



Caribbean Fishery Management Council's Report



January 2017

158th REGULAR MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

December 13-14 - The Marriot Frenchman's Reef Resort
in St. Thomas, USVI

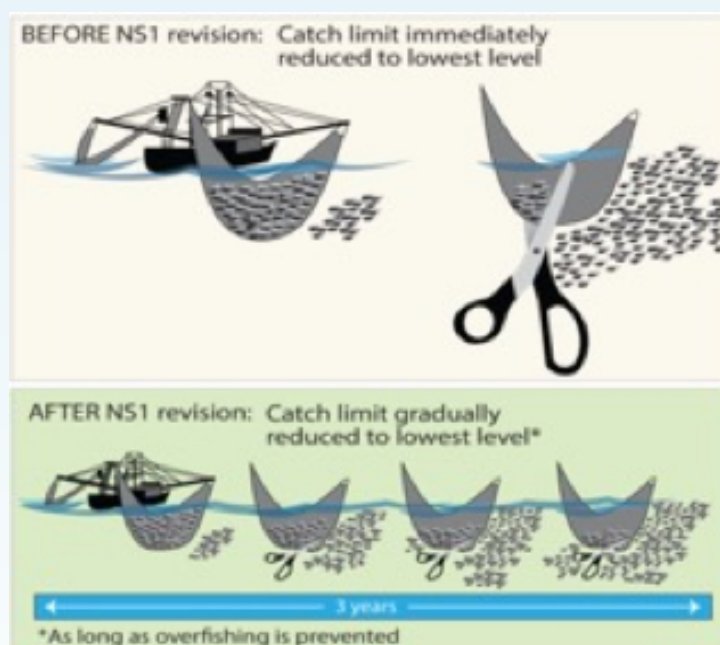
Revision of the Magnuson Stevens Act National Standard 1 Guidelines

NS1 is a critical component to MSA success that requires U.S. fisheries management to prevent overfishing and achieve optimum yield (OY).

The NS1 Guidelines present revision is updated on how to achieve these requirements by providing tools to further improve upon federal fisheries management. One of the outstanding revision is the phasing-in of catch levels as shown in the diagram. This revision presents no changes to the Fisheries Management Plan (FMPs) in place.

For more information, you may visit:

<http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/index.html>



Phasing-in changes to catch levels



Accountability Measure Timing-
Update on Status Following
Secretarial Submission

1. Based on the results from different meetings with fishers on Accountability Measures (AMs) an amendment was submitted to the Secretary of Commerce so that if any AM based closures were needed in 2017, the closures would be starting on September 30, 2017, moving backward into the year for the number of days necessary to achieve the required reduction in landings. Thus, minimizing the socio-economic impact of AM closures, while still limiting catch levels to the applicable annual catch limits and preventing overfishing.



Puerto Rico Fishers Spiny Lobster Data Collection Initiative

3. For the past two years,spiny lobster fishers from Puerto Rico have been testing a new type of lobster traps in different areas and gathering information on the status of the spiny lobster, life history and landings. In the 158th CFMC Meeting fishers' representatives met with the scientists to discuss the nature and extent of the information needed by the scientists for a better assessment. The fishers decided to undertake an inventory of lobster fishers, type of gear and differences between the types of traps. This information will be submitted to the scientists to prepare a sample design adequate to this fishery. The final goal of this project is for fishers to provide the best data on spiny lobster populations useful to the scientists for their Annual Catch Limit (ACL) determination.

Update on the development
of a permit program for
harvest of Snapper Unit 2
from the Puerto Rico EEZ

2. After extensive discussion of the outcomes from the Scoping Meetings held in Puerto Rico, on the development of a permit program for harvest of Snapper Unit 2 (queen and cardinal snappers) from the Puerto Rico EEZ, a Motion was presented, and approved, to table the decision on the permits until the appropriate time when the Council gets the information –from Puerto Rico –needed for this permit not later than 2018.

Island-based Fishery Management Plans

On the status of the Island Based Fishery Management Plans (IBFMP), there was ample discussion on several issues. A list of Goals and Objectives from PR, St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix were received by the Council. Other issues discussed include the request to the SSC to continue working on *Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule and the alternatives for the IBFMPs. The SSC and the DAPs will meet early in 2017 to discuss the draft documents

IBFMPs Draft Timeline:

December 2016	Council Meeting	Review DRAFT Actions and Alternatives; Goals and Objectives from PR, STT/STJ, STX; Action 3 guidance; Next steps
February 2017	SSC Meeting	Finalize Action 1 species selection, Action 2 grouping (indicator species?); Action 3 year sequences and reference points
		Review and Comment on Actions and Alternatives-emphasis on year sequences and groupings (indicators?). Meanwhile, staff continue development of DRAFT FMPs Public Hearing Drafts and DEIS'
March (?) 2017	DAP Meetings	SSC outcomes; DAP input; Identification of preliminary Preferred Alts;
April 2017	Council Meeting	
Spring/Summer 2017	Staff Work/Initial Public Hearings	Calculate reference points including ACLs based on Preferred Action 3 Alts; Public Hearings on DRAFT documents;
August 2017	Council Meeting	Review outcomes of public hearings; Finalize Preferred Alts;
Fall 2017	Staff	Finalize FMPs and DEIS'
December 2017	Council Meeting	Council reviews FMPs PHDs and DEIS' (if no changes needed approve for public hearings and DEIS publication)
Winter 2018	Staff	Publish DEIS' for public comment. Hold Public Hearings
Spring 2018	Council Meeting	Council votes to submit FMPs for Secretarial approval



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* Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule = acceptable biological catch (ABC), which is the catch level that accounts for scientific uncertainty in the estimate of the overfishing limit (OFL) and other sources of scientific uncertainty. The NS1 guidelines further require each Council, in conjunction with its SSC, to establish an ABC control rule that specifies how ABC is calculated based on the scientific uncertainty in the OFL estimate and the Council's risk policy.



Ongoing Reef Fish and Spiny Lobster Endangered Species 7 Consultation

Jennifer Lee, from SERO/PRD, presented an update on Reef Fish and Spiny Lobster FMPs Endangered Species Consultation. SERO is updating the list of species which have been included in endangered species list since 2014. With this information, the Reef Fish and the Spiny lobster FMPs must be amended to include the new species. To provide or receive information, ask questions, etc., about the Reef Fish and Spiny Lobster FMP on-going consultations (or any other Protected Resources topic), you may contact:

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SERO, PRD, Sea Turtle and Fisheries Coordination Branch
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Outreach and Education

Helena Antoun presented the CFMC Facebook page recently opened where announcements, photos and other information will be regularly posted. You are invited to visit the Caribbean Fishery Management Council facebook page.

Alternative Annual Catch Limit Benchmark

On the issue of developing an alternative annual catch limit (ACL) benchmark for application of accountability measures (AMs), Bill Arnold presented the need for this action. The objective is to revise the way accountability measures are triggered and applied to minimize the risk of fishery closures of the Puerto Rico reef fish fishery and reduce negative socio-economic impacts. This will ensure to the greatest degree practicable that optimum yield is achieved for federally managed reef fish fisheries while preventing the fishery from exceeding the overfishing limit. A motion to develop amendment for the reef fish FMP to revise the trigger for applying AMs was presented and approved.



Next Meetings:

SSC Meeting:

February 6-10, 2017 at the CFMC Office in San Juan, Puerto Rico

DAP's Meeting:

March 06-10, 2017 in San Juan, Puerto Rico

OEAP Meeting:

March 30, 2017 in San Juan, Puerto Rico

Council Meeting:

April 18-19, 2017 in St. Coirx, USVI

Acronyms

ABC - Acceptable Biological Catch
ACL - Annual Catch Limit
AM - Accountability Measures
CFMC - Caribbean Fishery Management Council
DAP - District Advisory Panel
EEZ - Exclusive Economic Zone
FMP - Fishery Management Plans
FMU - Fishery Management Unit
IBFMP - Island Based Fishery Management Plan
MSA - Magnuson Steven Act
NMFS - National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NS1 - National Standard 1
OFL - Overfishing Limit
OY - Optimum Yield
PR - Puerto Rico
SSC - Scientific and Statistical Committee
STT/STJ - St. Thomas / St. John
STX - St. Croix
USVI - United States Virgin Islands

Credits

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Thanks to Council Staff for their revision of this bulletin.

Editor's Note

The Caribbean Newsletter is published by The Caribbean Fishery Management Council. Its purpose is to report developments in fisheries management that would be of interest to its readers. Please credit the council when reprinting articles used in this newsletter. Anyone wishing to submit information or articles pertaining to fishing or fisheries management, or letters to the editor on a pertinent issue, is invited and encouraged to do so. These may be mailed to Natalia Perdomo, Caribbean Newsletter, 270 Muñoz Rivera Avenue Suite 401 San Juan Puerto Rico, 00918, or may be sent via internet to this email address nataliaperdomo_cfmcc@yahoo.com.