



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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## NOAA Fisheries Announces New Regulations Revising Accountability Measure Language in the U.S. Caribbean Fishery Management Plans

The final rule for the Comprehensive Amendment to the U.S. Caribbean Fishery Management Plans: Application of Accountability Measures, published in the *Federal Register* on May 11, 2016 (81 FR 29166). **Regulations will be effective on June 10, 2016.**

The final rule:

- Implements the comprehensive amendment, which revises text within the Reef Fish, Queen Conch, Spiny Lobster, and Corals and Reef Associated Plants and Invertebrates Fishery Management Plans of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to be consistent with language in the implementing regulations describing the application of accountability measures in the U.S. Caribbean exclusive economic zone. This change only revises text in the respective fishery management plans and does not change the regulations.
- Specifies what restrictions on fishing occur in the U.S. Caribbean exclusive economic zone when an annual catch limit is exceeded and an accountability measure is implemented.

- Clarifies that the spiny lobster annual catch limit for the Puerto Rico management area of the U.S. Caribbean exclusive economic zone applies to both the commercial and recreational sectors.
- Clarifies that for the queen conch minimum size limit requirement in the U.S. Caribbean exclusive economic zone, only one of the measurement descriptions (i.e., shell length or lip width) must be met.

An *accountability measure* is a management control to prevent annual catch limits from being exceeded and to correct or mitigate overages of the annual catch limit if they occur. An *annual catch limit* is the amount of a particular fish species, stock, or stock complex that can be caught in a given year.

### More Information

For more information on the final rule for the Comprehensive Amendment to the U.S. Caribbean Fishery Management Plans, please visit the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office Website at: [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/caribbean/generic/accountability\\_measures/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/caribbean/generic/accountability_measures/index.html).