



## Caribbean Fishery Bulletin

*Bringing Fishing News to You*

**FB20-039**

**FISHERY BULLETIN ISSUE DATE:** June 26, 2020

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### **Request for Comments: Notice of Availability for the Island-based Fishery Management Plans in the U.S. Caribbean**

#### **KEY MESSAGE:**

- The Caribbean Fishery Management Council developed island-based fishery management plans for federal waters of St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John, and Puerto Rico, to better account for the unique biological, economic, and cultural attributes of each island or island group.
- If approved, the island-based fishery management plans would replace the U.S. Caribbean-wide fishery management plans for reef fish, spiny lobster, queen conch and coral.
- NOAA Fisheries requests your comments regarding the changes these FMPs would make to fisheries management in U.S. Caribbean federal waters. **Comments are due by August 25, 2020.**
- NOAA Fisheries will also publish a proposed rule to implement the three island-based fishery management plans and will send another Fishery Bulletin to request comments at that time. Comments on the plans and proposed rule will be considered in the final rule.

#### **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES:**

- If implemented, each island-based fishery management plan would incorporate management measures from the existing U.S. Caribbean-wide plans that apply to federal waters of each island and modify specific management measures as needed.
- Each fishery management plan would:
  - revise the list of species to be managed.
  - specify status determination criteria (e.g., overfishing limit or proxy), management reference points for each managed stock or stock complex (e.g., annual catch limits), and accountability measures.
  - identify and describe essential fish habitat for species new to federal management.

- o establish framework procedures that the Council can use to adjust reference points and management measures without going through a full amendment process.

### **REQUEST FOR COMMENT:**

NOAA Fisheries must receive comments on the FMPs no later than August 25, 2020. You may obtain electronic copies of the FMPs and environmental assessments from the NOAA Fisheries Web site at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/caribbean-island-based-fishery-management-plans>.

### **HOW TO COMMENT:**

The comment period for the notice of availability of the fishery management plans is open now through August 25, 2020. You may submit comments by electronic submission or by postal mail. Comments sent by any other method (such as e-mail), to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NOAA Fisheries.

**FORMAL FEDERAL REGISTER NAME/NUMBER:** 85 FR 38350 published June 26, 2020.

**Electronic Submissions:** Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal.

1. Go to <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2019-0155>.
2. Click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields.
3. Enter or attach your comments.

**Mail:** Submit written comments to Maria del Mar Lopez, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

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