

PUERTO RICO FISHERIES INITIATIVE

ACTION PLAN AND EDUCATIONAL PROPOSALS FOR SUSTAINABLE FISHING COMMUNITIES IN PUERTO RICO

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Origin & Purpose of This Report

Fishermen Concerns

During the island-wide "Salva Peje" (Fish Descending Device) workshops, local commercial and recreational fishermen raised critical concerns regarding fisheries management, regulatory compliance, and marine conservation.

Planning Session

On July 15, 2026, a brainstorming meeting was held at Sea Grant UPR Mayagüez with Mr. Miguel Rolón, Diana Martino, Jannette Ramos, Cristina Olán, Nelson Crespo, and Wilson Santiago to develop this educational strategy.

Key Fishing Community Concerns

- ❗ **CFMC Structure:** Limited knowledge about the Caribbean Fishery Management Council and its advisory panels.
- 📏 **Measuring Tools:** Lack of standardized measuring calipers for regulated marine species.
- 🐟 **Jigging Issues:** Unregulated vertical jigging in protected areas like Bajo de Sico targeting Nassau Grouper.
- ⚖️ **Regulatory Gaps:** Low awareness of Federal Regulations, Island-Based FMPs, and law enforcement jurisdictions.
- ⚓ **Sector Rules:** Unclear requirements for charter boats, kayak fishing, shore fishing, tourists, among others.

Action Plan: Regional Workshops

We are suggesting two main island-wide workshops to deliver critical information on regulations, law enforcement jurisdictions, managing agencies, and federal/state management plans (IBFMP's). The following slides include the topics for the workshops and special meetings with the fisheries of the Us Caribbean.

Tentative Dates & Locations

Mayagüez: Holiday Inn — Wednesday, July 14, 2027

Fajardo: Multipurpose Center — Wednesday, July 21, 2027

Main Topics

1. CFMC & Advisory Bodies Presentation
2. Federal Regulation Training
3. Charter & Kayak Fishing Rules
4. Shore Fishing Regulations
5. Tourist & Outreach Campaign
6. Diving Safety & Accident Prevention
7. Law Enforcement Species ID Training
8. Regulated Species & Marine Protected Areas
9. Gear Diversification & Economic Resilience

1. CFMC & Advisory Bodies Presentation at the 2 Workshops

Council Advisory Structure

Island-wide workshops designed to explain the structure and roles of CFMC advisory components, including District Advisory Panels (DAP), Outreach & Education (OEAP), Liaison Officers, and the Scientific & Statistical Committee (SSC).

Island-Based Management Plan

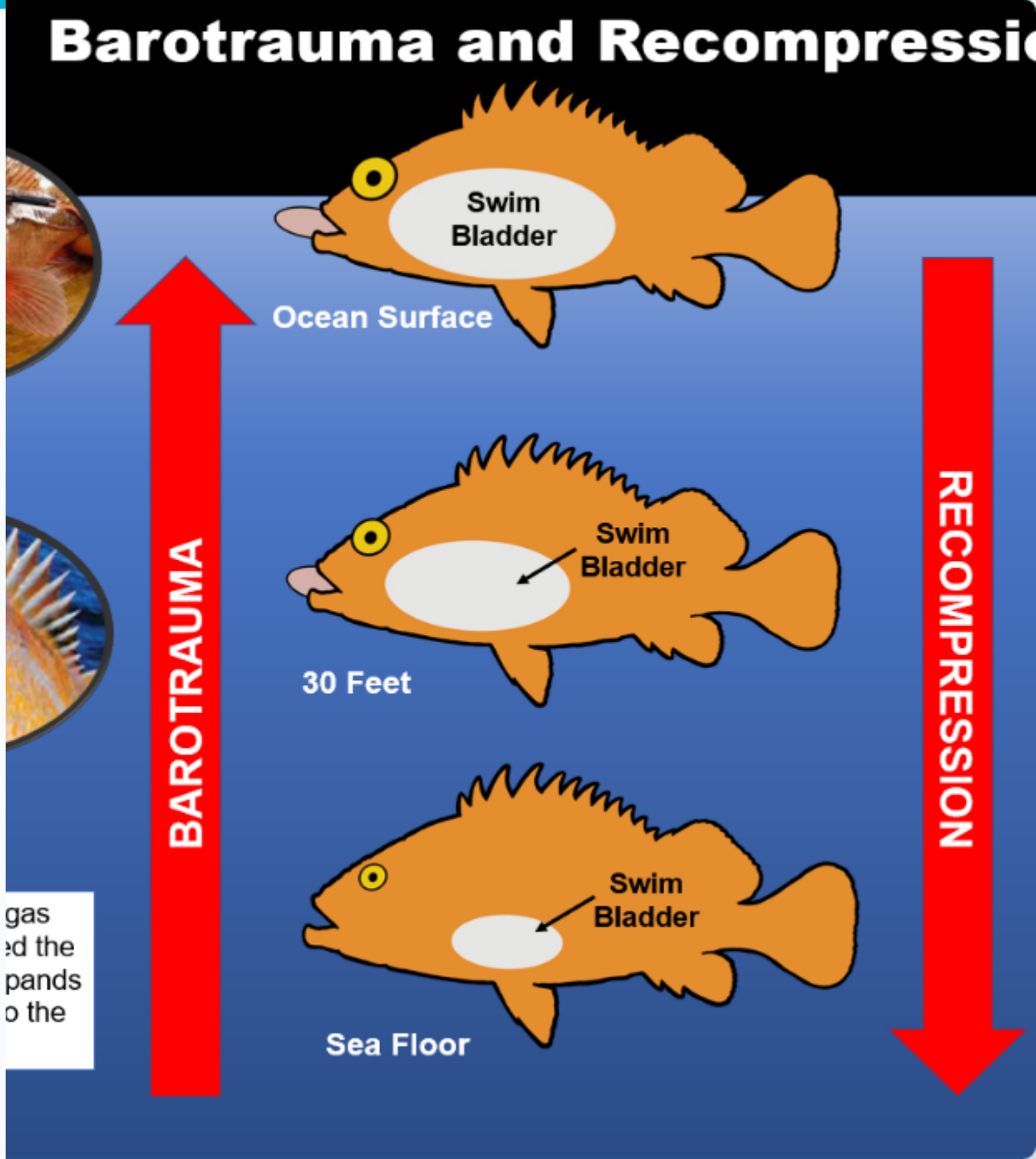
Presenting the Island-Based Fisheries Management Plan (IBFMP) specifically tailored for Puerto Rico, supported by newly developed informative brochures and educational guides.

2. Federal Regulations Training

Key Fishery Topics

Focused educational sessions regarding federal marine regulations governing managed reef fish and pelagic species in the U.S. Caribbean Exclusive Economic Zone. True PEPCO workshop or specialized workshops

Featured Modules: "Salva Peje" (fish descending devices for barotrauma), Dolphin (Mahi-mahi) & Wahoo regulations, Highly Migratory Species (HMS), and IBFMP's compliance rules.



3. Charter & Kayak Fishing Rules



Charter Vessels

Detailed orientation on federal and state permits, safety standards, and species catch limits for commercial charter boat operators.



Kayak Anglers

Guidelines on safety gear, coast guard requirements, and regulated catch limits for the growing kayak fishing sector.



Compliance

Clarifying operator responsibilities and reporting duties to prevent accidental infractions during recreational excursions.

4. Shore Fishing Regulations

State & Federal Coordination

Workshops addressing state-level shore fishing rules and federal regulations for protected coastal species.

Organized in direct collaboration with the DRNA (Department of Natural and Environmental Resources) Recreational Fishing Program to ensure consistent message delivery across coastal communities.



5. Tourist Outreach Campaign

Protecting Marine Resources

A joint awareness campaign with the Puerto Rico Tourism Company to inform visitors about protected marine species, coral reef conservation, and fishing prohibitions.

The OEAP Chair will establish official contact with tourism authorities to coordinate O&E activities and distribution of materials such as brochures at hotels, marinas, and visitor hubs.



6. Diving Safety & Accident Prevention



Safety Need

Addressing the concerning increase in diving accidents among commercial hookah and scuba fishers around Puerto Rico.



Expert Trainers

Inviting professional dive instructors and hyperbaric medicine experts to deliver hands-on safety workshops.



Health Focus

Teaching decompression safety, equipment maintenance, emergency response, and physical risk management for divers.

7. Law Enforcement Species ID Training

Building Agency Capacity

Specialized workshops for local agencies and federal enforcement agencies to enhance accurate identification of regulated marine species.

Focuses on distinguishing similar fish species, recognizing minimum legal sizes, and inspecting catches efficiently to ensure proper regulatory enforcement.



8. Regulated Species & Marine Protected Areas

MPA's Awareness

Educational workshops focused on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), seasonal fishery closures, and gear restrictions.

Ensuring commercial and recreational fishers fully understand geographic boundaries, regulated species limits, and the ecological purpose behind spatial closures.



9. Gear Diversification & Economic Resilience



Gear Making

Practical workshops on constructing alternative fishing gear to maintain income during seasonal closures of primary target species.



Vessel Maintenance

Hands-on training in fiberglass boat repair and engine maintenance to reduce operational costs for fishing families.



Value-Added Seafood

Culinary preparation and fish processing techniques to supply local restaurants or establish direct-to-consumer sales.

CFMC Educational Brochure Development

Council Overview

Collaboration with Jannette Ramos (OEAP Chair) to design a user-friendly brochure explaining the Caribbean Fishery Management Council's roles and advisory panels.

Specimen Measuring Calipers

Standardized Measurement

Designing and manufacturing physical measuring devices ("calipers") tailored for key regulated invertebrate species in Puerto Rico.

Target Species: Queen Conch (Carrucho), Spiny Lobster (Langosta), and West Indian Top Shell (Bulgao/Burgao) to ensure precise size compliance at sea.



Species Measuring Rules (USVI Adaptation)

Proven Model

Replicating the successful measuring ruler template originally created by the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI).

Target Species

Customized ruler mats designed for commercial fishers to rapidly verify size limits for managed finfish species like Yellowtail Snapper (*Colirubia*).

Weather-Resistant Outdoor Posters

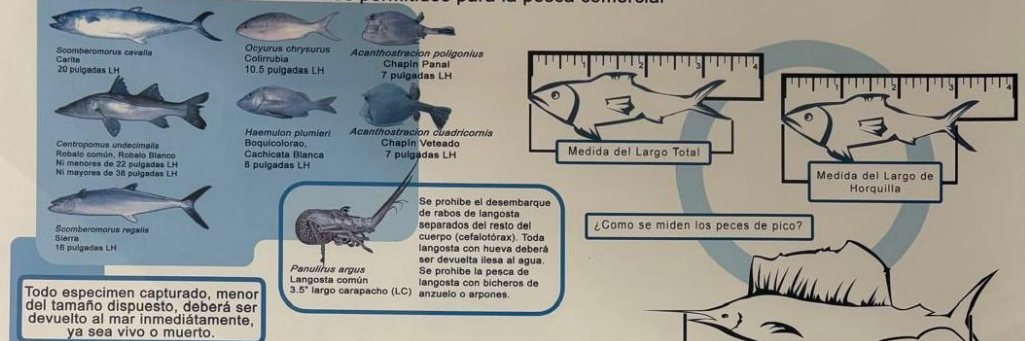
High-Durability Posters

Developing sun- and water-resistant informational posters outlining local governments and federal shore fishing regulations, size limits, and penalty fines.

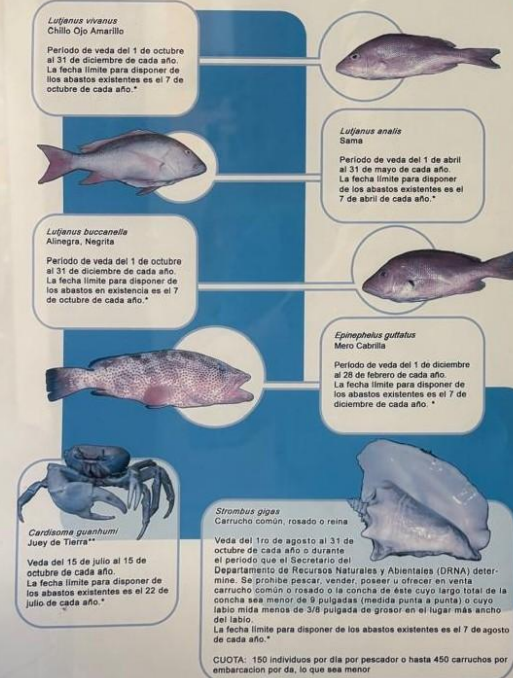
Distribution Points: Fishing centers, public boat ramps, heavily visited beaches, and piers across Puerto Rico.

Reglamentación Para La Pesca Comercial Reglamento 7 9 4 9 De la Ley de Pesca 2 7 8

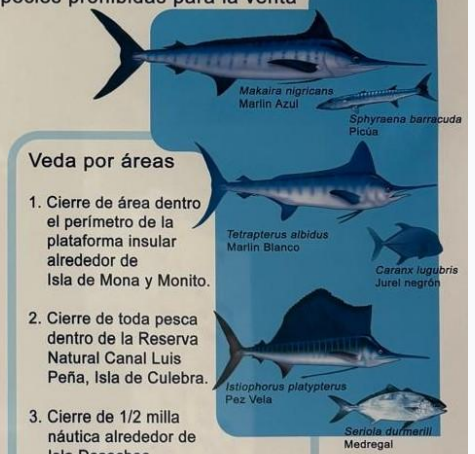
Tamaños mínimos permitidos para la pesca comercial



Especies con periodos de veda temporera



Especies prohibidas para la venta



Veda por áreas

1. Cierre de área dentro el perímetro de la plataforma insular alrededor de Isla de Mona y Monito.
2. Cierre de toda pesca dentro de la Reserva Natural Canal Luis Peña, Isla de Culebra.
3. Cierre de 1/2 milla náutica alrededor de Isla Desecheo.
4. Cierre de área de la Laguna del Condado, excluyendo el Canal San Antonio.

La pesca comercial de: marlin azul, marlin blanco, pez vela y aguja de escama redonda está prohibida.

*Todo pescador, vendedor y/o pescadería deberá disponer de cada ejemplar capturado en aguas jurisdiccionales antes de la fecha límite establecida para cada especie. Las personas que lo importen deberán demostrarlo mediante recibo de compra.
**En áreas protegidas administradas por el DRNA se prohíbe la captura permanentemente. Es ilegal destruir sus cuevas para capturarlos.



"Salva Peje" Video Experience Contest

Promoting Barotrauma Mitigation

Launching an interactive contest where fishers submit short videos demonstrating the proper use of the "Salva Peje" fish descending device.

Winner Recognition: Two selected fishers (1 from Puerto Rico, 1 from USVI) will be invited to present their practical experiences directly at a CFMC council meeting.

