

CRFM Fishery Report - 2013



VOLUME 1, Suppl. 3-

Report of the Second Joint Meeting of the CRFM Small Coastal Pelagic Fish Resource Working Group (SCPWG) and the CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean

**Report of Ninth Annual CRFM Scientific Meeting -
Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines
10-14 June 2013**

**CRFM Secretariat
Belize**

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FOREWORD

The Ninth Annual CRFM Scientific Meeting took place during 10 to 14 June 2013 in Kingstown, St Vincent and the Grenadines. During this Meeting, the five CRFM Resource Working Groups met. The CLWG, LPWG and RSWG each reviewed the relevant components of the 2013 Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME⁺), taking into account the need for incorporation of the precautionary approach, ecosystem and global environmental change considerations. Each Resource Working Group also developed an inter-sessional work plan. The CLWG reviewed the regional management options papers prepared and validated under the ACP FISH II Programme and proposed sub-regional regulations for the Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*) in accordance with the request by the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM Working Group on Queen Conch. The LPWG reviewed the regional billfish conservation plan proposed by the WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM/CFMC Working Group on Recreational Fisheries and the sub-regional blackfin tuna management plan prepared by the CRFM under the CLME Project and provided guidance and recommendations on the way forward for implementation in the region. The LPWG also identified critical research needs to improve the quality of fisheries resource assessments and management recommendations and discussed data collection and reporting requirements for ICCAT in 2013-2014. The RSWG reviewed the regional lionfish strategy and status of implementation, as well as the performance of Marine Protected Areas in some countries and provided suggestions for the way forward. The RSWG also undertook a preliminary analysis of data on landings, effort and fishing operation costs for the fisheries in Anguilla and it prioritized data collection needs for improved fisheries management advice. The SGWG conducted separate assessments of the seabob (*Xiphopenaeus kroyeri*) fishery for Suriname and Guyana, discussed the proposed new methodological approach and the draft fisheries management plans for Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago being developed under the ACP Fish II Programme. The SCPWG, together with the CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean, provided guidance on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the sub-regional management plan and agreed management actions for the Eastern Caribbean Flyingfish and reviewed the related Draft Resolution of the respective Ministerial Sub-Committee. In addition to review of Working Group reports, the plenary session received updates on several ongoing and planned regional activities: (1) the status of the CLME SAP endorsement by countries and development of the PIF for CLME⁺; (2) the Caribbean Regional Strategic Program for Climate Resilience being led by CCCCC; (3) the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Project in the Fisheries Post Harvest Sector being executed in collaboration with IICA; (4) two queen conch projects supported by the ACP Fish II Programme and focused on strengthening scientific capacity; and (5) a subset follow-up project to the Study on the Formulation of a Master Plan on the Sustainable Use of Fisheries Resources for Coastal Community Development in the Caribbean completed in collaboration with JICA.

The Report of the Ninth Annual Scientific Meeting is published in one volume instead of the usual two volumes published for such meetings. This volume (Volume 1) contains the report of the plenary sessions and the full reports of the CRFM Conch and Lobster, Large Pelagic Fish, Reef and Slope Fish and Shrimp and Groundfish Resource Working Groups for 2013. Nine national reports were submitted and these are published as Supplement 1 to Volume 1. The report of the inter-sessional meeting of the Shrimp and Groundfish Working Group, which was convened in February 2013 in Georgetown, Guyana, is published as Supplement 2 to Volume 1. The report of the combined meeting of the SCPWG, and CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean is published as Supplement 3 to Volume 1. Volume 2 usually contains part A (Overview), and the fishery management advisory summaries of individual fishery reports comprising part B of each Working Group report. However, only one detailed assessment was conducted in 2013, and hence there was insufficient material to warrant publication of a separate Volume 2.

The covers for this volume were designed and prepared by Mr. Shaun Young, while the photographs were provided by Mr. Junior Jarvis, Mr. Derrick Theophille, Mr. David Ramjohn and Dr. Susan Singh-Renton. These contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	-	African, Caribbean and Pacific States
CCCCC	-	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
CFMC	-	Caribbean Fishery Management Council
CLME	-	Caribbean large Marine Ecosystem
CLWG	-	Conch and Lobster Resource Working Group
CRFM	-	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICCAT	-	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IFREMER	-	Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer
IICA	-	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
JICA	-	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
LPWG	-	Large Pelagic Fish Resource Working Group
MSY	-	Maximum Sustainable Yield
OSPESCA	-	Organization of Fishing and Aquaculture in Central America (Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola de Centroamerica)
PIF	-	Project Identification Form
RSWG	-	Reef and Slope Fish Resource Working Group
SAP	-	Strategic Action Programme
SCPWG	-	Small Coastal Pelagic Fish Resource Working Group
SGWG	-	Shrimp and Groundfish Resource Working Group
UK	-	United Kingdom
TOR	-	Terms of Reference
WECAFC	-	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

Chairperson : Crafton Isaac (Grenada)
Rapporteur : Maren Headley (CRFM Secretariat)
Other Members: Jullan Defoe (Dominica), Allena Joseph (St. Lucia), Christopher Parker (Barbados), Reshevski Jack (St. Vincent & the Grenadines)
Consultant : Paul Medley (Fisheries Consultant, UK)
Resource Persons: Lionel Reynal (IFREMER), Susan Singh-Renton (CRFM Secretariat)

1. REVIEW OF INTER-SESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENTS SINCE LAST MEETING

The meeting of the two groups discussed the progress made to date regarding national consultations to review the draft Eastern Caribbean Flyingfish Fisheries Management Plan as proposed by the joint working group. It was noted that reports had only been received from two countries and consequently, the joint working group proposed a new deadline of 31 July 2013.

The Group also recognized that the status of the licensing system as proposed in the management plan was unknown and an update was required.

The Group noted that two meetings of the CRFM Ministerial Sub-Committee on Flyingfish had been held and was informed that the Terms of Reference (TOR) were finalized when the Ministerial Sub-Committee met in February 2013. The SCPWG highlighted that the finalization of the updated management plan would need to be completed by the joint working group by August 2013. The SCPWG also recognized that if there was no agreement in terms of implementing the management plan, it would also affect inter-sessional activities.

2. GUIDANCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE SUB-REGIONAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AND AGREED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

The SCPWG discussed the justification of the fishing capacity freeze and it was agreed that the timeline for implementing the freeze was not appropriate. Other parties, such as France, needed to be involved in the management decision.

There was also discussion on formalizing the relationship with France.

Regarding the exchange of scientific information, the Group indicated that there was need to develop a protocol and mechanism for this. It was also stated that an agreement would need to exist between countries for central data sharing and access levels. The group recommended that CRFM's capacity in this area be strengthened.

The IFREMER representative indicated that data were available on IFREMER's website, the data collection sheets as well as an annual report on the status of the fisheries.

It was agreed that the level of data sharing would be similar to that required by FAO and ICCAT. The SCPWG was also reminded of the informal agreements which existed from past Working Groups regarding data sharing from assessments. The ICCAT process regarding an informal agreement to destroy data on completion of assessments was also referred to. The Group recognized that these types of

arrangements were not binding and indicated that a formal agreement should be considered especially concerning shared resources.

The SCPWG also recognized that a data sharing protocol was previously developed, however it was specified by the Caribbean Fisheries Forum that this should not be implemented until the Common Fisheries Policy was finalized.

The IFREMER representative indicated that Martinique and Guadeloupe were in the process of national consultation and would be able to provide an update by November. He also raised the point that the documents regarding Eastern Caribbean Management Plan were circulated in English and this was problematic as most members of the staff were French.

The group noted that at the diplomatic levels, additional species would be considered and therefore there may be a greater need for translation of documents.

The Group continued to discuss the 5000 t trigger point. The consultant indicated that the driver for the model used during 2008 was data from Barbados. He indicated that a synoptic survey could be conducted if catches went over 5000 t to estimate abundance. He further explained that surveys in non-fished areas could provide a rigorous estimate of biomass. The need to gather better information for the flyingfish fishery was also stressed.

The point was also raised that it may not be necessary to invest resources in conducting a survey at the present time as expansion of the fishery above 5000 t was not expected in the near future.

The Barbados representative informed the meeting that various methods of preservation of flyingfish had been explored and it was found to not be an ideal product for export. In this regard, local consumption of flyingfish was considered as the most important use and catches were not expected to increase significantly.

The Dominica representative also added that the fishery was a small one in Dominica given that the fishing method was labour intensive and not pursued by many fishers and would most likely not expand. He also added that since there was little fishing effort, the reduced catches could be mistaken as a decrease in abundance.

The Dominica representative informed the meeting that it was an important species for food security as it was purchased in large quantities as it was very affordable.

The SCPWG realized that the small pelagic were an important source of food security for poor coastal communities.

The consultant indicated that the expansion of the flyingfish fishery could be considered as a fishery development project. He explained that as flyingfish was considered an underutilized species, which occupied a low trophic level, if expansion was to occur it should be done in a wider fishing area so as to avoid local depletion and adverse effects on other species.

In terms of fisheries expansion, the meeting noted that different fishing technology should be considered.

The issue of controlling the fishery by limiting licenses was also discussed and it was pointed out that the fishery was currently open access, so this may not be an option. The consultant indicated that island-based fisheries were by *de facto* considered limited access given their small populations.

The issue of management for the other flyingfish species which were also taken in the four-wing flyingfish fishery was also raised. The Barbados representative indicated that over 90% of the catches in Barbados was *Hirundichthys affinis*.

The Barbados representative expressed concern with a statement in the management plan which made reference to expansion of the fishery to species other than the four-wing flyingfish. He indicated that this was not advisable as no data were available for these species.

The Group agreed that more information to facilitate a more rigorous stock assessment was needed and this would likely require a fisheries independent survey.

3. REVIEW OF THE DRAFT [RESOLUTION] ON THE SUB-REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR FLYINGFISH IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN RESOLUTION

Based on additional explanations provided by the stock assessment consultant for flyingfish, the meeting agreed that the measure calling for a freeze on fishing capacity be withdrawn at this time.

The meeting suggested that the second paragraph of the resolution be amended by replacing the word “scientific” in the first sentence with “2008” and, in the last sentence the section after the word “Caribbean” be replaced by “is not experiencing overfishing, that catch rates have remained fairly stable even with increased overall catches, and it is unlikely that catches have exceeded MSY for this stock”.

The Meeting agreed that the following clause be placed as a new measure no. 2 of the resolution: “Agree to conduct a synoptic survey prior to any significant development of this fishery”

The meeting agreed that under the present measure no. 2, would become measure no. 3 and that under the new measure no. 3, the following clause should be included:

“If there is no improvement in total catch data collection then expansion of flyingfish fishing capacity would not be possible”

The meeting agreed that there was a need to highlight the importance of monitoring and reporting total catches. The meeting also identified the need for countries to improve the collection of data for total catches and report to CRFM.

4. INTER-SESSIONAL WORKPLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

4.1 Inter-sessional workplan

The Group noted that the CRFM D-groups would be used to facilitate the implementation of the inter-sessional plan outlined below:

1. Completion of the national consultations
2. Update on the status of the licensing system from each country
3. Revision of the management plan based on input from individual countries
4. Submission of the same to the FORUM

4.2 Recommendations

- i. It was recommended that the impacts of climate change and land based pollution should be considered on the ecosystem, flyingfish and other small coastal pelagics fisheries.
- ii. It was recommended that a research plan be developed for a synoptic survey which would be conducted if the 5000 t trigger point was exceeded.
- iii. It was also recommended that states should put structures in place to capture total landings data for all small coastal pelagics.

4.3 Proposed Agenda for the Next Meeting

The following items were proposed for inclusion in the draft agenda for the 2014 meeting of the SCPWG.

1. Review of inter-sessional activities and management decisions since the last meeting
2. Provide guidance on the joint CRFM-France approach to the implementation of the Sub-Regional Fishery Management Plan for the Eastern Caribbean Flyingfish.
3. Develop inter-sessional work plan

5. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF WORKING GROUP REPORT FOR 2013

The group adopted the meeting report.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.