

External Stakeholder Survey

Feedback Report

For

The Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

March/April, 2012

By

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Stakeholder Feedback Survey Summary Report

The Directors Office of the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center commissioned a survey of the Center's primary stakeholders in the first quarter of 2012 to better understand how well the Center is fulfilling its mission.

Method

The following feedback was gathered for the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center through face-to-face and telephone interviews conducted with 18 participants in March and April of 2012. The individual interviewees, nominated by Sam Pooley, Ph.D., were selected to represent several external stakeholder groups:

- 1) Policymaking/Regulatory Decision-Making Consumers of the Center's scientific findings (Pacific Islands Regional Office and Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, six interviewees)
- 2) Industry/Commercial and Recreational Fishermen in Hawaii and the Pacific (Pacific Islands Fisheries Group and Pacific Ocean Producers, five interviewees)
- 3) Affiliated Federal Agencies within NOAA (Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale Sanctuary National Program, Papahānāmokuākea Marine National Monument, and NOAA Pacific Regional Center, three interviewees)
- 4) Scientific Partners (University of Hawaii Institute of Marine biology, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, and the Monk Seal Recovery Team, four interviewees)

Individual interviewees and the organizations they represent did not fit easily into one of the four stakeholder categories. Most interviewees engage in activities from at least two categories but were classified according to their primary relationship with the Science Center.

All interviewees were asked a series of open-ended questions:

What does the Science Center do exceptionally well?

What does the Science Center do not as well or where could they improve?

What is your highest priority for their work with you?

What suggestions do you have for the Science Center?

Finally, all interviewees were asked to rate the Science Center on a scale of 1 to 10 in four areas of performance:

1) Timeliness/Responsiveness

2) Quality

If you had to choose between timeliness and quality, which would be most important?

3) Approachability/Accessibility

4) Overall Satisfaction

Results

We will first present the results from all of the interviewees' numerical ratings in the above four performance areas, and summaries of interviewees' answers to the open ended questions will be highlighted in the appropriate area.

Overall mean ratings for the Science Center were calculated by using the interviewees' individual ratings in the above four performance areas without segregating them by agency or stakeholder group. The following table shows the overall mean ratings from all interviewees.

Overall Summary of Mean Ratings of Performance Areas from All Interviewees

Timeliness/Responsiveness:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 7.3 8 9 10
Not at All Timely Very Timely

Quality:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8.0 9 10
Very Low Quality Very High Quality

Approachability/Accessibility:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 8.7 9 10
Not at All Approachable Very Approachable

Overall Satisfaction:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 7.7 8 9 10
Not at All Satisfied Very Satisfied

Discussion of Overall Mean Ratings

The overall mean ratings were high in all performance areas. Most interviewees were very complimentary of the Science Center. Specifically the Science Center's outstanding strengths were thought to include the quality and dedication of its scientists ("bright, creative, hard-working, and collaborative"), capacity for gathering and analyzing data, outreach/presence (especially to industry and fishermen), and the Center's work with Monk Seals.

Ratings of "Approachability/Accessibility" were the highest (8.7) of the four performance categories. Supporting these very high ratings, interviewees cited the Director's leadership style, close working relationships with individual scientists, and staff availability by phone or e-mail for answering quick questions.

"Quality" was the second most highly rated performance category (8.0) by all interviewees. Almost all interviewees praised the quality of the research produced by the Science Center. The center was characterized as "the premier experts at fishery science" and many interviewees praised the excellence of the scientists employed by the Center.

Overall "Satisfaction" with the Center was the third most highly rated performance category (7.7) by all interviewees. In addition to feeling satisfied with access to the scientists and the quality of research produced by the Science Center, many interviewees noted that the Center's excellent work occurred within the context of constrained resources. There were numerous comments praising the Center's work while recognizing its limited budget/resources.

The overall mean rating for "Timeliness/Responsiveness" (7.3), while still high on a scale of 1 – 10, was the lowest rated of the four performance categories. The Timeliness/Responsiveness category was consistently rated lower than the other three categories by all stakeholder groups. The lack of timeliness in delivering data and stock assessment reports seemed to be the issue of primary concern.

To better understand potential differences in perceptions between the various stakeholder groups we will discuss the ratings offered by each group on Timeliness/Responsiveness, Quality, Approachability/Accessibility, and Satisfaction.

The mean ratings from each stakeholder group were calculated using individual participants' ratings without segregating them by agency affiliation. That is, individual interviewee ratings were weighted equally within each stakeholder group, not computed for each agency and then combined to obtain the mean for the stakeholder group. The results for each stakeholder group are displayed below:

Mean Ratings by Stakeholder Group

	Policy/Decision Making Consumers	Industry/ Fishermen	Affiliated Federal Agencies	Scientific Partners	Overall Mean
Timeliness/Responsiveness	6.8	7.9	7.5	7.3	7.3
Quality	7.7	8.0	8.0	8.5	8.0
Approachability/Accessibility	7.5	9.4	9.0	9.2	8.7
Overall Satisfaction	6.7	8.4	8.3	8.3	7.7

Discussion of Mean Ratings by Stakeholder Group

As reflected in the mean ratings, most stakeholder groups were quite satisfied with the performance of the Science Center and especially pleased with the approachability/accessibility of the staff and the quality of the research. Within this very positive context, however, a few areas of improvement were also noted.

The mean ratings from three stakeholder groups (Fishermen, Affiliated Federal Agencies, and Scientific Partners) were consistently higher than the overall mean ratings in all performance categories. The mean ratings from one of the stakeholder groups (Policymaking/Regulatory Decision-Making) were consistently lower than the overall mean ratings in all performance categories. In other words, some interviewees from the Policymaking/Regulatory Decision-Making stakeholder group were less satisfied with the Science Center's performance than interviewees from any other group.

Timeliness/Responsiveness and overall Satisfaction were rated lower by the Policy/Decision-Making stakeholder group than any other performance category. Timely delivery of data and stock assessments was the most prominent concern of these stakeholders. Opinions about the prioritization and deployment of the Center's resources were expressed, but the primary concern appeared to be related to the disruption caused by untimely delivery of data or reports. The Policy/Decision-Making stakeholders reported being unable to effectively make policy or decisions (literally, an inability to do their jobs) without timely delivery of data and stock assessment reports from the Science Center.

Otherwise, the mean ratings offered by the other three stakeholder groups suggest that they are generally satisfied with the Center's performance. Closer inspection of comments offered by interviewees from each stakeholder group, however, will offer a more thorough analysis.

Respectfully submitted,

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