

February 1 2021- SSC Consensus Statement:

The SSC has finalized its Generic Ecosystem Conceptual Model for the U.S. Caribbean. The SSC believes its ECM in the current state meets the objectives that the SSC was tasked by the Council following the Caribbean Region EBFM Roadmap Implementation Plan.

The SSC also feels that the generic model it developed should be sufficient and that developing three separate SSC Island-based models is not necessary to meet the objectives of the overall process of developing a fishery ecosystem plan, and specifically the next step of comparison of conceptual models.

The SSC recognizes its ECM will be useful in developing the next steps in the process of developing a fishery ecosystem plan and in addressing concerns specific to the SSC. Examples are given below:

- Generate questions to help prioritize management strategies (e.g., management strategy evaluation).
- Generate questions to help prioritize future research (identify data and knowledge gaps).
- Develop hypotheses to be tested using available data in quantitative modeling approaches.
- Identify key ecosystem linkages and indicators for risk assessment.
- Explore different visualization and communication tools for effective outreach of conceptual model (or sub-model) outcomes.

Specific issues like magnitude, variability, and direction of the relationships would need to be confronted in order to realize these next steps.

February 2 2021 SSC

Consensus

Allow the Chair to approve the updated OFL Projections and ABCs estimates for spiny lobster using updated landings data and expansion factors (i.e., Puerto Rico, 2019) for presentation to the Council (as requested).

The SSC requests the SEFSC run updated projections with revised PR landings data for spiny lobster for 2019 and the 2019 correction factors—for updating ABCs/OFLs for 2021-2026.

The SSC recommends for purposes of the Draft Framework Amendment to the Puerto Rico, St. Thomas/St. John, and St. Croix Fishery Management Plans (FMP) to modify spiny lobster management reference points based on SEDAR 57 stock assessments, the SSC recommends constant-catch and variable-catch ABCs for 2021-2023.

The SSC request from the SEFSC to perform an Interim Assessment for spiny lobster by April 2022 and update all the landings and TIP data into model for all 3 Islands; final data 2020 or 2021 (depending on incoming data to the SEFSC).

Remind the Council to request spiny lobster be scheduled for a SEDAR Operational Assessment given that the previous assessment used data up to 2016. Note that SEDAR operates with a 2-year lead time.

Language for Amendment: The SSC recommends by consensus

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In the event that subsequent rulemaking with updated spiny lobster OFLs/ABCs/ACLs is not in place by the end of the SSC-recommended year period (2023), the SSC recommends the following:

For each Island group, for both the constant and variable scenarios, the OFL/ABC for 2024 and beyond would be equal to the variable OFL/ABC for 2023, until modified by subsequent rulemaking.

The SSC recommends that for spiny lobster stocks, the Council continue using an arithmetic mean for ACL monitoring purposes (i.e., triggering an AM and calculating length of AM-based closure). (consensus)

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Recommendation to the CFMC: to request the SEFSC give high priority to reviewing the MER Report Puerto Rico Port Sampling and Catch Validation Project (August 2017, December 2019)

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