

## Island-Based Fishery Management Plans

### Goals and Objectives

At the 155<sup>th</sup> Caribbean Fishery Management Council Meeting, held March 15-16 2016 in San Juan Puerto Rico, the Council received input from the Interdisciplinary Plan Team (IPT) (Appendix A), as well as input from the Pew Charitable Trusts (Appendix B) on the draft goals and objectives for the Island-Based Fishery Management Plans (IBFMPs). The Council reviewed these at the 156<sup>th</sup>, June 28-29 2016, regular meeting in St. Croix USVI and requested a merged draft document on the IBFMPs goals and objectives. (USVI Representative requested more time to prepare their comments at the last meeting and provide these to the Council at the August 2016 meeting.) This draft provides the Council with the requested document.

The Council will decide on the final list of goals and objectives for each one of the IBFMPs at the August 2016 meeting.

The overarching goal of each of the Island-Based Fishery Management Plans is to ensure the continued health of fishery resources occurring in waters surrounding each of Puerto Rico, St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix Exclusive Economic Zones within the context of the unique biological, ecological, economic and cultural characteristics of those resources and the communities depending upon them.

Specific goals that the Council needs to decide if they apply to each IBFMP are:

- **Goal #1:** Prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery in the U.S. Caribbean taking into account and allowing for variations among, and contingencies in, fisheries, fishery resources, and catches.
- **Goal #2:** Maintain long-term sustainable use of coral reef fishery resources while preventing adverse impacts to stocks, habitats of the fisheries resources, protected species, or the reef ecosystem as a whole.

- **Goal #3:** Ensure the continued health of fishery resources occurring in US Caribbean Exclusive Economic Zone which will provide for the sustained participation of the fishing communities of the U.S. Caribbean and to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities<sup>1</sup>.
- **Goal #4:** Manage the fisheries within the limits of local ecosystem production so as not to jeopardize a wide range of goods and services provided by a healthy ecosystem, including food, revenue, and recreation for humans.
- **Goal #5:** Account for biological, social, cultural and economic differences among the islands comprising the U.S. Caribbean.
- **Goal #6:** Foster collaboration among territorial and federal authorities in the management of fisheries of the U.S. Caribbean.
- **Goal #7.** Ensure outreach and enforcement efforts.

The generality of the goals addresses a wide range of concerns including economic impacts, bycatch, ecosystem function, resource use by different sectors (for example recreational and commercial) and jurisdictional collaboration within the US Caribbean.

In order to achieve these goals, the Council needs to decide on the specific objectives of the IBFMPs.

Citing from the general discussion before discussing each national standard guideline in the 50 CFR 600.305(b):

(b) Fishery management objectives. (1) Each FMP, whether prepared by a Council or by the Secretary, should identify what the FMP is designed to accomplish (i.e., the management objectives to be attained in regulating the fishery under consideration). In establishing objectives, Councils balance biological constraints with human needs, reconcile present and future costs and benefits, and integrate

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<sup>1</sup> Note: this goal paraphrases the overarching goal described above.

the diversity of public and private interests. If objectives are in conflict, priorities should be established among them.

(2) How objectives are defined is important to the management process.

Objectives should address the problems of a particular fishery. The objectives should be clearly stated, practicably attainable, framed in terms of definable events and measurable benefits, and based upon a comprehensive rather than a fragmentary approach to the problems addressed. An FMP should make a clear distinction between objectives and the management measures chosen to achieve them. The objectives of each FMP provide the context within which the Secretary will judge the consistency of an FMP's conservation and management measures with the national standards

Appendices A and B provide sufficient language for the Council to address the goals through the following objectives:

**Objective 1.** Provide for long-term sustainable use of fisheries resources within the limits of local ecosystem production using a precautionary, ecosystem-based approach to management that accounts for uncertainty and relevant biological, ecological, economic and social factors in the fishery, including the benefits of food production, recreational opportunities, and protection of marine ecosystems. Prevent overfishing, rebuild overfished stocks, and achieve optimum yield on a continuing basis.

**Objective 2:** Reduce bycatch and waste in the fishery.

**Objective 3a:** Ensure the metrics upon which optimal yield is based, are derived from the best available scientific information and are updated continuously every five years to respond to changing ecological, biological, economic and social conditions.

**Objective 3b:** Establish and maintain data collection and reporting programs necessary to support the conservation and management objectives of the Plan,

including the biological, ecological, economic, and social data needed to assess the impacts of management measures.

**Objective 3c:** Obtain data necessary to achieve the objectives of this plan, and adapt to technological and technical advances in methods of data collection, reporting and analysis.

**Objective 4:** Promote international and domestic cooperation in the management of pan-Caribbean stocks.

## **Objective 5**

**Objective 5a:** Minimize conflicts between stakeholders by promoting an effective marine spatial planning.

**Objective 5b:** Promote fair and equitable use of fishery resources that recognizes the importance of them to fishing communities as well as differences in local environment, culture, markets, user groups, gears, and seafood preferences.

**Objective 5c:** Establish resource access permits as necessary and appropriate to facilitate data collection, sustainability and long-term yield.

**Objective 6:** Provide flexibility in the management process which minimizes regulatory delay and allows for rapid adaptation to changing resource abundance, availability, health or preference, using the best available scientific and socioeconomic information;

**Objective 7:** Devise a regulatory framework that maximizes the efficiency and efficacy of enforcement efforts within and across jurisdictional boundaries while promoting the safe conduct of fishing operations.

**Objective 8:** Promote awareness of laws and regulations governing marine resource management and the science and social obligations that support that management, and to ensure informed public input into the management process.

**Objective 9:** Ensure the socioeconomic health of the fishing communities dependent on federal fishery resources.

**Objective 10:** Protect spawning aggregations and the habitats when needed to support those aggregations to ensure the future health of the resource.

**Objective 11a:** Describe and identify EFH, adverse impacts on EFH, and other actions to conserve and enhance EFH. Adopt management measures that minimize adverse impacts from fishing on EFH and promote habitat conservation, including designation of specific habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) within EFH for more focused management action.

**Objective 11b:** Map, define, and manage habitat upon which the resource depends, with particular emphasis on coral reef resources throughout the region.

**Objective 12a:** Ensure continued provision of ecosystems services derived from living marine resources, including adequate abundance of forage resources to ensure a healthy and diverse trophic web.

**Objective 12b:** Account for ecological relationships and functional roles of species in the fishery that contribute to a healthy ecosystem, such as grazers, forage fish, habitat-builders and top predators.

**Objective 13:** Require essential scientific data is gathered and analyzed in advance to guide the development of new fisheries to ensure they are sustainable from the start.

**Objective 14 b.** Promote to underutilize marine fisheries.