

7. CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The four-wing flyingfish supports important small-scale fisheries in the region in terms of employment generation, food security and supply of bait for fisheries targeting large pelagic fish species. Like other small-scale fishers in the Caribbean, fishers involved in flyingfish fisheries often belong to the lower socio-economic strata of society.

Unlike many other commercial species in the region the flyingfish, and in particular the four-wing flyingfish, *Hirudichthys affinis*, which comprises the majority of the flyingfish catch, has been extensively studied. There is a rich information-base on its stock delineation, distribution and biology. Less has been documented however, on the socio-economic, bio-economic and, ecological aspects of the fishery and resource, including the impacts on the population and risks associated with climate change, extreme weather events, and other aspects of global environmental change.

2. ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUP

2.1 Scope

The scope of the Working Group is to facilitate the achievement of management objectives as outlined in the respective sub-regional management plan for flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean, through the application of international best practices consistent with the precautionary, ecosystem and participatory approaches to fisheries management. These management objectives are: a) sustained flyingfish resources (biological objective), b) optimal use of the flyingfish resource for long-term benefit (socio- economic objective) and c) sustained ecosystem health (ecological objective).

2.2 Specific Terms of Reference for the period 2016 to 2018

(this will be completed later)

2.3 Mode of Operation

2.3.1 Membership of the Working Group

Membership shall consist of all Member States of CRFM and WECAFC, including Overseas Territories and Departments, with a real interest in the flyingfish fishery. Membership may also include representatives of key flyingfish stakeholders of Member States as well as relevant regional organizations and experts.

2.3.2 Election of Chair of the Working Group

The Working Group shall elect a Chair from among its Members States to serve over the two-year period.

2.3.3 Role of Member States and other Collaborating Countries

- a. To develop or update national fisheries management plans, based on the agreed Sub-Regional Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for Flyingfish in the Eastern Caribbean;
- b. To implement national fisheries management plans;
- c. To monitor and evaluate implementation of the FMP at the national level;
- d. To report annually to the CRFM/WECAFC Working Group on the progress made in implementation of national FMPs;
- e. To improve the coverage and quality of data nationally to facilitate assessment of the fishery and associated stock as well as monitoring and evaluation of the FMP at the regional level; and
- f. To support the national level implementation of activities outlined under the CLME + (Implementation of Strategic Action Programme) that are aligned with the specific Terms of Reference.

2.3.4 Role of the CRFM Secretariat

- a. To assist with coordination of activities of the Working Group, at the regional level;
- b. To assist with procurement of funds for the activities of the Working Group;
- c. To assist with convening of meetings of the Working Group;
- d. To continue efforts to formalize the relationship between France and the CRFM to facilitate involvement of Guadeloupe and Martinique in the management process;
- e. To promote training in assessment methodologies and other relevant areas of interest identified;
- f. To promote technical assistance and support to research and resource assessment through collaboration with regional and international research partners; and
- g. To coordinate the formulation and adoption of recommendations by the Working Group so as to facilitate the decision-making process at the sub-regional level.

2.3.5 Role of WECAFC Secretariat

- a. To coordinate activities of the Working Group, among CRFM and Non-CRFM Members, at the wider regional level;
- b. To assist with procurement of funds for the activities of the Working Group;
- c. To assist with convening of meetings of the Working Group;
- d. To promote training in assessment methodologies and other relevant areas of interest identified; and
- e. To promote technical assistance and support to research and resource assessment through collaboration with regional and international research partners;
- f. To coordinate the formulation and adoption of recommendations by the Working Group so as to facilitate the decision-making process at the level of WECAFC Area 31.

2.3.6 Communication

Communication is critical to the efficient execution of the work programme of the Working Group, particularly during the inter-sessional periods so as to maximize the quality of outputs. Consequently, each country should designate a National Focal Point for this purpose. The National Focal Point is to liaise with the Convener/ Chair of the Working Group as well as the CRFM and WECAFC Secretariats to facilitate effective implementation of the Terms of Reference and communication among all entities. Available ICT tools, such as the CRFM DGroup and GoToMeeting, should be utilized for this purpose as far as possible. The outputs of the Working Group will be communicated through the CRFM and WECAFC Secretariats to the respective Member States.

2.3.7 Working Group Meetings

Face-to-face meetings of the Working Group should be convened at least once every two years, or as required, if resources are available. Where possible the use of available ICT tools to facilitate electronic meetings should be maximized. Meetings shall be chaired by the Chair of the Working Group.

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference may be amended as required by Member States at the level of CRFM and WECAFC, following each two-year period coinciding with meetings of the WECAFC.