



**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**

July 7, 2023

Dr. Earl Campbell
Field Supervisor
USFWS Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office
300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 3-122
Honolulu, HI 96850

Ms. Sarah Malloy
Acting Regional Administrator
NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office
1845 Wasp Boulevard, Building 176
Honolulu, HI 96818

Dear Dr. Campbell and Ms. Malloy:

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council at its 195th Meeting in American Samoa held June 27-29, 2023, requested that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) prioritize the 5-year status review for the distinct population segments (DPS) of green sea turtles applicable to American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Hawaii.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires a review of listed species at least every five years to determine whether the species should be removed from the list or its listing status changed. NMFS and USFWS last initiated a status review in 2012, which led to the current DPS listings in 2016 that designated the Central North Pacific DPS (Hawaii) as threatened, and the Central West Pacific (CNMI and Guam) and Central South Pacific (American Samoa) DPSs as endangered.¹ The status review was published in 2015, thus the status of the DPSs should have been reviewed by 2020. We note that the USFWS included the US East Coast population of green turtles (South Atlantic DPS) in its FY2022-2025 National Workplan² to complete 5-year reviews, but none of the DPSs that occur in the US Pacific Islands were included in the workplan. NMFS does not appear to have a comparable workplan accessible to the public. Green sea turtles are culturally significant in the US Pacific Islands, and prioritizing its recovery is a matter of equity and environmental justice. Conducting the status reviews at least every 5 years as intended by the ESA will be an important step toward recovery.

Please contact the Council's protected species coordinator Asuka Ishizaki (808-522-8220; asuka.ishizaki@wpcouncil.org) to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director

Cc: Martha Williams, USFWS Director
Janet Coit, NMFS Assistant Administrator
Sam Rauch, NMFS Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs
Archie Soliai, Director, AS Dept. of Marine and Wildlife Resources; Council Member
Sylvan Igisomar, Secretary, CNMI Dept. of Lands and Natural Resources; Council Member
Chelsa Muña, Director, Guam Dept. of Agriculture; Council Member
Dawn Chang, Chairperson, Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources
John Gourley, CNMI Council Chair

¹ See 77 Fed. Reg. 45571 (August 1, 2012) and 81 Fed. Reg. 20058 (April 6, 2016).

² See <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/national-five-year-review-workplan-fiscal-years-2022-2025.pdf>