

## 6/94 Johnston Atoll News II Petition to Fish & Wildlife

■ We, the undersigned "residents" of Johnston Atoll officially make it known that we protest the recent actions of the United States Fish and Wildlife office on Johnston Island; this action being the complete ban of off-island shipment of reef fish and crustaceans caught by line, net or spear.

We protest the fact that the chief Fish and Wildlife officer on Johnston Island turned in the revised regulation the same day he left the island, thus preventing any dialogue between him, management and island "residents" before the new regulation took effect. We believe that he abdicated his responsibility to the junior Fish and Wildlife officer, and left FCJ and the resident manager in an untenable position.

We agree that limits need to be set regarding the amount of fish shipped off island for personal use. We understand that this is a Fish and Wildlife Refuge and so our activities must be restricted. However, this is our home for much of the year, and we protest the fact that no dialogue took place between Fish and Wildlife and the island "residents." We protest the fact that we were not made aware of the problem and allowed to become part of the solution. We believe that Fish and Wildlife has acted in an irresponsible and subversive manner.

We have not been provided with any hard evidence that the reef fish and crustacean population is being adversely affected by our fishing. We have made several requests to have an open meeting with Fish and Wildlife and those requests have been ignored, thus reinforcing our belief that Fish and Wildlife has no interest in cohabitation or moderation.

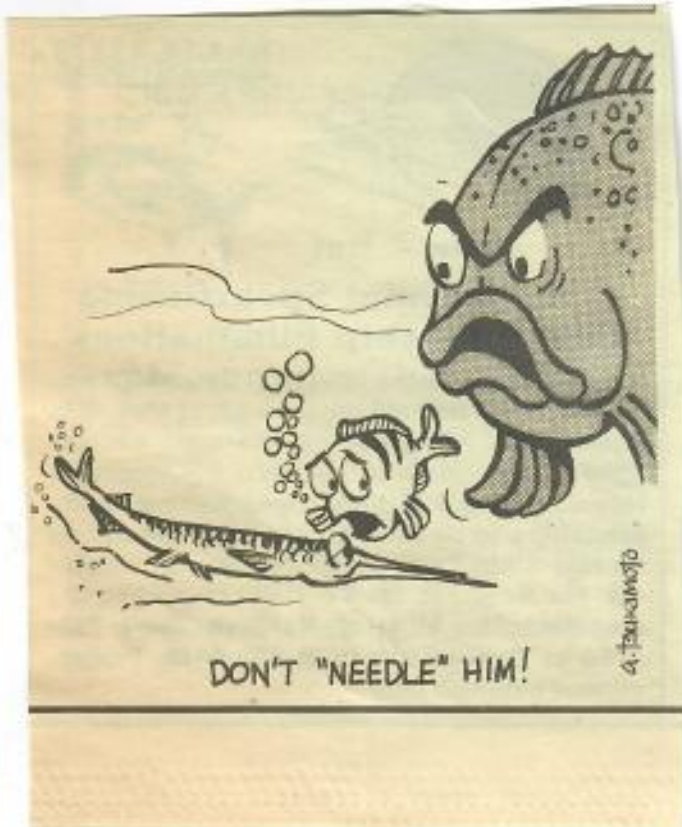
We also make it known that we have no quarrel with the ban on coral collecting or shark fishing. We see that those restrictions are sensible.

### We propose the following:

1. That the Commander-FCJ, amend the recent regulation to allow continued shipment of limited amounts of fish off-island until this matter can be discussed in an open forum.
2. That an open meeting be held with Fish and Wildlife, the resident manager, Commander-FCJ, the managers/commanders of other island organizations and all interested island "residents" no later than 30 June 1994. This meeting will give us an opportunity to work together to arrive at an acceptable solution.
3. That at this meeting we be provided with facts and figures relating to the condition of reef fish and crustaceans and how we are or are not causing their decline.
4. That unlimited shipment of reef fish and crustaceans no longer be allowed, but that a yearly limit be set. For example: one box, not to exceed 30 lbs, may be shipped out per individual every six months. Air terminal personnel may not accept fish boxes/coolers without a stamp of approval from Fish and Wildlife.
5. That the individual(s) who are known to have precipitated this situation by illegally selling fish from Johnston Atoll be prosecuted, rather than punishing those who have obeyed the regulations.



# Johnston Atoll-What Da Reason?





Dear Guys,

We sure have enjoyed your publication over the years; almost as much as we enjoy our fishing. Sad to say, our fishing is being restricted without any attempt at dialogue or compromise. Watch out, Hawai'i. Big Brother is alive and well. Is this the wave of the future?

Power House Gang  
Johnston Atoll

### Attention:

## All Johnston Atoll Residents

(Reprinted from *ISLAND BREEZE*, a newsletter published under contract to the U.S. Department of Energy.)

■ On 11 March 1994, a revised FCJ Instruction (5000.4K), "Conservation of Natural Resources and Protection of Fish and Wildlife on Johnston Atoll," will be released. It updates a similar instruction of two years ago and, upon recommendation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, contains two significant changes:

1. Coral collecting will no longer be permitted in any area of the atoll beginning 30 days after the instruction's publication date, i.e. after 12 April 1994. Any coral already collected or collected up to 12 April, which the owner wants to take from Johnston Atoll, must be shipped or carried off the island within six months of the instruction's publication, i.e. by 11 September 1994. After that date, coral may not be exported via any means.

2. Effective 11 March 1994, no reef fish, shellfish, octopi, or crustaceans may be exported from Johnston Atoll. Exporting fish caught during deep-sea fishing activities is permitted. If you have any questions, please contact Roger at the Fish and Wildlife Office.

### Letters

(Reprinted from *JACADS Journal*, Johnston Atoll, 5 March 1994.)

Why are decisions such as the one announced in the Island Council meeting on 21 February 94 regarding banning off-island shipments of reef fish caught by spear, line, or net made without the input of the island population? I understand the restriction on coral collecting and shark fishing since both types of sea life are slow to recover from overcollecting or fishing. However, I find it hard to believe that regular fishing is a problem. My parents are both retired and on a fixed income. The fish I take home to them each LOA [Leave of Absence] help them stretch their limited budget. Neither they, nor I, sell the fish; we eat them.

Isn't there some middle ground that we can meet Fish and Wildlife on? Perhaps some limits may be set, but I strongly oppose banning the off-island shipment of all fish caught by spear, line, or net. I encourage other fishermen to contact FCJ and voice their opinion.

Fisher Dude  
Johnston Atoll

Dear Fisher Dude:

News travels fast at Johnston Island! The revised FCJ instruction is still in draft, but I will take this opportunity to respond to your concern. Regarding input from the island population, not all issues on a military installation and national wildlife refuge (NWR) are negotiable. The use of Johnston Island's natural resources is a recreational privilege—not a right. This privilege can be modified or revoked for the proper reasons by the DOD or the Fish and Wildlife Service. There is not, nor has there ever been, a native population entitled to subsistence hunting and fishing rights. All activities occurring on an NWR must be compatible with the primary purpose for which the refuge was created, that is, the protection and management of wildlife populations and their habitats. All recreational activities must therefore pass this compatibility test. This is even more important now than ever before because of the tremendous scrutiny being placed on all public lands, not just wildlife refuges, by the general public and environmental groups.

The Fish and Wildlife Service manager advised the DOD that "the uncontrolled export of lagoon fish from Johnston Island is an inappropriate activity that is leading to resource conservation problems. However, there is no limit on the take or export of deep-sea fish caught from the MIKE boats. The new restriction will only mandate that residents must consume their catches of lagoon fish, octopus and lobster on the island. We hope this will reduce the level of impact observed on local fish populations and the illegal sale of fish in Honolulu. The decision was not made without closely coordinating with other organizations in wildlife conservation and DOD representatives."

"Making decisions that affect you is the most difficult part of any refuge manager's job. I do not take that responsibility, or the one I have to the natural resources, lightly. I am sympathetic to your position and the impact more regulations cause to the island population. I believe very strongly in trying to gain compliance through education as opposed to regulation, but sometimes it takes both. It is for those reasons I have written a much more detailed response regarding your concerns and the issue of compatibility. It will be available from your organization's management. I also discuss DOD's responsibility to the natural resources under its jurisdiction. There is much more information in the response than I can provide in this limited space. If, after reading the response, you or anyone else has additional questions, I would be happy to discuss them in a group or personal setting. There probably will be more changes in the future because Johnston Island cannot be exempt from the oversight that the rest of the United States is undergoing. This is a unique place, and it deserves our best attention and efforts to preserve its natural resources."

Editor  
*JACADS Journal* (3/94)