

REGIONAL FISHERY BODY SECRETARIATS' NETWORK

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NEWS FROM FAO HQ

The FAO High Seas Vessels Authorization Record (HSVAR) web site has been renovated with enhanced functionalities including incorporation of full access controls through username and password, dynamic summary tables and a data uploading function through web. This new portal is a first example of using the Vessel Record Management Framework (VRMF) developed by FIPS as an engine to drive vessel portals for specific users. The next development, (of more relevance to RFBs), is the creation of a dedicated portal for tuna regional fisheries management organizations (T-RFMOs), which will compile all vessels listed by tuna organizations. A further development will be to establish a public portal where all available public information regarding fishing vessels could be consulted. Stay tuned for more information on the VRMF developments, including a URL to an interactive site page.

In other news from FAO, the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN4) meeting to be held on 13 July 2012 has seen a draft agenda circulated amongst all Secretariats. Initial expressions of interest to attend the RSN4 meeting have been slow, so I will resend the invitation and draft agenda as an attachment to this newsletter. Why not drop us a line now and say whether you intend to attend? We are also looking for a summary of your current work programme, successes and struggles that we can use in the meeting report – this is due by May 1st. We intend RSN4 to be an interesting, stimulating and relevant meeting for all Bodies.

NEWS FROM CENTRAL ASIAN AND THE CAUCASUS FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE COMMISSION (CACFish)

The Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish) was officially inaugurated at a meeting opened by FAO's Assistant Director-General for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Árni M. Mathiesen in December 2011. The Commission is a statutory body of FAO with the aims of promoting the development, conservation, rational management and best utilization of living aquatic resources and the sustainable development of aquaculture in its member countries. The Commission fills a gap in the global map of regional fishery bodies, aiming to ensure that the fish stocks in the inland waters of Central Asia and the Caucasus are properly managed to benefit current and future generations.

Technical advice endorsed by the December 2011 meeting included:

- Guidelines for Sturgeon Hatchery practices and management for release, which were developed in partnership with the World Sturgeon Conservation Society (WSCS), FAO, World Bank, UNDP, IUCN, the Caspian Environment Programme, South Branch Federal Centre of Selection and Genetics for Aquaculture of the Russian Federation, the 6th International Sturgeon Symposium and others;
- Recommendations of the Regional Study on the "Feasibility of Restocking and Culture-based Fisheries in Central Asia";

- Better Management Practices for Carp Production in Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia; and
- Conclusions and Recommendations of the Regional Workshop on Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics, Information, and Trends: Improving Data Collection, Analyses and Dissemination.

More information on the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission, its statutes, membership and its activities can be found at:

Website: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/cacfish/en> (English version) and <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/cacfish/ru> (Russian version)



NEWS FROM THE WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION (WECAFC)

The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), a body of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which convened in Panama City for its 14th biennial session from 6 to 9 February 2012, has adopted a resolution that will mark significant progress toward sustainable fisheries management in the region. The Resolution on Strengthening the Implementation of International Fisheries Instruments calls upon the WECAFC members to become party to legally binding international fisheries instruments where this has not yet been done. It also urges the members to take action and measures to strengthen implementation of existing international fisheries instruments, including those that are legally binding and Guidelines that are widely adopted at national and regional levels on a voluntary basis. The Resolution was triggered by deep concern about the declining fish catches in the Caribbean region, the increased percentage of overexploited and depleted reef fish stocks, the fact that the situation seems critical for some highly migratory, straddling and other fishery resources that are exploited solely or partially in the high seas, and the overall

reduction of 30 percent during the past decade in capture fisheries in the Western Central Atlantic region (FAO Area 31).

The meeting noted that international fisheries instruments have been carefully negotiated by the international community in response to a recognition of the need for States to cooperate to address issues of deep concern in order to ensure the sustainability of fisheries resources. The international instruments include the FAO Compliance agreement (1993), the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (1995), the FAO Port States Measures Agreement (2009), the FAO Technical Guidelines on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (2003), the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas (2008) and the FAO International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards (2010). The Commission also agreed to establish a WECAFC Working Group on the management of deep sea Fisheries. The Working Group will inform the management of such fisheries by WECAFC members with the objective of promoting responsible fisheries that provide economic opportunities while ensuring the conservation of marine living resources and the protection of marine biodiversity.

The Commission is comprised of thirty-two countries and the European Union. The members' commitment to responsible fisheries is high and it was widely agreed that enduring positive results can only be achieved through continuing the general spirit of cooperation and constructiveness that animated the debate at the 14th session.

The 14th session was kindly hosted by the Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama on behalf of the Government of Panama.

More information about WECAFC can be found at: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/wecafc/en>

The WECAFC Secretariat can be reached: wecafc-secretariat@fao.org

