A Meeting to Remember:

This is a memorable Regular Meeting of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council…it is the 150th! Ms. Livia Montalvo guided the audience on a trip through time…Council Chairmen, FMPs, protected areas and international initiatives, among others. The Council Staff and the visitors present celebrated the date.

August 12-13, 2014
Wyndham Grand Rio Mar Beach Resort and Spa, Puerto Rico
Two distinguished visitors celebrated this event with the Council: Ms. Carmen Guerrero, Secretary of Puerto Rico’s Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNER) and Mr. Samuel Rouch, NOAA/NMFS Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs. They both congratulated the Council for its achievements, since 1976, and presented their compromise and support for successful fisheries management in the Caribbean. Mr. Rouch pointed out the healthy status of US fisheries, due to the Council’s conservation measures, and the importance of the CFMC in the international collaboration in the region. Ms. Guerrero addressed the many actions taken by the DNER for fisheries conservation within the local jurisdiction of Puerto Rico.

CFMC Recognitions

During this meeting the Council expressed its recognition and thanks to Mr. Phil Steele, NMFS/SERO Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fishery, who will be retiring from NMFS/SERO by the end of this year; and to Mr. Miguel Rolón, Council’s Executive Director. Miguel has been in the Council since June 1977, when he was appointed as the Puerto Rico’s representative from the Department of Agriculture; in May 1983, he was the Council’s Chief Scientist, and in January 1989, became the Council’s 2nd Executive Director to this day.
Abrir la Sierra/Bajo de Sico/Tourmaline Consistency of Regulations

On the issue of Abrir la Sierra/Bajo de Sico/Tourmaline Consistency of Regulations there was an extensive discussion with members of the public present. Results of the Public Hearings conducted in Mayagüez on July 18, 2014 were presented by Dr. Graciela García-Moliner, CFMC Scientific Staff. Dr. Richard Apeldoorn, SSC Chairperson, presented their recommendations. Public’s reactions and comments were received at the meeting. The following motions were approved by the Council as preferred alternatives or to be added to the list of alternatives being considered:

- **Action 1**: Modify the closed season to be Dec 1-March 31 for Abrir La Sierra, Bajo de Sico, and Tourmaline Bank.
  - **Sub-Alternative a**: Abrir La Sierra Bank (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alternative b**: Tourmaline Bank (Preferred)

- **Action 2**: Modify Reef Fish Fishing Activities: Alt 3: Prohibit fishing for and possession of Council-managed reef fish during the seasonal closure established in Action 1 (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alt a**: Abrir La Sierra Bank (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alt b**: Tourmaline Bank (Preferred)

- **Action 3**: Modify Spiny Lobster Fishing Activities: Alt 6: Allow fishing for spiny lobster year-round (Preferred)
  - **Sub- Alt a**: Abrir La Sierra Bank (Preferred)
  - **Sub- Alt b**: Bajo de Sico (Preferred)
  - **Sub- Alt c**: Tourmaline Bank (Preferred)

- **Action 4**: Prohibit Anchoring: Alt 3: Prohibit anchoring year-round (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alt a**: Abrir La Sierra Bank (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alt b**: Bajo de Sico (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alt c**: Tourmaline Bank (Preferred)

- **Action 5**: Modify HMS Fishing Activities: Alt 2: Upon request of the Council, prohibit bottom longline fishing for HMS year-round in Bajo de Sico (Preferred)
  - **Action 5 move to add spearfishing to the allowable activities of alternative #4.**
  - **Sub-Alt a**: Abrir La Sierra Bank (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alt b**: Bajo de Sico (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alt c**: Tourmaline Bank (Preferred)

- **Action 6**: Modify Spearfishing Activities: Alt 2: Prohibit spearfishing for Council-managed reef fish during the seasonal closure established in Action 1 (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alt a**: Abrir La Sierra Bank (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alt b**: Bajo de Sico (Preferred)
  - **Sub-Alt c**: Tourmaline Bank (Preferred)

Staff was asked to continue working on the document to be considered at the next Council meeting. The Council will conduct an Orientation Meeting to inform fishers and other interested citizens in Mayagüez.

- **For more information you may contact Helena Antoun at: hantoun.cfmc@gmail.com**

The modified document for Council approval will be presented at the December meeting. The DNER may consider approving changes in their jurisdiction’s regulations to make these compatible with Federal Regulations.

- **For more information visit the www.caribbeanfmc.com or call 787-766- 5926.**
New Council Member

Mr. Marcos Hanke, recreational fisher and charter boat owner was sworn in as Council member for the next three years. Mr. Hanke will bring his experience as a former CFMC and AP member to represent Puerto Rico’s recreational fishers sector to work for the sustainability of the fisheries resources in the EEZ. Welcome to the Council!

Island Fishery Management Plans:

New District Advisory Panels (DAP) formed. These panels will be created for the development of the Island Fishery Management Plans. There will be one DAP for Puerto Rico, one for St. Thomas/ St. John and one for St. Croix. The Council will announce in the regional newspapers that it will be considering candidates for membership in the APs. This is a great opportunity for community participation in which all stakeholders of the fisheries industry may present their concerns and contribute to the goal of fishery conservation and management for a sustainable fishery in the three islands.

Marine Resources Education Program for the Caribbean:

In collaboration with the NMFS/South East Regional Office (SERO) and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, the Council has been designing a Marine Resources Education Program (MREP) for Caribbean Fishers: MREP-SE Caribbean Initiative. The main goal of this program is to enhance fisher’s knowledge of the scientific basis for fisheries management. This is a program developed by the fishers for the fishers. In the three-day Workshop, fishers, fishery scientists, administrators and enforcement personnel will guide 25 participants through the basic biological and socioeconomic concepts for sustainable fisheries management.

The MREP-SE-CARIBBEAN will meet on October 14-17, 2014, at Parador Villa Parguera, Lajas, Puerto Rico. It is expected that future MREP workshops will take place in St. Thomas/St. John and in St Croix in 2015.

For more information contact Helena Antoun at: hantoun.cfmc@gmail.com or call (787)-766-5926.

Fuete y Verguilla Fishing Heritage in St. Croix:

This excellent issue of the magazine Fuete y Verguilla was produced by UPR-Sea Grant as part of the “Don’t Stop Talking Fish” outreach and education effort in St. Croix. Inside this issue you can find photos, interviews with fishers and general information on the history of the fishing activity in St. Croix. It is available in digital format at www.caribbeanfmc.com or you can request a printed copy from the Council.