



FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR PAPERS

70th GULF AND CARIBBEAN FISHERIES INSTITUTE

6-10 NOVEMBER 2017, MERIDA, YUCATAN, MEXICO

The 70th Annual conference of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute will be held in Merida, Mexico, from 6-10 November 2017 at the Hyatt Regency Merida Hotel. The conference is being hosted by the CINVESTAV, Unidad Merida, Instituto Tecnológico de Merida and Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán.

The 70th GCFI conference will focus on applying fisheries and marine science to solve problems by bringing multiple users of ocean resources together to make informed and coordinated decisions for sustainable use of these resources. Addressing the issues of connectivity, fisheries management, conservation, and related issues at GCFI will aid in addressing critical marine resource issues within the Wider Caribbean Region.

CONFERENCE THEME

The theme of the Conference is "**TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABILITY OF TROPICAL FISHERIES STRATEGIES, MODELS AND TOOLS**". The initiative is based on the interest of the membership of the GCFI to call attention to users on the importance of sustainable oceans through the implementation of sustainable fisheries and marine resource management. We recognize that new sustainability-oriented projects are needed in order to reset ecological balances, to change consumption and production patterns, promote ecological efficiency, and restore social equity conditions. The conference will emphasize the stakeholder processes to identify fisheries management strategies that put fisheries on the path to sustainability. In particular, we encourage presentations that guide the user in identifying the appropriate monitoring, assessment and management options for a specific fishery, including its socio-economic and governance context, goals and needs.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

GCFI is pleased to announce that the opening address will be presented by Dr. Brian Luckhurst. Dr. Luckhurst retired several years ago after 27 years as the Senior Fisheries Officer, Department of Environmental Protection, Bermuda Government. He has worked in the wider Caribbean region since 1970 conducting studies in Barbados, Curacao, Bonaire and Venezuela. He made his first dive on a grouper spawning aggregation in 1973. Most of his work has been with coral reef fishes including studies of the reproduction and age and growth of groupers and snappers, with a focus on the dynamics of reef fish spawning aggregations,

management and conservation issues in Bermuda, Belize, Puerto Rico, Cayman Islands and the wider Caribbean.

He monitored the recovery of Bermuda's coral reef fish stocks (focusing on parrotfish) by diver census for nine years following a fish pot ban in 1990. Other studies have involved the fishery biology of pelagic species such as wahoo, yellowfin tuna, blackfin tuna and dolphinfish. He was a partner in an international program to deploy satellite pop-up tags on blue marlin in the western Atlantic over five years. He has also conducted studies on the fishery biology of deep-water fishes (wreckfish, misty grouper). He has published over 75 scientific papers as well as numerous technical reports and marine conservation pamphlets. He is a co-author of a book published in 1999, "Fishes of Bermuda". He is a long-standing emeritus member of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), and is a Board member of Science and Conservation of Fish Aggregations (SCRFA). He has been a fisheries and marine resources consultant to The Nature Conservancy, the Caribbean Fishery Resources and Management Program (CFRAMP) and the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council. Since retirement he has been a fisheries consultant to the Bermuda Government and for the past five years he has been working with the Sargasso Sea Commission studying the pelagic ecosystem of the Sargasso Sea with a focus on tunas, swordfish and sharks.

CONFERENCE THEMATIC SESSION

Grouper Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico

The host institutions propose a thematic session on "**Grouper Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico**". Management of the Gulf of Mexico grouper fishery, has reached a new level of complexity with social, economic, ecological, and biological considerations playing a large role in the management and sustainability of these important commercial species. The purpose of this session is to facilitate critical thinking by reviewing the issues affecting grouper fisheries management in the Gulf of Mexico, especially off the Yucatan Peninsula, and examining the ways in which management measures interact. We hope that this session will stimulate discussion and expand the array of solutions available by learning from the experiences of experts and stakeholders involved in research and management representing different regions, disciplines, and areas of expertise.

We encourage presentations on:

- Biology and Life history, (e.g. stock structure, age and growth, reproduction, mortality)
- Monitoring (e.g. data needs, improvement on data collection system)
- Stock assessment (e.g. evaluation of methods used to estimate population and management parameters; single species, multi-species management)
- Recreational and commercial fisheries (e.g. status, effort, harvest, fishing grounds)
- Socio-economic aspect of grouper fisheries
- Stakeholders participation (e.g. education, outreach, and awareness)
- Habitat interaction and associated species (e.g. information about associated groupers and snappers; nursery grounds)
- Successful management strategies in the Gulf of Mexico

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

The conference program features multi-disciplinary sessions arranged in part by ecosystem type. The subject areas are consistent with previous GCFI conferences. Each session may have a mix of natural and social

science, management, and technology related to the ecosystem or fisheries. Papers and posters are solicited in the following areas (other subjects not listed below will also be considered):

- ❖ Governance, livelihoods, gender and organizations
- ❖ Reefs and associated ecosystems fisheries
 - Shallow and deep reef fishes
 - Snapper and grouper fisheries
 - Fish spawning aggregations
 - Lionfish and other invasive species
 - Queen conch, spiny lobster, and other invertebrates
- ❖ Marine Protected Areas Science and Management
- ❖ Pelagic ecosystem and recreational fisheries
- ❖ Continental shelf ecosystem fisheries
- ❖ Habitats, climate change, and coastal management
 - Essential fish habitats
 - Integrated coastal management
 - Climate change adaptation
 - *Sargassum*
- ❖ Aquaculture
- ❖ Marine Debris

POSTER SESSION

The poster session/reception will be on the evening of 7 November 2017. Poster space is limited. Poster specification guidelines are found on the GCFI web site. The preferred poster size is 24" x 36" either portrait or landscape orientation.

After last year's success of the special poster session on "**Gender In Fisheries**", we are pleased to invite you one more time to submit poster abstracts on this topic. Topics of interest include: Value chains, Social networks, organizations, roles in science, equality and equity.

Kindly submit your abstracts following GCFI instructions, but indicate Gender as your poster session preference. For more information please contact Maria Pena and Dalila Aldana maria.pena@cavehill.uwi.edu; daldana@mda.cinvestav.mx.

SPECIAL SESSIONS

❖ *Marine Animal Movement Ecology in the Wider-Caribbean*

This special session will focus on marine animal movement ecology. It will convey to a group of participants interested in the science, technology, management and education the importance of understanding movement as a fundamental feature of understanding aquatic ecosystems in the Wider-Caribbean region. The session will consist of one or two invited presentations to address the state-of-the-art of movement ecology in aquatic animals and discuss the regional needs and directions of this field. Additionally, a series of submitted and accepted contributions will: **1)** identify scientific projects that contribute to the field in assessing the ecology of vertebrate and invertebrate's movement in the ocean, **2)** constitute reference studies that utilize different movement assessment methodologies and tracking technologies, **3)** describe relevant integration of movement data into ecosystem based management frameworks that can be replicated in other jurisdictions and geographies, and **4)** introduce knowledge transfer processes that support educating society

in the dynamic aspects of mobile species. The organizers of the session will synthesize the information provided, in the case studies, best practices, and technology presented in a workshop summary that will be published by GCFI.

- Why is this important? Animal movement ecology has broad applicability across taxa, habitat, and spatial scales, and supporting a holistic approach to understanding managing aquatic ecosystems
- What is the target audience? This session will provide science-based knowledge relevant for students, scientists, resource managers, decision-makers, and educators in understanding the concepts of animal movement ecology and how this contributes to integrative marine science in the Wider-Caribbean region.
- Who should benefit most from the session? We expect researchers, managers, and educators to benefit from this session by increasing their understanding of the role movement plays in driving vulnerability and productivity of populations to anthropomorphic stressors, important pathways (e.g., migratory corridors), nodes (e.g., stopovers, aggregations sites), and habitats (e.g., from reefs to water column features) that support their populations. Additionally movement ecology informs our understanding of connectivity between species and the habitats that they need to complete their lifecycles.

The session will consist of presentations (a) by invited guest speakers and (b) selected from proposals submitted by participants. **Contacts:**

Jorge Brenner, Ph.D. (main contact)
The Nature Conservancy
1800 Augusta Dr., Suite 240
(281) 407-3252
jbrenner@tnc.org

Susan Lowerre-Barbieri, Ph.D.
Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission
100 8th Ave. S.E.
St. Petersburg, Florida
(727) 502-4930

❖ ***Innovative technologies and tools to support implementation of Ecosystem-Based Management” (EBM) and the “Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries” (EAF) in the CLME+ region***

The sustainability of the **provision of goods and services** from the living marine environment in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (further referred to as “the CLME+ region”) has been severely affected over the past decade as a consequence of **inadequate fishing practices, habitat degradation and marine pollution**. These effects become exacerbated as symptoms of **climatic variability and change**.

In 2013, countries from the wider Caribbean developed and politically endorsed a region-wide, 10-year Strategic Action Programme: the “CLME+ SAP” (2015-2025) “for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources”. The CLME+ SAP promotes region-wide adoption and implementation of “Ecosystem-Based Management” (EBM) and the “Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries” (EAF).

The CLME+ SAP identified weaknesses in marine resources **governance, awareness building, data and information management and exchange, monitoring and enforcement capacity, and science-policy interface**, to be at the root of environmental degradation in the CLME+ region.

Improved **interactive governance**, defined as “*the whole of interactions among public, civil and private actors taken to solve societal problems and to create societal opportunities*” is believed to be key to

reverting the ongoing degradation of the marine environment, and its diminishing support for socio-economic development.

Several practical examples exist to date, showing how innovative technologies and tools can be instrumental in fostering and up-scaling such “interactive governance”, and in the promotion and implementation of EBM/EAF. This special session will highlight innovations and technologies that have been applied successfully in the CLME+ region and beyond.

Contributions to the session will include but not limited to: the development and/or adoption of online tools that support decision-making for sustainable choices, either at the policy level (government) or “in the field” (consumers/producers, general public); GPS- and mobile phone-based apps that the public can use to register/report the location of key features or events; technologies and tools to support Monitoring, Control and Surveillance, e.g.: drones and remote sensing technology for monitoring IUU; interactive approaches for scenario modelling and environmental reporting, etc.

The session will consist of presentations (a) by invited guest speakers and (b) selected from proposals submitted by participants. Proposals that address the various dimensions (ecological, social, and economic) of the EBM/EAF approaches are encouraged.

Contacts:

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Colombia 130001.
patrickd@unops.org

❖ *Joint GCFI-SEAC Symposium on Acoustic Technologies for Surveying Reef Fish Ecosystems.*

The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) and SouthEast Acoustic Consortium (SEAC) will hold a special session entitled “Acoustic Technologies to Improve Reef Fish Ecosystem Surveys.” Given the complexity of the life history and habitat of reef fish, the difficulties of sampling reef ecosystems have resulted in data-limited assessments in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean regions. Ongoing advances in both active and passive underwater acoustic technologies have brought a variety of tools to scientists for improving surveys and experimental research in reef habitats that can address a variety of operational research objectives. For example, active acoustic instruments (echo sounders) provide measurements to estimate fish abundance, map distributions, delineate spawning aggregations, observe behavior, and characterize community structure. In addition to remote sensing of the biological community, active acoustics can also provide seafloor bathymetry and classification of their habitats. As scientists strive for integrated sampling operations, passive acoustic instruments (hydrophones and acoustic tags) are also used to locate and monitor spawning aggregations, monitor aquatic ecosystem integrity, and investigate the impact of ocean noise on marine resources.

The objective of this special session is to provide the current state-of-the-science, challenges, applications, and recommendations on the best practices for integrating active and passive acoustic technologies into reef fish and ecosystem surveys to provide high quality and timely scientific information for the management of

living marine resources. The special session also serves to communicate how integrating acoustic technologies into reliable and sustained survey and observation systems will provide socioeconomic benefits from the scientific gains. Abstracts for this session should be submitted by the deadline in the GCFI announcement.

Contacts:

William L. Michaels, NOAA/NMFS,
Office of Science and Technology,
Silver Spring, MD; Phone: 1-301-427-8155
Email: william.michaels@noaa.gov

Christopher Taylor, NOAA/NOS,
National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science,
Beaufort, NC; Phone: 1-252-838-0833
Email: chris.taylor@noaa.gov

WORKSHOPS AT THE 70th GCFI

- ❖ ***GCFI-SEAC Workshop on Best Practices for Acoustic Reef Fish Survey Operations***
(Registration deadline is 15 August 2017).

The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) and SouthEast Acoustic Consortium (SEAC) are planning a one-day workshop entitled “Best Practices for Acoustic Reef Fish Survey Operations” to be held concurrently with the GCFI conference. This workshop will provide an overview of research objectives, operational methods, survey design, and analytical procedures relevant to the acoustic technologies available for conducting reef fish research and survey operations. Ongoing advances in underwater acoustic technologies bring a variety of tools to scientists to conduct surveys and experimental research in reef habitats that can address a variety of management objectives. Therefore, the intent of workshop is to inform scientists, managers, and stakeholders on the state of the science, best practices and applications to consider when investing and implementing in acoustic technologies to optimize reef fish research and survey operations. Case studies will help to identify the challenges, lessons learned and recommendations in building scientific capacity with acoustic technologies to improve data for the sustainability of living marine resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean regions. Attendance will be limited to the first 25 participants that register; if you would like to register for this workshop please contact:

William L. Michaels, NOAA/NMFS,
Office of Science and Technology,
Silver Spring, MD; Phone: 1-301-427-8155
Email: william.michaels@noaa.gov

Christopher Taylor, NOAA/NOS,
National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science,
Beaufort, NC; Phone: 1-252-838-0833
Email: chris.taylor@noaa.gov

- ❖ ***GCFI-SEAC Training Workshop for Conducting Acoustic Reef Fish Survey Operations***
Registration deadline is August 15th.

Before the GCFI meeting, a two-day training workshop to provide introductory training with acoustic hardware and software systems is scheduled during November 4-5, 2017. The first day will be dedicated to technical training with fishery acoustic systems through basic acoustic theory and hands-on waterside demonstrations, including parameter configurations, calibration, and data acquisition and survey design considerations for quantitative estimates of fish densities and remote observations of other marine organisms. The second day will be conducted in a classroom to receive training with software for the analysis of acoustic data for the evaluation of species composition and quantitative estimates of abundance for stock assessments. This training workshop

will be sponsored in partnership by GCFI, NOAA, SEAC, Kongsberg Simrad Fisheries and Echoview, Pty Ltd. Registration will be limited to the first 12 participants, and the deadline for registration will be August 30th. **Scholarships up to \$2,000 US will be awarded to selected participants who submit a request for consideration with justification of need for the scholarship** and how this training will advance ongoing research and survey operations. Please send your request for registration, and statement for scholarship consideration if needed, to the following contacts before August 15, 2017:

Contacts:

William L. Michaels, NOAA/NMFS,
Office of Science and Technology,
Silver Spring, MD; Phone: 1-301-427-8155
Email: william.michaels@noaa.gov

Christopher Taylor, NOAA/NOS,
National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science,
Beaufort, NC; Phone: 1-252-838-0833
Email: chris.taylor@noaa.gov

ABSTRACTS

Abstracts for the 70th GCFI will begin to be accepted from 1 July 2017 until 15 August 2017. Abstracts will be accepted in English, French, and Spanish. **ALL ABSTRACTS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY ENGLISH, SPANISH AND FRENCH TITLES.** Abstracts are only required in one of the three languages; titles **must be in all three languages.** Abstracts must not exceed **250** words (**275** for Spanish and French). Abstracts must be submitted using the secure online abstract Submission Form found via the GCFI website. This link will open on July 1, 2017.

Acceptance to present within an oral session REQUIRES submission of a full and complete manuscript or extended abstract in the proper format (MS Word and jpg or PowerPoint figures) PRIOR to presentation at the meeting. Poster presentations DO NOT REQUIRE submission of a manuscript although they are enthusiastically accepted. Students wishing to compete for the student awards and who are presenting an oral *OR* poster presentation are required to submit a manuscript for publication in the GCFI Proceedings either before or at the meeting. Manuscript preparation guidelines are available on the GCFI (**New website available very soon**).

The Book of Abstracts will be available online in page-flipping and PDF formats. No printed Book of Abstracts will be distributed at the conference.

CINEFISH

Are you interested in submitting a short film for this year's CINEFISH film festival at the GCFI conference? If so, please email the following information to CINEFISH at cinefish@gcfi.org

- Title of film
- Brief description of film (2-3 sentences)
- Film makers(s)
- Duration of film (specify) – Films should be 10-15 minutes or less
- Film still shot
- Type of film
 - Documentary: A non-fictional motion picture to document some aspect of reality.
 - Animation: A short, hand-drawn, stop motion, character animations or computer animated production.

- New media: This includes Music Videos and Public Service Announcements (PSAs).
- B-film: These are low budget films

Please note that films should be recorded in AVI format. ***The deadline for submission is 30 September 2017.***

GLADDING MEMORIAL AWARD: CALL FOR FISHER NOMINATIONS

The GCFI Gladding Memorial Award (GMA) committee is requesting nominations of outstanding fishers for the 70th GCFI GMA. This annual award is presented to select fishers (men and women), who demonstrate, as Peter Gladding did, significant commitment to the sustainable use and long-term conservation of marine resources in the Gulf and Caribbean region. The winner will be sponsored to attend the 70th GCFI meeting in Merida to receive his or her award, and to participate in the Fishers Forum and main conference.

You are invited to submit award nominations to the GMA committee at gma@gcfi.org. All nominations must be received by 30 July 2017. Background information on the GMA, nomination forms with award criteria, and details of the process are available on the GCFI website.

THE RON SCHMIED SCHOLARSHIP

The Ron Schmied Scholarship, a GCFI initiative supported by the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) and private individuals, will be offered to a qualified graduate student in support of their travel to the 70th GCFI conference in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico. The Scholarship is in the amount of US\$1,500, and graduate students with an interest in social, economic, biological, ecological, or management perspectives on recreational fisheries are eligible to apply. ***The deadline for students applying for the award and submitting an abstract and all supporting paperwork is 31 July.*** Students will be notified of acceptance/rejection of their application by **1 September**. Complete instructions and eligibility requirements for the Ron Schmied Scholarship are on the GCFI web page at: **(The User Portal will be available very soon)**. Students may apply for the Scholarship and for consideration for the Student Achievement Award in the same year. Students may also ask to be considered for the Ron Schmied Scholarship and a GCFI Travel Award in the same year, but will only be awarded one of these sources of funding.

THE SCRFA TRAVEL AWARD

The [Science and Conservation of Fish Aggregations Association \(SCRFA\)](http://www.scrfa.org) will offer a Student Travel Award of US\$800 to a student in the Caribbean Region to attend the 70th GCFI, Merida, Mexico. Originally formed in 2000 and known as the Society for the Conservation of Reef Fish Aggregations with the mission of promoting responsible stewardship of fish aggregations; in particular, reef fish spawning aggregations, the Society modified its name in 2012 to reflect its focus on science and the inclusion of all aggregating fish species. The SCRFA Student Travel Award is to encourage and help students to work in this important area and showcase their ideas and work at GCFI.

Applications should be submitted by 31 July. Applications and further information enquiries are to be sent to [Martin Russell](mailto:Martin.Russell@scrfa.org) (SCRFA Chair/CEO) or, visit: www.scrfa.org

STUDENT AWARDS

GCFI is offering two travel awards of US\$750 each to eligible students to help offset travel costs to the 70th GCFI in Merida, Mexico. ***The deadline for students applying for these awards is 31 July*** at which time abstracts and all supporting paperwork must be submitted. Students will be notified of acceptance/rejection of their application by **1 September**. Complete instructions and eligibility requirements for the travel awards are on the GCFI web page at: **(The User Portal will be available very soon)**. Students may apply for a travel award and for consideration for the Student Achievement Award in the same year. Students who received a Student Achievement Award at the 69th GCFI are not eligible for a travel award to the 70th GCFI.

GCFI will offer two Student Achievement Awards which will cover all expenses to the subsequent GCFI conference. Students must meet the abstract deadline to be eligible for the Student Achievement Awards. Students wishing to be considered for these awards must indicate their interest at the time of abstract submittal on the abstract submittal form. Eligibility criteria for the Student Achievement Awards can be found at: (The User Portal will be available very soon). Note that a manuscript of the talk/poster must be submitted at the meeting to be eligible for this award. Students who applied for the award when submitting their abstract may withdraw from consideration of the award by the first day of the conference. Winners of these awards will be announced on Friday at the end of the conference. Please check the website (www.gcfi.org) for other Student Awards.

REGISTRATION

Registrations must be completed online. Early-bird registration (US\$200 and for US\$75 students) extend through 30 September; Regular Registration rates (US\$250 and for US\$95 students) end on the Friday before the meeting starts

Starting in 2017, registration rates are different for members and non-members. Membership is not required to register for the conference; however, there is a significant savings for members of GCFI. To become a member of GCFI, please visit the GCFI Membership Page.

Onsite registrations may be paid with a credit card, check, money order, or US currency. Other arrangements may be made by contacting registrations@gcfi.org.

THE VENUE

The meeting venue will be at the Hyatt Regency Merida Hotel. Located in the heart of Merida's business district, our luxury hotel offers contemporary rooms and suites along with stylish facilities and décor. During your stay, you can visit the city cathedral which was built in the 16th century. Enjoy fascinating museums or take a ride in a horse-drawn carriage down the city's main avenue, Paseo Montejo.

The hotel offers excellent cuisine. The restaurants are sophisticated environments that are complemented with unique foods and drinks that will cover all your needs. Located only 20 minutes from the airport.

Hyatt Regency Merida

Ave. Colon esq Calle 60, a 100 metros del Paseo Montejo, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, 97000

Tel: +52 999 942 1234; Fax: +52 999 925 7002 merida.regency@hyatt.com

FOR HOTEL RESERVATIONS PLEASE COMPLETE THE HOTEL RESERVATION AT:

<https://aws.passkey.com/go/fishwild>

For information related to travel to the GCFI conference in Merida, Mexico, please visit the [GCFI Merida, Mexico conference website](#) (**The User Portal will be available very soon**). We have included information related to airfare, the hotel as well as other important travel information. Please be sure to revisit the conference webpage often as information changes regularly.

FISHERS FORUM AND FIELD TRIP

The Fishers Forum comprises a themed session in the main conference ending in the presentation of the Gladding Memorial Award (Monday, 6th) and a field trip especially for fishers (Tuesday, 7th). The theme for the 70th GCFI conference is “Collaborating to conserve spawning aggregations”. Fishers and other GCFI participants with experience of fisheries exchanges who are interested in sharing information in the Fishers Forum should contact Will Heyman (heymanwill@yahoo.com) or Mitchell Lay (mitchlay@yahoo.co.uk) by 30 July 2017. Details of the Forum session and field trip will be in the second GCFI announcement

FIELD TRIP AND TOURS

On the afternoon of Wednesday 8 November, choose from among three tours of the City and nearby attractions that have been specially designed with you in mind. A contribution to each tour will be required from each participant. Please check the GCFI website for updates on tours.

VISA APPLICATION

For the 70th GCFI Conference in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico all individuals travelling by sea or air will require a passport or other accepted official form of identification to enter the country.

There are a number of countries that require visas to travel to Mexico. Please make contact with the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Immigration Department, for enquiries or to obtain one.

For requirements to enter Merida, Mexico, please visit the Mexican Embassy in your country or general information on: <https://mexico.visahq.com/>

As the meeting approaches, more information about the venue and program will be posted on the conference web page.

Remember advanced planning can smooth the visa application process for you. Apply for your visa well in advance of your travel!

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN MERIDA, YUCATAN, MEXICO IN NOVEMBER FOR THE 70th GCFI!