GCFI | GULF AND CARIBBEAN FISHERIES INSTITUTE

Reef Fisheries and Spawning Aggregations at GCFI72 Punta Cana

[By M. Schärer, GCFI Board Member] November 20, 2019. *Research techniques, management applications and the outcomes of a regional technical workshop on fish spawning aggregations were recently shared during the 72nd conference of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI).*

This year's technical session on Reef Fisheries and Spawning Aggregations was hosted by GCFI and the organization Science and Conservation of Fish Aggregations (SCRFA). The session comprised oral presentations from the Gulf of California in Mexico, Florida, and Puerto Rico, and highlighted the use of knowledge gained from the study of fish spawning aggregation (FSAs) to guide management actions for sustainable fisheries and the conservation of fish populations. Multiple technologies applied to FSAs were showcased: active acoustic surveys with echosounders for a Goliath grouper (*Epinephelus itajara*) spawning aggregation; passive acoustic research on red hind (*Epinephelus guttatus*) in captive and wild conditions during the reproductive season; and spatial modeling based on passive acoustic monitoring in a Gulf grouper (*Mycteroperca jordani*) FSA. The combination of multiple technologies (split beam sonar, diver surveys, ROV, wave gliders, acoustic tagging and passive acoustics) to study snapper and grouper FSAs and the responses from decision makers were discussed. The latest technological advances and state of science to study FSAs reviewed during the workshop "Improving the Monitoring and Abundance Estimation of FSAs" was also presented in the session. This workshop hosted by GCFI and NOAA enhanced the capacity and strengthened links in the regional network, seeking to link data collected at FSAs with traditional fisheries stock assessments and inform the development of spatial management. For more information please visit the GCFI72 conference website to download the Book of Abstracts as we wait for the GCFI72 Conference Proceedings to come online.

Figure 1. From left to right: Emma Doyle session moderator, Allison White, Carlos Zayas-Santiago, Chris Taylor, Tim Rowell and Danielle Morley.