



PROSPECTUS

3rd MEETING OF THE CFMC/OSPECSA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES WORKING GROUP ON QUEEN CONCH

Panama City, Panama, 30 October – 1 November 2018

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 (OSPECSA), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) are pleased to announce the Third meeting of the CFMC/OSPECSA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch. The joint Working Group was first established by the 14th session of WECAFC in February 2012. This meeting is being organized with support from the European Union, CFMC, and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service.

The working group last met in November 2014 in response to a recommendation adopted at the 15th Session of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission. This recommendation called for development of a regional plan for the conservation and management of queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) for adoption by WECAFC at its 16th Session in 2016 and other actions to enhance regional cooperation in the sustainable management and trade of queen conch.¹ The recommendation built upon decisions adopted by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) adopted in 2013 at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16).²

¹ <http://www.fao.org/fishery/docs/DOCUMENT/wecafc/15thsess/16e.pdf>

² <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/WorkingDocs/E-CoP17-72.pdf>

At the working group meeting, participants reviewed a draft Queen Conch management and conservation plan and determined which measures would contribute most to the sustainability of the queen conch fisheries in the region. The experts recommended that measures suitable for regional level harmonization be discussed in 2015 with all relevant stakeholders at national level in the queen conch range States.

Following-up on the CoP16 Decisions adopted by CITES and WECAFC Recommendation WECAFC/15/2014/3 on queen conch, the working group reached also agreement on the use of regional harmonized conversion factors for the processing of conch meat and a format for Non-Detriment Findings (NDF) assessments. Participants also agreed to terms of reference for the working group.

The 16th Session of WECAFC endorsed the terms of reference for the working group for the period 2015 – 2018, and adopted Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/1 on the regional plan for the management and conservation of queen conch in the WECAFC area,³ which calls on WECAFC members to implement *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan*.⁴ The recommendation also calls for actions to harmonize and improve trade statistics, implementation of NDF guidance to help ensure sustainable trade, and collaboration in assessment methodologies for queen conch.

Since the last meeting of the working group, Decisions 17.285 – 17.290 related to queen conch were adopted at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP17).⁵ Decisions 17.285 and 17.287 are most relevant to the working group. Specifically, Decision 17.285 directs CITES Parties to collaborate to implement the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation* that was adopted by WECAFC and develop national plans as appropriate; organize national level consultations to discuss the plan to build awareness, increase stakeholder support and increase compliance; continue data collection to improve the regionally agreed-upon conversion factors and develop national conversion factors; continue collaboration and exploration of ways to enhance the traceability of queen conch in international trade; collaborate in development and implementation of joint research programs to support NDFs and promote relevant research and capacity building through regional fisheries management bodies; promote collaboration in development and implementation of public education and awareness programs regarding the conservation and sustainable use of queen conch; and provide information on implementation of this decision to be reported at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES and WECAFC as appropriate on the implementation of the regional or national plans. Decision 17.287 directs the CITES Animals Committee to provide advice regarding the making of NDFs for queen conch, research in support of sustainable fishing and trade in queen, and other technical matters, if requested by range States of queen conch.

³ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7818e.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bo087e.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.cites.org/eng/dec/valid17/81891>

The Third meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch follows these developments and is consistent with the Terms of Reference of the working group.

Terms of Reference

According to the Working Group Terms of Reference endorsed at the 16th Session of WECAFC,⁶ the scope and goals of the Working Group are as follows:

1.1 Scope

The purpose of the working group is to support the sustainable management and conservation of queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) resources and its fisheries in the WECAFC region. In undertaking its work, the working group will pay due attention to FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries' Article 6.4 of the general principles.⁷

1.2 Goal

Using a multidisciplinary approach, the working group will contribute to the sustainable conservation and management of the queen conch fisheries and trade. In pursuing this goal, the working group will contribute to the fulfillment of national, regional and international responsibilities and commitments for the management and conservation of and trade in queen conch and related or interacting species or fisheries in the WECAFC Region under the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and in accordance with agreed, documented management goals including ensuring the livelihoods of the people depending on these resources.

2. Objectives

The purposes of the Third meeting of the CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES Working Group on Queen Conch are to contribute to implementation of Recommendation WECAFC/16/2016/1, with emphasis on implementation of the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan*,⁸ improvement and standardization of trade data and statistics, and strengthened regional collaboration to ensure the sustainable management and trade of queen conch.

The objectives of the working group meeting are:

- To present and discuss the status of queen conch fisheries and management and implementation of the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan* at the national level.

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/fi/static-media/MeetingDocuments/WECAFC16/15e.pdf>

⁷ 6.4 Conservation and management decisions for fisheries should be based on the best scientific evidence available, also taking into account traditional knowledge of the resources and their habitat, as well as relevant environmental, economic and social factors. States should assign priority to undertake research and data collection in order to improve scientific and technical knowledge of fisheries including their interaction with the ecosystem. In recognizing the transboundary nature of many aquatic ecosystems, States should encourage bilateral and multilateral cooperation in research, as appropriate.

⁸ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7818e.pdf>

- Identify challenges and actions needed to advance implementation of the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan* and strengthen regional conservation and management of queen conch.
- Learn of developments and possible tools to improve the traceability of queen conch.
- Review the status of development and application of conversion factors for standardized data reporting.
- Gain an understanding of scientific developments related to queen conch to identify potential emerging threats and future research needs.
- Assess research programs in support of making NDFs.
- Exchange information on enforcement issues and regional/bilateral collaboration in fighting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing of queen conch.
- Reach agreement upon new Terms of Reference and a revised work plan to guide future activities of the working group and help ensure achievement of its goal.

3. Outputs

It is noted with urgency that this is the last year to implement the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan*, and the other items for collaboration called for in the Terms of Reference for the working group. Therefore, members of the working group are urged to implement the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan* as a matter of priority, suggest improvements to the Terms of Reference for the working group as needed, and recommend to WECAFC the adoption of new Terms of Reference for the period 2019 – 2021.

The meeting outputs should include the following:

1. New Terms of Reference for the working group to advance implementation of the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan* and enhance regional collaboration to ensure the sustainable harvest and trade of queen conch for the period 2019 – 2021.
2. Updated work plan outlining actions to conserve and manage queen conch, promote legal and sustainable trade, and improve our understanding of the species' ecology.
3. Updates and proposed modifications to the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan* as deemed appropriate.
4. Actions and timeline for implementation of the *Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan*.
5. Steps to strengthen the application of conversion factors for queen conch meat processing to facilitate standardized data reporting.
6. Recommendations to address any outstanding research needs or data gaps deemed critical to ensure the sustainable management and trade of queen conch.
7. Actions needed to improve the traceability of queen conch from the point of harvest to the point of export (“chain of custody”) to help ensure that queen conch in trade is legally harvested.

8. Discuss key elements for development of an action plan for the region to combat IUU fishing of queen conch.

The outputs above will be included in a resolution provided to the 17th Session of WECAFC for discussion and endorsement.

4. Participants

Foreseen participants are Government officials from WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA member countries that engage in the harvest, management, and/or trade of queen conch. These are officers of national institutions, entities, and authorities responsible for implementation of policy, legal, and operational aspects of fisheries management and/or implementation of CITES. Invitations for participants will be sent to WECAFC, CRFM, and OSPESCA members and relevant partners in the region.

The CFMC and the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service will be providing financial support to host the workshop. Flights, food, and accommodation arrangements will be provided for selected confirmed participants. It is expected that some selected experts from WECAFC member countries be sponsored by the EU-funded project “Support to the implementation of the Regional Plan for the Management and Conservation of Queen conch”.

It is to be noted that CFMC (in the person of the Executive Director, Miguel A. Rolón) is the Convener of the Working Group, while the WECAFC Secretariat serves as secretariat of the Working Group.

5. Structure of the Meeting

An agenda and provisional timetable for the meeting can be found in Appendix 1.

5.1 Location and dates

The meeting will be held from Tuesday, 30 October to Thursday, 1 November 2018 at the Hard Rock Hotel in Panama City, Panama.

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. This will include the selection of participants, travel arrangements and other matters before and during the meeting.

Inquiries concerning administrative arrangements should be addressed to:

Contact for your response:

Please provide your response, including the name, title and contact details of the representative from your Fisheries Authority to the joint CFMC/WECAFC Secretariat for this Queen Conch Working Group meeting as follows:

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Appendix 1

3rd MEETING OF THE CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM/CITES WORKING GROUP ON QUEEN CONCH
Panama City, Panama, 30 October – 1 November 2018
Provisional Agenda

30 October 2018*Morning session*

0900 Registration of participants

0915 1. Opening of the session

Welcome words by:

- Miguel A. Rolón, Executive Director of CFMC
- FAO/WECAFC
- Honorable Representative from the Government of Panama

0945 2. Introduction of delegates

1000 3. Election of the Chairperson and rapporteurs

1015 4. Introduction of the Working Group – Convener: Miguel A. Rolón

1020 5. Adoption of the agenda and arrangements for the Working Group

1030 Break

1045 6. Summary of WECAFC work on Queen Conch – Yvette Diei-Ouadi (WECAFC Secretariat)

1100 7. Presentation of WECAFC Regional Queen Conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan (FMP) – Martha Prada Coralina (

1130 8. Queen conch developments at CITES (Decisions 17.285-17.290) – Tom De Meulenaer (CITES)

1200 Lunch Break*Afternoon session*

1330 9. Queen Conch FMP implementation status in CRFM member states - Elizabeth Mohammed/Susan SinghRenton (CRFM)

1400 10. Queen Conch FMP implementation status in OSPESCA member states - Manuel Perez (OSPESCA)

1430 11. Queen Conch FMP implementation status in selected WECAFC member States (10 minutes each and 5 minutes for questions/discussion)

- Haiti
- Cuba
- Mexico
- Jamaica
- Bahamas

1545 Coffee Break

16.00 12. Queen Conch FMP implementation status in selected WECAFC member States (10 minutes each and 5 minutes for questions/discussion)

- United States
- Colombia
- Venezuela
- Martinique & Guadeloupe
- Honduras
- Nicaragua

1730 End of the first day of the meeting

1900 Hospitality

31 October 2018

Morning session

0830 Reflection on Day 1 deliberations

0900 13. New scientific developments related to queen conch - Dr. Aldana (Research and Advanced Studies Center of the National Polytechnic Institute, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico)

0930 14. Research programs in support of making non-detriment findings (Honduras)

1000 15. Traceability of queen conch in trade - Ever Hernández (Regional Traceability Director, OIRSA)

1030 Break

1100 16. Status update of the development and application of conversion factors for standardized data reporting (Nelson Ehrhardt)

1130 17. Plenary discussion on the next steps in managing trade in Queen Conch

1200 Lunch Break

Afternoon session

1330 18. Plenary discussion on strengthening implementation of the Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan for Queen Conch with a focus on the following:

- Legal and institutional aspects
- Management measures and tools
- Scientific information and advice

1500 Break

1530 19. Working Group discussion on the Regional Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan

1730 End of the second day of the meeting

1 November 2018***Morning session***

0830 Reflection on Day 2 deliberations

0900 20. Presentation of Working Group findings and recommendations

1000 21. Plenary discussion of the new Terms of Reference and Work Plan

1030 Break

1100 22. Enforcement issues and status update on regional and bilateral collaboration in fighting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing of Queen Conch – To be determined (CLME+ Consultant/Service provider and CRFM/OSPESCA)

1130 23. Facilitated discussion on tackling IUU fishing of Queen Conch towards the development of an action plan (CLME+ Consultant/Service provider)

1200 Lunch Break***Afternoon session***

1330 24. Adoption of the summary report and recommendations for WECAFC

1430 25. Time and location of next meeting

1445 Closure of the meeting – Yvette Diei-Ouadi (WECAFC Secretariat)

1500 Concluding remarks