



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Britni Tokotch, or Britni.Tokotch@noaa.gov
727-824-5305, FAX 727-824-5308

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NOAA Fisheries Service Publishes a Final Rule to Establish Compatible Closures for Queen Conch in the U.S. Caribbean

NOAA Fisheries Service has published a final rule to the Regulatory Amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for Queen Conch Resources of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (U.S.V.I.) Establishing Compatible Closures. The Caribbean Fishery Management Council (Council) submitted the regulatory amendment and associated finding of no significant impacts for review, approval, and implementation by NOAA Fisheries Service. The final rule was published in the *Federal Register* on April 29, 2011 (76 FR 23907) and the provisions will be effective May 31, 2011.

The final rule will establish compatible closures with the U.S.V.I. territorial regulations for queen conch. In St. Croix, U.S.V.I. territorial waters, queen conch is managed under a 50,000 pound quota and a seasonal closure from June 1 through October 31.

Under the final rule, NOAA Fisheries Service will close the queen conch fishery after the local government has determined the quota in St. Croix has been reached. The final rule will also extend the seasonal closure in federal waters to June 1 through October 31, each year, consistent with the territorial seasonal closure.

Need more information on these topics?

Frequently Asked Questions:

Management of Queen Conch in Federal Waters: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/Queen_Conch_Reg_Amendment_FAQs_April2011.pdf at the Southeast Regional Office's Web page: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

Addresses

Electronic copies of the final rule or regulatory amendment may be obtained from the e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>, the Council's Web site at <http://www.caribbeanfmc.com/>, or:

NOAA Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information pertinent to the rule. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the rule as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

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