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Considering Management Measures for Pelagic Species

178th Caribbean Fishery Management Council
Meeting
April 2022



Island-based Fishery Management Plans (FMP)

- Approved by the Secretary of Commerce
- National Marine Fisheries Service has prepared a proposed rule to implement the FMPs
- FMPs included pelagic species new to federal management
 - Established annual catch limits;
 - Established accountability measures (AM), which specified an annual catch target as the AM trigger (i.e., what landings are compared to).



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Pelagic species managed under the island FMPs

Puerto Rico

Dolphin (*Coryphaena hippurus*)
Pompano dolphin (*C. equiselis*)
Little tunny (*Euthynnus alletteratus*)
Blackfin tuna (*Thunnus atlanticus*)
King mackerel (*Scomberomorus cavalla*)
Cero mackerel (*S. regalis*)
Wahoo (*Acanthocybium solandri*)
Great barracuda (*Sphyraena barracuda*)
Tripletail (*Lobotes surinamensis*)

St. Thomas and St. John

Dolphin (*Coryphaena hippurus*)
Wahoo (*Acanthocybium solandri*)

St. Croix

Dolphin (*Coryphaena hippurus*)
Wahoo (*Acanthocybium solandri*)



Discussion of Pelagic Species at the December 2021 Caribbean Council Meeting

- Puerto Rico District Advisory Panel recommended the Council consider establishing size and bag limits for recreational fishing of pelagic species similar to regulations for Puerto Rico state waters.

Mgmt. measure	Recreational Limit in Puerto Rico State Waters
Size limit	King mackerel - 20" fork length minimum Cero mackerel - 16" fork length minimum
Bag limit	Dolphin - 10 per fisher/day or 30 per vessel/day, whichever is less. Wahoo, King mackerel, Cero mackerel - 5 of each species per fisher/day or 10 animals vessel/day, whichever is less.

- Council discussed concerns about potential overharvest of juvenile dolphinfish associated with fishing on influxes of *Sargassum* mats.

Discussion of Pelagic Species at the December 2021 Caribbean Council Meeting

- The St. Thomas and St. John DAP Chair commented that the St. Thomas/St. John Fishery Advisory Committee previously recommended size and bag limits for dolphin and wahoo for recreational fishing regulations.
 - The FAC planned to propose those recommendations for consideration from both state and federal managers.*
- The St. Croix FAC had similar discussions for dolphin and wahoo size limits.

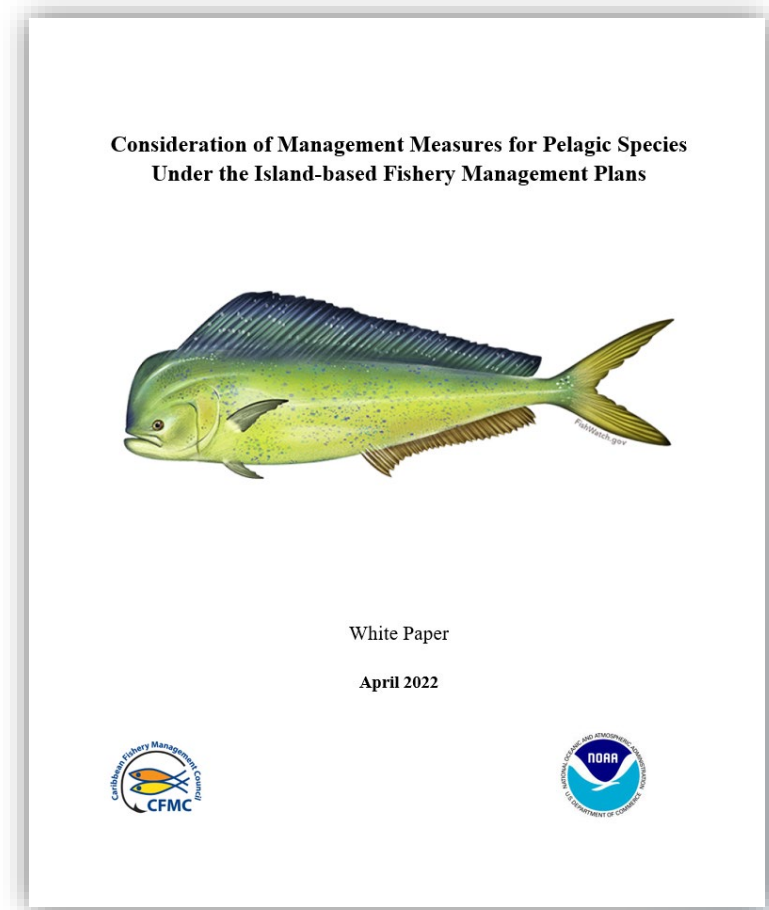
** No commercial or recreational size limit, commercial trip limit, or recreational bag limit regulations are specified for dolphin or wahoo in U.S. Virgin Islands state or federal waters.*



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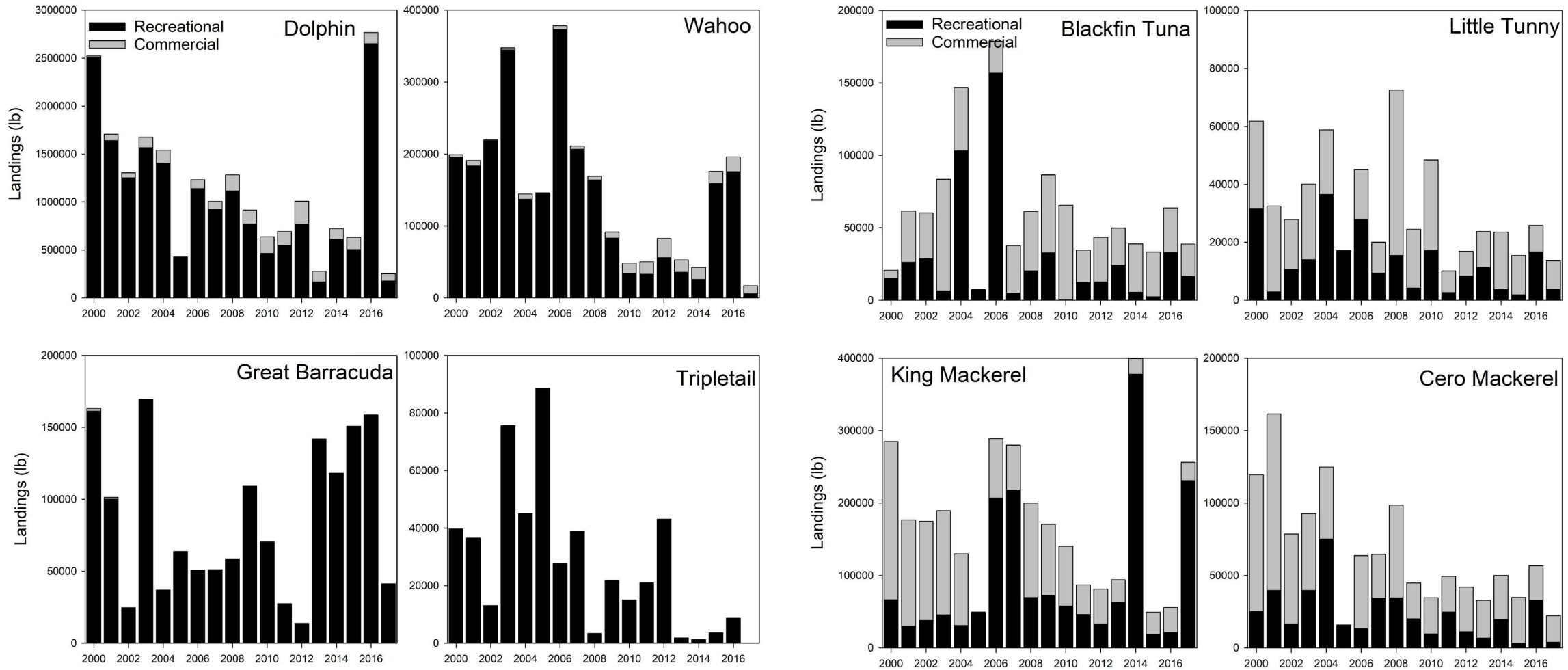
Guidance from the Council at the December 2021 Caribbean Council Meeting

- The Council directed staff to develop a white paper for size limits for dolphin, wahoo, and mackerels* and recreational bag limits for dolphin and wahoo.
- White paper included in briefing book.



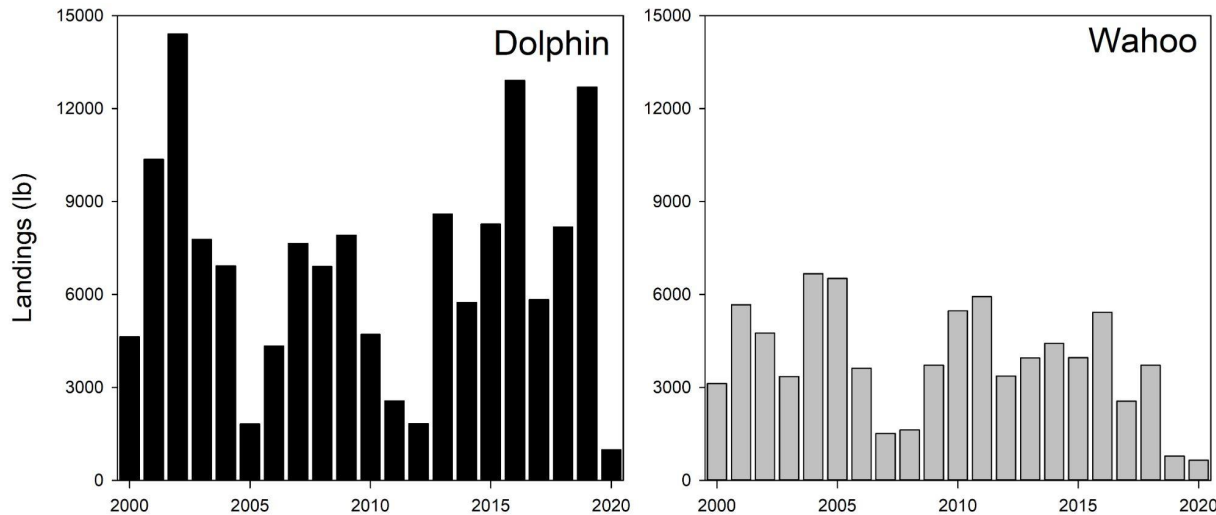
**King mackerel and cero mackerel are only managed in federal waters under the Puerto Rico FMP.*

Landings of Pelagic Species - Puerto Rico

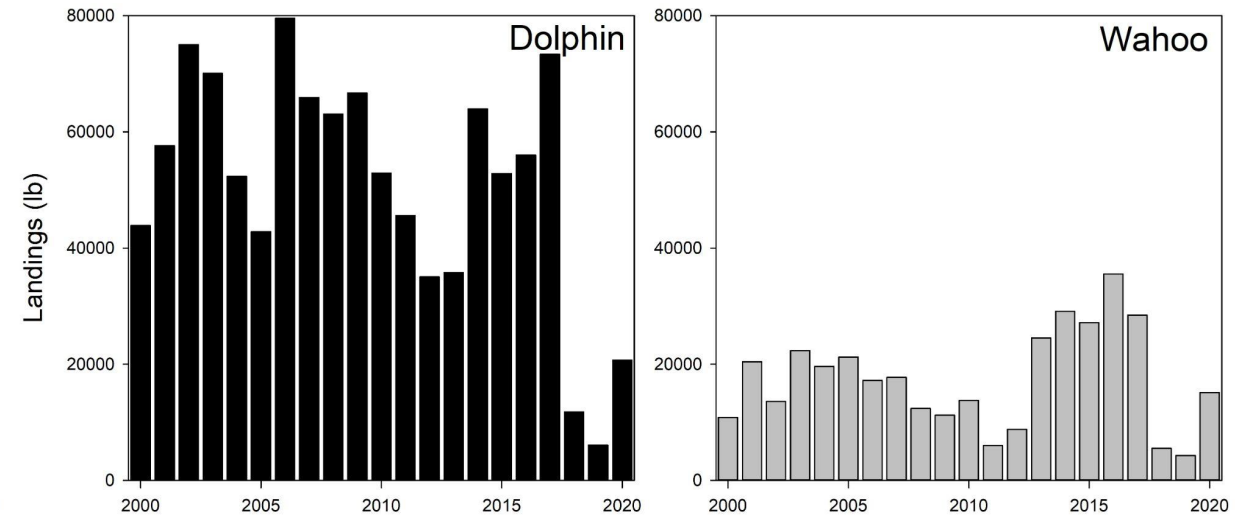


Landings of Pelagic Species – U.S. Virgin Islands

St. Thomas/St. John



St. Croix



Management Measures for Pelagic Stocks

- At this meeting, the Council could determine which management measures to develop (commercial or recreational size limits, commercial trip limits, recreational bag limits) and for which pelagic species.
- The Council could also revise the accountability measure (AM) provision for pelagic stocks/stock complexes to include size limits, bag limits, or trip limits as the responsive action that the Council and NMFS take when the AM has been triggered (i.e., when landings exceed the annual catch target).
- Staff could begin work on an Options Paper.



Management Measures – Size Limits

- Establishing minimum size limits would allow the Council to restrict the harvest of fish below a certain size, reducing the amount of fish harvested before they can reproduce.
- Size limit options could be recommended based on available life history information (e.g., size at first maturity) and landings and length data, where available.
- For this management measure, the Council could consider:
 - establishing a minimum size limit for the commercial sector;
 - establishing a minimum size limit for the recreational sector;
 - whether to specify compatible recreational size limits for king mackerel (20" fork length) or cero mackerel (16" fork length) in federal waters off Puerto Rico.



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Management Measures – Quota Limits

- Establishing recreational bag or commercial trip limits would allow the Council to limit the amount of fish removed and reduce the harvest of smaller fish, especially for schooling species.
 - Commercial trip limits could limit catch if highly efficient gear are employed in the fishery;
 - Commercial trip limits and recreational bag limits could reduce localized depletion.
- For this management measure, the Council could consider:
 - establishing a trip limit for the commercial sector;
 - establishing a bag limit for the recreational sector;
 - whether to specify compatible recreational bag limits for dolphin (10 per person per day; 30 per vessel per day), and for wahoo, king mackerel, and cero mackerel (5 of each species per fisher per day; 10 animals per vessel per day) in federal waters off Puerto Rico.



Selection Matrix for Minimum Size Limits

FMP	Species	Commercial size limit	Recreational size limit	Rationale
Puerto Rico	Dolphin			
	Pompano dolphin			
	Wahoo			
	King mackerel*			
	Cero mackerel*			
	Little tunny			
	Blackfin tuna			
	Tripletail			
	Great barracuda			
St. Thomas and St. John	Dolphin			
	Wahoo			
St. Croix	Dolphin			
	Wahoo			

**Recreational size limit specified in state waters.*



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Selection Matrix for Quota Limits

FMP	Species	Commercial trip limit	Recreational bag limit	Rationale
Puerto Rico	Dolphin*			
	Pompano dolphin			
	Wahoo*			
	King mackerel*			
	Cero mackerel*			
	Little tunny			
	Blackfin tuna			
	Tripletail			
	Great barracuda			
St. Thomas and St. John	Dolphin			
	Wahoo			
St. Croix	Dolphin			
	Wahoo			

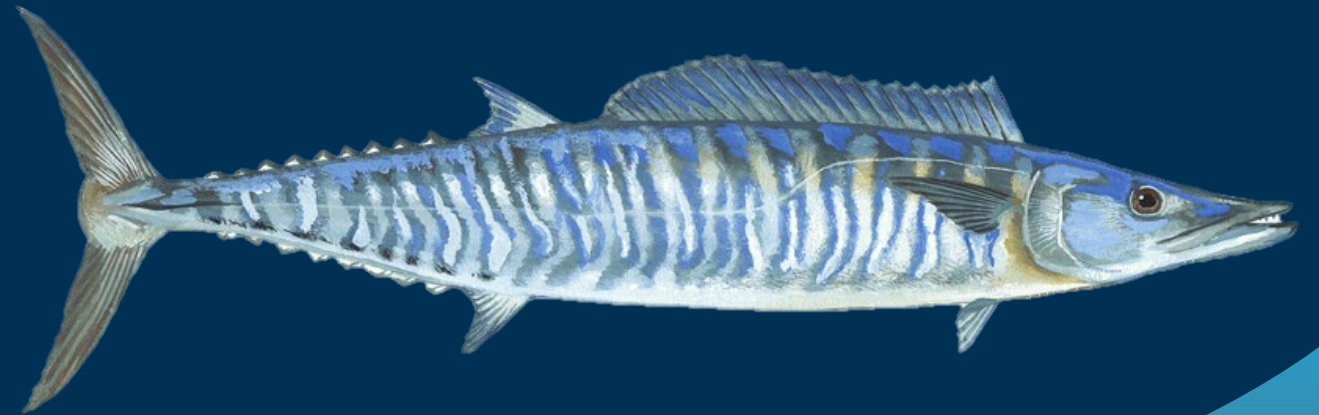
**Recreational size limit specified in state waters.*



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Questions



Puerto Rico Fishery Management Plan

Annual Catch Limits for Pelagic Stocks/Stock Complexes

Pelagic Stock/Stock Complex	Commercial ACL (lb)	Recreational ACL (lb)	Total ACL (lb)
Great barracuda	495	167,693	168,188
Tripletail	270	39,005	39,275
Dolphinfish complex (dolphin*, pompano dolphin)	232,173	1,513,873	1,746,046
Tuna complex (little tunny, blackfin tuna)	82,779	34,485	117,263
Mackerel complex (cero mackerel, king mackerel)	232,422	129,180	361,602
Wahoo	25,911	210,737	236,648

* Indicator stock



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Puerto Rico Fishery Management Plan

Accountability Measures

- For pelagic stocks, the Council established an annual catch target (ACT) as 90% of the ACL to serve as the AM trigger.
- An AM would be triggered if the sector landings, as available, exceed the sector ACT for that stock/stock complex.
- If landings for one sector are not available for comparison to the ACT, the ACT for the sector with available data would be the applicable ACT for the stock or stock complex.

Pelagic Stock/Stock Complex	Commercial ACT (lb)	Recreational ACT (lb)
Great barracuda	445	150,924
Tripletail	243	35,105
Dolphinfish complex (dolphin*, pompano dolphin)	208,956	1,362,486
Tunas complex (little tunny, blackfin tuna)	74,501	31,037
Mackerel complex (cero mackerel, king mackerel)	209,180	116,262
Wahoo	23,320	189,663

* Indicator stock



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St. Thomas/St. John Fishery Management Plan Annual Catch Limits & Accountability Measures

- The ACL and the AM governs all harvest, whether commercial or recreational.
- The ACL is based on available commercial landings, whether reported as landed from federal or territorial waters.

Pelagic Stock	Annual Catch Limit (lb)	Annual Catch Target (lb)
Dolphin	9,778	8,800
Wahoo	6,879	6,191

- For pelagic stocks, the Council established an annual catch target (ACT) as 90% of the ACL to serve as the AM trigger.
- An AM would be triggered if the commercial landings exceed the ACT for the stock.



St. Croix Fishery Management Plan

Annual Catch Limits & Accountability Measures

- The ACL and the AM governs all harvest, whether commercial or recreational.
- The ACL is based on available commercial landings, whether reported as landed from federal or territorial waters.

Pelagic Stock	Annual Catch Limit (lb)	Annual Catch Target (lb)
Dolphin	86,633	77,970
Wahoo	27,260	24,534

- For pelagic stocks, the Council established an annual catch target (ACT) as 90% of the ACL to serve as the AM trigger.
- An AM would be triggered if the commercial landings exceed the ACT for the stock.

