



Caribbean Fishery Management Council's Newsletter



Volume 2

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Managing Our Nation's Fisheries 3: Advancing Sustainability (MONF3)

The Managing Our Nation's Fisheries 3: Advancing Sustainability meeting, co-sponsored by the eight regional fishery management councils and NOAA Fisheries, was held on May 7-9, 2013, at the Mayflower hotel in Washington DC, and it was attended by over 600 persons interested in fishery management. Issues regarding what has been successful, and what needs to be improved in the management process for the sustainability of our fisheries were discussed in different meeting sessions.

CFMC members, SSC, AP, OEAP and staff members attended this meeting, which was a very appropriate one in terms of timing given that the MSA will be up for reauthorization in Congress this year.



MONF3 2013

Some of the issues discussed at the various sessions were:

- **Improving Fishery Management Essentials** – the challenges of using ACLs. Implementation of rebuilding programs, and the participation in international fishery management, towards a meaningful discussion of potential ways to improve sustainable management practices that maintain vibrant fisheries.
- **Advancing Ecosystem-Based Decision Making** – views regarding the fact that fisheries affect, and are affected, by an ever changing ocean ecosystem, and the need to consider relationships between managed species and their environment when setting policies and developing management strategies.
- **Providing for Fishing Community Stability** – analysis of recreational and subsistence fisheries, socio-economic trade offs, and fishing communities, including jobs and seafood quality, to find ways to meet management objectives while taking into account the needs of different user groups and their diverse social and economic objectives that may help councils and NOAA to better evaluate the social and economic outcomes of policy choices.

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The following findings, summarized by the Pew Charitable Trust, were presented at the plenary session:

- **Session 1:** New approaches to understand species health, reproductive rate, and its place in the food web before allowing fishing are needed to end and/or prevent overfishing. Thanks to the MSA, dozens of species are recovering from overfishing, and many others have scientifically sound catch limits, which means that the MSA should not be weakened on its reauthorization, but should be built on its success. Even though, some fishing interests would like more flexibility in the regulations, the law is already flexible. Therefore, clear targets and firm catch limits should not be changed.
- **Session 2:** Healthy oceans need a thriving diversity of marine life, and we should alter our fish management methods to consider the big picture; an ecosystem-based fishery management system, considering ocean acidification, warming seas, habitat preservation, and protection of food webs to achieve this goal. Fishing should not be allowed in new areas until we make sure it will not cause stress to these areas. Small forage fishes, such as sardines, herring and mullets, which serve as prey to valuable fish species, should be protected by limiting new or expanded large-scale fishing, until scientific studies are conducted and new rules, if needed, are developed to protect them. More efforts should be directed into identifying and conserve habitat, ranging from coastal waters to the continental shelf edge to the deep rocky sea bottom. Climate change should not be used as an excuse for inaction on fish decline. Adjusting catch limits and enforcing the regulations are tools that can help the populations to be more resilient in facing many threats, including warmer oceans.



- **Session 3:** Cooperative research with the fishing communities can provide additional and important information to the scientists. This joint effort, providing the fishermen participation in the management process, can be a cost-effective way to collect and compile better data that form the basis of fish population studies. Congress should increase efforts to strengthen enforcement, monitoring and improve international management in lieu to contend illegal fishing.

For more information on the discussions and outcomes of MONF 3 visit:

www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/other-resources/top-10-takeaways-from-the-national-fish-summit-85899478729



145th Regular CFMC Meeting Highlights

The 145th CFMC meeting was held on March 26-27, 2013, at the Buccaneer Hotel, in St. Croix, USVI.

Access through the Web was provided for all interested parties to participate via the GoToMeeting Internet tool for the first time, and will be provided at all future CFMC meetings.

Regulatory Amendment 2 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Queen Conch Resources of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands: Compatibility of Trip and Bag Limits for the U.S. Caribbean Exclusive Economic Zone Off St. Croix.

The Regulatory Amendment proposes to establish compatible regulations with USVI territorial regulations for the commercial and recreational harvest of the queen conch resources. The USVI Government has expressed their desire to establish compatible regulations between federal and territorial waters to facilitate enforcement efforts in the region, enhance compliance of regulations by the fishers and achieve a more efficient management of the queen conch resources in the U.S. Caribbean.

The Regulatory Amendment will modify the commercial trip limit from 150-queen conch per licensed commercial fisher per day to 200-queen conch per vessel per day, regardless of the number of licensed commercial fishers on board, and will leave the recreational bag limit unchanged. The reason to maintain a lower recreational bag limit is that increasing it may have negative consequences in the continued health of the queen conch resource and would do little to assist law enforcement.

Importance of High Quality Data Collection

An evaluation and update of the data for the Queen Snapper and Red Hind resources is needed to make a scientific assessment of the status of the stocks, for management purposes. Based on the new data collected and analyzed, the SSC will establish the pertinent ACLs and AMs. Discussions regarding this issue emphasized the need for reliable and timely data on fish stocks to produce management measures that will contribute in the conservation of the resource.

Management agencies as well as fishermen are equally responsible in collecting and submitting the necessary data to the scientists for the development of sound management strategies.

Queen Conch resolution approved in CITES

In 1996, the CFMC sponsored the First International Queen Conch Conference, held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, with the participation of several Caribbean countries and the purpose of joining efforts in the management of the queen conch resources of the US Caribbean. The final product of this Conference was the Declaration of San Juan.

In October 23-25, 2012, a second International Queen Conch Conference was held in Panama, City, Panama, with the participation of several US Caribbean countries. At this conference a queen conch CITES resolution was approved by the participants.

Following are some of the most important recommendations for the CFMC jurisdiction:

- That WECAFC, OSPESCA, CRFM and CFMC support the development for a regional plan for the management and conservation of queen conch, in accordance with the best available scientific evidence to be presented to the 15th session of WECAFC for review, consideration and regional adoption;
- That fisheries authority, with the support of CRFM, OSPESCA, CFMC and WECAFC, strengthen the participation of fishers in the decision making related to implementation of measures for management and sustainable utilization of queen conch.



Queen Conch - NOAA Gallery Photo

For more information on the Queen Conch International Initiative visit:

www.caribbeanfmc.com or www.strombusgigas.com

Outreach activities with commercial fishermen in Puerto Rico

Helena Antoun, Fisheries Liaison for the CFMC and the DNER, has been consulting with fishermen in different areas throughout Puerto Rico for the design and implementation of a Commercial Fishers Education Program: Programa Educativo para Pescadores Comerciales (PEPCO). This program will provide commercial fishers with the knowledge and tools needed to apply for commercial fishing licenses and permits. It will also familiarize the fishers with the importance and urgency to understand and comply with obligations of data collection and regulations to avoid enforcement actions. As part of the PEPCO, there will be joint discussions with fishermen in Naguabo and Cabo Rojo during the month of June.

St. Croix Agriculture Fair

The CFMC participated at the St. Croix Agriculture Fair on February 16, 2013. Fisheries and marine resources educational materials was distributed to teachers, students and interested persons that visited the exhibit. Mr. Carlos Farchette, Diana Martínó and Alida Ortiz attended this activity. Over 20,000 people visited the Fair grounds between Saturday and Sunday. This is an excellent opportunity for the Council to do outreach in the USVI.



Emphasis on enforcement



The issue of violations to the regulations in place for commercial and recreational fishermen is an ever-present discussion in the Council meetings and in the social networks. To develop an effective, proactive, outreach initiative, the CFMC will meet with the different enforcement agencies (DNER, NMFS, NOAA) in the region to discuss the possible activities that may be implemented by the Council.

The first meeting will be with the DNER Secretary, Carmen Guerrero. A full report on the outcomes of this meeting will be presented by the OEAP at the next regular meeting.

Orientation meetings with decision makers

As part of the outreach and education efforts of the Council a series of meetings with legislators from the USVI and PR have been programmed. The purpose of these meetings is to facilitate interactions between fisheries players: local & federal. The expected outcome is an improved communication between CFMC and the local governments to share important fishery management issues.

Mr. Carlos Farchette facilitated the coordination for the first meeting with USVI Legislators in St. Thomas on April 19, 2013. The next meetings will be in St. Croix and in Puerto Rico.

Marine Outreach and Education USVI Style (MOES-VI)

Fishing impacts, LBSP, and climate change are recognized as the three main stressors of coral reefs and their resources in the USVI and wider Caribbean by both federal and local resource managers; hence the need for building community awareness and capacity to participate in natural resource management to mitigate these threats.

To address these needs, a series of projects have been developed under the brand of Marine Outreach and Education USVI Style (MOES-VI) coordinated by CRCP. The MOES-VI initiative consists of several projects, either proposed or being implemented, including: (1) The Marine Environmental Community Awareness Project assessing local community awareness gaps of marine environment topics and management, led by the local fishing associations (2) The Commercial Fishers' Training Module and Fishing/Boating License Protocol aimed at building commercial fisher knowledge of fisheries management rules and regulations, a collaboration between NOAA CRCP and USVI Division of Fish and Wildlife and Division of Environmental Enforcement; and (3) The Strategizing for Improved Outreach,



Photo by: Lia Ortiz



Photo by: Lia Ortiz

Education and Communication Pertaining to US Virgin Islands Marine and Fisheries Management and Conservation Project (discussed in detail below) which aims to increase community and management capacity to maintain marine resources, including fishery resources, through developing a plan to implement open communication and targeted outreach and education.



Photo by: Lia Ortiz

This project (3) will serve as a means to engage USVI community stakeholders, including local and federal managers, in meaningful dialogue regarding marine (including fishery) resources management and conservation issues and the outreach, education and communication gaps relative to these topics that exist amongst the



Photo by: Lia Ortiz

USVI community and management network. This will be done through implementation of focus group meetings and interviews of local and regional outreach, education and communication specialists.

The perspectives of participants related to management issues, awareness gaps, the educational content of project components, and the effectiveness of education efforts will be quantified and interpreted using textual analysis techniques. An extensive literature review of existing outreach, education and communication strategies, plans, materials, projects and programs will also be conducted. Data gathered will be used to inform the development of the USVI Comprehensive Communications, Outreach and Education Plan for 2015-2020. This project will be funded in FY13 by the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program and implemented through October 2013-October 2014.

Together, these MOES-VI projects will serve as a foundation for building community ownership of sustainable

fisheries management and conservation, while strengthening community relationships. Educational tools and products from the other MOES-VI projects will be used to inform outreach and education efforts through the project (3) and vice versa. MOES-VI goals and objectives complement those of on-going CRCP efforts that target outreach and education for enforcement officers in the USVI. Collaborators include the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office, Caribbean Fishery Management Council, USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources, University of the Virgin Islands Center for Marine and Environmental Sciences, SeaGrant, The Nature Conservancy, St. Croix Commercial Fishermen's Association, St. Thomas Fishermen's Association, USVI Housing Parks and Recreation, US Coast Guard, Ecotrust, Inc., and VI Network of Environmental Educators.



Photo by: Lia Ortiz

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Acronyms

ACL - Annual Catch Limit

AP – Advisory Panel

AM - Accountability Measure

CITES - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

CFMC - Caribbean Fishery Management Council

CRCP – Coral Reef Conservation Program

CRFM - Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism

FMP - Fishery Management Plans

MSA – Magnuson Steven Act

NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act

NMFS - National Marine Fisheries Service

NOAA - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

OEAP – Outreach and Education Advisory Panel

OSPESCA – Organization for the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus

PEPCO - Programa Educativo para Pescadores Comerciales

PR - Puerto Rico

PRDNER - Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources

SERO - NMFS / Southeast Regional Office

SSC - Scientific and Statistical Committee

USVI - United States Virgin Islands

WECAFC - Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

Upcoming Events & Announcements

• The 146th CFMC Regular Meeting will be held in Ponce, Puerto Rico on August 13-14, 2013 at the Hilton Ponce Golf & Casino Resort. The hotel is located in 1150 Caribe Ave, Ponce, PR 00716.

• There will be Scoping Meetings to obtain input from fishers, general public, and the local agents and representatives on the development of island-specific fishery management plans for PR, St. Thomas/ St. John and St. Croix. The meetings will be held:

Puerto Rico:

July 8 - Vieques

July 9 - San Juan

July 10 - Ponce y Mayagüez

July 11 - Naguabo

July 12 - Arecibo

US Virgin Islands:

July 9 - St. Croix

July 10 - ST. Thomas

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Special thanks to the Council staff members who helped with the review of the newsletter.

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.