



### **Responsible Fishing: A Way of Life for Hawaiians for Centuries**

*From Thomas Cummings, Jr., former fisherman and native Hawaiian*

The bounty of the Pacific Ocean has sustained Hawaiians for hundreds of years. With seafood as the main source of protein for early inhabitants, leaders took great care in managing our islands' first fisheries. The konohiki system, where management of land and sea were integrated, ensured an adequate supply of fish and other natural resources. The demise of that system began in the mid-1800s and led to enormous changes in our coastal fisheries. Today, with new fishing techniques and high technology, our ocean resources are more vulnerable to overfishing than ever before. It is vital that we return to our traditional values of caring for the sea, so that it will care for us for many more generations. Following are a few examples of how local recreational fishermen are catching in a fair and responsible manner.

### **Free-dive, or Breath-hold, Spear Fishing**

*From Cal Hirai*

Free-dive spear fishing is a very selective way to fish. A lot of people go for the big, trophy-size fish, but I know those fish are important for replenishing the sea. They've got the best reproductive capacity. So I look for fish in the middle range – not too small, and not too big. I only take a few fish at a time, just what I'm going to eat with family or friends, and that way I know there will be some tomorrow. It's okay if you come out of the water empty-handed after not finding the right fish.

### **Hand Line**

*From Bruce Blankenfeld*

My favorite way to fish has always been by hand line because there's nothing more natural than feeling the tug of the line and pulling it up with your bare hands. You can target the exact type of fish you want, and since it takes only one fish at a time, it's not wasteful. It's a good way to make sure you're taking just what you need.

### **Pole and Line**

*From Dwight Matsuwaki*

If I catch something that I know I will eat, I will take it home, but otherwise I practice catch and release. Having lived on O'ahu, it's gravy to bring home a fish to eat because of the fewer fish around here. I am conscious about my impact on the reef, so I try to avoid walking on it whenever possible. I want the ocean to be healthy for my son and provide the same kind of enjoyment that I had while growing up.

*To contribute your thoughts on responsible fishing in Hawai'i, contact Fair Catch at [info@faircatchhawaii.org](mailto:info@faircatchhawaii.org) or 808-587-6224.*