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# Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC): 18th Session Update



Queen Conch. Credit: NOAA Fisheries



Scalloped Hammerhead. Credit: NOAA Fisheries



Caribbean Spiny Lobster.  
Credit: NOAA Fisheries

**Laura Cimo**  
**Caribbean Fishery Council Meeting**  
**11-12 August 2022**



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# Presentation Topics

- **Overview of WECAFC**
- **WECAFC 18 Outcomes**
- **Upcoming Events**
  - **First Meeting: Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group**
- **Contact Information**
- **Questions**

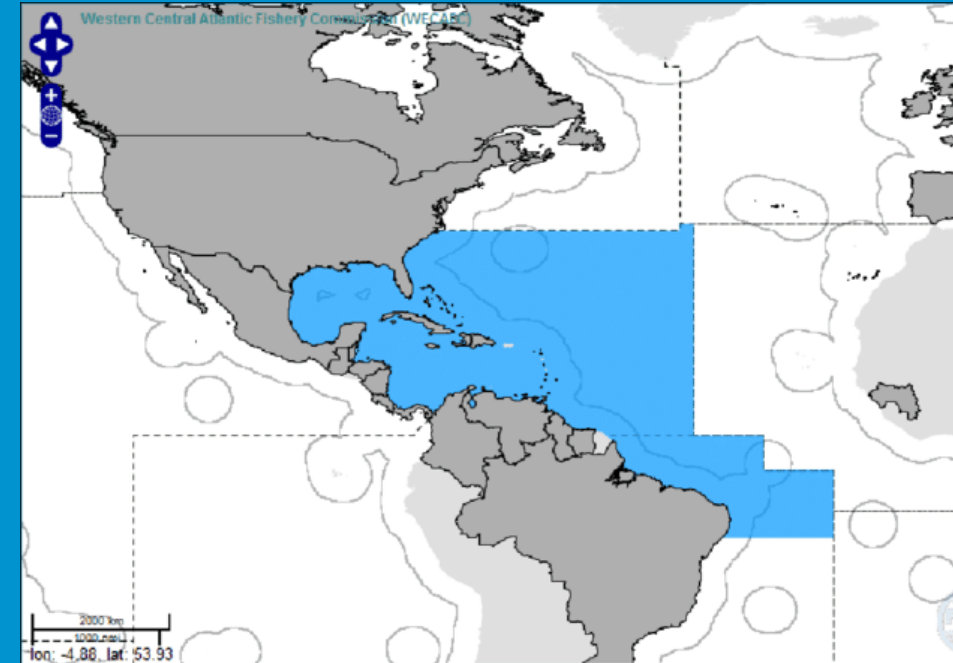




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# Overview of WECAFC

- Operates as a regional fisheries body under Article VI of the FAO Constitution
- Acts in an advisory capacity to promote effective conservation, management, and development of living marine resources in the Wider Caribbean
- Comprised of 34 Members, including USA





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# Overview of WECAFC

- **Eleven working groups focus on species/fisheries issues:**
  - **Caribbean spiny lobster\***
  - **Queen conch\***
  - **Fish spawning aggregations\***
  - **IUU fishing\***
  - **Recreational fisheries\***
  - **Moored Fish Aggregating Devices (MFADs)\***
  - **Sharks\***
  - **Fishery Data and Statistics\***
  - **Deep sea fisheries**
  - **Flyingfish-dolphinfish**
  - **Shrimp and groundfish (N. Brazil-Guianas Shelf)**





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## WECAFC18

- **Held virtually 26-29 July 2022**
- **U.S. delegation led by State Department with representation from:**
  - **NOAA Fisheries Office of International Affairs, Trade, and Commerce**
  - **NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office**
  - **CFMC, SAFMC, and GFMC**
  - **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**





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## **WECAFC18 Outcomes**

- **Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) adopted to provide guidance for standardized data collection on key species in the region.**
- **Regional database will provide WECAFC with information for the monitoring of priority species and future stock assessments.**
- **Members are strongly encouraged to proceed with the use of DCRF for monitoring and reporting.**



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## WECAFC18 Outcomes



- **Regional Fish Spawning Aggregation FMP focused on Nassau grouper and mutton snapper was endorsed.**
- **Members are called upon to implement the FMP and improve data collection and assessment of fish spawning aggregations (FSA).**
- **WECAFC Secretariat and Members agreed to promote communication and outreach for FSA conservation and mobilize resources for priority research and monitoring.**



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## WECAFC18 Outcomes



- **Recommendation on counter IUU fishing adopted.**
- **Commission reaffirmed its commitment to implement the Regional Queen Conch FMP and monitor progress annually.**
- **Members are strongly encouraged to participate in genetic work to identify spatial distribution of queen conch.**
- **Queen Conch Working Group encouraged to collaborate with Regional Working Group on IUU fishing.**



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## WECAFC18 Outcomes



Dolphin & Silky Shark. Credit: Annie Guttridge

- **MFAD regional management plan and guide for improved monitoring of MFAD catches adopted on “interim basis”.**
- **MFAD Working Group charged with finalizing the plan and guide for consideration at next Commission meeting.**
- **Secretariat asked to support regional MFAD assessment.**
- **Members encouraged to promote data collection and analysis on MFAD fisheries, support stakeholder outreach and communication campaigns, and encourage research.**



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## WECAFC18 Outcomes



- **Regional Plan of Action for Sharks adopted.**
- **Commission supported WECAFC becoming signatory to Memorandum of Understanding creating non-binding coordination mechanism for ocean governance.**
- **Exchange of letters of cooperation between WECAFC and ICCAT was endorsed to facilitate collaborative work.**
- **Work Program for 2022-2024 will include meetings of the Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group and Recreational Fisheries Working Group.**



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## Upcoming Events

- **Fifth Meeting of Working Group on Spawning Aggregations**
  - 24-25 January 2023
- **Sixth Meeting of Queen Conch Working Group**
  - 26 January 2023
- **First Meeting of Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group**
  - To be determined





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Atlantic dolphinfish. Credit: NOAA Fisheries

# First Meeting: Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group

- **Work Plan and priority areas are to be identified.**
- **NOAA Fisheries is seeking input on issues, challenges, and opportunities of interest to U.S. stakeholders for the Working Group to address.**
- **Council members are invited to share your views on issues for the Working Group.**





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## Contact Information

- For more information, please see WECAFC's website:  
<https://www.fao.org/wecafc/en>
- If you have any questions, please contact:  
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**Thank you for your attention  
and interest!**

