



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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## NOAA Fisheries Seeks Comments on a Proposal to Revise Accountability Measure Language in the U.S. Caribbean Fishery Management Plans

*Comment Period Ends April 4, 2016*

NOAA Fisheries seeks public comment on the Comprehensive Amendment to the U.S. Caribbean Fishery Management Plans: Application of Accountability Measures.

### Purpose of the Accountability Measures Application Amendment

The amendment would resolve an existing inconsistency between language in the Reef Fish, Queen Conch, Spiny Lobster, and Corals and Reef Associated Plants and Invertebrates Fishery Management Plans of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and the regulations guiding the application of accountability measures in the U.S. Caribbean exclusive economic zone. The purpose of the amendment is to ensure the regulations governing accountability measures in U.S. Caribbean federal waters are consistent with their authorizing fishery management plans.

### Proposed Management Measure

Accountability measure language in the four fishery management plans would be modified to reflect current regulatory text. The result of this proposed change would be that an accountability measure-based closure would only apply for the fishing year in which it was implemented. This approach is consistent with the intent of the Council and implementing regulations used by NOAA Fisheries to apply accountability measures in U.S. Caribbean federal waters. The current process used by NOAA Fisheries and the Caribbean Fishery Management Council to apply accountability measures would not change as a result of this proposed amendment.

### Request for comments

The Notice of Availability for public comment on this amendment published in the *Federal Register* on February 4, 2016. NOAA Fisheries must receive comments on this notice no later than April 4, 2016. We will address all comments specifically directed to the

Accountability Measures Application Amendment or the subsequent proposed rule. You may obtain electronic copies of the Amendment from the NOAA Fisheries Website:

[http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/caribbean/generic/accountability\\_measures/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/caribbean/generic/accountability_measures/index.html), the e-Rulemaking Portal: [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), or the Caribbean Fishery Management Council Website: <http://www.caribbeanfmc.com>.

### How to Submit Comments

You may submit comments on this document, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2015-0124, by any of the following methods:

**Electronic Submission:** Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2015-0124-0001>, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

**Mail:** Submit written comments to María del Mar López, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

**Instructions:** Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NOAA Fisheries. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NOAA Fisheries will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).