

Caribbean Fishery Management Council's 163rd Meeting Report



163rd REGULAR MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

August 28-30, 2018 • The Buccaneer Hotel, St. Croix USVI

CFMC Recognitions

Mr. Carlos Farchette, has been the CFMC Chairman from 2009 to 2018. He is known in the USVI for his presence as Enforcement Agent, Deputy Chief of St. Croix and Director of enforcement for the territory. Since 1985 he has been a member of the St. Croix Fishery Advisory Committee and have been secretary of that Committee since 2010. This Committee makes fishery management recommendations for territorial waters to the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources.



As Chairman of the Council, he worked with a variety of committees such as, Committee member for the Pan Caribbean spiny lobster working group, and participated in other Pan Caribbean meetings such as spawning aggregation working group, and queen conch working group. He was also a member of the Council Coordinating Committee's legislative group. He played a very important role in the development of regulations to control the number of fish pots in the USVI. He has worked closely with the CFMC in the development of Island Based Fishery Management Plans. He is not leaving the Council space...he will continue his valuable contributions to the best management of the fisheries as president of the DAP St. Croix. Our sincere thanks to Carlos Farchette for his time and contribution to the Council!



Changes in the Council's composition

Two new members were taken oath: Ms Vanessa Ramírez to represent Puerto Rico and Mr. Edward (Eddie) Schuster to represent the US Virgin Islands.



Mr. Edward (Eddie) Schuster, Sr. was born and raised on the island of St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. Eddie, began commercial fishing in 1991, as a line fisherman, fishing mainly pelagic fish species. Later, moved into diving, harvesting conch and lobster. Spear fishing was incorporated into his commercial operation, which enabled him to offer selective species of reef fish to include snapper, parrot fish, grunt, etc., for sale to businesses and restaurants on island.

In 2006, he became the Chairman of the Fish Advisory Committee (FAC). This committee advises local and federal regulatory agencies and organizations on the issues and concerns within fishing industry. During that same year, he became a member of the DAP/ St. Croix, and later the Chairman of the DAP, and in 2018 has been appointed as Council Member.

Ms. Vanessa Ramírez, is the first woman representing fishers in the Council. She is a Fisherwoman from Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico. Vanessa Ramírez began in 2010 as a recreational diver fisher and in 2012 turned to the comercial fisheries. She was the Administrator of the Rosa's Fish market until 2016 and since then is the Administrator of the Caro Valle Fishing Market in Cabo Rojo.



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New Council Chair and Vice Chair were elected.

Captain Marcos Hanke was elected as Council Chair. Marcos Hanke is a recreational fisher, U.S.C.G certified Captain, a fishing charter owner and marine biologist in Puerto Rico. He was first appointed to CFMC in 2002 and reappointed in 2017. He is the president of the Caribbean Marine and Fishery Research Group, LLC and as such contributes with field research in data collection of different species for genetic studies in waters around Puerto Rico. He has been involved on multiple outreach and education initiatives, research and promoting sustainable fishing practices on many different special platform.



Louis (Tony) Blanchard was elected as Council Vice Chair. Tony Blanchard represents the commercial fishing sector of the USVI. He has contributed, as Chairman, for the Saint Thomas /St. John Fish trap reduction committee, the lobster committee and member of the St. Thomas/St. John DAP. As the new Vice Chairman of the CFMC he looks forward to being one of the leaders in continuing to make sound and sensible decisions for all the stakeholders, to the best of his ability, with the science the data and any other applicable information that can be used in making good decisions.



Status of Island Based Fishery Management Plans (IBFMPs)

Dr. Bill Arnold presented the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) required for the IBFMPs. The EIS describes the possible impact on the physical, biological/ecological, socio-economic, and administrative effects as well as the benefits to be gained with the Actions recommended in the IBFMP. Draft EISs for each Island were extensively discussed and several motions were approved by the Council to continue developing the IBFMPs and the EIS. The following Actions and the respective Alternatives were discussed:

- Action 1:** Transition Fisheries Management in the Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and St. Thomas/St. John EEZ from a Species-based Approach to an Island-based Approach
- Action 2:** Determine the Species to be Included for Management in each Island FMP
- Action 3:** Revise Stocks or Stock Complex Groupings in each Island FMP
- Action 4:** Status Determination Criteria (SDC) and Management Reference Points for Stocks/Stock Complexes in each FMP
- Action 5:** Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Description and Identification for Species Not Previously Managed in Federal Waters of each Island
- Action 6:** Framework Procedures for each Island FMP
- Action 7:** Accountability

The Council will conduct Public Hearings for DEIS comments in December 2018 in the following dates:

December 3 – San Juan, PR

December 4 –Fajardo, PR and St. Thomas, USVI

December 5 – Mayagüez, PR and St. Croix, USVI

¿Se pueden incluir aquí la hora y el lugar específico?

You can access more information about the EIS at the www.caribbeanfmc.com



Outreach and Education

The Fishery Environment Plan (FEP) Working Group, formed by Alida Ortiz (OEAP), René Estevez (UPRSG) and Yásmín Vélez (Pew Charitable Trust) informed the Council on the status of their task of identifying the Stakeholder groups to be addressed in the outreach activities to educate about the importance of the FEP for sustainability of the fisheries resources in the Council's jurisdiction. The following groups were identified:

- **Fishing community:** Commercial fishers, Recreational fishers, Sports fishers, Fish markets, Fishers association and fishing clubs.
- **Science community:** SSC members, Research consultants, Center for Marine & Environmental Studies USVI, Renowned scientists from the academia.
- **Governance:** Territorial governments/agencies:
 - PR** Department of Natural Resources and Environment - Fisheries division, Fisheries Lab., Coastal Zone Management, Marine Protected Areas and Natural Reserves Management Officials, Department of Agriculture.
 - USVI** Department of Planning & Natural Resources/Division of Fish & Wildlife.
 - Federal government** - CFMC Advisory Panel, Fish & Wildlife, Coral Reef Conservation Program, NOAA NMFS, Science Center, Restoration Center, Sea Grant.
- **Tourism businesses:** On the water expeditions, Charter boats
- **NGOs**

US Virgin Islands Recreational Fishery Data Collection Program

Some species caught by recreational fishers are usually the same species caught by commercial fishers, thus the importance of collecting their catch data to determine the management measures to be implemented to the fishery. **Ms. Ruth Gómez** (Director DPNR/USVI) presented the USVI recreational fishery data collection project with several products to facilitate this data collection as well as educational outreach activities through the Fisher to Fisher outreach of the Fisherman Advisory Committee (FACs) members.

The Council expressed that this a great step forward in the recreational fisheries data collection issue.





Lionfish in the USVI Project Report:

The invasive species *Pterois volitans* (Lionfish) is present throughout the Caribbean impacting the native fish populations due to its rapid reproduction rate and predation of local species.

Dr. Jennifer Sweeney Tookes, Georgia Southern University presented the results of the **Lionfish in the USVI Project**. This research was conducted to find answers to these questions:

- 1) Are consumers willing to consume and pay for lionfish?
- 2) Are fishermen willing to harvest and sell lionfish?
- 3) What are the economic, cultural, and regulatory barriers?

Through surveys and participant observations they contacted local consumers, tourists, restaurants and distributors.

The following conclusions were obtained:

- 1) Consumers are interested in buying and consuming lionfish.
- 2) Many restaurants throughout the Caribbean are selling lionfish
- 3) There is a need for consumer education to increase demand of lionfish.

Dr. Sweeney Tookes suggests that the Council may take on promoting management of lionfish, even though, the MSA does not explicitly address managing invasive species, the management of lionfish is an emerging issue in the Caribbean, Gulf, and South Atlantic Councils. There is an opportunity for CFMC to engage in the setting of these policies in the early stages, to best ensure that the management put in place works for the islands.

Field Trip to Visit St. Croix Fishing Communities



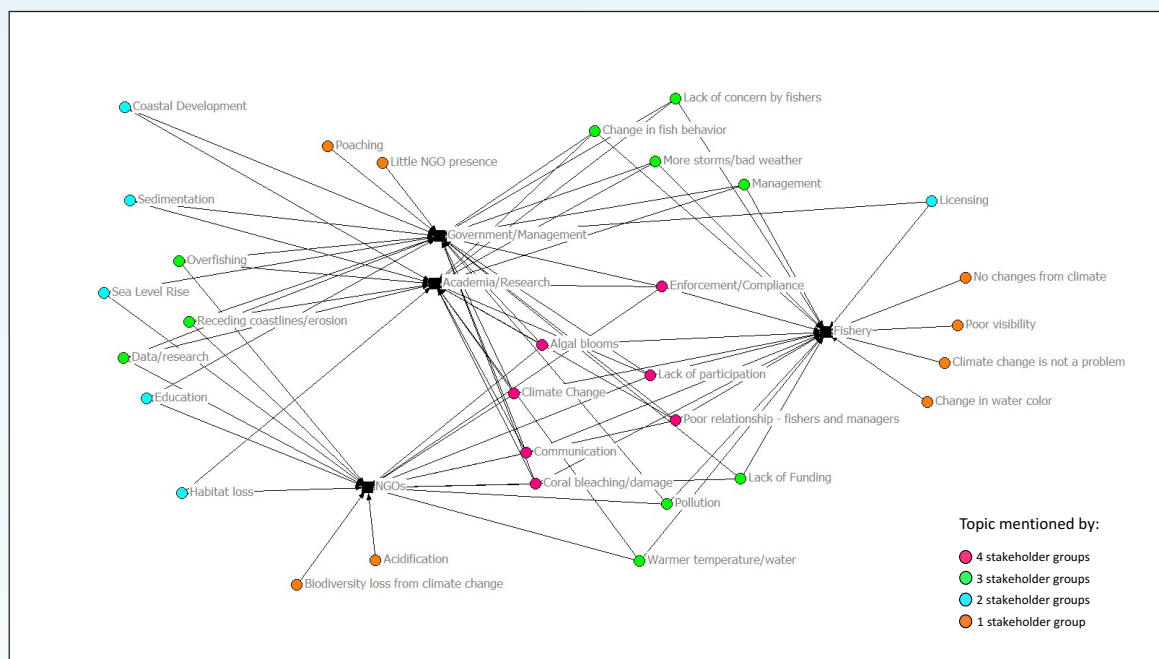
An important event during the 163rd Regular Meeting was the Council members visit to some fishing and fish market areas in St. Croix. Ruth Gómez, Carlos Farchette and Dawn L. Henry (USVI Commissioner Department of Planning and Natural Resources USVI), described the sites visited and facilitated the communications between Council members, the fishers and the distributors.



Fisher's perception of climate change

The possible impacts of climate change on fisheries resources and fishing communities is an issue to be considered by the Council. Puerto Rico's fisher's perceptions of the impacts of climate change on coral reef fisheries was presented to the Council by Dr. Tarsila Seara, University of New Haven, New York through the results obtained in her field research conducted in different fishing communities in Puerto Rico: ***Perceptions of Climate Change among Puerto Rican Fishers Pre-and Post-Hurricanes Irma and Maria: Implications for Vulnerability and Adaptive Strategies in Fishing Communities***. Her findings demonstrate that:

- PR fishers showed significant levels of awareness of and concern for climate change.
 - Hurricanes (exposure/sensitivity) significantly affected subjective perceptions of climate change impact à behavior
 - Adaptive behavior to experienced/observed environmental changes (fishing in farther/deeper waters) poses threat to health and well-being of fishers, particularly SCUBA divers.
 - High levels of job satisfaction show attachment to and dependency on occupation
- As conclusion of this research, Dr. Seara identified Management & Policy opportunities, such as:
- Increased levels of perceived vulnerability to climate change after storms may lead to more involvement in and acceptance of climate change mitigation/adaptation strategies specific to Caribbean fisheries.
 - Convergence of perceptions among different stakeholders on many major threats affecting fisheries may provide common ground to further support collaborations in the sector, particularly about climate change adaptation in fishing communities, and aspects of participation and compliance among fishers.





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Next Meetings:

CFMC Meeting:

December, 11-12, 2018 at the
Vanderbilt Hotel in San Juan, PR

Acronyms

ABC - Acceptable Biological Catch

ACL - Annual Catch Limit

AM - Accountability Measures

CFMC - Caribbean Fishery Management Council

DAP - District Advisory Panel

EBFMP - Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management Plan

EEZ - Exclusive Economic Zone

FEP - Fishery Ecosystem Plan

FMP - Fishery Management Plans

FMU - Fishery Management Unit

IBFMP - Island Based Fishery Management Plan

MSA - Magnuson Steven Act

NMFS - National Marine Fisheries Service

NOAA - National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration

NS1 - National Standard 1

OFL - Overfishing Limit

OY - Optimum Yield

PR - Puerto Rico

SSC - Scientific and Statistical Committee

SFSC - South Fisheries Science Center

STT/STJ - St. Thomas / St. John

STX - St. Croix

USVI - United States Virgin Islands

Credits

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Thanks to Council Staff for their revision of
this bulletin.

Editor's Note

The Caribbean Newsletter is published by The Caribbean Fishery Management Council. Its purpose is to report developments in fisheries management that would be of interest to its readers. Please credit the council when reprinting articles used in this newsletter. Anyone wishing to submit information or articles pertaining to fishing or fisheries management, or letters to the editor on a pertinent issue, is invited and encouraged to do so. These may be mailed to Natalia Perdomo, Caribbean Newsletter, 270 Muñoz Rivera Avenue Suite 401 San Juan Puerto Rico, 00918, or may be sent via internet to this email address nataliaperdomo_cfmcc@yahoo.com.