

# Un-Official Barbless Circle Hook Newsletter

News/Updates/Tournaments

PACIFIC ISLANDS FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER, NMFS, NOAA

Volume 1, Issue 1.1 June 2007

## In the beginning.....

The Barbless Circle Hook Program has been in existence for 3 years now. It had its beginnings in 2004-2005 when the idea was first conceived. The idea behind promoting the voluntary use of barbless circle hooks was to minimize any post hooking trauma to anything that was hooked and got away or was released.

Think about those freight train sayonara strikes that spooled you or more often than not resulted in breaking the mainline, the leader, or getting pinned down. The other scenario is a hook up that turned out to be unwanted and is therefore destined to be cut loose or otherwise released. As fishermen you know that prohibiting fishing is an extreme solution to any protected species (monk seal, turtle) interaction problem. At times there is nothing that you can do to prevent an interaction but there is something that you can do as a concerned fisherman that may reduce any post-hooking effects. Just like when dealing with people we can extend some common courtesy to the fish and sea life that we interact with when fishing.

In the last 3 years the program has given away over 35,000 barbless circle hooks of all sizes to the recreational anglers in Ha-

waii. These were given away at shoreline tournament weigh ins on 4 islands, fishing club meetings, NMFS community outreach functions, fishing supply stores, tackle shows, fishing classes, high school classes, on the beach by protected species volunteers, thru non-profit organizations, individual requests, etc. The free starter packs of barbless circle hooks have been generally well received by the public who are at times reluctant to try these hooks but openly recognize the potential usefulness of the concept.

The key to minimizing some of the post hooking effects is the barbless aspect of this program. One of the positive benefits of using the barbless circle hooks is that the individual animals should be able to rid themselves of the barbless circle hook more quickly and easily should they break off or be released by cutting the line as close as possible. Another positive benefit of going barbless on any hook is seen when practicing tag and release fishing or just releasing other fish that are unwanted or when fishing for prime ulua bait. The barbless hook is much easier and quicker to remove so the fish or bait remains in top shape. Oama fishing is much easier to do when you're not busy trying to get the hook out of the net, your t-shirt, or the one oama that took you hours to catch. It is also reasonable to assume that if the

hook is easier to get out of a fish then it will be easier to get out of you if any accident happens and it would prevent that big emergency room charge and save a day of fishing.

Approaching anglers with this off the wall proposition and asking them to try this "new" idea was fraught with all kinds of objections and rationalizations as to why it wouldn't work. There was opposition to it from young and old alike. In the midst of all this there were quite a few old time local fishermen that did remember the old olden days when the hooks didn't have any barbs and many times didn't even have an eye to tie the leader to. While attending informational outings at the shoreline tournament weigh ins I met many fishermen that had these old hooks that had been handed down to them from their fathers, grandfathers, or even great grandfathers, or other fishing mentors. These were tangible personal treasures from the past. This meant that this concept wasn't at all new to many anglers across Hawaii.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

IN THE BEGINNING.....	1
RESEARCH	2
LOCAL TOURNAMENT ACTIVITY	3
BARBLESS CATCHES OF NOTE	6
BARBLESS CATCHES 2005-2006	7-8
MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER	9
BARBLESS CATCH PHOTOS 2005-2006	10-11

# Un-Official Barbless Circle Hook Newsletter

## Research News

Early on in the process we realized that we needed to be able to answer the many questions and comments that were brought up by skeptical fishermen.

Some comments were:

“How do you know the fish won’t just come off?”

“I going lose all my bait before the fish can find ‘em. Bait expensive you know.”

“I neva going use that.”

“Why ruin a good hook?”

“Why you think they put one barb on if it wasn’t betta?”

“What now! \$%^&\*#%???? I going have to buy all new hooks?”

“In theory it should work but.....I going catch one ulua first then try ‘em.”

We knew that we had to do some research to do in order to answer a lot of questions. Our researcher in the Fish Biology and Stock Assessment Division (FBSAD) Bert Kikkawa looked for any and all available literature on circle hooks in general and for any studies that dealt with the catch rates and comparative hook studies. Research showed that the circle hook is a very old design and was used world-wide. There were many studies done on comparing the conventional J hooks to circle

hooks but none that dealt with comparing standard circle hooks and barbless circle hooks. This was a new area for research. This was a first and the fishermen of Hawaii helped make this possible.

Bert decided on a research design that took advantage of the abundance of papio and other small game in Kewalo Basin, Oahu. A research project using a side by side comparison of fish catching using barbed and barbless circle hooks was started in 2005. The research project caught a total of 205 fishes. All data were recorded for analysis. We believe that the scale of hook size to fish size could be carried over to the larger sized hooks and the targeted uluas. Although this initial phase of the research has been completed we are continuing to gather data through cooperating fishing clubs on general shorecasting catch rates with information regarding barbed and barbless circle hook catches. Preliminary results on the retention of fish once they were hooked up showed no statistical difference in catches and misses using barbed and barbless circle hooks. These preliminary results were displayed at all outreach events. The research is ongoing and was documented in a research paper “Performance of Barbed and Barbless Circle Hooks in a Marine Recreational

“Performance of Barbed and Barbless Circle Hooks in a Marine Recreational Shoreline Fishery” which was presented at the American Fishery Society meeting at Lake Placid in September 2006. Research is ongoing and more results will be presented as they are analyzed.

The many questions regarding bait staying on the hook were looked at while conducting the research and through oral and written comments during various club outings. The majority of the fishermen reported that they did not have the anticipated bait loss problems. There were a few fishermen that thought that some of the softer baits may have been lost due to the barbless nature of the hooks but the majority didn’t notice any problems. There were some slide bait fishermen that commented on losing some live bait due to the lack of the barb. In general, if you tie or somehow secure your live bait to your barbed hook that same method will generally work for your barbless hook(made barbless by smashing down the barb rather than filing it off).

How to make a Barbless Circle Hook



# Un-Official Barbless Circle Hook Newsletter

## Tournament Activity Year 1 — 2005

Tournaments are generally a focal point for many fishermen. It gathers fishermen from all over the island as well as some from other islands. It was for this reason that we tried to start a dialog with the fishermen at a few of the tournaments. In 2005 the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) started

to engage the public at a few of the tournaments. We distributed starter packs of barbless circle hooks and informational literature on the idea and ongoing research at the Big Island Park and Recreation's Ohana Shoreline Fishing Tournament (Big Island), the Maui Casting Club's Labor Day Tournament (Maui), the Atlapac Weighmasters Classic Fishing Tournament (Oahu), and the

Lihue Fishing Supply's 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Tournament (Kauai). The reactions were mixed but was generally well received and supported by the fishing community on all islands. Fishermen are conservationists too and they care about what happens out there. That sentiment came across loud and clear.

## Tournament Activity Year 2 — 2006



### Tokunaga Ulua Challenge

This year was the first year that the barbless circle hook category was incorporated into any kind of tournament. Mike Tokunaga and company (S. Tokunaga Store, Inc.) threw in their support for the project by allowing the Barbless Circle Hook Program to become a part of



their Tokunaga Store "Ulua Challenge" format. Mike supported the State's Ulua Tagging Project by having a "Tagging Challenge" in the tournament for the second year in a row. This was the first tournament in

the world to have both these categories.

The addition of the "challenges" into the existing "Ulua Challenge" tournament helped to inform more people about the projects. The results of the 2006 Barbless Circle Hook Challenge held May 18-21, 2006 were:



Participating Barbless Circle Hook Anglers: 76 total.

Number of anglers that weighed in fish: 2

Number of fish weighed in: 3

Angler	Species	Weight(lbs)
Mitchell Taketa	White ulua	28.4 – first ulua in a tournament.
Ken Waters	White ulua	36.1 – first ulua in a tournament.
Ken Waters	Omilu	8.2

Congratulations are in order for those Big Island and outer island anglers that signed up and tried barbless circle hooks.

# Un-official Barbless News — Tournament Activity Year 2 — 2006 cont.

## Pole Benda Invitational –2006

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Pole Benda Invitational put on by Eddie Carvalho offered another opportunity to engage the public. We were invited to put up our display at his weigh in. Unfortunately I could not attend but Neil Kanemoto from the Pacific Islands Fishery Group took over the starter packs of barbless circle hooks and information for display and distribution at the weigh in. Congratulations to all who participated in this long running and successful tournament.

## Weighmaster Classic

The Atlapac Weighmasters Classic held on Oahu on June 23-25, 2006 was a second chance to have the “Barbless Circle Hook Challenge” incorporated into a tourna-

ment. The Club is actively supporting our research and is contributing to our data gathering efforts.

The results of the Weighmaster Classic “Barbless Challenge” were:

Participating Anglers: 54

Number of anglers that weighed in fish: 5

Number of fish weighed in: 8

<u>Angler</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Weight(lbs)</u>
Glen Paison	Omilu	3.2
Mitchell Taketa	Oio	5.4
Shelby Taketa	Oio	5.3
Shelby Taketa	Oio	2.6
Ken Waters	White papio	3.0
Ken Waters	Oio	3.7
Brennan Waters	Omilu	1.2
Brennen Waters	Oio	4.0

Congratulations to those Oahu anglers who signed up and tried using barbless circle hooks.



Left->right. Barbless circle hook anglers Glen Paison, Weighmaster Classic Queen Nicole Kojima, Shelby Taketa, Mitchell Taketa, Ken Waters, Brennan Waters, at the Weighmaster Classic, June 2006.



## Lihue Fishing Supply

We attended the Lihue Fishing Supply’s 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Tournament’s weigh in on September 17, 2006. The West Pac Fishery Council, the HDAR’s Ulua Tag-

ging project, and the NOAA Barbless Circle Hook project set up informational booths and distributed information to all who attended.

Perhaps a Barbless Circle Hook Challenge division within the existing tournament format can be added for next year. We’ll have to wait and see.

<u>PAPIO</u>		<u>ULUA</u>	
David Kealoha	4.2	Chirren-Jensen	10.55
Cassidy Lee Bailey	5.7	Ken Hoana	
Ryan Nagasaka	5.4	Keaton Oka	
Warine August	3.1	Wayne August	
Brandon Fujioka	3.4	Lawrence Orosius	
Shane Daniels	3.2	Michael Iwa	
Randall Takaraka	3.2	Kanalo Kai	
Kevin Adato	3.0	Gleno Aou	
Randerson Caspillo	10.15	Shad Kahi	
Shawn Yagay	10.30	Alan Iada	
Garon Yoshimitsu	11.40		
Eidan Nakashima	5.45		
Jerry Hamura	5.45		
Tracy Hamura	3.30		
Mike Mabini	22.80		
Kurt Onuma	53.00		
Aaron Uveho	17.40		
Phillip Hesson	17.10		
Colleen W. Hester	13.20		
Michael A. Iwani	24.75		
Mattam C. Hernandez			
Gilbert Barretto			

## Un-official Barbless News — Tournament Activity Year 3 — 2007

### General Activity

In 2007 the Barbless Circle Hook Program has not been as active as in the previous 2 years. The program has not been funded by the Science Center for the current year and future funding remains very uncertain. The program has been making progress in getting more fishermen to try out the hooks and some of the success in this regard can be seen in the greater public awareness of the program as well as people actually using the free hooks and catching fishes. There has also been a large increase in participation in the barbless circle hook challenge category in the highly respected Tokunaga tournament.

### Tokunaga's Ulua Challenge 2007, Hilo, Hawaii.

The Barbless Circle Hook Project attended the Tokunaga Ulua Challenge shorefishing tournament's weigh in on Sunday May 20. This was the second year that the project had a barbless circle hook category within the competition. The overall tournament this year had 357 participants. The barbless circle hook challenge had a record 95 entrants. The weather this year was totally opposite from last year's howling winds and big surf. The result was witnessed by a weigh in that lasted



continuously for a record number of hours. Although the weigh in officially started at noon and the weigh in line of vehicles was closed at 2 pm the weigh in was not completed until just after 3:30 pm.

NOAA personnel manned the Barbless Circle Hook outreach booth and weigh in station. Outreach materials dealing with green sea turtles, monk seals, recreational fishing in Hawaii, etc was handed out. The HDAR Ulua Tagging Program and the Pacific Island Fisheries Group (PIFG) also attended the tournament to outreach to the fishermen. The Ulua tagging project also had a tagging



category within the tournament again this year. They had distributed over 100 tag kits for papios or uluas in preparation for this tournament. All of the entities worked together to man the booths as there was a constant flow of participants and spectators. Dr. Craig Severance(U.H. Hilo) also lent a hand and his bountiful expertise.

The Barbless hook random weight drawing winner was Duane DeSilva who caught a black ulua weighing 26.1 lbs. The largest ulua weighed in for the barbless

competition was a 44.8 pound white ulua caught by Craig Kawamura. The smallest fish to



be weighed in was a 4.25 pound omilu. Participation prizes went to Melvin Kilaulani and to Bryson Kawaihae. The weigh ins and the award ceremony were well attended by an estimated 500-600 people.

In the general competition the overall largest ulua at 78 pounds was caught by Gerald Llanes. The largest omilu at 19.8 pounds was caught by Rory Belanio Sr. Although the top of the line prizes and jackpot prize money is great, the bragging rights for a year is.....priceless.

### Weighmaster Classic 2007

Unfortunately the much anticipated Atlapac Weighmaster Classic tournament was cancelled for the 2007 season. It is hoped that these activities resume in the 2008 season. The Barbless Circle Hook Program will be there when it happens.

### Lihue Fishing Supply 2007

The word is that the Lihue Fishing Supply's 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Tournament has been cancelled. The much anticipated tournament should resume in 2008.

# Barbless Circle Hook Catches of Note 2005-2006

Catches from club outings, tournaments, and just fishing for fun.

There have been a few catches that have been highlights for this program over the past 3 years. **The first ulua for this program was caught in 2005 by Mitchell Taketa of the Atlapac Fishing Club.** He caught it bait casting at Kapapa island in Kaneohe Bay on July 8, 2005. He



used a #26 bkn with a tako leg for bait. A month after that he caught another ulua this time on the Big Island using a barbless circle hook and a live toau for bait(no bridle or ties).

**In 2006 Mitchell Taketa and Ken Waters entered the Tokunaga Ulua Challenge and they caught the first barbless circle hook uluas in a tournament format.** They both caught one ulua each in the competition, a 28.4 and a 36.1 pound ulua.



**The largest barbless circle hook ulua to date was caught in 2006 on the Big Island. Randall Elarco Jr. caught a 117 lb white ulua on May 29, 2006 (HFN July 2006).** He used a barbless 16/0 mustad circle hook that he got at the Big Island Ohana tournament in '05. Tako was the bait of choice. The barbless 16/0 circle hook did bend out a little but brought the big fish in. Too bad it was just 1 week late for the Tokunaga's but a 100 pounder is welcome any time.



Other highlights are the 2 minute "Mykala's Fishing Tips" clip that was shown for a month on a local channel on the Big Island last year. Mykala Tokunaga highlighted the barbless hook program and the reasons for trying them. It also showed Randy Elarco Jr's 117 pound ulua that was caught on a 16/0 Mustad barbless circle hook.

At the first annual Fishing and



Seafood Festival that was held on October 8, 2006 in Honolulu a special "100 pounder" award was given to Randy Elarco Jr. by Mayor Mufi Hanneman.



Randy and family flew to Honolulu to enjoy the festivities and accept the award. An additional special award was also given out to Mitchell Taketa for catching the first ulua for the program.



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fishing and Seafood Festival has been scheduled for October 7, 2007 in Honolulu. It is hoped that the program can again honor the outstanding catches made by Hawaii's barbless circle hook anglers.



# BARBLESS CIRCLE HOOK CATCHES MADE BY YOU!

## Barbless Circle Hook Catches 2005

<b>Mitchell Taketa</b>	<b>white Ulua</b>	<b>17.5 lbs-first white ulua for the program</b>
	toau	0.9 lbs
	toau	1.7 lbs
	white papio	1.6 lbs
	oio	2.4 lbs
	puffer	
Ken Waters	toau	1.7 lbs
Craig Yamashita	puffer	
Dan Meheula	omilu	3.4 lbs
Paul Okouchi	white papio	3.0 lbs
Joe Sugihara	oio	2.3 lbs
	oio	6.6 lbs
	oio	2.6 lbs
Mel Tolbe	awa awa	5.6 lbs
Kurt Kawamoto	oio	6.5 lbs
	oio	3.0 lbS
	sting ray	released
	opakapaka	3.0-6.5 lbs – deepwater bottomfishing
	kahala	4.0-10 lbs – deepwater bottomfishing
	almaco jack	4.0-10 lbs – deepwater bottomfishing
	channel catfish	2-14 lbs
Marc Kawamoto	oio	2.5 lbs
Erin Kawamoto	channel catfish	16 lbs
Ken Bartlett	oio	3.0 lbs

## Barbless Circle Hook Catches 2006

<b>Randall Elarco Jr.</b>	<b>White Ulua</b>	<b>117 lbs-first &gt;100 lb white ulua</b>
Florine Elarco	omilu	3.7 lbs
Richard Saiki	oio	2.1 lbs
	oio	3.1 lbs
<b>Mitchell Taketa</b>	<b>white ulua</b>	<b>28.4 lbs – first ulua caught in a tournament</b>
	oio	7.4 lbs
	oio	8.6 lbs
	oio	5.4 lbs
	oio	6.1 lbs
	oio	2.0 lbs
	oio	2.0 lbs released
	oio	1.0 lbs released
	white papio	3.8 lbs
	yellow spot	3.0 lbs
	barred papio	4.7 lbs
	papio	2.0 lbs
	reef shark	
	puhi onion	
Shelby Taketa	oio	5.3 lbs
	oio	2.6 lbs
	puffer	
Glen Paison	omilu	3.2 lbs
<b>Ken Waters</b>	<b>white ulua</b>	<b>36.1 lbs - first ulua caught in a tournament</b>
	omilu	8.2 lbs
	white papio	3.0 lbs
	oio	3.7 lbs
Brennen Waters	omilu	1.2 lbs
	oio	4.0 lbs
Ronnie Galarce	kahala	3.0 lbs



For more info contact: Kurt Kawamoto-(808) 983-5326 or Kurt.Kawamoto@noaa.gov. 2570 Dole Street, Hon., HI 96822-2396.

# BARBLESS CIRCLE HOOK CATCHES MADE BY YOU!

## Barbless Circle Hook Catches 2006

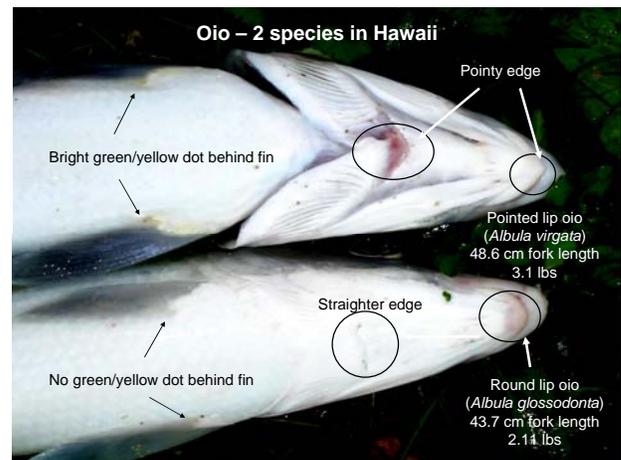
Duane Fukumoto	oio	2.4 lbs
	Oio	3.0 lbs
	Oio	1.3 lbs
		released
	Toau	0.5 lbs
Richard Saiki	oio	2.6 lbs
	Oio	2.2 lbs
Seth Johnson	oio	5.1 lbs
	White papio	1.0 lbs
		released
Joe Sugihara	sting ray	released
Kurt Kawamoto	white papio	1.5 lbs
	oio	2.5 – 7.0 lbs
	hammerhead shark	
	eagle ray	
	puhi paka	
	moi	1.5-2 lbs
	spiny balloon fish	
	smooth balloon fish	
Erin Kawamoto	channel catfish	2.0-13 lbs
Marc Kawamoto	channel catfish	8 lbs
Nicole Bartlett	oio	2.0 lbs
	oio	2.5 lbs
Roy Teruya	oio	1.75 lbs
Jonathan Yee	oio	3 lbs 1 oz.
Brian Funai	oio	3.25 lbs
Tod Yoshizawa	oio	1 lb 13 oz.
		released

## Barbless Circle Hook Catches 2007

Ken Waters	omilu	5.1 lbs
	omilu	4.2 lbs
	omilu	4.6 lbs
Craig Kawamura	white ulua	44.8 lbs-largest barbless ulua in Tokunaga
Duane Desilva	black ulua	26.1 lbs-winner of random weight drawing Tokunaga
Laron Kageyama	omilu	7.5 lbs
Teresa Elarco	white ulua	13.6 lbs
Mitchell Taketa	white ulua	29.0 lbs
	Omilu	1.5 lbs released
	Omilu	1.0 lbs released
	Oio	4.4 lbs
	Oio	4.5 lbs

## Fish Facts - Oio in Hawaii

If you haven't already noticed we have 2 species of oio in Hawaii. In Hawaii both of them are caught in similar areas and attain similar sizes. There are a few



subtle differences between them that will enable you to easily tell them apart.

If you would like to have your barbless catches listed please call, email, or write me and I'll be glad to add it to the growing list of anglers and catches.

Send us photos of your barbless hook catches so we can add it to our growing list. Sending in your photos will give us implicit permission to use them for publicizing the NOAA Barbless Circle Hook Program.

For more info contact: Kurt Kawamoto-(808) 983-5326 or Kurt.Kawamoto@noaa.gov. 2570 Dole Street, Hon., HI 96822-2396.

## Program Manager's Message - where da rubba meets da road.

I would like to thank all of you fishermen that tried using the barbless circle hooks these past 3 years. It hasn't been easy to get all of you to try them but the message of being proactive and courteous to the animals that use the same resources and shoreline is an important one.

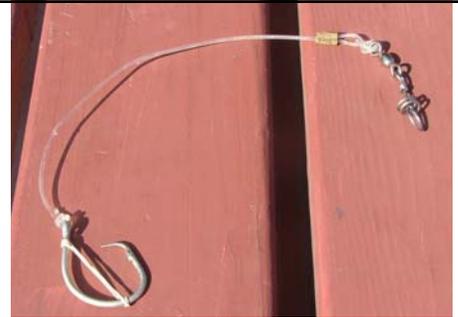
The ease of a barbless circle hook release has recently been substantiated. For those of you that repeatedly asked for "proof" that the barbless circle hooks would more easily be removed there is a recent case from the Big Island that illustrates the help that

we fishermen can provide both for the animal and for ourselves.

*"Well we got super lucky last night and got the hook out without even touching the seal. I've attached two pics so you can see the hook in the*



*mouth and the hook by itself. It appears that the fisherman may have cut off the barb so the seal actually pulled the hook out herself when she reacted to me getting close and moved away*



*she popped it right out!! "*

If only releases were all so easy but this **first** example shows what the barbless circle hook can do to help keep fishing alive and well in Hawaii. Thank you to the fisherman who used this one.

Please keep on using them.....kurt

### Barbless Circle Hook story from the 2007 Tokunaga Ulua Challenge tournament

One of the entrants emailed this story:

"Check out the pics of his 4.8 lber on barbless. Check out how big the hook hole was and he still brought it up. Also notice the line sticking out of the fishes mouth. Ken had jacked up his line and lost his hook in the process. He re-tied, re-baited, and recast. As soon as the bait hit the water, this fish bit. Evidently, the fish had found and ate his lost hook and bait, then bit his next bait as soon as it hit the bottom. When I pulled on the line, the hook came right out of the stomach so we know that it wasn't hooked in there. What a persistent fish!"



# BARBLESS CIRCLE HOOK CATCHES MADE BY YOU!

Send us photos of your barbless hook catches so we can add it to our growing collection. Please remember that sending your photos in means that you have implicitly given your permission for us to use them. Thank you very much.....kurt

## Barbless Catches for 2005



For more info contact: Kurt Kawamoto-(808) 983-5326 or Kurt.Kawamoto@noaa.gov. 2570 Dole Street, Hon., HI 96822-2396.

# BARBLESS CIRCLE HOOK CATCHES MADE BY YOU!

Barbless catches for 2006



For more info contact: Kurt Kawamoto-(808) 983-5326 or Kurt.Kawamoto@noaa.gov. 2570 Dole Street, Hon., HI 96822-2396.