

PR DAP MEETING REPORT

In the past meeting of the PR DAP, which I consider was one of the best in a long time, several recommendations were made to this Council.

Regarding the IBFMP

It came to light that in the past Spiny Lobster closure, a news site from PR (NOTICEL) published in its headlines that PR would not have lobsters until October, that they could not be fished, bought, or sold.

This caused great confusion in the restaurants and refused to buy it as they thought it was an illegal act. The market of lobsters was affected until the situation was clarified.

We suggested that when is time to apply accountability measures, to use a simple and clear language to prevent it to happen again.

We also recommended to the OEAP to issue a press release when these closures arise.

Another issue related to lobsters was the ACL's table where it shows a drop for the next few years. The DAP wondered why this happens if during the past seven years catches have been abundant, with a considerable mix of juveniles and adults.

They also questioned if most of the catches takes place in local waters, why closures are applied in federal waters.

Regarding this matter, we recommend the following:

- A revision of the Spiny Lobster ACL is necessary considering the biological size data.
- We recommend evaluating the possibility of obtaining statistics with an independent landings program.
- We request to the SSC to hold a workshop with the existing projects using lobsters as a model. We want to know which projects are running, the data you need and how fishermen can collaborate. Maybe creating a committee that includes all sectors related to lobsters fishing, like divers pots and

trammel netters, with scientific participation and direct guidance to contribute to the data of the lobsters ACL's.

- We understand that the participation of Kevin and others is necessary to do the things right and not waste more time.

In another matter we recommend reviewing again the common names of the species and how they are named by region.

An example of this is the skipjack, this species is not the same of the albacore. In PR we call the skipjack "vacora" and it is very important to clarify it since in the past PR was awarded that it had fished a large part of the Albacore's ACL when this species is not found in our waters.

Comentado [LRG1]: A que te refieres en español con awarded?

Another recommendation to the OEAP is to study the possibility of making a catalog or an identification book of species in the Caribbean and once it has been drafted, consult with all DAPs so they can make their comments and recommendations.

It's also recommended to create a fact sheet on what the Bajo de Cico area is in terms of regulations and once done, send it to the DAP for review and suggestions.

We recommend creating a workshop for DAP members, especially for the new ones on management regulations, this way, it will be easier for them to participate and give recommendations. This will could also serve of future benefit as they can guide the fishing communities from their areas correctly.

It could be a workshop like PEPCO or something similar.

Following the same line, we recommend to this Council, write a letter to the DNER recommending that all fishermen with a beginner license, before aspiring to obtain a full-time commercial fisherman's license, must take the PEPCO workshop as a requirement. Also, we recommend the same for the recreational fishers with the new workshop that Helena Antoun is offering for them when they are coming to take the navigation certificate.

It is hard and frustrating to see the disaster that occurred past Eastern week in La Parguera where hundreds of boats had anchored, damaging an ecosystem that is supposed to be protected by NOAA and the local government. And this

did not end here, two manatees were killed, and one recreational vessel ran over two commercial fishermen who were returning to port and have to be taken to the hospital with serious injuries plus the damage causing to their working vessel, with the luck that another boat nearby was able to take the registration number because they don't stop and ran away.

It's time to address these issues seriously and at least with the limited resources available try to put some order to this situation that day by day is growing like a snowball.

Regarding the issue of fishing nets, we recommend that the use of trawlers be prohibited in federal waters.

It is recommended to leave open fishing for ballyhoo, goggle eyes fish and species used as bait in federal waters with the gillnet.

Comentado [LRG2]: y el pez volador?

We believe that it's necessary to create a support group when describing the fishing nets, so they are more in tune with the reality to avoid possible confusion in the future.

In other business we discussed a concern of the fishing community from the west of the Island.

It turns out that in an intervention by the federal authorities with a charter boat in Bajo de Cico, they advised the captain that it is prohibited to catch Rainbow Runners during the six-month closure period of the area because this species is classified as a reef fish.

We all thought that this species was classified as pelagic and when talking to divers they told us that they have never seen Rainbow Runners at the bottom, but they have seen them in the water column.

This species was captured mostly in Bajo de Cico and around the waters of Desecheo Island in the water column either by trolling or with live bait and is a great important species for commercial fishing.

Keeping the Rainbow Runner as a reef fish could cause the pressure fishing increase around the waters of Desecheo Island, which could consequently may cause the possibility that in the future this species could be in danger.

For this reason, we recommend moving the Rainbow Runner from a reef fish to a pelagic fish.