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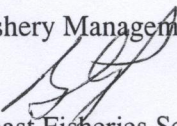


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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November 7, 2008

F/SEC: TJ

MEMORANDUM TO: Eugenio Pinero
Chairman, Caribbean Fishery Management Council

FROM: Bonnie Ponwith, Ph.D. 
Science Director, Southeast Fisheries Science Center

SUBJECT: CFMC Request for Fishery Data to Allow Allocation of ACLs Among St. Croix, St. Thomas/St. John and Puerto Rico, and Analysis of Data to Determine MSY for Queen Conch Off St. Thomas, USVI

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) fully supports the efforts of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC) to determine the ACLs/AMs of fishery resources of Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and St. Thomas/St. John. Given the challenging data and science issues involved, SEFSC and the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) held a joint meeting last September 2 – 4, 2008 to address the following:

- (1) Compile, process and assess the quality and utility of all available data that could be used by the SEDAR Workshop participants and CFMC to calculate ACLs/AMs of the Caribbean fishery,
- (2) Explore scientifically sound and acceptable methods for determining ACLs/AMs of data-poor fishery,
- (3) Ascertain the feasibility of establishing "island-based" fishery management as an equitable approach for the allocation and management of CFMC fishery resources, and
- (4) Determine the socio-economic effects of proposed ACL/AM amendments and area closures on the fishing industry and on the island's dependent communities.

SEFSC and SERO are collaborating on the above tasks with the goal of compiling the data evaluating the analytical methodologies in preparation for SEDAR workshop early next year. A joint SEFSC-SERO follow-up meeting is also planned in late November of this year to assess progress and to provide updates to the Council at the December meeting.

Regarding the analysis of data to determine the MSY for queen conch off St. Thomas, SEDAR 14 already did a comprehensive review of all the available information pertaining to this fishery. The conclusion of SEDAR 14 was that the MSY for queen conch cannot be calculated due to a lack of useful effort data.

Please feel free to contact us should you need more assistance.

CC: F/SEC – Aleta Hohn
F/SEC – Peter Thompson
F/SEC – Theo Brainerd
F/SEC – Tom Jamir
F/SEC – Sophia Howard
CFMC – Miguel Rolon
F/SER – Joe Kimmel

E-File