



4th MEETING (VIRTUAL) OF THE CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM WORKING GROUP ON SPAWNING AGGREGATIONS
9-10 November 2020

1. Background

The Secretariat of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Caribbean Fishery Management Council (CFMC), Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA), and Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) are pleased to announce the Fourth meeting of the CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM Working Group on Spawning Aggregations (SAWG). A copy of the meeting agenda is attached (see Appendix). The joint Working Group was first established by the 14th session of WECAFC in February 2012.

At the 17th Session of WECAFC, the Commission received a report of the 2nd meeting of the SAWG and were informed about the initiative by the Working Group in developing a draft Regional Fish Spawning Aggregation Fishery Management Plan (FSAFMP) for the WECAFC region to further improve the management and conservation of fish spawning aggregations and species that aggregate to spawn in the Wider Caribbean Region, particularly Nassau grouper and mutton snapper. The Commission expressed support for the efforts towards development of the management plan and the key components presented in document WECAFC/XVII/2019/13 at the meeting. However, the Commission requested the FSAFMP be revised in both content and format to be consistent with previous management plans adopted by the Commission (e.g., Queen Conch and Spiny Lobster).

The CFMC kindly agreed to support the development and finalization of the FSAFMP with a focus on Nassau grouper and mutton snapper. The Commission also supported development of a communications strategy on fish spawning aggregation conservation and management to complement the FSAFMP. The Commission also endorsed Recommendation WECAFC/ XVII /2019/24 on the sustainable management of spawning aggregations and aggregating species.

The 3rd SAWG meeting was held 18-19 December 2019 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where an updated draft FSAFMP was reviewed and endorsed by the participants. A comprehensive Communications Strategy was also reviewed, updated, and adopted. The Working Group updated its Terms of Reference (see Point 2). Finally, the SAWG agreed to collect information on the parrotfish fishery, including current regulations and existing educational materials in fulfillment of the request by the Commission.

Since then, the draft FSAFMP has been circulated for preliminary comments by WECAFC members. A survey to assess the parrotfish fishery was also sent out to WECAFC members to assess the fishery, current management, and ongoing outreach and education activities.

2. Terms of Reference of the working group

The working group will carry out the following tasks:

- Compile and analyse data on spawning aggregations in the member countries and monitor any changes.
- Seek partnerships with other institutions that could provide assistance in the monitoring, evaluation, and recommendations for management for protection and conservation of spawning aggregations.
- Provide science-based advice to inform the development and implementation of regional strategies and regulations to protect spawning aggregations.
- Promote communication and exchanges with other WECAFC Working Groups to attend common challenges and risks.
- Report to the Commission at each session.

3. Purpose and Outputs of the meeting

The purposes of the 4th meeting of the SAWG are to address any comments received from members and partners on the draft FSAFMP, provide updates on the communications strategy and advance implementation of Recommendation WECAFC/XVII /2019/24 adopted at WECAFC 17. The SAWG will also further revise the Work Plan as needed, review the available information on parrotfish and make recommendations as appropriate. The Working Group will outline the steps towards implementation of Recommendation WECAFC/XVII/2019/24 on the sustainable management of spawning aggregations and aggregating species adopted at WECAFC 17.

The meeting outputs should include the following:

1. Content of the FSAFMP and steps and timeframe for WECAFC to adopt the management plan.
2. Actions needed to implement the Communications Strategy for Spawning Aggregations supported by the Working Group, including key messages for outreach efforts.
3. Action plan towards implementation of [WECAFC/ XVII /2019/24 on the sustainable management of spawning aggregations and aggregating species](#) adopted at WECAFC 17, including seasonal closures.
4. Any recommendations as necessary and appropriate measures for the conservation and management of parrotfish upon review of the available information.
5. Updated Work Plan.

4. Participants

Foreseen participants are Government officials, researchers, fisherfolks and other stakeholders from WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA member countries that engage in the research, harvest and management of fish species that aggregate to spawn in the WECAFC region. Officials from national institutions, entities, and authorities responsible for implementation of policy, legal, and operational aspects of fisheries management and other

experts will be nominated to participate and contribute their expertise and experience for the benefit of the working group. Invitations for participants will be sent to WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA members and relevant partners in the region.

Participants will be expected to come to the meeting prepared with the following:

- Knowledge of the FSAFMP and any domestic measures in place for the management of Nassau grouper, mutton snapper, and other fish species that aggregate to spawn, including progress on implementation of seasonal closures as called for in the FSAFMP, and ideas to implement the FSAFMP at both an organizational and regional scale.
- Knowledge of the Communications Strategy and the key communication and outreach messages.
- Knowledge of any domestic management measures for parrotfish.

The CFMC, NOAA Fisheries, and WECAFC will be providing financial support to host the SAWG meeting virtually.

CFMC (in the person of Dr. Will Heyman) is the Convener of the Working Group, while the WECAFC Secretariat serves as secretariat of the Working Group.

5. Structure of the Meeting

The provisional agenda of the meeting can be found in the Appendix.

5.1 Location and dates

The virtual meeting will be held from Monday, 9 November to Tuesday, 10 November 2020 from 9.30am to 4.15pm Atlantic Standard Time (AST). The CFMC will be providing instructions to participants on how to join the meeting through a virtual platform.

5.2 Languages

The meeting will be conducted in English and Spanish.

6.0 Administrative Arrangements and Other Information

Administrative arrangements for the meeting will be handled by the CFMC, in close collaboration with the WECAFC Secretariat.

Inquiries concerning logistical arrangements should be addressed to the contacts listed below.

Contact for your response:

Please provide your response, including the name, title and contact details of your representative(s) from the Fisheries Authority, as well as any appropriate researchers and academia from your country, to the CFMC and WECAFC Secretariat as follows:

To: **Mr Miguel Rolón**

Executive Director, USDOC/CFMC

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diana_martino_cfmc@yahoo.com

cc: **Ms Tracy Phillips**

Administrative and Operational Assistant

StewardFish Project & CLME+ Shrimp & Groundfish Project

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E-mail: Tracy.Phillips@fao.org

WECAFC Secretariat to WECAFC-Secretariat@fao.org

AGENDA**4th Meeting (Virtual) of the CFMC/WECAFC/OSPESCA/CRFM
Working Group on Spawning Aggregations****November 9, 2020****9:30 am – 10:00 am Atlantic Standard Time**

Opening of Session

Roll Call of Delegates of the Working Group and Other Participants

Welcome words by:

- Will Heyman, SAWG Convener
- Yvette Diei-Ouadi, WECAFC

Election of the Chairperson and Rapporteurs

Adoption of the agenda

10:00 am – 10:15 am

Meeting objective and expected outcomes– Will Heyman

10:15 am – 10:35 am

Summary of WECAFC work on Spawning Aggregations – Yvette Diei-Ouadi

10:35 am – 10:50 am

Spawning aggregations status and management update in CRFM member States – Maren Headley

10:50 am – 11:00 am Break**11:00 am – 11:15 am**

Spawning aggregations status and management update in OSPESCA member States – To be determined

11:15 am – 12:15 pm

Spawning aggregations status and management update from remaining member States – Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, and Brazil

12:15 pm – 1:15 pm Lunch Break

1:15 pm – 2:15 pm

Final review of FSAFMP for WECAFC – Yvonne Sadovy and Martha Prada

2:15 pm – 3:15 pm

Ideas to implement the FSAFMP: Lessons from Belize and Cayman Islands.
Discussion of next steps – To be determined, Croy McCoy, Will Heyman

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm

Results of Parrotfish Survey and Discussion of Next Steps – Chelsea Harms-Tuohy and Patricia Kramer

4:15 pm

Adjourn for the day

November 10, 2020**9:30 am – 10:30 am**

Reflection on Day 1 deliberations and key elements – Yvette Diei-Ouadi

10:30 am – 10:45 am

Presentation of Updated Regulatory Tables – Stephania Bolden

10:45 am – 11:00 am Break**11:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Update on Communications Strategy and adoption of key messages – Ana Salceda and Miguel Rolon

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Lunch Break**1:00 pm – 2:00 pm**

Alignment of SAWG efforts: Integration of FSAFMP Objectives, SAWG Work Plan, and the Communication Strategy. Discussion of next steps – Stephania Bolden, Will Heyman

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Review, update and adopt TOR, Work Plan and Expected Outcomes; determine time and location of 5th SAWG meeting, and elect new SAWG Convener – Will Heyman and Yvette Diei-Ouadi

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Final Comments from Delegates and closure of meeting – Yvette Diei-Ouadi

3:30 pm

Adjourn