

Proposal #: 20PIR016-006

Project Title: Identifying community ideas and prospects to diversify and promote fresh 'ahi, yellowfin tuna, landed by the Kaua'i small boat fishery

Applicant: Pacific Islands Fisheries Group

Priority Addressed Priority #1 – Promotion, Development and Marketing

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Abstract: Yellowfin tuna, 'ahi, is a key species in the Hawaiian diet, the local economy, and visitor culinary experience. 'Ahi (*Thunnus albacares*) is being fished sustainably, and the high local availability of juvenile and adult fish supports hand line fisheries in the MHI. Each island's 'ahi fisheries are unique and has different features. Kaua'i is dominated by part-time anglers, most of them trollers, whose catch generally supplies the local Kaua'i market. While working together with Kaua'i fishermen on co-operative 'ahi and bottom fish tagging and surveys over the years, and being part of this community, we learned about the unique aspects of the local fishery. This included both advantages and problems Kaua'i fishermen experience in their efforts to provide fresh seafood for residents and visitors. The objective of this proposed work is to identify and evaluate a range of possible approaches to diversify or increase market share and business opportunities for the Kaua'i small boat 'ahi (and other species) fleet, and the community's goals and preferences related to diversification.

We will achieve this by 1. Researching and compiling approaches taken elsewhere to diversify and add value to fresh caught tuna, including consultation with experts and the Kauai Dept. of Economic Development. 2. Determine the small boat fleet's views of past and present performance of the island fishery, their preferences, and interest in diversification or new distribution channels and outlets, through a series of iterative workshops across the island. For peer to peer exchange, we will bring in visiting fishermen experts who have completed successful diversification and expanded markets for tuna/seafood products elsewhere. 3. Near the completion of the work, we will produce a comprehensive summary of findings, formatted as a Curriculum Workbook and illustrated guide, along with an explanatory online presentation.

Summary of potential commercial benefits to the fishing community of the research results:

These products will provide a roadmap to identifying next steps that individuals or local stakeholders might take to implement diversification and increased market shares, as well as to provide more opportunities for island residents and visitors to obtain fresh and affordable local 'ahi.
