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Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) Updates



Queen Conch. Credit: NOAA Fisheries



Scalloped Hammerhead. Credit: NOAA Fisheries



Caribbean Spiny Lobster.
Credit: NOAA Fisheries

Laura Cimo and Rachel O'Malley
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Public Meeting: September 21, 2022



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Presentation Topics

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

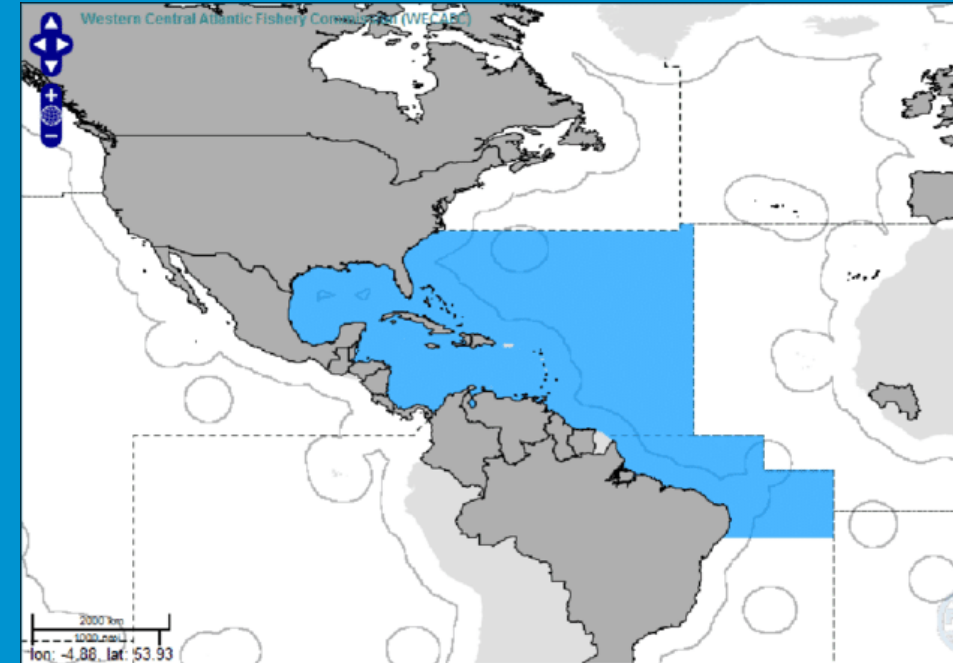




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Overview of WECAFC

- 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





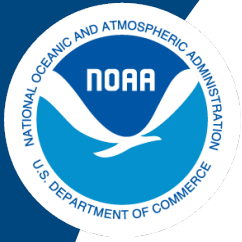
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Overview of WECAFC

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)



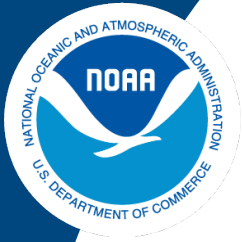


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WECAFC18

- **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**

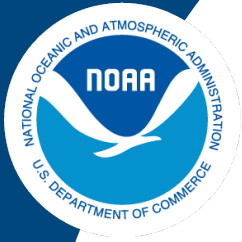




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WECAFC18 Outcomes

- **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.**

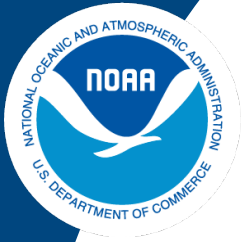


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WECAFC18 Outcomes



- **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.**

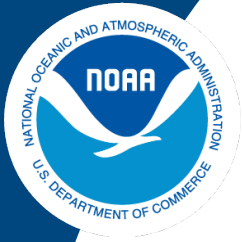


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WECAFC18 Outcomes



- **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.**

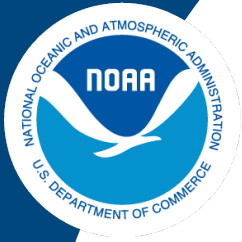


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WECAFC18 Outcomes



- **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.**



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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**



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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





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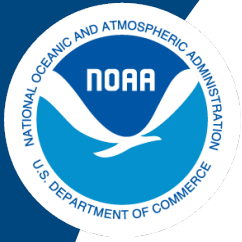


Atlantic dolphinfish. Credit: NOAA Fisheries

First Meeting: Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group (2023)

- **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.**





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First Meeting: WECAFC Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group (2023)

Goals for the first meeting include:

- **To identify regional needs and priorities**
- **To highlight areas for potential collaboration**
- **To develop a work plan and recommendations for future activities of the Working Group.**



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

