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End of bottomfishing unlikely to hurt economy, study says

Associated Press

Ending bottomfishing in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands will likely have a relatively small economic impact on Hawai'i, according to a new University of Hawai'i study.

The study previewed Tuesday at the Hawaii Conservation Conference looked at how ending the fishery would economically affect the restaurant, wholesale and other industries that use fish caught by the eight remaining vessels still operating in the islands' waters, which became a federal monument in June.

Bottomfishing in the 140,000 square miles of the marine monument is scheduled to end in five years under the proclamation that created the monument. The fishing technique involves trolling for fish such as red snapper and 'opakapaka using hooks and lines.

There are 36 jobs and \$192,000 in payroll associated with the remote islands' bottomfish industry. But while restaurants purchase about \$20 million in Hawai'i commercial fish, only about \$300,000 of that is bottomfish originating in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, said the study, presented by graduate student Makena Coffman, one of the study's authors.

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