

Island-Based Fishery Management Plans

Goals and Objectives

At the 155th Caribbean Fishery Management Council Meeting, held March 15-16 2016 in San Juan Puerto Rico, the Council received input from the Interdisciplinary Plan Team (IPT) (Appendix A), as well as input from the Pew Charitable Trusts (Appendix B) on the draft goals and objectives for the Island-Based Fishery Management Plans (IBFMPs). The Council reviewed these at the 156th, June 28-29 2016, regular meeting in St. Croix USVI and requested a merged draft document on the IBFMPs goals and objectives. (USVI Representative requested more time to prepare their comments at the last meeting and provide these to the Council at the August 2016 meeting.) This draft provides the Council with the requested document.

The Council will decide on the final list of goals and objectives for each one of the IBFMPs at the August 2016 meeting.

The overarching *goal* of each of the Island-Based Fishery Management Plans is to ensure the continued health of fishery resources occurring in waters surrounding each of Puerto Rico, St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix Exclusive Economic Zones within the context of the unique biological, ecological, economic and cultural characteristics of those resources and the communities dependent upon them.

Specific goals that the Council needs to decide if they apply to each IBFMP are:

- **Goal #1:** Prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery in the U.S. Caribbean taking into account and allowing for variations among, and contingencies in, fisheries, fishery resources, and catches.
- **Goal #2:** Maintain long-term sustainable use of coral reef fishery resources while preventing adverse impacts to stocks, habitats, protected species, or the reef ecosystem as a whole.
- **Goal #3:** Ensure the continued health of fishery resources occurring in US Caribbean Exclusive Economic Zone which will provide for the sustained participation of the fishing communities of the U.S. Caribbean and to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities¹.

¹ Note: this goal paraphrases the overarching goal described above.

- **Goal #4:** Manage the fisheries within the limits of local ecosystem production so as not to jeopardize a wide range of goods and services provided by a healthy ecosystem, including food, revenue, and recreation for humans.
- **Goal #5:** Account for biological, social, and economic differences among the islands comprising the U.S. Caribbean.
- **Goal #6:** Foster collaboration among territorial and federal authorities in the management of fisheries of the U.S. Caribbean.

The generality of the goals addresses a wide range of concerns including economic impacts, by catch, ecosystem function, resource use by different sectors (for example recreational and commercial) and jurisdictional collaboration within the US Caribbean.

In order to achieve these goals, the Council needs to decide on the specific objectives of the IBFMPs.

Citing from the general discussion before discussing each national standard guideline in the 50 CFR 600.305(b):

(b) *Fishery management objectives.* (1) Each FMP, whether prepared by a Council or by the Secretary, should identify what the FMP is designed to accomplish (i.e., the management objectives to be attained in regulating the fishery under consideration). In establishing objectives, Councils balance biological constraints with human needs, reconcile present and future costs and benefits, and integrate the diversity of public and private interests. If objectives are in conflict, priorities should be established among them.

(2) How objectives are defined is important to the management process. Objectives should address the problems of a particular fishery. The objectives should be clearly stated, practicably attainable, framed in terms of definable events and measurable benefits, and based upon a comprehensive rather than a fragmentary approach to the problems addressed. An FMP should make a clear distinction between objectives and the management measures chosen to achieve them. The objectives of each FMP provide the context within which the Secretary will judge the consistency of an FMP's conservation and management measures with the national standards

Appendices A and B provide sufficient language for the Council to address the goals through the following objectives:

Objective 1

Objective 1a: Achieve optimum yield in the utilization of federal fishery resources while minimizing impacts to non-target species;

Objective 1b: Provide for long-term sustainable use of fisheries resources within the limits of local ecosystem production using a precautionary, ecosystem-based approach to management that accounts for uncertainty and relevant biological, ecological, economic and social factors in the fishery, including the benefits of food production, recreational opportunities, and protection of marine ecosystems;

Objective 1c: Prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished stocks, and achieve optimum yield on a continuing basis;

Objective 2

Objective 2: Reduce bycatch and waste in the fishery through the use of measures such as gear restrictions, seasonal closures or marine protected areas that reduce or minimize regulatory and/or economic discards, including measures to minimize the mortality of discarded bycatch that cannot be avoided;

Objective 3

Objective 3a: Ensure the metrics upon which OY is based are derived from the best available scientific information and are updated to respond to changing ecological, biological, economic and social conditions;

Objective 3b: Establish and maintain data collection and reporting programs necessary to support the conservation and management objectives of the Plan, including the biological, ecological, economic, and social data needed to assess the impacts of management measures;

Objective 3c: Obtain data necessary to achieve the objectives of this plan, and adapt to technological and technical advances in methods of data collection, reporting and analysis;

Objective 4

Objective 4: Promote international cooperation in the management of pan-Caribbean stocks;

Objective 5

Objective 5a: Collaborate with domestic and international regional fishery management bodies in managing pan-Caribbean species;

Objective 5b: Pursue consistent, coordinated regulations for the conservation and management of coral reefs and reef-associated resources in cooperation with local governments in the region;

Objective 6

Objective 6a: Minimize conflicts between resource users;

Objective 6b: Promote fair and equitable use of fishery resources that recognizes the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities as well as differences in local environment, culture, markets, user groups, gears, and seafood preferences;

Objective 6c: Establish resource access permits as necessary and appropriate to facilitate data collection, sustainability and long-term yield;

Objective 7

Objective 7: Provide flexibility in the management process which minimizes regulatory delay and allows for rapid adaptation to changing resource abundance, availability, health or preference, using the best available scientific and socioeconomic information;

Objective 8

Objective 8: Devise a regulatory framework that maximizes the efficiency and efficacy of enforcement efforts within and across jurisdictional boundaries while promoting the safe conduct of fishing operations;

Objective 9

Objective 9: Promote awareness of laws and regulations governing marine resource management and the science and social obligations that support that management, and to ensure informed public input into the management process;

Objective 10

Objective 10: Ensure the socioeconomic health of the fishing communities dependent on federal fishery resources;

Objective 11

Objective 11a: Protect spawning aggregations and the habitats supporting those aggregations to ensure the future health of the resource;

Objective 11b: Enhance and stabilize the spawning potential of managed species at levels sufficient to sustain adequate recruitment to replenish the population;

Objective 12

Objective 12a: Describe and identify EFH, adverse impacts on EFH, and other actions to conserve and enhance EFH. Adopt management measures that minimize adverse impacts from fishing on EFH and promote habitat conservation, including designation of specific habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) within EFH for more focused management action;

Objective 12b: Map, define, and manage habitat upon which the resource depends, with particular emphasis on coral reef resources throughout the region;

Objective 13

Objective 13a: Ensure continued provision of ecosystems services derived from living marine resources, including adequate abundance of forage resources to ensure a healthy and diverse trophic web.

Objective 13b: Account for ecological relationships and functional roles of species in the fishery that contribute to a healthy ecosystem, such as grazers, forage fish, habitat-builders and top predators.

Objective 14

Objective 14: Require essential scientific data is gathered and analyzed in advance to guide the development of new fisheries to ensure they are sustainable from the start.

Federal Fishery Management Plan for Puerto Rico Goals and Objectives

The overarching *goal* of the Puerto Rico Fishery Management Plan is to ensure the continued health of fishery resources occurring in Exclusive Economic Zone waters surrounding Puerto Rico within the context of the unique biological, ecological, economic and cultural characteristics of those resources and the communities' dependent upon them. To achieve that overarching goal, the following *objectives* are defined:

- 1) Achieve optimum yield in the utilization of federal fishery resources while minimizing impacts to non-target species;
- 2) Ensure the metrics upon which OY is based are derived from the best available scientific information and are updated to respond to changing ecological, biological, economic and social conditions;
- 3) Obtain data necessary to achieve the objectives of this plan, and adapt to technological and technical advances in methods of data collection, reporting and analysis;
- 4) Promote international cooperation in the management of pan-Caribbean stocks;
- 5) Minimize conflicts between resource users;
- 6) Establish resource access permits as necessary and appropriate to facilitate data collection, sustainability and long-term yield;
- 7) Provide flexibility in the management process which minimizes regulatory delay and allows for rapid adaptation to changing resource abundance, availability, health or preference, using the best available scientific and socioeconomic information;
- 8) Devise a regulatory framework that maximizes the efficiency and efficacy of enforcement efforts within and across jurisdictional

boundaries while promoting the safe conduct of fishing operations;

- 9) Promote awareness of laws and regulations governing marine resource management and the science and social obligations that support that management, and to ensure informed public input into the management process;
- 10) Ensure the socioeconomic health of the fishing communities dependent on federal fishery resources;
- 11) Protect spawning aggregations and the habitats supporting those aggregations to ensure the future health of the resource;
- 12) Map, define, and manage habitat upon which the resource depends, with particular emphasis on coral reef resources throughout the region;
- 13) Enhance and stabilize the spawning potential of managed species at levels sufficient to sustain adequate recruitment to replenish the population;
- 14) Ensure continued provision of ecosystems services derived from living marine resources, including adequate abundance of forage resources to ensure a healthy and diverse trophic web.

Example Goals & Objectives for Island-based Fishery Management Plans (IBFMPs)

Without clearly articulated goals and objectives, the rationale for IBFMPs is weak and lacks any guiding framework or focus for future management actions. The following examples illustrate possible configurations of G&Os for purposes of discussion.

Example Goals (an FMP may have multiple goals and objectives may be indexed to goals):

- **Goal #1:** *Maintain long-term sustainable use of coral reef fishery resources while preventing adverse impacts to stocks, habitats, protected species, or the reef ecosystem as a whole.*
- **Goal #2:** *Manage the fisheries within the limits of local ecosystem production so as not to jeopardize a wide range of goods and services provided by a healthy ecosystem, including food, revenue, and recreation for humans.*
- **Goal #3:** *Account for biological, social, and economic differences among the islands comprising the U.S. Caribbean.*
- **Goal #4:** *Foster collaboration among territorial and federal authorities in the management of fisheries of the U.S. Caribbean.*

Example Objectives:

- **Objective #1:** *Provide for long-term sustainable use of fisheries resources within the limits of local ecosystem production using a precautionary, ecosystem-based approach to management that accounts for uncertainty and relevant biological, ecological, economic and social factors in the fishery, including the benefits of food production, recreational opportunities, and protection of marine ecosystems.*
- **Objective #2:** *Prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished stocks, and achieve optimum yield on a continuing basis.*
- **Objective #3:** *Account for ecological relationships and functional roles of species in the fishery that contribute to a healthy ecosystem, such as grazers, forage fish, habitat-builders and top predators.*
- **Objective #4:** *Describe and identify EFH, adverse impacts on EFH, and other actions to conserve and enhance EFH. Adopt management measures that minimize adverse impacts from fishing on EFH and promote habitat conservation, including designation of specific habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) within EFH for more focused management action.*
- **Objective #5:** *Reduce bycatch and waste in the fishery through the use of measures such as gear restrictions, seasonal closures or marine protected areas that reduce or minimize regulatory and/or economic discards, including measures to minimize the mortality of discarded bycatch that cannot be avoided.*
- **Objective #6:** *Promote fair and equitable use of fishery resources that recognizes the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities as well as differences in local environment, culture, markets, user groups, gears, and seafood preferences.*
- **Objective #7:** *Establish and maintain data collection and reporting programs necessary to support the conservation and management objectives of the Plan, including the biological, ecological, economic, and social data needed to assess the impacts of management measures.*
- **Objective #8:** *Pursue consistent, coordinated regulations for the conservation and management of coral reefs and reef-associated resources in cooperation with local governments in the region.*
- **Objective #9:** *Collaborate with domestic and international regional fishery management bodies in managing pan-Caribbean species.*
- **Objective #10:** *Reverse the burden of proof on new, renewed or significantly expanded fisheries.*