



<b>WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC FISHERY COMMISSION</b> Tenth Session
<b>WECAFC LESSER ANTILLES FISHERIES COMMITTEE</b> Seventh Session
Bridgetown, Barbados, 24-27 October 2001
<b>REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WECAFC AD HOC WORKING GROUPS</b>

## I. Introduction

1. The Ninth Session of the Commission, September 1999, noted with satisfaction that the following working groups were addressing issues considered to be high priority and recommended that the groups continue their activities as *ad hoc* working groups:
  - *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish Resources in the Brazil-Guianas Shelf;
  - *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Caribbean Spiny Lobster, *Panulirus argus*; and
  - *Ad Hoc* Flying Fish Working Group of the Eastern Caribbean.
2. The Commission also endorsed the Working Group on Queen Conch, *Strombus gigas*, which is being coordinated by the Caribbean Fishery Management Council.
3. At the Ninth Session of the Commission, the delegation of France, in expressing its support for the new mode of operation of WECAFC, informed the Commission that it would consider the possibility of supporting selected activities in the region. In this regard, IFREMER (Martinique) took the initiative to establish the Lesser Antilles Working Group on Sustainable Development of Moored FAD Fisheries.

## II. Activities and Results

### WECAFC *Ad hoc* Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish Resources in the Brazil-Guianas Shelf

4. The *ad hoc* Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish Resources in the Brazil-Guianas Shelf held the following meetings during the biennium:
  - Meeting of Fisheries Managers and Ministers of the WECAFC *ad hoc* Working Group, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 26-29 March 2001. The main objectives were to review the results of the stock assessment and bio-economic analyses obtained by the *ad hoc* Working Group over the past five years, consider management measures to address the sustainable utilisation of the fishery resources in the Brazil-Guianas shelf and identify appropriate strategies for implementation of effective co-operation in fisheries research and management in the Brazil-Guianas shelf.
  - Fourth Workshop on Assessment and Management of Shrimp and Groundfish Fisheries in Brazil-Guianas shelf, Cumaná, Venezuela, 2-13 October 2001. The principal objectives were to review and finalise the stock assessments, undertaken prior to the workshop, of the most important shrimp and groundfish fisheries in each country or shared between countries, leading to estimates of the status

of each stock, investigate the implications of different management options, and prepare a written report to senior decision-makers in the national fisheries administrations.

- National Workshops on Fisheries Management in Brazil, French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela, June/July 2000. The main objectives were to disseminate the results of the scientific analyses of the *ad hoc* Working Group to stakeholders, to stimulate and encourage the participation of stakeholders and to initiate dialogue on partnership arrangements between the fisheries administrations and industry stakeholders.
5. The meeting of Fisheries Managers and Ministers of the group, 26-29 March 2001, could be viewed as a culmination of five years of work by the *ad hoc* Working Group. The managers met from 26-28 March and made a number of important recommendations for the consideration of the ministers who met on 29 March. The managers' recommendations covered the status of shrimp and groundfish resources, fishery management recommendations, modalities of co-operation, improving the effectiveness of the *ad hoc* working group, and priority areas for future work.
  6. The ministers issued the following joint statement at the end of the meeting:
  7. We, the Ministers responsible for fisheries and the Representatives participating in the Meeting of Fisheries Ministers and Fisheries Managers of the member countries of the WECAFC *ad hoc* Working Group, organised by FAO and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, recognise that attaining sustainable management of fisheries in the Brazil-Guianas shelf is of significant importance for the food security of our countries, for the attainment of national economic and social development goals, and for the well-being and livelihoods of individuals and families dependent on these fisheries.
  8. We are aware that it is our duty to ensure that the resources of the region, and especially those of the Brazil-Guianas shelf, are utilised and managed in a sustainable and environmentally acceptable manner to sustain the high consumption of fish in our region.
  9. Consequently, we reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries through policies and programmes to secure the sustainability of the fisheries sector.
  10. We note that the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) provides the countries with a neutral forum and mechanism for regional co-operation in fisheries management and conservation, that crosses the political, geographic, cultural and language barriers that exist in the region, and we undertake to find ways to strengthen and support WECAFC and the *ad hoc* Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish in the Brazil-Guianas shelf.
  11. We note the shared nature of many of the important resources of the Brazil-Guianas shelf and the need for regional approaches to fisheries management and conservation, such as the one being promoted for the Brazil-Guianas shelf, to ensure sustainable fisheries production.
  12. We therefore recognise and support the important role played by *the ad hoc* Working Group, within the framework of WECAFC, in providing an effective mechanism for the interaction of fisheries managers and scientists at the regional level and for the generation and sharing of information and analyses essential for responsible management of these valuable resources.
  13. We take note of the status of the fisheries resources in the Brazil-Guianas shelf as outlined in this report and the management recommendations generated by the *ad hoc* Working Group.
  14. We are concerned that there are indications of over-exploitation in a number of the important fishery resources of the region and note the remedial options suggested. We undertake to seriously consider these recommendations in formulating our national strategies for the management of our fisheries.

15. We recognise the importance of establishing clear objectives for our fisheries to facilitate their optimal utilisation and acknowledge the need for the fishers and fishing industry to be informed and consulted in designing and implementing fishery management plans and strategies.
16. We considered the report of the meeting and reaffirm our common determination to continue supporting the work of our fishery management institutions and to build and strengthen them as necessary. We support their on-going full participation in the activities of the WECAFC *ad hoc* Working Group.
17. We express our appreciation for the support provided by FAO to the WECAFC *ad hoc* Working Group, the Government of Norway, DANIDA and CFRAMP, and call on FAO and these agencies to consider maintaining their support to the *ad hoc* Working Group.
18. The *ad hoc* Working Group received financial support for its work through the global project GCP/INT/648/NOR (FISHCODE) which was funded by the Government of Norway.

WECAFC *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Caribbean Spiny Lobster, *Panulirus argus*

19. During the biennium the Group held a workshop on Management of the Caribbean spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) Fisheries in the Area of the Western Central Atlantic, Merida, Mexico, 4-8 September 2000. The workshop represented a continuation of the work done in the two previous regional workshops; Belize City, Belize, 21 April - 2 May 1997 and Merida, Mexico, 1-12 June 1998. While these two workshops had concentrated on biological and bio-economic assessments, the 2000 Workshop concentrated on regional co-operation on research and management of the Caribbean spiny lobster.
20. The 2000 Workshop was held in two phases. The Preparatory Phase (4-5 September) and the Management Workshop (6-8 September). The Preparatory Phase produced four sub-regional reports on the status of the stocks, research and management. The reports contained an up-to-date summary of information on the resources of the spiny lobster, their fisheries and their management. The reports were the basis for discussions during the management workshop which was attended by scientists and decision-makers (ministers and managers) responsible for fisheries management.
21. The Management Workshop led to a number of important conclusions and recommendations, which pertain to regional co-operation, management issues, data and information, enforcement, communication funding and institutional capacity for fisheries management.
22. Some of the more important conclusions and recommendations were:
  - Greater co-operation was required among the lobster producing nations of the WECAFC region given the shared nature of the spiny lobster resource. The WECAFC *ad hoc* Working Group provided an appropriate mechanism for greater co-operation;
  - Continuation of the work of the *ad hoc* Working Group through regular workshops to address stock assessment and management issues with emphasis on management;
  - The establishment of a fund with contributions by the countries, and possibly the lobster industry in each country as well, to enable the holding of the proposed regular workshops of the *ad hoc* Working Group. The contributions should be determined according to agreed criteria and an average of approximately US\$5,000 to US\$10,000 annually per country was proposed. FAO was proposed as the most appropriate body to manage the fund;
  - Preparation of a regional strategy for spiny lobster research and management that would identify the future directions and approaches of the countries and the *ad hoc* Working Group;
  - The formal role for co-ordination of research and management of Caribbean spiny lobster should be given to WECAFC;

- Primary responsibility for sustainable management of spiny lobster lies at the national level even though the resource is shared;
- Harmonisation of fishery management measures where possible;
- Holding of national workshops in each country to disseminate the results of the scientific analyses of the *ad hoc* working group; and
- Agreed to put in place a consistent and sustainable data collection system in each country. Where appropriate, these systems should be standardised throughout the region given the pan Caribbean nature of the resource.

23. The *ad hoc* Working Group received financial support for its work through the global project GCP/INT/648/NOR (FISHCODE) which was funded by the Government of Norway.

#### WECAFC *Ad hoc* Flying Fish Working Group of the Eastern Caribbean

24. This Working Group provided the seven participating island states with the opportunity to development a co-operative approach to managing a locally important and shared pelagic resource. The Group had undertaken some descriptive and exploratory analyses of their data during their first meeting. At the second meeting of the Group, Barbados, 8-12 January 2001, further analyses were undertaken, including attempts to standardise catch rates and to examine spatial and temporal trends in reported catches and effort. The attempts to standardise effort had not been successful with the data that were available.
25. It was recommended that member countries should improve their data collection systems and that studies should be conducted in Barbados and Tobago to quantify the changes in the day-boat fishery and differences in catch rates between different vessel types.
26. The Working Group observed that few of the participating countries had formal management plans and prepared a generic outline to assist countries in formulating their own plans within the sub-regional context. The Group also agreed on a generic outline of a sub-regional management plan for flying fish and requested technical assistance from WECAFC for its further elaboration.

#### Working group on Queen Conch, *Strombus gigas*

27. The First International Queen Conch Conference was held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1996. The Conference produced the “Declaration of San Juan”, where countries agreed to cooperate in the sustainable management of the *Strombus gigas* resource. Since the First International Queen Conch Conference, the following events took place with the coordination and support of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council.
- Regional fisheries Forum of the Southwest Caribbean, Isla de San Andres, February 1997, resulted in the “Declaration of San Andres”, which agreed to develop a regional management strategy for certain Caribbean fisheries including the *Strombus gigas*.
  - Meeting of the Queen Conch Working group, Costa Rica, July 1997;
  - Jamaica-Honduras International Queen Conch meeting, Honduras, November 1997;
  - International meeting for the Management of Queen Conch, Dominican Republic, March 1998;
  - Queen Conch Assessment Workshop, Belize, March 1999;
  - Jamaica-Honduras International Queen Conch Meeting, Jamaica, March 2000;
  - Jamaica-Honduras International Queen Conch Meeting, Honduras, August 2000; and
  - Second International Queen Conch Conference, Dominican Republic, July 2001.

Lesser Antilles Working Group on Sustainable Development of Moored FAD Fisheries.

28. This group met for the first time at IFREMER, Martinique, 8 -11 October 2001. The main objectives were to: exchange information on national experiences with FAD fisheries; examine the technical and scientific issues involved in FAD construction and deployment; and promote regional co-operation in the sustainable development of moored FAD fisheries in the Lesser Antilles.

**III. Reports**

29. The following reports have been published or are in the process of being published:

WECAFC Ad hoc Working Group on Shrimp and Groundfish Resources in the Brazil-Guianas Shelf:

- Report of the Meeting of Fisheries Managers and Ministers of the WECAFC *ad hoc* Working Group of the Brazil-Guianas Shelf, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 26-29 March 2001. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 650. Rome, FAO, 2001. 381p.
- Fourth Workshop on Assessment and Management of Shrimp and Groundfish Fisheries on the Brazil-Guianas Shelf, 2-13 October 2000, Cumana, Venezuela. **Regional reviews and National Management reports.** *FAO Fisheries Report* No. 651. Rome. FAO, 2001. 152p.
- Report of National Workshop on Fisheries Management in Suriname and a Follow-up Meeting, Paramaribo, Suriname, 21-22 June 2000 and 11 July 2000. FAO/FISHCODE Project, GCP/INT/648/NOR. Field Report F-12 (Ni and En). Rome, FAO, 2000, 23p.
- Rapport de la Réunion Nationale sur les Pêcheries de Crevettes et de Poissons de Fond du Plateau Guyano-Brésilien, Cayenne, 16 juin 2000. Programme de Coopération FAO/Norvège, GCP/INT/648/NOR. Rapport de terrain F-11 (Fr). Rome, FAO, 2000, 6p.
- Seminário Nacional sobre Pesca de Camarão e Peixes Demersais na Costa Norte do Brasil (Report of National Workshop on Shrimp and Groundfish Fisheries of the Brazil-Guianas Shelf), Belém, Brazil, 14 June 2000. FAO/FISHCODE Project, GCP/INT/648/NOR., Field Report F-10 (Por). Rome, FAO, 2000, 22p.
- Informe del Taller sobre Pesquerías de Camarón y Peces de Fondo en la Región Atlántica de Venezuela, Cumaná, Venezuela, 5 de mayo de 2000. Programa de Cooperación Gubernamental FAO/Noruega, GCP/INT/648/NOR. Informe de Campo F-9 (Es). Roma, FAO, 2000, 9p.
- Report of National Workshop on Shrimp and Groundfish Fisheries of the Brazil-Guianas Shelf, Couva, Trinidad, 2-3 May 2000. FAO/FISHCODE Project, GCP/INT/648/NOR. Field Report F-8 (En). Rome, FAO, 2000, 22p.
- Report of National Workshop on Shrimp and Groundfish Fisheries of the Brazil-Guianas Shelf, Mon Repos, Guyana, 27-28 April 2000. FAO/FISHCODE Project, GCP/INT/648/NOR. Field Report F-7 (En). Rome, FAO, 2000, 16p.
- Report of the Third Workshop on the Assessment of Shrimp and Groundfish Fisheries on the Brazil-Guianas Shelf, Belém, Brazil, 24 May – 10 June 1999. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 628. Rome, FAO. 2000, 206p.
- National reports presented and stock assessment reports prepared at the CFRAMP/FAO/DANIDA Stock Assessment Workshop on the Shrimp and Groundfish Fisheries on the Guiana-Brazil Shelf, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 7-18 April 1997. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 600. Rome, FAO. 1999, 200p.

- Report of the Fourth Meeting of the WECAFC *ad hoc* Shrimp and Groundfish Working Group of the Guianas-Brazil Continental Shelf and CFRAMP Shrimp and Groundfish Subproject Specification Workshop, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 8-12 January 1996. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 544. FAO, Rome, 1996, 43p.
- National Report and selected papers presented at the fourth meeting of the WECAFC *Ad hoc* Shrimp and Groundfish Working Group of the Guianas-Brazil Continental Shelf and CFRAMP Shrimp and Groundfish Subproject Specification Workshop, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 8-12 January 1996. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 544, Supplement. Port-of-Spain FAO, 1997, 248p.
- Report of the third workshop on the Biological and Economic Modelling of the Shrimp Resources of the Guyana-Brazil Shelf, Paramaribo, Suriname, 22-25 June 1992. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 526. FAO, Rome, 1992, 24p.
- National Reports and selected papers presented at the Third Workshop on the Biological and Economic Modelling of the Shrimp Resources of the Guyana-Brazil Shelf, Paramaribo, Suriname, 22-25 June 1992. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 526 Supplement, Rome, FAO, 1995, 200p.

WECAFC *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Caribbean Spiny Lobster, *Panulirus argus*;

- Report of the Workshop on Management of the Caribbean Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*) Fisheries in the Area of the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission, Mérida, Mexico, 4-8 September 2000. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 643. Rome, FAO, 2001. 66p.
- Report on the FAO/DANIDA/CFRAMP/WECAFC Regional Workshops on the Assessment of the Caribbean Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*), Belize City, Belize, 21 April – 2 May 1997 and Mérida, Mexico, 1-12 June 1998. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 619. Rome, FAO, 2001. 381p.

WECAFC *Ad hoc* Flying Fish Working Group of the Eastern Caribbean

- Report of the First Meeting of the WECAFC *Ad hoc* Flyingfish Working Group of the Eastern Caribbean, Bridgetown, Barbados, 22-24 September 1999. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. 613. Port-of-Spain, FAO, 1999, 45p.
- Report of the Second Meeting of the WECAFC *Ad hoc* Flyingfish Working Group of the Eastern Caribbean, Bridgetown, Barbados, 8-12 January 2001. *FAO Fisheries Report*. No. -----. Port-of-Spain, FAO, 2001. (in the process of being published)

**IV. Suggested Action by the Commission**

30. The Commission is invited to review and comment on the *ad hoc* working groups' activities and may wish to provide guidance for the future work of the groups. In doing so the Commission should also take into consideration the report of the First Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Group of WECAFC, Document WECAFC/X/01/7.