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Draft Framework Amendment 2: Update the Overfishing Limit, Acceptable Biological Catch, and Annual Catch Limit for Spiny Lobster

Based on the 2022 Update Assessment to the
SEDAR 57 Spiny Lobster Stock Assessments

181st Caribbean Fishery Management Council Meeting
April 18-19, 2023

Background

The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) determined that the 2019 SEDAR 57 spiny lobster stock assessments for Puerto Rico, St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John were suitable for management advice.

Framework Amendment 1 (effective April 15, 2023; [88 FR 16194](#))

- Updated spiny lobster management reference points based on the accepted stock assessments using the ABC Control Rule.
- Updated spiny lobster OFLs/ABCs/ACLs using a constant-catch approach and set the ACL = 95% of the ABC.
 - Set values for 2021-2023 and more conservative values for 2024 and later.
 - Council intends to request an update assessment by 2023 to update OFL/ABC projections and set catch levels for 2024 and later.
- Updated the accountability measure (AM) trigger for spiny lobster (landings used in comparison to the ACL).



Update from December 2022 Council Meeting

- SSC accepted the 2022 Update Assessment and recommended both variable-catch values (i.e., OFLs and ABCs change each year) and constant-catch values (i.e., OFL and ABC based on a 3-year average) for years 2024-2026 for spiny lobster under each FMP.
- Council directed staff to begin a Framework Amendment to the island-based FMPs based on the 2022 Update Assessment to update spiny lobster OFLs, ABCs, and ACLs using the constant-catch values.
- Interdisciplinary Planning Team formed to draft Generic Framework Amendment 2.

Interdisciplinary Planning Team



NMFS Southeast Regional Office,
NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Caribbean
Fishery Management Council



**Generic Framework Amendment 2 to the Puerto Rico,
St. Croix, and St. Thomas and St. John Fishery
Management Plans: Updates to the Spiny Lobster
Overfishing Limit, Acceptable Biological Catch, and
Annual Catch Limit**



April 2023



Actions - Update the Spiny Lobster OFL, ABC, and ACL

Alternative 1 – No Action. The OFL, ABC, and ACL for spiny lobster would remain as specified under Framework Amendment 1 to the Island-specific FMP.

Alternative 2 - Update the OFL and ABC for spiny lobster for 2024-2026 based on the constant-catch approach selected by the Council and set the ACL equal to the ABC, until modified.

Alternative 3 - Update the OFL and ABC for spiny lobster for the period of 2024-2026 based on the constant-catch approach selected by the Council and set the ACL equal to 0.95 of the ABC, until modified.

Alternative 4 - Update the OFL and ABC for spiny lobster for the period of 2024-2026 based on the constant-catch approach selected by the Council and set the ACL equal to 0.90 of the ABC, until modified.

Comparison of Alternatives

Alt	Comments
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to base management measures on the best scientific information available.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same OFL and ABC values as Alts 2 and 3, only difference is in degree of management uncertainty.* No management uncertainty: $ACL = ABC$. Greatest level of catch allowed; greatest amount of lobster removed.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same OFL and ABC values as Alts 2 and 4. Some management uncertainty: $ACL = 95\%$ of ABC. Lower amount of catch allowed than Alt 2, but more than Alt 4.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same OFL and ABC values as Alts 2 and 3. More management uncertainty: $ACL = 90\%$ of ABC. Least level of catch allowed; greatest amount of lobster retained.

Management uncertainty refers to uncertainty in the ability of managers to constrain catch to the ACL, and the uncertainty in quantifying the true catch amounts. Sources of management uncertainty could include late reporting, misreporting, or underreporting of catch amounts, as well as lack of sufficient in-season management, including in-season closure authority.

Action 1 – Puerto Rico OFL, ABC, and ACLs

Table 2.1. Overfishing limit, acceptable biological catch, and annual catch limit for spiny lobster in Puerto Rico under the Action 1 alternatives. All values are in pounds whole weight.

Alternative	OFL	ABC	ACL
Alt. 1 (no action)	438,001	386,279	366,965
Alt. 2 (ACL=ABC)	426,858	376,452	376,452
Alt. 3 (ACL=ABC x 0.95)	426,858	376,452	357,629
Alt. 4 (ACL=ABC x 0.90)	426,858	376,452	338,807



Action 2 – St. Croix OFL, ABC, and ACLs

Table 2.2. Overfishing limit, acceptable biological catch, and annual catch limit for spiny lobster in St. Croix under the Action 2 alternatives. All values are in pounds whole weight.

Alternative	OFL	ABC	ACL
Alt. 1 (no action)	144,219	127,189	120,830
Alt. 2 (ACL=ABC)	163,823	144,478	144,478
Alt. 3 (ACL=ABC x 0.95)	163,823	144,478	137,254
Alt. 4 (ACL=ABC x 0.90)	163,823	144,478	130,030

Action 3 – St. Thomas/St. John OFL, ABC, and ACLs

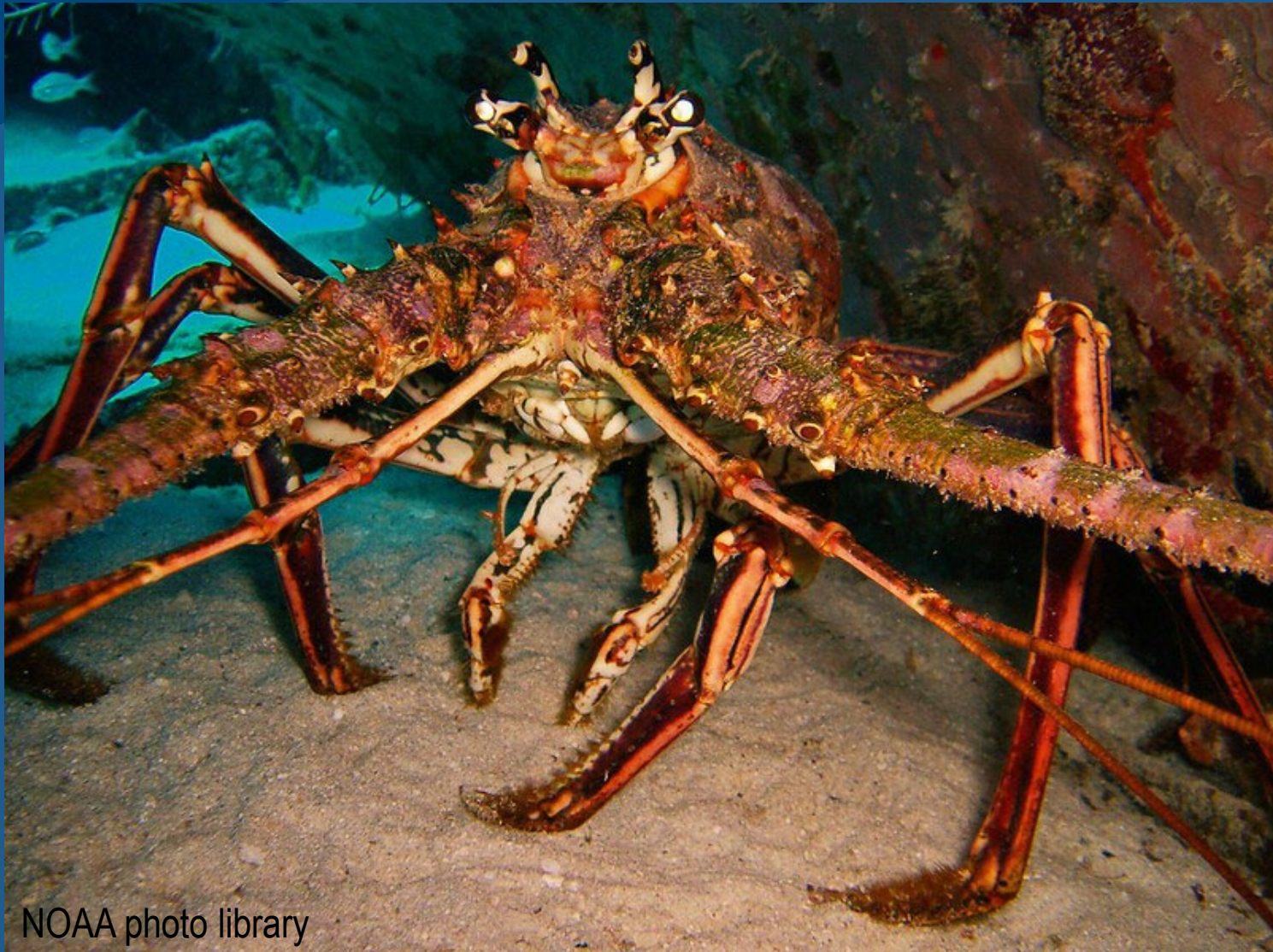
Table 2.3. Overfishing limit, acceptable biological catch, and annual catch limit for spiny lobster in Puerto Rico under the Action 1 alternatives. All values are in pounds whole weight.

Alternative	OFL	ABC	ACL
Alt. 1 (no action)	150,497	132,725	126,089
Alt. 2 (ACL=ABC)	158,993	140,218	140,218
Alt. 3 (ACL=ABC x 0.95)	158,993	140,218	133,207
Alt. 4 (ACL=ABC x 0.90)	158,993	140,218	126,196

Next Steps

- Council could select preferred alternatives at this meeting.
 - select management uncertainty buffer for Puerto Rico spiny lobster ACL.
 - select management uncertainty buffer for St. Croix spiny lobster ACL
 - select management uncertainty buffer for St. Thomas/St. John spiny lobster ACL.
- IPT develops Framework Amendment 2 for final action at the August 2023 Council meeting.

Questions



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