



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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FB13-014

NOAA Fisheries Seeks Comments on Amendment 4 to the Fishery Management Plan for Corals and Reef Associated Plants and Invertebrates of the U.S. Caribbean Region

Comment Period Ends April 26, 2013

NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on Amendment 4 to the Fishery Management Plan for Corals and Reef Associated Plants and Invertebrates of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (Amendment 4). The amendment proposes to modify management of seagrasses in federal waters of the U.S. Caribbean.

The Caribbean Fishery Management Council (Council) has submitted Amendment 4 to NOAA Fisheries for review, approval, and implementation. The Notice of Availability for public comment on this amendment published in the *Federal Register* on February 25, 2013 (78 FR 12703).

The Council and NOAA Fisheries developed Amendment 4 to address the future management of seagrasses in federal waters of the U.S. Caribbean in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. This amendment would remove seagrass species from the fishery Management plan. The Council determined that federal management of these species is unnecessary because there is no known harvest of seagrass species, these species occur predominately in state waters of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and seagrasses are designated as essential fish habitat and habitat areas of particular concern in all of the Council fishery management plans.

Request for Comments

NOAA Fisheries must receive comments on this amendment no later than April 26, 2013. Comments received by NOAA Fisheries will be addressed in the final rule. Electronic copies of the amendment may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Web site:

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/CoralandCoralReefs.htm>, the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov, or the Caribbean Fishery Management Council's Web site at www.caribbeanfmc.com.

How to Submit Comments

You may submit comments by either of the following methods. Comments received through other means may not be considered.

Electronic Submissions: Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: www.regulations.gov

- Enter the following docket number into the "Search" box: NOAA-NMFS-2013-0021.
- Click on "Comment Now." This will display the comment Web form.
- Attachments to electronic comments (up to 10 MB) will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

Mail:

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All comments will be part of the public record, and generally posted for public viewing to 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. Anonymous comments will be accepted.