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Framework Amendment 2: Update the Overfishing Limit, Acceptable Biological Catch, and Annual Catch Limit for Spiny Lobster

Based on the 2022 Update Assessment to the
2019 SEDAR 57 Spiny Lobster Stock Assessments



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Background

- At the April 2023 meeting, the Council selected preferred alternatives for setting the spiny lobster annual catch limits (ACL) equal to 0.95 of the acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommended by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee.
- The recommendations were based on the 2022 Update Assessment to the 2019 SEDAR 57 spiny lobster stock assessments.
- The final draft of Framework Amendment 2 was prepared for Council review and final action for the August 2023 meeting.
- If approved, the Council would submit the amendment for review by the Secretary of Commerce.

Framework Amendment 2

Framework Amendment 2 ([August 2023 Briefing Book](#)):

- Updates Overfishing Limits, ABCs, and ACLs for spiny lobster under the Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and St. Thomas/St. John Fishery Management Plans (FMPs).
- Is based on best scientific information available.
- If approved, the updated ACLs would be implemented for the 2024 calendar fishing year.

FMP	ACL under No Action	ACL under preferred alternatives in Framework Amendment 2
Puerto Rico	366,965 lbs	357,629 lbs
St. Croix	120,830 lbs	137,254 lbs
St. Thomas/St. John	126,089 lbs	133,207 lbs

Summary of Effects

Increase in ACL (St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John)

- **Biological/Ecological:** Short-term negative effects from increased removals, but long-term positive effects from managing to the maximum sustainable yield.
- **Social/Ecological:** Short-term positive effects from increased revenues and fishing opportunities**, and long-term positive effects from sustainably managing the stock.

Decrease in ACL (Puerto Rico)

- **Biological/Ecological:** Short-term positive effects from decreased removals*, but long-term positive effects from managing to the maximum sustainable yield.
- **Social/Ecological:** Short-term negative effects from reduced revenues and fishing opportunities*, but long-term positive effects from sustainably managing the stock.

* Depends on the location where lobster are harvested: state vs federal waters.

** If fishermen take advantage of the increased fishing opportunities and harvest the total ACL.

Regulatory Text

When the Council submits Framework Amendment 2 for Secretarial review, the proposed rule will include regulatory text with the updated ACLs for spiny lobster under each FMP.

The draft regulatory text ([August 2023 Briefing Book](#)) states:

- For Puerto Rico (federal regulations part 622.440), the ACL is 357,629 lb (162,218kg), round weight.
- For St. Croix (federal regulations part 622.480), the ACL is 137,254 lb (62,257 kg), round weight.
- For St. Thomas/St. John (federal regulations part 622.515), the ACL is 133,207 lb (60,422 kg), round weight.

Next Steps

- Council submits Framework Amendment 2 for Secretarial review.
- Council and NMFS costs associated with preparing Framework Amendment 2 are not yet finalized (Chapter 5), so Council could allow Chair to approve editorial changes to the amendment.
- NMFS staff begin rulemaking:
 - Proposed rule would include opportunity for public comment.
 - Final rule would likely be completed in early 2024.

Questions



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