

Caribbean Fishery Management Council
Draft Operational Issues
Operations Meeting
April 22-23, 2008
St. Petersburg, FL

The following are operational issues of the CFMC in no order of priority:

Enforcement of the regulations in place needs to continue

Recreational Data

Completely missing from the USVI

PR has MRFSS but no data on queen conch and spiny lobster

- Missing actual sampling of the recreational catch (TIP data; L-W; effort, etc.)
- Gear survey
- Identification of the universe of fishers (validation of the MRFSS)

How to assess the recovery/rebuilding of the stocks if there is no monitoring? (Nassau, Goliath, Queen conch, yellowfin (grouper unit 4))

Possible solutions include: (1) Surveys for Groupers (e.g. groundtruth hydro acoustic survey); (2) surveys of closed areas; (3) survey queen conch populations with commercial fishers (both nursery and adult areas; (5) establish a research program to collect data needed to conduct baseline assessment of the status of Nassau and Goliath grouper and queen conch (CFMC minutes 117th)

Urgent (by Law)

ACLs and AMs (parrotfishes; groupers units 1, 2 and 4; and snappers unit 1, queen conch)
Re-do SFA but use the best available data (including L-frequency analyses and trends)

Schedules of reviews (SFA Amendment):

- 2008 Queen conch (SEDAR 2007)
- 2010 Nassau Grouper, Goliath grouper, Grouper Unit 1; Snapper Unit 1 (2008); Parrotfishes

SEDAR Recommendations (SEDAR 04; SEDAR 08A; SEDAR 14):

- Basic life history information (important species by Island; e.g., olewife (*Balistes vetula*) for St. Thomas as requested by the St. Thomas Fishermen's Association)
- Species specific data for the USVI fisheries (landings and TIP)
- Availability of TIP-Landings cross reference (link biostatistical data for a fishing trip to all landings records for that trip)
- TIP sampling to follow fishery (e.g. yellowtail and mutton snapper are primarily harvested at night)

The following is an excerpt from the SEDAR 14 Review workshop:

2.4. Recommendations for Future SEDAR Assessments

The Review Panel recommends that the assessment and management of inshore and reef fish in the Caribbean should follow a multi-species, mixed fishery approach appropriate to the conditions of coastal tropical fisheries. It is therefore recommended that the scope and timing of the next Assessment Workshop is established following an intersessional workshop within the next 12 - 18 months to evaluate the information available to support such an approach. Specifically, the workshop should identify the relative abundance, potential vulnerability to exploitation and type and quality of data available for each species, potential indicator species for which it may be possible to provide reliable single-species assessments and benchmarks, and procedures and data-needs for deriving indicators and benchmarks at the fish community level.

How to assess changes in EFH/HAPC if not monitored?

Feedback – need to assess the benefits of management (independent from the fishery) and communicate these to the public (e.g. seasonal closures, gear bans).

Upper shelf slope (30-50 m depths) fishery resources assessments are needed (including spawning aggregation sites). Habitat characterization and community description of these and deeper habitats (30 – 100 m depths are potential coral reef habitats). (See CFMC Coral Grant Research Plan)

Deep water fishery resources need to be assessed (CFMC discussing federal permits/limited entry for the deep water snapper fishery)

Ecosystem approach (e.g. continue ECOPATH analysis – R. Hill)