



NOAA
FISHERIES

Potential Criteria for Revising the List of Stocks Managed under the Island-based Fishery Management Plans

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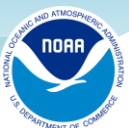
188th Caribbean Fishery Management Council Meeting

December 3-4, 2025



August 2025 Council Meeting

- Reviewed guidance on identifying which stocks are in need of federal conservation and management.
 - 10 National Standard factors; and
 - Criteria applied to stocks in the Island-based Fishery Management Plans (FMPs).
- Reviewed an option to classify stocks as ecosystem component species.
- Discussed using a species matrix (summary of available data) as a tool to reconsider the list of stocks that could be managed under each FMP.
- Council made a motion to develop an amendment to evaluate and revise the list of species managed under the FMPs.



Potential Criteria for Revising Managed Stocks

From the list of stocks currently managed under the Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and St. Thomas/St. John Fishery Management Plans:

- Retain stocks that are currently classified as overfished.
- Retain stocks predominantly caught in federal waters.
 - if 50% or more of the reported landings are from federal waters.
 - if 75% or more of the reported landings are from federal waters.
- Retain stocks that are targeted by the USVI and Puerto Rico fisheries (all waters).
 - if average annual landings reported are 5,000 pounds or more.
 - if average annual landings reported are 10,000 pounds or more.

Numbers in green are examples and could be changed based on Council input.

Potential Criteria for Revising Managed Stocks - Continued

- Retain stocks listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act.
- Consider removing stocks that are adequately managed by the territories.
 - Recommend Council/NMFS get input from Puerto Rico DNER/U.S. Virgin Islands DPNR.
- Retain stocks that that can be adequately monitored or assessed.
 - Data collection program in place or there is a feasible method/reason to collect data.
 - Use information from the SEFSC data triage to support decisions.

Potential Criteria for Revising Managed Stocks - Continued

- Reclassify ecologically important stocks retained as ecosystem component species (ECS).
 - Habitat or habitat engineers (e.g. coral, urchins): no need for catch limits or accountability measures, but could retain harvest prohibition to protect their role in the ecosystem.
 - Other species/species group (e.g., surgeonfish): no need for catch limits or accountability measures; could retain to achieve ecosystem management objectives (collect data or minimize bycatch mortality).
 - The Council and NMFS, in cooperation with the Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, could continue to monitor fisheries that catch ECS.
 - If an ECS stock becomes a target of a federal fishery in the future, NMFS and the Council may consider including that stock in the management unit to actively manage that stock.
- Other criteria to consider?

Discussion and Next Steps

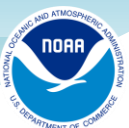
- Are there other criteria (qualitative or quantitative) the Council would like staff to consider?
- Are there other thresholds (numbers in green) the Council would like staff to consider?
- For species that don't meet criteria for retention, what criteria would be used for removal vs. classification as an EC species?
- Staff and work group will draft amendment with criteria options (including potential list of stocks to manage) and bring to April 2026 meeting.



Questions

National Standard Factors Councils Should Use to Decide if Stocks Require Conservation and Management

1. The stock is an important component of the marine environment.
2. The stock is caught by the fishery.
3. Whether an FMP can improve or maintain the condition of the stock.
4. The stock is a target of a fishery.
5. The stock is important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users.
6. The fishery is important to the Nation or to the regional economy.
7. The need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups and whether an FMP can further that resolution.
8. The economic condition of a fishery and whether an FMP can produce more efficient utilization.
9. The needs of a developing fishery, and whether an FMP can foster orderly growth.
10. The extent to which the fishery is already adequately managed by states, by state/federal programs, or by federal regulations pursuant to other FMPs or international commissions, or by industry self-regulation, consistent with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law.



Selection Criteria used by the Council in the FMPs

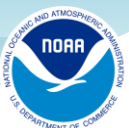
Criterion A. *Include* species classified as overfished in federal waters, or for which harvest is prohibited due to their ecological importance as habitat (corals) or habitat engineers (midnight, blue, rainbow parrotfish), or those with seasonal closures or size limits.

Criterion B. From those remaining, *exclude* species that infrequently occur in federal waters based on expert analysis and available data.

Criterion C. From those remaining, *include* species that are biologically vulnerable, constrained to a habitat that makes them vulnerable, or have essential ecological value, based on expert analysis.

Criterion D. From those remaining, *include* species important to the national/regional economy for the recreational, commercial, and aquarium trade sectors as appropriate (e.g., top 90% of landings) and those that are an important component of bycatch, based on expert analysis.

Criterion E. From those remaining, *include* any other species that the Council determines are in need of conservation and management.



FMP	Included under Criterion A	Included under Criterion C	Included under Criterion D	Included under Criterion E
Puerto Rico	Snappers: black, blackfin, silk, vermilion, lane, mutton, yellowtail Groupers: Nassau, goliath, red hind, black, red, tiger, yellowfin, yellowedge Parrotfish: blue, midnight, rainbow Queen Conch Spiny Lobster Corals n = 20 + corals	Snappers: dog, schoolmaster, cubera Groupers: coney, graysby, rock hind, misty, yellowmouth Parrotfish: queen, princess, redband, striped Surgeonfish: blue tang, ocean, doctorfish Triggerfish: ocean, queen, gray Wrasses: hogfish, puddingwife, Spanish hogfish Angelfish: queen, gray, French Great barracuda Tripletail Rays: giant manta, spotted eagle, southern stingray n = 31	Snappers: wenchman, cardinal, queen White grunt Jacks - crevalle, African pompano, rainbow runner Wahoo Dolphinfish - dolphin, pompano dolphin Tunas - little tunny, blackfin Mackerels - king, cero n = 14	Sea cucumbers Sea urchins
St. Croix	Snappers: black, blackfin, silk, vermilion, lane, mutton, yellowtail Groupers: Nassau, goliath, red hind, black, red, tiger, yellowfin Parrotfish: blue, midnight, rainbow, queen, princess, redfin, redband, striped, stoplight Queen Conch Spiny Lobster Corals n = 26 + corals	Groupers: coney, graysby, rock hind, misty Bluestriped grunt Longspine squirrelfish Surgeonfish: blue tang, ocean, doctorfish Angelfish: queen, gray, French n = 12	Snappers: queen, gray, schoolmaster White grunt Queen triggerfish Dolphin Wahoo n = 7	Sea cucumbers Sea urchins
St. Thomas/ St. John	Snappers: black, blackfin, silk, vermilion, lane, mutton, yellowtail Groupers: Nassau, goliath, red hind, black, red, tiger, yellowfin, yellowedge Parrotfish: blue, midnight, rainbow Queen Conch Spiny Lobster Corals n = 20 + corals	Groupers: coney, misty, yellowmouth Parrotfish: queen, princess, redband, striped, redfin Grunts: white, margate, bluestriped Porgies: jolthead, sea bream, sheepshead, saucereye Surgeonfish: blue tang, ocean, doctorfish Angelfish: queen, gray, French Hogfish n = 24	Queen snapper Blue runner Queen triggerfish Dolphin Wahoo n = 5	Sea cucumbers Sea urchins

Species Matrix - Variables

Qualitative	Quantitative
FMP selection criterion (A, C, D, E)	Number of years the species was reported in the commercial landings during historical (2012-2023) and recent (2021-2023) periods.
Indicator stock for the complex (Y/N)	Average commercial landings for the species during historical (2012-2023) and recent (2021-2023) periods.
ABC Control Rule Tier (3, 4a, 4b)	Percent of the commercial landings reported from federal waters for each species during historical (2012-2023) and recent (2021-2023) periods.
Species listed on the current commercial catch report form (Y/N)	Rank of each species in commercial landings during historical (2012-2023) and recent (2021-2023) periods.
ESA-listed species and if 4d rule in place (Y/N)	Comparison of the commercial landings in recent years (2019-2023) to the historical period (2012-2023).
List of federal/territorial regulations applicable to the species (e.g., size limit, seasonal closure)	For Puerto Rico only, the number of years the species was reported in the recreational landings, average recreational landings per species, and rank of each species for years 2000-2016.
Stock status (overfished/overfishing)	Productivity and Susceptibility scores assigned by SSC included in FMPs
Critical role in ecosystem (e.g., grazer) or fishery (e.g., bait)	Pending - TIP length data; NCRMP abundance/biomass data; price per pound
Years that ACLs or OFL/OFL proxy were exceeded	
Species on the SEDAR stock assessment schedule (year)	