



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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NOAA Fisheries Service Seeks Comments on a Proposed Rule to Establish Compatible Queen Conch Closures in the U.S. Caribbean

Comment Period Ends February 22, 2011

NOAA Fisheries Service is seeking public input on a proposed rule to modify the Queen Conch Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to implement compatible closures with U.S. Virgin Islands (U.S.V.I.) territorial waters. The intended effect of this proposed rule is to provide further protection for queen conch.

Background

Currently, fishing for and possession of queen conch is prohibited in the Caribbean exclusive economic zone, with the exception of an area known as Lang Bank east of St. Croix, which is open to harvest of queen conch from October 1 through June 30. In St. Croix territorial waters, queen conch is managed under a 50,000 pound quota and a seasonal closure from June 1 through October 31.

The proposed rule will implement compatible closures in federal waters with the St. Croix territorial regulations to close the queen conch fishery after the local government has determined the quota in St. Croix has been reached. The proposed rule will also extend the seasonal closure in federal waters to June 1 through October 31, each year, consistent with the territorial seasonal closure.

Request for Comments

Written comments on this proposed rule must be received no later than February 22, 2011, in order to be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service. See the **Addresses** section for information on where and how to submit comments.

Addresses

You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- Electronic Submissions: Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Enter the following docket number into the "Search" box: **NOAA-NMFS-2010-0014**. All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA Fisheries Service will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only. Comments received through means not specified in this bulletin may not be considered.
- Mail: Britni Tokotch
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If you would like to receive these fishery bulletins via e-mail as soon as they are published, please e-mail: sero.communications.comments@noaa.gov and include: "Request for Electronic Fishery Bulletins" in the subject line and your preferred e-mail address in the body of the e-mail.