



REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE LOBSTER FISHERIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA

WORKSHOP ACCORDS

The delegates representing Central American fishery management agencies, artisanal fishers, and industry, as well as the other institutions participating in the "Regional Workshop on the Lobster Fisheries in Central America" held in Managua, Nicaragua, December 10-11, 2007, conducted under the framework of the project "Strengthening Interdisciplinary Investigations for Responsible Fishing in Central American Countries" sponsored by OSPESCA, with the financial backing of the Government of Sweden and technical support from FAO:

AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. That the countries in Central America continue executing the harmonizing actions detailed in the Managua Memorandum for the management of spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) fisheries in the Caribbean, designed for the recovery, maintenance, and sustainable use of said lobster populations.
2. That the interdisciplinary group that promotes the FIINPESCA project (Sweden/FAO/OSPESCA) of the Managua Memorandum, coordinate monitoring and establish a research plan with participation from industry using different fishing methods.
3. That the appropriate authorities in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama, in joint consultation with industry, coordinate and enforce the closed fishing season in 2008 starting March 1. Starting in 2009, all agree to harmonize the closed season which would start on March 1 and last four months. Belize will maintain their closed season between February 15 and June 14 and will consult with the remaining countries to harmonize their regulations.
4. That industry remove their traps from sea no later than the day prior to the start of the closed season, storing them where national authorities dictate. The countries considered taking into account the control procedures used by Nicaragua to ensure the extraction of traps during the closed season.
5. That no later than the third day after the start of the closed season, fishers and sellers will provide the appropriate authorities with inventories of available lobster.
6. That during the closed season, licensing of lobster fishing vessels be suspended.
7. That the appropriate authorities, with the support of OSPESCA, organize and conduct at least two monitoring surveys during the closed season, with the participation of industry.
8. That the cooperation of naval forces be requested for the enforcement of the measures agreed upon in the Managua Memorandum.
9. That penalties be established in those countries that did not have them for illegal harvest and trade of undersized lobsters.
10. That national and international funds be obtained to provide economic and social alternatives for divers and their families, and to finance research projects in aquaculture and other areas.





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11. That a presentation be made to OSPESCA's Board of Directors concerning the possibility of creating a type of trusteeship to support the divers.
12. That importing countries continue considering the information provided by the national fishing and trade entities as the basic source of its registrations.
13. That the appropriate national authorities, in a period not greater than three months, with the participation of artisanal and commercial fishers, establish a minimum harvest size for lobster (*Panulirus argus*) tails of 140 mm. For commercial purposes, each box must have an average tail weight of five ounces with a range of 4.5 to 5.5 ounces. Lobster exported from Belize will gradually reach the target weight of 4.5 ounces in 2010.
14. That during the fishing season, escape gaps be used in traps. Traps should have an escape gap on at least one side, measuring 2 1/8 inches between the bottom of the trap and the first board immediately over the bottom of the trap to guarantee that juvenile lobsters can exit the trap.
15. That the maximum number of traps per industrial fishing vessel in the act of fishing be 2,500.
16. That the appropriate authorities, in consultation with artisanal and commercial fishers, act to prohibit the use of SCUBA for lobster fishing. The governments of Honduras and Nicaragua, with the participation of OSPESCA, will organize meetings at the highest levels to harmonize these regulations.
17. That SICA/OSPESCA, that the governments of Central America, that Caribbean nations that have lobster fisheries, as well as importers and international organizations interested in this resource, recognize the agreements of this workshop.
18. That the cooperation of WWF y FIINPESCA be solicited to send lobster leg samples and post-larval lobsters to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for genetic analyses in order to determine population structure.

The delegates expressed their gratitude to Sweden for their financial support of OSPESCA for the sustainable management of fishery resources; to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for their technical assistance; to the experts who made presentations; to OSPESCA for organizing the workshop; and particularly to the Nicaraguan Institute of Fishing (INPESCA) for its hospitality and support in organizing this workshop.

Managua, December 11, 2007

