



Fisher FOLK Net

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A newsletter to share information among fisher folk organisations and people in fisheries on matters relating to sustainable fisheries management and other issues of interest to fisher folk organisations throughout the region

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*Happy
Holidays!*



*Fishers honoured for their
outstanding efforts*

This edition marks another year of highlighting your issues, challenges, triumphs and opportunities. Like the recently concluded Gladding Memorial Awards Regional Fishers Summit on which this current newsletter is focused, Fisher Folk Net has sought to be a space where you can share information most relevant to your livelihood and the editorial team thanks you for your interest and your support. We hope that you will continue to offer us information that you want shared with your counterparts across the Caribbean and the rest of the world.

If you haven't done so already, we would also encourage you to join the online forum for the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) at fisherfolk_network@yahoogroups.com where you can contribute to the strengthening of fishers' exchanges across the region. We also welcome your comments or suggestions via 'snail mail', e-mail or fax using the information in the mast head above.

Have a Happy Holiday and a Prosperous New Year!



The 2009 Gladding Memorial Award winners (from left): Mr. Ruben Dario Penott of Venezuela, Mr. Andrés Maldonado of Puerto Rico, and Mr. Mitchell Lay of Antigua enjoying their moment in the spotlight. (Photo: Terry Gibson/North Swell Media)

When the 6th Annual Gladding Memorial Awards (GMA) was held in November as a component of the 62nd Annual Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Conference in Cumana, Venezuela, one of the proud recipients of this year's awards was none other than Coordinator of the Caribbean

Network of Fisherfolk Organisations Coordinating Unit (CNFO-CU), Mr. Mitchell Lay of Antigua. A fisher from his youth, who went full-time into the business from 1990, Mr. Lay was recognised for being: "a fisher who demonstrates a strong personal conservation ethic for sustainable fisheries, he is also respected as an effective leader of fisherfolk organisations at national and regional levels who has broken new ground within CARICOM in getting the voices of fisherfolk heard at the policy level".

Mr. Lay was joined in the awards standing by Mr. Ruben Dario Penott, who became the second Venezuelan in as many years to receive the prestigious award. He was recognised for his "tremendous leadership in campaigns to bring sustainable fishing practices to Venezuela". And Mr. Andrés Maldonado, a Puerto Rican whose seniority among conch fishermen has allowed him to persuade, through teaching, received the award for influencing other fishers to maintain stock health and not just maximizing their search for wealth at the expense of the living resource.

The *GMA* is named in honour of Peter Gladding, a patriarch fisherman from the Florida Keys who was instrumental in the protection of the Dry Tortugas and its designation as an Ecological Reserve. The award is given only to fishers who have been role models through practically demonstrating a long-term vision for the sustainable use and conservation of marine resources. They have now joined 10 fishers from Barbados, Belize, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, the United States and Venezuela who have been recipients.



Largest gathering of fishers at GCFI



Mr. José Sanchez, fisher from the USVI (backing) who participated in the GMA Regional Fishers Summit exchanging views with a Venezuelan fisher during a visit to Mochima National Park.

This year's Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute Conference included participation by almost 20 English and Spanish-speaking fishers from across the region. Organisers say that this marked almost double the participation of fishers in previous years and this high turnout was as a result of the first ever *GMA* Regional Fishers Summit being held as part of the proceedings of the November 1 - 6 conference in Venezuela.

Over the one-and-a-half days of the Summit the fishers led discussions, raised issues and brainstormed to find solutions to some of the major problems facing the future of their industry in their various countries.

The highlight of the first day was the plenary session where past *GMA* winners shared presentations based on their experience with other fishers and almost 100 scientists and researchers who were in the audience. Past *GMA* winner Mr. Jaime Medina of Mexico spoke of the challenges and opportunities for

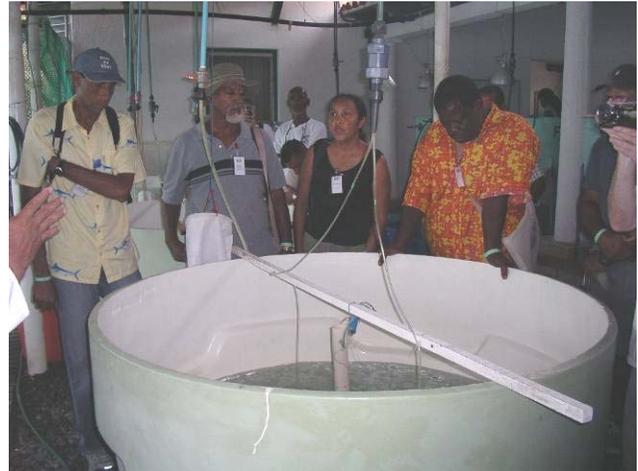
sustainable fisheries in the MPA of his community; present *GMA* winner and CNFO CU coordinator Mr. Mitchell Lay of Antigua and Barbuda presented on ecosystem-based management and how it fitted into the fishers' vision for sustainability; past *GMA* winner Claudio Gonzalez of the Dominican Republic outlined the problems in enforcement and compliance faced in his country's small scale fishing industry; and past *GMA* winner Eloy Cuevas of Belize addressed the opportunities to diversify fisheries to sustain fishers' livelihoods while grappling with the issues of open fishing.



Barbadian fisherman and former *GMA* winner Mr. Anderson "Rogee" Kinch moderating a regional fishers' panel discussion.

This was followed up by a lively panel discussion where other past *GMA* winners Harvey Robinson (Colombia), Ceylon Clayton (Jamaica), Carlton 'Jack' Young (Belize), Toribio Mata (Venezuela), plus Anderson Kinch (Barbados) as panel chair, tackled the issue of fishers' involvement in fisheries management and policy while fielding suggestions from the audience as to what should be the priority actions and partnerships taken to achieve this. Much discussion centred around the lack of accurate fisheries data that existed across most countries and need to find collaborative ways in which to produce better data on

which decisions could be made. There was also debate as to whether fishers were allowing themselves to fall into a culture of victimhood rather than taking more responsibility for the causes, and the solutions, of their issues.



***GMA* Regional Fishers Summit participants learn about a major fisher-oriented aquaculture project in Mochima National Park.**

Later that day, participants took a trip to the Mochima National Park marine reserve where 2009 *GMA* winner Mr. Rubén Penott has been in charge of the Mochima biological station since 1983. There, participants learnt about a major aquacultural project with the blackspade fish which is meant to empower local fishing communities by giving them the tools and the technology to pursue their own small-scale commercial fish farming. The Summit participants were also able to learn from fishers in the marine reserve how they had diversified to also become water taxi operators for the increasing number of tourists who visit Mochima.

The next day provided fishers with an opportunity to collaborate in working groups with fisheries scientists and managers to brainstorm on priorities and action areas where participants could target their conservation efforts. Suggestions were made for more fisher-driven marine parks; self-

regulation and enforcement; and the need for fishers to be more involved in data collection efforts.

Small-scale fisheries the only sustainable future for the global industry



Dr Daniel Pauly outlining the future threats to Caribbean fisheries. (Photo: Terry Gibson/North Swell Media)

World famous fisheries scientist Dr. Daniel Pauly has identified small-scale fisheries as the best hope for preventing the complete collapse of commercial fishing worldwide if promoted along with an increased number of marine protected areas across the globe. Dr. Pauly made these observations as he delivered the keynote address on the topic: "If you don't like overfishing, you will hate global warming" at the 62nd annual GCFI Conference in Cumana, Venezuela.

Dr Pauly of the Canada-based Sea Around Us Project, advised that the global industry should concentrate on small-scale fisheries because they employ far more people; catch about the same quantity or twice as much for human consumption as the industrial fishers;

expend much less capital for each job; consume much less fuel because they do not fish as deep or far away, and use static gear; and their ecological efficiency is much higher. He also projected that as the world moved more toward carbon taxation, the small-scale fisheries would survive moreso than the big-scale fisheries as fuel prices go up. However, he cautioned that artisanal fisheries must be regulated because of the increasing superiority of their gear.

Dr Pauly also pointed out that only 1% of the world's oceans were registered as MPAs. He cautioned that the annual rate of MPA creations worldwide was falling well below the globally agreed upon number and this was putting the world's fisheries resources in jeopardy from climate change. He explained that if fish stocks were protected from overfishing, this allowed them an opportunity to rebuild and large fish populations could adapt more easily to climate change than small populations.

The University of British Columbia professor also sounded a dire warning for the Caribbean fisheries from the effects of runaway climate change. He predicted that if nothing was done, in the next 50 years the region's seas would be empty of fish as rising sea temperature would drive fish, which cannot regulate their body temperature, to seek cooler waters further north. Dr Pauly illustrated how the Caribbean sea would become uninhabitable for fish unless they were allowed the capacity to adapt to the changes.



Fishers must be the guardians of their own marine resources

Two veteran regional fishermen are encouraging their fellow fishers to stand up and be responsible for sustaining the fisheries on which their livelihoods depend. GMA Regional Fishers Summit participants Mr. Jose Sanchez of the United States Virgin Islands and Mr. Eloy Cuevas of Belize both see a need for fishers to be more involved in devising methods for using their fisheries resources in ways that ensured the fisheries were maintained for generations to come.



2005 GMA winner Eloy Cuevas, a Belizean fisher

Mr. Cuevas said he would like to spread the message around the region that it was time for fishing communities to take ownership of their fishing areas and develop partnerships that would equip fishers with the capacity to take care of their own resources. The Belizean fisher, who has been to more than five GCFI conferences, said that he was pleased that the first GMA Regional Fishers summit had brought forward fishers to be more involved in talking together to see how they could tackle the important issues that face them. However, he said that he would like to see more young fishers being given the

opportunity to attend the GCFI conferences and future regional fishers' meetings because they were the future of the industry. Drawing from his own experience, Mr. Cuevas said that he was raising his three sons to be lobster fishermen and his youngest boy was already able to derive his own spending money for school from his lobster traps.



USVI fisherman Mr. José Sanchez

Mr. Sanchez, who also has two sons who he guides in sustainable fishing practices, said he wished that more fishers recognised that they should not be "greedy" when fishing. He scolded those fishers who went ahead and caught hundreds of pounds of fish in one go, despite knowing that they could probably only get half of that sold and have to throw away the rest. He said that fishers had to recognise for themselves when their fishery was in crisis and take the necessary steps to solve it without waiting for scientists or fisheries managers to have to tell them what to do. This being his third GCFI conference, Mr. Sanchez said he liked the fact that it brought together regional fishers to share their experiences.

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