

THE QUARTERLY CATCH

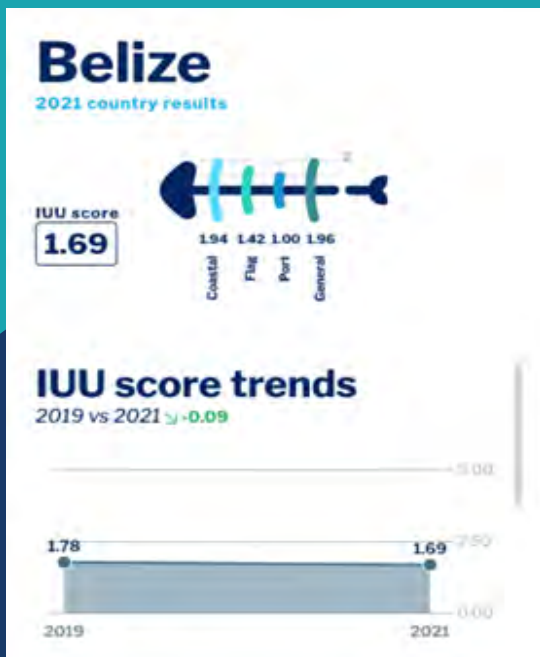
E-NEWSLETTER

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BELIZE RANKS UP AS A RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES NATION

By: Robert Robinson



Our regular readers may recall, the first issue¹ of this publication on April 1st, 2019, which reported Belize's success in ranking 8th of 152 countries in the Global IUU Fishing Index². This Index provides a measure of the degree to which states are exposed to and effectively combat IUU fishing. It is with great pride today, that we announce Belize's ranking has moved up to #5 with an IUU index of 1.69 (1 being the best and 5 being the worse). The top five ranking countries includes Estonia, Switzerland, New Zealand, Finland and Belize. While the world average improved marginally from 2.29 in 2019 to 2.24 in 2021, Belize's score improved by 0.09 over the same period.

This improvement in Belize's rating is attributed to improvements in its Flag Score for views of fisheries observers on flag state incidents and views of MSC³ Practitioners on flag state compliance incidents. Port Scores of the Index's indicators improved due to resilience of ports to visits from

foreign fishing vessels and carrier vessels. There is room for further improvement in the performance of the Coastal and General Scores through the settlement of maritime boundaries; establishing MSC certified fisheries; improving trade balance for fisheries products; increasing the gross national income per capita; and increasing demand for MSC certified products. Nonetheless, Belize's performance as a responsible fisheries Nation remains laudable.

The rating by the IUU Fishing Index is a direct reflection of Belize's efforts to continuously improve the management of its high seas fisheries with the aim of becoming a global leader in high seas fisheries management. Belize's full report is available on-line at the link below:

<https://www.iuufishingindex.net/reports/iuu-fishing-index-country-profile-2021-belize.pdf>

¹ <http://www.bhsfu.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/The-Quarterly-Catch-E-Newsletter-Issue-1.pdf>

² <https://www.iuufishingindex.net/about> | accessed 28th September 2022

³ Marine Stewardship Council (<https://www.msc.org/about-the-msc/what-is-the-msc>)

IATTC 99th Extra-Ordinary Meeting & 100th Ordinary Meeting

By: Delice Pinkard - Senior Fisheries Officer

The 99th Extra-Ordinary Meeting and the 100th Ordinary Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and its subsidiary bodies was hosted by the IATTC Secretariat in Phoenix, Arizona on the 28th of July to 5th August 2022.

During the meeting, several important conservation and management measures were discussed and later adopted. These measures included, inter alia, at-sea transshipment measures which now allows for more transparency in transshipment activities, such as electronic transmission of notifications and transshipment declarations, reduced reporting deadlines and vessel monitoring on carrier vessels. Harvest strategies measures were also adopted for north pacific albacore. Compliance measures were also improved which will now allow for enhanced follow-up and reporting on identified infractions, allowing for additional details to be presented in the compliance report to provide for a more comprehensive review and the development of systems to identify patterns of infractions. However, it was unfortunate that measures were not adopted to protect sharks and other by-catches, especially stronger measures for shark finning.



Center - New Director of the IATTC Secretariat Mr. Arnulfo Franco)



Left to Right - Delice Pinkard- Senior Fisheries Officer, Robert Robinson - Deputy Director

Overall, the Commission was successful in achieving their key objectives. A new Director was elected, important measures were adopted, and with the support of the scientific staff, it was noted that the major stocks were thriving. As a long-standing member of this organization, we continue to play an active role in the decision-making process. As a result, we can introduce new vessels to operate in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

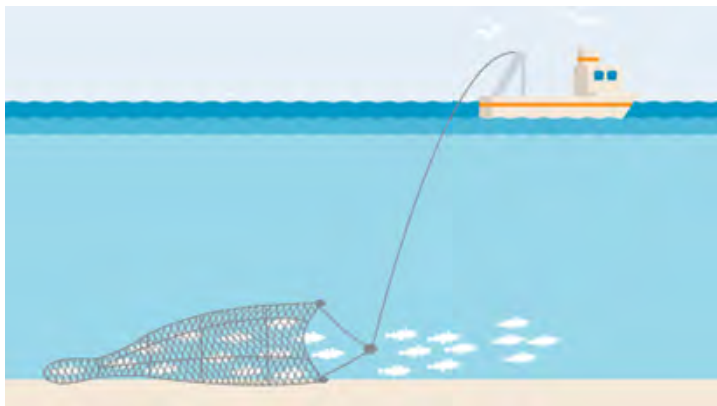
Can Bottom Trawling Fisheries be Sustainable?

By: Ernie Howe- Fisheries Officer

Trawling is a fishing technique that involves pulling a fishing net through the water behind one or more fishing vessels. The net used for this type of fishing is called a trawl. Trawling can be divided into bottom and mid-water trawling depending on how high the trawl is in the water column. Trawling is a common fishing method used worldwide due to its efficiency in capturing large numbers of fish. However, the management of trawl fisheries, especially bottom trawling is a little controversial because its impacts on the environment can be unsustainable.

Bottom trawling is when a net is weighted down to the seafloor and dragged across the bottom to scoop up fish. This type of trawling causes damages to plants and animals that live on the seafloor and is considered incompatible with sustainable fisheries management. Some species can be damaged or killed when the nets pass through the water, but the marine life that lives on the seafloor like corals, sponges and sea-grass are particularly vulnerable to this type of fishing.

On the other hand, it can be argued that this type of fishing can be compatible with good environmental stewardship and that modifications and careful management of fishing operations such as adoption of strict standards can reduce environmental impacts and increase sustainability. These standards include prioritizing the reduction of fishing of over-exploited stocks, reduce fishing on the most vulnerable eco-systems, targeting specific species, reducing by catches, using smart nets that have specific mesh size and reducing the impact or harm to the environment.



(Photo courtesy of Marine Stewardship Council)

Sport Fishing in Belize

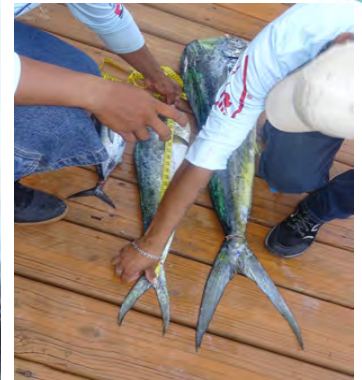
By: Ian Constantino - Monitoring Officer

Sport fishing can essentially be defined as any fishing done with a rod or reel for sport or recreation, where the fish caught are released and not retained for commercial purposes. Belize is well known, not only as a popular tourist destination and hot spot for conservation projects, but also as a key sport fishing destination, where anglers from around the region can participate in annual sport fishing tournaments. Belize's reputation as a popular sport fishing destination has risen dramatically over the years. Anglers anxiously await these tournaments hoping to catch that "Grand Slam" experience. The "Grand Slam" refers to instances in which an angler catches a Bonefish, Permit and Tarpon in a single day. While nowhere near illustrious, many other species are also captured during these fishing events, such as snappers, barracuda, dorados, marlins and bonito, to name a few.



Mr. Ernie Howe - Fisheries Officer _ Grand Caribe Deep Water Classic (Photo courtesy of CZMAI)

There are currently 4-5 popular annual fishing tournaments held in Belize each year, the most acclaimed being the Grand Caribe Deep Water Classic held in San Pedro Ambergris Caye, the Yamaha Saltwater Tournament held in Placencia and the Belikin Blue Water Classic held in Belize City. These tournaments are a showcase of what to anticipate when fishing on Belizean waters with weights of fishes caught ranging from 20 to 40 pounds on average. The interweaving networks of rivers, creeks, cays, lagoons coupled with the blissful temperature of a subtropical climate ensures that the events are both enjoyable and fluid, regardless of where an angler wishes to test his mettle.



The BHSFU in collaboration with CZMAI was able to attend two of these sport fishing tournaments with the objective of gathering essential data on the different species being caught during these tournaments. The end goal being to successfully fulfill our reporting and compliance obligations with the RFMOs to which Belize subscribes. The unbiased and real-time collection of this data was important as it is one of our main goal as a fisheries management and conservation body and allows us to assist in ensuring the sustainability of our marine resources as well. While Belize may be considered flexible in some aspects of our fishing, we take pride in our natural resources and wish to support sport fishing in a sustainable manner by helping to safeguard the diversity and numbers of fish population while still providing a little bit of fun fishing.



IN OTHER NEWS

BHSFU personnel attends Ship Registry Sanctions Risk Management Workshop for Belize facilitated by Sandia National Laboratories and the United States State Department



(Left to right - Ian Constantino - Monitoring Officer, Robert Robinson - Deputy Director

The purpose of this workshop was multifaceted and was basically formulated to discuss relevant sanctions and the recent sanctions against Russia resulting from the invasion of Ukraine. The workshop covered topics related to maritime sanctions and how registries can implement policies to mitigate sanctions compliance risk under their flag.

The workshop covered topics on the following:

- Sanctions Overview
- Best practices for ship registry contracts
- Provisional and suspended status
- Certification of registration and deletion process
- III Code with IMSAS walk through
- AIS and LRIT operations and identified illicit manipulations
- Belize Ship Registry Analysis
- Communication and reporting
- Methodologies for Ship Registry Risk Analysis
- Ship Registry audit best practices
- Ship Registry risk management audit exercise
- Risk management plan development

BELIZE REBOUNDS AT 41

Every year Belize celebrates the September celebrations and its independence with a unique theme. The theme for this year's celebration was "Valiant and Bold, Proud and Strong! Belize Rebounds @ 41".

Independence Day 2022 was a special time in Belize as the country rebound after a two year hiatus caused by the Covid-19 virus. The occasion was marked with a number of amazing celebrations which included, carnivals, marches and parades, musical concerts, expos and other run filled activities.

With so many parades, concerts and festivities, it is no wonder that September is one of the most popular months to visit Belize.

BHSFU personnel attends Belize-Taiwan Technical Cooperation for Deep Sea Fishing Resource Exploration Program.



The main objectives of the project are:

- Develop sampling methodology for surveys to determine species diversity, abundance, size, structure and sex composition of fish biomass within Belize's EEZ.
- Conduct tagging to obtain relevant information on fish growth rates and movement.
- Employ stock assessment modeling approaches of different complexities to evaluate the dynamics of fish stocks, estimate the current status of the fishery and evaluate alternative management strategies.
- Determine in country capacity (technical, fishing, processing, storage, marketing, feasibility, incentives

