



Tab A, No. 8(a)

# Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC): 18th Session Update



**Laura Cimo**  
**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Council Meeting**  
**24 August 2022**



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# Presentation Topics

- Overview of WECAFC
- WECAFC 18 Outcomes
- Upcoming Events
  - First Meeting: Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group
- Supplemental and Contact Information
- Questions





**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# Overview of WECAFC

- Operates as a regional fisheries body under Article VI of the FAO Constitution
- Acts in an advisory capacity to promote effective conservation, management, and development of living marine resources in the Wider Caribbean
- Comprised of 34 Members, including USA





**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# Overview of WECAFC

- **Eleven working groups focus on species/fisheries issues:**
  - **Caribbean spiny lobster\***
  - **Queen conch\***
  - **Fish spawning aggregations\***
  - **IUU fishing\***
  - **Recreational fisheries\***
  - **Moored Fish Aggregating Devices (MFADs)\***
  - **Sharks\***
  - **Fishery Data and Statistics\***
  - **Deep sea fisheries**
  - **Flyingfish-dolphinfish**
  - **Shrimp & groundfish (N. Brazil-Guianas Shelf)**





**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# WECAFC18

- **Held virtually 26-29 July 2022**
- **U.S. delegation led by State Department with representation from:**
  - **NOAA Fisheries Office of International Affairs, Trade, and Commerce**
  - **NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office**
  - **CFMC, SAFMC, and GFMC**
  - **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**





**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

## **WECAFC18 Outcomes**

- **Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) adopted to provide guidance for standardized data collection on key species in the region.**
- **Regional database will provide WECAFC with information for the monitoring of priority species, future stock assessments, and science-based management.**
- **Members are strongly encouraged to proceed with the use of the DCRF for data reporting.**



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

## WECAFC18 Outcomes



Nassau Grouper. Credit: Paddy Ryan

- Regional Fish Spawning Aggregation FMP focused on Nassau grouper and mutton snapper was endorsed.
- Members are called upon to implement the FMP and improve data collection and assessment of fish spawning aggregations (FSA).
- WECAFC Secretariat and Members agreed to promote communication and outreach for FSA conservation and mobilize resources for priority research and monitoring.



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

## WECAFC18 Outcomes



- **Recommendation on counter IUU fishing adopted.**
- **Commission reaffirmed its commitment to implement the Regional Queen Conch FMP and monitor progress annually.**
- **Members are strongly encouraged to participate in genetic work to identify spatial distribution of queen conch.**
- **Queen Conch Working Group encouraged to collaborate with Regional Working Group on IUU fishing.**



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# WECAFC18 Outcomes



- **MFAD regional management plan and guide for improved monitoring of MFAD catches adopted on “interim basis”.**
- **MFAD Working Group charged with finalizing the plan and guide for consideration at next Commission meeting.**
- **Secretariat asked to support regional MFAD assessment.**
- **Members encouraged to promote data collection and analysis of MFAD fisheries, support stakeholder outreach and communication campaigns, and encourage research.**



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# WECAFC18 Outcomes



- **Regional Plan of Action for Sharks adopted.**
- **Commission supported WECAFC becoming signatory to Memorandum of Understanding creating non-binding coordination mechanism for ocean governance.**
- **Exchange of letters of cooperation between WECAFC and ICCAT was endorsed to facilitate collaborative work.**
- **Work Program for 2022-2024 will include meetings of:**
  - **Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group**
  - **Recreational Fisheries Working Group**



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# Upcoming Events

- **Fifth Meeting of Working Group on Spawning Aggregations**
  - 24-25 January 2023
- **Sixth Meeting of Queen Conch Working Group**
  - 26 January 2023
- **First Meeting of Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group**
  - To be determined 2023





**NOAA  
FISHERIES**



# First Meeting: Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group

- Work Plan and priority areas of work will be identified.
- NOAA Fisheries is seeking input on issues, challenges, and opportunities of interest to U.S. stakeholders for the Working Group to address.
- Council members are invited to share your views on issues for the Working Group.





**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# Supplemental and Contact Information

- For more information, please see WECAFC's website:  
<https://www.fao.org/wecafc/en>
- If you have any questions, please contact:  
[Laura.Cimo@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Cimo@noaa.gov)  
[Rachel.O'Malley@noaa.gov](mailto:Rachel.O'Malley@noaa.gov)





**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

**Thank you for your  
attention and  
interest!**

