

THE QUARTERLY CATCH

E-NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME....

Welcome to our third issue of the Quarterly Catch, the BHSFU quarterly E-Newsletter. I trust that every person who receives a copy of this newsletter will find it quite helpful, informative and of our course entertaining. All the articles are researched, curated and tailored to what we think will be gratifying and useful to our readers. Thank You!



Valarie Lanza-Director for High Seas Fisheries

Implications of the BBNJ Conference



By: Robert Robinson - Deputy Director

As shipping increases across the oceans and advanced technology provides more gateways to access the living marine resources of the high seas and the areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), the list and magnitude of threats to the marine environment and its biodiversity has increased tremendously. In addition to these threats, many human activities such as marine scientific research, mineral extraction, fishing, deep seabed mining, marine pollution, bio-prospecting, to name a few, have emerged with the potential to harm the

highly interrelated and sensitive ecosystems of the high seas and the deep seabed if not properly managed. As a result, following decades of informal discussions, the Intergovernmental Conference (ICG) on Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) was convened by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) with an aim to develop a legally binding international instrument under the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. UNCLOS, which is commonly regarded as the constitution of the oceans, establishes the legal framework for all activities therein; however, it does not specifically refer to marine biodiversity and this gap was bridged by the Convention on biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol which defines biodiversity and to promote its conservation, the sustainable use of its components, and access to marine genetic resources and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their utilization.

To date, the IGC has had three sessions. The fourth will take place in the first half of 2020 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA. The process is structured around four key elements which elaborated on the recommendations made by the BBNJ ~~Elementary Component~~, the marine genetic resources (MGRs), including questions on benefits sharing; environmental impact assessments (EIMs), area based management tools including marine protected areas (MPAs); and capacity building and marine technology transfer.

As work progressed the conference was able to achieve convergent views on areas such as: the need to promote coherence, complementarity, and synergies with other frameworks and bodies; benefit sharing as part of conservation and sustainable use; and EIAs being mutually supportive with other instruments. At the opening of the third session of the conference, President Rena Lee (Singapore), noted that the IGC is "on the right track" to contribute to the transformative change necessary to reverse marine biodiversity loss. She prepared and presented the draft text of international treaty which featured twelve "parts," ranging from a preamble and general provisions, such as on the use of terms, to provisions on institutional arrangements and the settlement of disputes. Dedicated parts addressed the elements of the package agreed in 2011: marine genetic resources (MGRs), including questions on benefit sharing; area-based management tools (ABMTs), including marine protected areas (MPAs); environmental impact assessments (EIAs); and capacity building and transfer of marine technology (CB&TT).

It is noteworthy that fishing in areas beyond national jurisdiction will continue to be governed by the existing international legal instruments regulating fisheries developed under the framework of UNCLOS. These instruments include: the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the Agreement on Port State Measures; as well as instruments developed by other international organizations including the Compliance Agreement of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the International Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing; and the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance and Catch Documentation Schemes.



Belize Participates in the 94th Ordinary Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

By: Delice Pinkard - Senior Fisheries Officer, IATTC Commissioner

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) concluded its 94th Annual Meeting in July in Bilbao Spain, which saw the adoption of several new resolutions. However, while the Commission took some positive steps forward in line with science based advice, not much progress was made regarding tuna management.

The Commission nonetheless strengthened its efforts in combating IUU fishing by refining its IUU vessel listing process and joined other prominent RFMOs in enabling a cross listing of vessels of the IUU vessel list of these RFMOs. The Commission also enhanced its measures to mitigate fisheries impacts on sea turtles as well as silky sharks. FAD management was a priority for discussion, however despite advice from the scientific body to reduce FAD limit by restricting fishing effort, the Commission could not agree on this recommendation. And while certain project initiatives for observer placement on smaller purse seine vessels are underway, the Commission could not reach consensus on proposals to increase observer coverage on longline vessels despite scientific advice. Although transshipment was another hot topic of discussion, the Commission was not able to agree on any improvements to its resolution regulating at-sea transshipment.

Belize Continues to maintain its full compliance within the IATTC RFMO through proper fisheries management and can accept large scale tuna long line fishing vessels wishing to operate in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO)

To know more about IATTC, click on the link www.iattch.org

Interested in registering your large-scale tuna lone line fishing vessel with Belize to fish in the EPO send us an email to delice.pinkard@bhsfu.gov.bz or visit our website www.bhsfu.gov.bz for more information.



Review of the Framework for EU Relations with ACP Countries

By: Ernie Howe - Fisheries Officer

Discussions on the nature and structure of future relations between the European Union and ACP (African, Caribbean, Pacific) countries and their Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) are underway pending the expiration of the Cotonou Agreement in February 2020. This Agreement is the primary framework for relations between the European Union and ACP Countries. These discussions will influence the EPA between the European Union and the CARIFORUM States. Belize, as a member of CARIFORUM, through its Directorate for Foreign Trade, is presently reviewing this Agreement with a view to further strengthen trade and development, thereby enhancing Belize's partnership with the European Union.

The most recent EPA between the EU and CARIFORUM States was signed on 31st October 2008 and allows for the duty-free trading of goods between the signatories to the Agreement. The process is facilitated by the Eur.1 certificate which is validated by the Belize Customs Department and facilitated by the BHSFU for the export of fishery products from Belize flagged high seas fishing vessels to the EU markets.

DID YOU KNOW?

DID YOU KNOW that the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission is the oldest Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO), created in 1949 by a Convention between the United States and Costa Rica? In 1966, the IATTC initiated the world's first tuna fishery management program, which limited the annual catch of yellowfin tuna.

Reference: <https://iss-foundation.org>

FMC CORNER



Global Fishing Watch and its Link to Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS)

By: Stanley Burgess - Monitoring Officer

Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) is an interminable fisheries management tool of which technology plays a key role for its effective and efficient utilization. Technology improves continuously which allows our FMC to become even more competent and advance in our monitoring activities. Having the ability to tract a vessel's movement in real-time or near real time and to observe when a vessel is engaging in transshipment activities are two of the most important features a VMS platform can provide. In addition, a VMS platform that allows the user to create automatic alerts based on certain parameters is critical for an FMC to be most effective and efficient while monitoring the vessels of their fleet.

In keeping up-to-date with new advances in high seas vessel monitoring we have collaborated with OCEANA who provided training to BHSFU and IMMARBE personnel in the use of their Global Fishing Watch (GFW) platform. Global Fishing Watch is a monitoring website launched in 2016 by Google in partnership with OCEANA and SkyTruth "to provide the world's first global view of commercial fishing activities". GFW is promoting ocean sustainability through greater transparency and are using cutting edge technology to visualize, tract and share data about global fishing activities in near real time. The GFW platform supplements our VMS with data that allows us to identify when two vessels are near each other which is essential in detecting high seas transshipment activities.

Having the necessary technology and ability to monitor vessels and identify possible IUU activities is important for any FMC. The utilization of GFW platform will not only complement our existing monitoring system but will provide an additional outlet to better manage the activities of our high seas fishing fleet thus creating a more robust and efficient fisheries monitoring regime.



Global Fishing Watch (GFW) Monitoring Platform

DID YOU KNOW?

That there are several different species of marine turtles that grace our oceans? However, it is unfortunate that human activities have resulted in the slow demise of these primordial creatures. Almost all sea turtles are classified as endangered due to poaching and over-exploitation. They are killed for their shells, eggs, meat, skin etc., or are captured incidentally during fishing operations. Climate change also plays a factor in their demise as it affects their nesting site and sand temperatures which is important to their hatching.



Belize Delegation Prepares for Attendance at the 26th Regular Meeting of the ICCAT Commission

Officials from the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit, Government of Belize and industry representatives prepare for the 26th Regular Meeting of ICCAT which will be held in Palma de Mallorca, Spain from 18-25 November. Last year the Commission did not achieve consensus for the adoption of a revised management measure for the tropical tuna species (bigeye tunas, yellowfin tuna and skipjack) which resulted in the maintenance of the existing recommendation. Based on the Kobe Matrix, the BET stock is in critical condition and if new measures are not adopted soon the stock could collapse. It is therefore of paramount importance that a new measure be adopted this year. As a result, an intersessional meeting of the Panel 1 Committee for Tropical Tunas is being convened to commence discussions on this measure two days in advance of the Annual Commission meeting.

An assessment of the yellowfin stock was carried out this year and the results have been presented at the SCRS Meeting which was held in Madrid Spain from 30th September to 4th October. The result of this meeting and data presented will be further discussed at the Annual Meeting and based on the outcome of the assessment additional measures will need to be put in place for this stock as well.

Belize is collaborating with its neighboring countries in the framework of the Central American Organization for Fisheries and Aquaculture (OSPESCA), for the creation of a regional position on this conservation and management measure for tropical tunas. While there are divergent views regarding the actions necessary for the rebuilding of the BET stock, it is certain that the Commission, in the interest of conservation and sustainability, will achieve consensus in the adoption of a new conservation and management measure



Belize Delegation meets with neighboring OSPESCA members to work on a regional proposal for Tropical Tunas



Celebration of Patriotism in Belize

The month of September saw the celebration of two significant milestones in Belize's history, the Anniversary of the Battle of St. Georges Caye and Belize's Independence.

This year marked the 221st anniversary of the battle of St. Georges Caye which is celebrated annually on the 10th of September. It commemorates the battle and victory of the British Settlers (known as the 'Baymen') in the Bay of Honduras, present-day Belize, which took place on September 10th 1798 between Spanish military forces based in Mexico in an effort to exert their claim over the territory of the settlement.

The second important event which took place in September was Belize's 38th Anniversary of Independence from Great Britain.

Events which memorializes these days around the country included a Carnival Parade, a St. George's Caye Day Citizens Parade, live musical concerts and an official Independence Day road-march through the streets of Belize City and day-long celebrations. The theme of this year's celebrations evoked a spirit of nationalism and a call to work for Belize: "From Maya Grandeur to Modern Glory, Together Let's Shape the Belizean Story."

DID YOU KNOW?

That marine protected areas are geographically defined areas of the sea in which all or some economic activities, especially fishing are prohibited. Restricting access to these area helps to conserve marine ecosystems, especially by protecting endangered species or unique habitats such as coral reefs.