



Caribbean Fishery Management Council's Report

December 2015



154th REGULAR MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

December 15-16 - The Frenchman's Reef and Morning Star Hotel
in St. Thomas, USVI

Island Based Fishery Management Plans (IBFMP) Update

Dr. Bill Arnold and Dr. Graciela García-Moliner presented the Drafts for Actions and Alternatives for the Puerto Rico, St Thomas/St John and St. Croix fisheries management Plans that are being developed by SERO. The recommendations came initially from the Group of Experts, the DAPs and the SSC. The actions to be taken are:

- **Action 1:** Determine species to be included for management in the St. Croix Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
- **Action 2:** Establish stock complexes in the St. Croix Fishery Management Unit (FMU)
- **Action 3:** Define management reference points for species within the St. Croix Fishery Management Unit (FMU)

To determine the species to be managed in each District the following criteria were considered.

- **Criterion A.** Include for management those species that are presently classified as overfished in U.S. Caribbean federal waters based on NMFS determination, or for which historically identified harvest is now prohibited due to their ecological importance as habitat (corals presently included in the Corals and Reef Associated Plants and Invertebrates FMP) or habitat engineers (midnight, blue, rainbow parrotfish), or those species for which seasonal closures or size limits apply.

- **Criterion B.** From the remainder species, exclude from federal management those species that have been determined to infrequently occur in federal waters based on expert analysis guided by available data.



- **Criterion C.** From the remainder species, include for management those species that are biologically vulnerable, constrained to a specific habitat that renders them particularly vulnerable, or have an essential ecological value, as determined by expert analysis.
- **Criterion D.** From the remainder species, include those species possessing economic importance to the nation or regional economy based on a threshold of landings or value separately determined for each of the recreational, commercial, and aquarium trade sectors as appropriate (e.g., top 90%) and those representing an important component of bycatch, as established by expert analysis.

After the presentation, the Council had an extensive discussion and examined as well the species to be considered. Some recommendations were rejected and others were accepted. The discussion about the inclusion or exclusion of the dolphin fish and the wahoo from the three FMPs was especially intense and, in order to follow the protocol established by CFMC “for species selection” a motion to include the dolphin and wahoo fish in the draft list of species for federal management in all three IBFMPs was approved.



Timing of Issue Accountability Measures-Based Closures Amendment Update

This has been under the Council's consideration for some time; it deals with the fact that some fishing closures coincide with very productive economic seasons for the fishers, and it may be possible to adjust the timing of said closures to reduce the economic impact. The public hearings conducted in PR, STT and STX, were very well attended. Fishers from PR requested that the information regarding this issue be presented to them in smaller meetings before the final action is taken. Motions

were approved to use the word revisit instead the word review on the alternative. A re-visitation would consist of a presentation to the CFMC, two years after the implementation of the amendment. This presentation will provide for discussion and subsequent guidance to council staff. Another motion approved, defined a new alternative: for species that already have a seasonal closure in place, to close immediately after or before this seasonal closure for the number of days necessary to achieve the required reduction in landings, once the overage of the ACL is identified.

The Council will continue with this discussion in the next regular meeting. It will also hold orientation meetings in Puerto Rico during the month of March to further discuss this issue.



SEDAR 46 Workshop (November 2015) Update

Application of Data-Limited Methods (SEDAR 46) and Potential Use for Management was convened in Puerto Rico on November 2015. The results of this meeting was presented via GoToMeeting by Shannon L. Cass-Calay from NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Documents are available at <http://sedarweb.org/sedar-46>. Among the results of

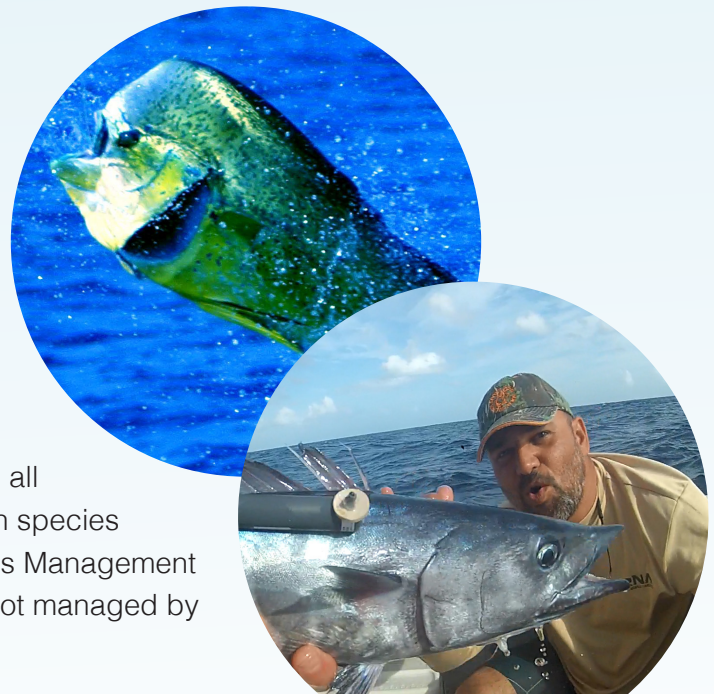
The SEDAR 46, November workshop, it was presented that data in the Caribbean is too limited, thus making it difficult to establish the status of the fisheries populations and the necessary management measures that need to be implemented. Data on fisheries

populations and catch levels is essential to establish credible management measures. The information resulting from SEDAR will be provided to the SSC and they will present their recommendations to the Council for the best management decisions. Many methods/models can be applied at the same time and see which one is better. After the discussion, the Council passed a Motion to include all models that follow the legal parameter as recommended by SEDAR 46: a) Probability of overfishing less than 50%, b) Probability of overfished status less than 50% and c) the Minimum Stock Size Threshold = 50% BMSY. Also, a motion was approved to allow variation in annual yield (CV=15%) as an exercise following the recommendation by SEDAR 46. The complete Assessment Report for SEDAR 46 will be submitted to the Council on March 28, 2016.



SSC Report

Dr. Jorge García Sais presented the SSC report with the recommendation on the species to be included or excluded in the management units of the IBFMPs. Ample discussion was generated on the removal or inclusion of dolphin fish and wahoo in the IBFMPs. A motion was approved to include the dolphin and wahoo fish in the draft list of species for federal management in all three IBFMPs. The argument for this decision is that both species are managed by the South Atlantic and the Gulf Fisheries Management Councils and they are fished in the Caribbean, but are not managed by the CFMC.



AM-Based Season Closure Schedule for 2016

Dr. Bill Arnold presented the analysis of the statistics for (ACLs and ACL overage) based on fish landing reported that will determine the closure schedule for 2016. There are no closures for STT/STJ and STX. The following Table presents the season closure schedule for PR.

Species or Species Group	Closure Date Based on 2014 Fishing Rate
PR Commercial Parrotfish	18-Dec
PR Commercial Snapper Unit 2	24-Oct
PR Commercial Spiny Lobster	12-Nov
PR Commercial Triggerfish & Filefish	2-Oct
PR Commercial Wrasse	27-Oct
PR Recreational Jacks	14-Jun

The Council requested information for the PRDNER to explain the reasons for increased landings for Snapper Unit 2 and others.

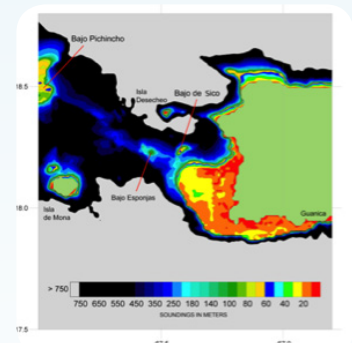
Outreach and Education Report

Dr. Alida Ortiz, OEAP Chairperson, presented three outreach and education initiatives:

- **Puerto Rico's Responsible Fish & Seafood Consumers Actions to Support Sustainable Fisheries** targeting consumers and restaurant owners in Puerto Rico to consume less known species, but just as delicious and healthy. Outreach products will include short videos, information placemats, small posters and Fact Sheets to promote a better knowledge of the biology and the ecology of the fish and seafood species consumed, the management measures established to protect the resource and the consumer's responsibility for a sustainable fishery.
- The need for a person in charge of **Fisheries liaison for USVI**. It is imperative to have a constant communication between the Council and the fishers as the new IBFMP are developed and implemented for ST/SJ and STX.
- Establish the **Fisher of the Year Award** to be granted to the fisher with the best record for submission of fishing data and compliance with local and federal fisheries regulations.

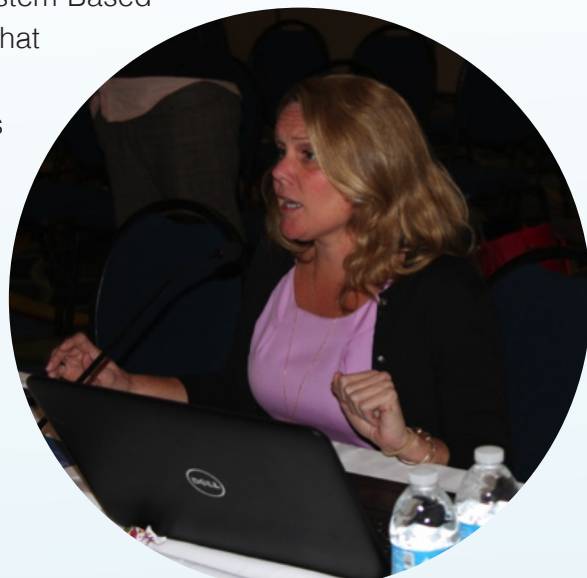
Coral Habitat and Queen Snapper Ecosystem

Dr. García-Sais has been conducting monitoring on deep water coral reefs in the Council's jurisdiction for several years. He presented at this meeting his most recent findings, which the Council may take into account to establish management priorities in the monitored areas.



Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management Policy and Planning

Ms. Heather Sagar presented the NOAA draft document for the Ecosystem- Based Fisheries Management Policy and Planning that will be adopted in 2017. In essence Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) refers to an integrated management approach that incorporates the entire ecosystem, including humans, into resource management decisions. Ms. Sagar explained that NOAA Fisheries is developing an Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Policy and Planning (EBFM) defined as: A systematic approach to fisheries management in a geographically specified area that ensures the resilience and sustainability of the ecosystem; recognizes the physical, biological, economic, and social interactions among the affected components of the ecosystem, including humans; and seeks to optimize benefits among a diverse set of societal goals. The Guiding Principles for EBFM to be included in the policy are as follows:



1. Advance our understanding of ecosystem processes
2. Implement ecosystem-level planning
3. Prioritize vulnerabilities and risks of ecosystems and their components
4. Explore and address trade-offs within an ecosystem
5. Incorporate ecosystem considerations into management advice
6. Maintain Resilient Ecosystems

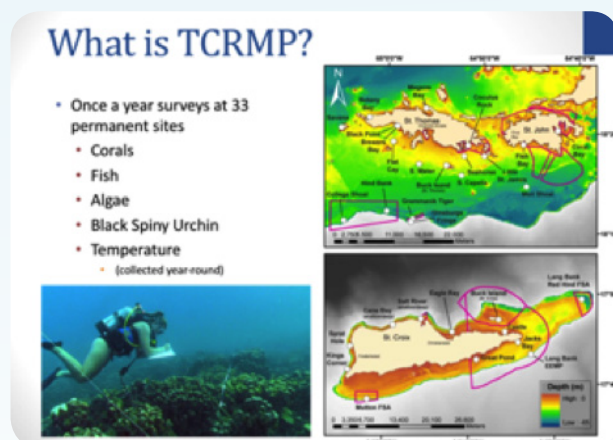
More information on this issue may be accessed through:

<http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/ecosystems/ebfm/creating-an-ebfm-management-policy>

USVI Coral Reef Initiative, Ms. Leslie Henderson, Territorial Coral Reef Monitoring Program (TCRMP)

An interesting finding from Ms. Henderson presentation is the fact that the lionfish has found successful refuge in the Marine Protected Areas due to the fishing regulation in these areas. The website to find more information on TCRMP is:

<https://sites.google.com/a/myuvi.net/tyler-b-smith-lab/>



Congratulations, Helena and Edwin!

The Council recognized Ms. Helena Antoun, Fisheries Liaison (CFMC/DNER) for Puerto Rico for her excellent performance in facilitating the communication between the fishers and other stakeholders and the Council. Her initiatives have resulted in a considerable increase in public participation in all the events where the Council has requested public input.

Commercial fisherman Edwin "Pauco" Font was recognized at the 68th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Meeting in Panama. The Gladding Memorial Award recognizes the knowledge and wise use of the resources by fishers. Pauco received the award from GCFI Chairwoman and Council staff Dr. Graciela García-Moliner.



Next Meetings:

Council Meeting:

June 27-30, 2016 in St. Croix, USVI
August 22-25, 2016 in Puerto Rico
December 12-15, 2016 in St. Thomas, USVI

SSC & DAP's Meeting:

March 15-17, 2016 in Puerto Rico
at Hotel Verdanza

Acronyms

ACL - Annual Catch Limit
CFMC - Caribbean Fishery Management Council
DAP - District Advisory Panel
EEZ - Exclusive Economic Zone
FMP - Fishery Management Plans
FMU - Fishery Management Unit
MSA - Magnuson Steven Act
NMFS - National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PR - Puerto Rico
SSC - Scientific and Statistical Committee
STT/STJ - St. Thomas / St. John
STX - St. Croix
USVI - United States Virgin Islands

Credits

Alida Ortiz - Editor
Miguel Rolón - Editor
Natalia Perdomo - Designer
Thanks to Council Staff for their revision of this bulletin.

Editor's Note

The Caribbean Newsletter is published by The Caribbean Fishery Management Council. Its purpose is to report developments in fisheries management that would be of interest to its readers. Please credit the council when reprinting articles used in this newsletter. Anyone wishing to submit information or articles pertaining to fishing or fisheries management, or letters to the editor on a pertinent issue, is invited and encouraged to do so. These may be mailed to Natalia Perdomo, Caribbean Newsletter, 270 Muñoz Rivera Avenue Suite 401 San Juan Puerto Rico, 00918, or may be sent via internet to this email address nataliaperdomo_cfmc@yahoo.com.