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📍 Palau International Coral Reef Center- PICRC

Press Release

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PICRC researcher co-authors fishery publication

Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) Researcher Lincy Lee Marino has co-authored a publication in *Marine Policy* journal regarding Palau's fishery value chain. The paper, entitled "Documenting baseline value chains of Palau's nearshore and offshore fisheries prior to implementing a large-scale marine protected area," is based on research completed in a collaboration between PICRC, The Pacific Community, the Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions, and the University of Hawaii at Manoa, which had three main objectives: to estimate the current domestic market size and structure; to document the amount, type, and prices of fish as they are bought, processed, and sold; and to estimate fish consumption by different consumers: residents, tourists, and exports.

Ms. Marino, working with Dr. Kirsten Oleson, Dr. Rachel Dacks, and Staci Lewis, conducted a literature review, and interviews of restaurant managers and owners, fish market managers, and knowledgeable Palau residents to gain an understanding of the movement of fish within the domestic market. This analysis confirmed some facts about the market, such as the local diet preference for reef fish rather than pelagic fish, as well as debunking some common misconceptions: for example, tourists tended to consume a small amount of reef fish, in spite of anecdotes to the contrary.

The study also highlighted Palau's complex social relationship with fish: a large proportion of reef fish is not sold, but rather utilized as capital for customary obligations and to strengthen social ties. In particular, a large amount of reef fish is exported noncommercially by Palauans in the "cooler trade."

Through their research, the team was able to create a baseline of flows between buyers and sellers, the value chain, for both reef and pelagic fish. With the closure of 80% of Palau's Exclusive Economic Zone through the Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS) Act, there is potential for increased pressure on reef fish if the supply of pelagic fish is lessened. However, the baseline uncovered here can help resource managers to identify gaps, and therefore opportunities, to develop the domestic pelagic fishery for the benefit of Palau.

For more information on the publication, please call PICRC at 488-6950, or send us an email at outreach@picrc.org.



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