

## **Native commercial fishermen complete Seafood HACCP Certification**

**by Laurie White, GLIFWC Traditional Food Grant Project Manager**

**Baraga, Mich.**—With support from GLIFWC planners, the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) Seafood HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) conducted food safety certification training December 5-7, 2023 at Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. Through a long term, ongoing commitment, GLIFWC works to successfully equip tribal commercial fishermen and associated employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to build a HACCP plan for their own products. Fond Du Lac, Bad River, Sokaogon, Grand Traverse, and Little Traverse Band members, along with five KBIC members and one Indian Health Services inspector, attended the training. Participants completed their AFDO Seafood HACCP Certification in a concentrated effort to promote safe seafood practices. This nationally recognized program provides crucial guidelines for ensuring seafood safety. Obtaining this certification enhances the reputation and credibility of tribal fishermen, guaranteeing safe and high-quality seafood to wholesalers and consumers.

For over 35 years Michigan State University (MSU) and GLIFWC have maintained a partnership enabling tribal fishermen to receive comprehensive three-day AFDO Seafood HACCP training. Industry experts with extensive knowledge and practical experience, such as Jim Thannum and Ron Kinnunen, who specialize in threats to Great Lakes aquatic vertebrate animals and safety regulations, and Dr. Lauren Jescovitch, who brings expertise in aquaculture and curriculum instruction for adult students, execute the course. The collaboration between these organizations creates a rich and dynamic learning environment with diverse perspectives.

Seafood HACCP training is based on seven essential principles covering all seafood safety aspects, from harvesting and processing to distribution and consumption. HACCP is a systematic approach that identifies, assesses, and controls potential hazards throughout the production and

processing of perishable items like seafood. The principles include conducting a hazard analysis, determining critical control points, defining monitoring procedures, implementing corrective actions, establishing verification procedures, and creating recordkeeping procedures. Once students have a grasp of the principles, the instructors incorporate hands-on sessions where participants can use various safety instruments. This interactive approach deepens their understanding of these instruments' crucial role in maintaining seafood safety standards.

GLIFWC facilitates the training and ensures quick access for tribal members by covering the HACCP registration fee, including the course book. Accommodations, meals, and mileage reimbursements are provided for participants from GLIFWC member tribes and tribal employees. It is important to note that attendees must commit to attending all three days of the training to obtain the HACCP certificate and have their travel expenses reimbursed.

**Upcoming HACCP certification trainings are scheduled for May 14-16 at the St. Croix Tribal Educational Building in Webster, Wisconsin, and December 10-12 in Brimley, Michigan.**

These sessions present an excellent opportunity for tribal fishermen to acquire the mandatory Seafood HACCP certification required for obtaining a tribal commercial fishing license. Fishermen are encouraged to seize these opportunities, further enhancing their skills, and contributing to the overall safety and quality of seafood in the Great Lakes region.