assets at end of year	\$32,435,326	\$41,229,375	(21)%	\$37,248,018

# FINANCE

## MIMRA: Management's Discussion and Analysis for fiscal years 2017, 2016 and 2015

### Comparative Revenue: FY17 vs FY16 vs FY15



	2017	2016	2015
1 Fishing Rights	\$3,143,085	\$2,978,087	\$9,177,671
2 Vessel Day Scheme Revenue	25,389,600	23,991,991	15,228,935
3 License fee collections	2,508,792	2,202,988	1,621,500
4 Transshipment fees	596,000	799,000	677,000
5 Fishing violation fines	715,000	380,000	3,235,000
6 Boat chartering fee	700,000	700,000	700,000
7 Observers fees	815,987	544,040	647,419
8 Others	196,430	70,039	426,092
<b>9 TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>34,064,764</b>	<b>31,666,145</b>	<b>31,713,617</b>
Recovery (Allowance) for bad debts	(7,470)	-	(144,149)
<b>NET REVENUES</b>	<b>34,057,294</b>	<b>31,666,145</b>	<b>31,569,468</b>
<b>Overall Change FY2017 vs FY2016</b>	<b>2,391,149</b>	<b>8%</b>	



Above, an artist's drawing of the new MIMRA headquarters. Left and right, construction of the building is nearing completion.



## Planning for the future

A new multi-story headquarters building for MIMRA was in the planning and development stages from 2017. It is expected to be complete in late 2018.

Since its establishment in the 1980s, MIMRA has been located in the Ministry of Commerce, Resources and Development building. MIMRA has seen its staffing level grow from a handful of staff to nearly 100 in 2017, and expects continued growth in the future. This put MIMRA in an impossibly cramped situation at the ministry and led to development of the new headquarters.

The new headquarters will showcase the importance of all aspects of fisheries to the Marshall Islands.

'The new headquarters will showcase the importance of all aspects of fisheries to the Marshall Islands.'

Most importantly, it will support and accommodate expansion of MIMRA's work.

This includes expanded facilities for monitoring, control and surveillance, and MIMRA's fisheries information management system.

It will also support a new Competent Authority, international collaboration with partner agencies and donors, including the Parties to the Nauru Agreement, Forum Fisheries Agency, Pacific Community (SPC), Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, World Bank, Japan Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation, and international non-government organizations.

In addition, the new headquarters will support the much anticipated implementation of the protected area network (PAN) legislation, the Marshall Islands National Oceans Policy, Reimmaanlok (Looking to the Future) program, and collaboration with the Coastal Management Advisory Council.



Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority

[www.mimra.com](http://www.mimra.com)