



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

Environmental Center  
Crawford 317 • 2550 Campus Road  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
Telephone (808) 948-7361

RL:0777

HR 342, HCR 270  
REQUESTING A STUDY ON USE OF  
ARTIFICIAL REEFS FOR GROWING LOBSTERS

Statement for  
House Committee on  
Ocean and Marine Resources  
Public Hearing - April 14, 1988

By  
John Harrison, Environmental Center  
Jacquelin Miller, Environmental Center  
Richard Brock, Sea Grant

HCR 342, HCR 270 requests the Division of the Aquatics [Division of Aquatic Resources] of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, to conduct a study of Cuba's lobster industry with special emphasis on the use of artificial reefs.

Our statement does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

While we strongly concur with the need for greater research and development of artificial reef structures, we must express some reservation as to the likelihood of developing a local lobster industry using such structures.

Research at the University, particularly with regard to studies of lobster biology and populations both locally and in the Northwest Hawaiian islands have provided strong evidence that recruitment is probably the limiting factor, to the local Spiny lobster population, not habitat.

Spiny lobsters spend the first 9 months of their lives in the plankton, drifting with the ocean currents. The current gyres found around much of the islands may be transitory and tend to carry these larval forms away from the islands. Furthermore, Spiny lobsters require 7 years to produce their first eggs. Hence, there is the additional stress on the population due to the extended length of time exposed to predation prior to spawning.

Some of the banks fished in the North West Hawaiian Islands have shown ~~serious declines in the catch-per-unit-of-effort of spiny lobsters.~~ Other areas (Necker Island) have not shown such declines. It has been hypothesized

that in this later locality, current gyres may be more strongly established, remain in place, and hence return more of the young recruiting lobsters.

Therefore the limitation to the lobster fishery may be with recruitment of juveniles rather than shelter limitations for the adults.

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