



GULF & CARIBBEAN FISHERIES INSTITUTE

NOVEMBER 7-11, 2022 | FORT WALTON BEACH, FL

GCFI is pleased to announce that the 75th annual meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI 75) will be held in Fort Walton Beach, FL from 7 – 11 November 2022 at The Island Hotel. GCFI is partnering with the Okaloosa County, the Destin – Fort Walton Beach Convention Center and Visitor Bureau to host GCFI75. We intend to host a [hybrid in-person event in Florida with options for virtual participation](#). We are monitoring the status of COVID19 within the region and the safety of our GCFI Family is our priority. Thus if the status of the pandemic changes, and it is no longer safe to host an in-person meeting, a fully virtual event will be convened.

CONFERENCE THEME

The theme of this year's conference is "*Understanding connectivity of coastal and estuarine ecosystems: Highlighting Successes & Learning from Challenges*".

THE VENUE

The Island Hotel will serve as the main hotel while the meeting will be hosted at the Destin – Fort Walton Beach Convention Center. The Island Hotel is a 329 room beachside resort that has multiple resort-style amenities, bars, onsite restaurants, and complimentary parking. To book your accommodation and take advantage of special rates [please click here](#).



REGISTRATION

GCFI 75 Registration includes access to our conference app (Whova) all technical sessions, the Fisheries for Fishers forum, special thematic sessions, the poster session, the CINEFISH film festival, field trips, socials and other special events.

Registration can be completed online at: <https://www.gcfi.org/conference-registration/>

The registration rates are as follows:

GCFI Members	In Person Rate (USD)	Virtual Rate (USD)
Regular Early-Bird (through 10 October)	200	125
Regular	250	150
Regular Onsite	300	N/A
Student Early-Bird (through 10 October)	75	25
Student	95	50
Student Onsite	125	N/A

Non-Members	In Person Rate (USD)	Virtual Rate (USD)
Regular Early-Bird (through 10 October)	300	200
Regular	350	250
Regular Onsite	400	N/A
Student Early-Bird (through 10 October)	125	75
Student	145	100
Student Onsite	175	N/A

GCFI acknowledges that some of our members may not be able to afford virtual registration rates due to hardships experienced as a result of COVID-19. Please email gcfi@gcfi.org to submit a request for waiver of virtual registration fees.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

	Sunday 6 November		Monday 7 November	Tuesday 8 November	Wednesday 9 November	Thursday 10 November	Friday 11 November	
8:00	Workshop to Advancing the Science of Fish Ageing Workshop (NOAA)		Registration	Registration	Registration	Registration	Registration	
9:00			GCFI75 Opening Ceremony Keynote Address: Bob Glazer	Reef Fisheries	Sargassum Special Session Keynote Address: Dr Shelly Ann Cox	Demersal / Pelagic Fisheries	Communication	
10:00	Coffee Break		Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
11:00	Workshop to Advancing the Science of Fish Ageing Workshop		Small Scale Fisheries	Fish Spawning Aggregations	Sargassum Special Session	Marine Litter / Climate Change	Science and Innovation	
12:00								
13:00	Lunch		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
14:00								
15:00	Registration	Regional Women in Fisheries Forum	IYAFA Special Session	Governance	Field Trips	Invertebrates / Aquaculture	Keynote Address: Dr. Kiki Jenkins GCFI75 Closing Ceremony	
16:00								
		Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break			Coffee Break	Coffee Break
17:00		Regional Women in Fisheries Forum	Fishers Forum	Meeting of the GCFI Membership			Marine Protected Areas / Habitats	
18:00			Poster Session					
19:00	Student - Board Social Welcome Reception				CINEFISH Film Festival	GCFI75 Banquet		
20:00								
21:00								

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Bob Glazer: *A users guide for managing planet earth in the Anthropocene*

Bob recently retired from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commissions' Fish and Wildlife Research Institute where he served as the Principal Investigator of the queen conch research and restoration program in Marathon. His research focused on stock restoration, essential habitat, larval recruitment, endocrine disruption, marine fishery reserves, and stock structure. He has worked extensively on molluscan aquaculture for both commercial and restoration projects. In 2018, he received the Director's Award for his lifetime of achievement. Bob also served as the Principal Investigator on a number of climate change adaptation projects. He developed the KeysMAP (Florida Keys Marine Adaptation Planning) program which uses scenarios to develop climate adaptation strategies, identifies triggerpoints for implementing the strategies, and develops monitoring program to identify when the triggerpoint is attained. He also served as the chair of the Monroe County Climate Change Advisory Committee whose objective is to make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on how best to adapt to a changing climate in the Florida Keys. In 2016 he received the Leadership Award Honorable Mention of the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy.



Dr. Lekelia "Kiki" Jenkins: Insights into improving the adoption of bycatch reduction devices

Dr. Jenkins is a marine sustainability scientist and Associate Professor at Arizona State University. She grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, fishing and crabbing recreationally on the Chesapeake Bay and volunteering as a junior zookeeper. She received her PhD from Duke University by pioneering a new field of study into the invention and adoption of marine conservation technology. Her research centers on the human dimensions of marine sustainability solutions, including fisheries conservation technologies and marine renewable energy. Her work has led to regulatory changes that allow more sustainable fishing practices, has advised international fisheries diplomacy, and has informed renewable energy policy. Dr. Jenkins also studies the science dance as a means of science engagement, science communication, and social change. Among her many honors and awards, she received an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowship in Ocean Sciences and is a member of to the National Academies of Sciences Ocean Studies Board.

SPECIAL SESSION: Living With Sargassum: Current Scientific Perspectives And Future Outlook For Fisheries, Coastal Managers And Entrepreneurs.

Organized by: Global Ocean Institute, World Maritime University, Sweden in association with CERMES, University of West Indies, Barbados and The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute.

For over a decade, influxes of the floating sargassum seaweed to the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico have caused major environmental and socioeconomic problems for fisheries, tourism and coastal communities. In the early years responses were reactive, uncoordinated and inefficient leading to environmental degradation. Millions of dollars were channelled into emergency efforts to deal with the problem, regional coordination, research to understand the problem and innovative ways of using sargassum for commercial purposes. With the realization that sargassum influxes will persist into the foreseeable future, proactive and coordinated management responses across the region are essential. However, as highlighted by the 2021 UNEP white paper on sargassum, it is a complex problem with inevitable trade-offs between clean-ups, harvesting initiatives and environmental impacts. The session will present a current state of understanding, with a particular emphasis placed on what the future holds and what research will be needed to resolve the key challenges.



Keynote Speaker: Dr. Shelly Ann Cox

Current Scientific Perspectives And Future Outlook For Fisheries, Coastal Managers And Entrepreneurs.

For more than a decade, the Wider Caribbean and West Africa have experienced an unprecedented Transatlantic Triple Threat- Sargassum Influxes. This threat has also been described by scientists as the Great Atlantic Sargassum Belt, emphasizing the magnitude and complexity of this environmental issue. Sargassum influxes have caused significant social, economic and environmental impacts resulting in challenges to already strained climate-sensitive socio-economic sectors. Emerging impacts recently reported in the energy and water sectors highlight the need for adaptive management strategies to address this crisis. While efforts to explore potential opportunities are underway, the reality is that sargassum influxes remain more of a threat than a benefit until key issues are resolved. This presentation

provides guidance on the operationalisation of the strategy framework and blue economy links proposed in the UNEP-CEP Sargassum White paper (2021). Existing and potential interventions are categorised under three main headings: Adaptation, Mitigation and Policy Development and Coordination. Established, emerging and nascent solutions including examples of sargassum product innovation will also be presented. Making the shift from a triple threat to opportunity requires more attention to potential value chains. Considerations for logistics, costs and resources at each stage of a potential sargassum value chain will be presented as well as cross cutting activities that support quality control and environmental and social safeguards.

The presentation ends with a proposal on the promise of digital technologies including artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT) and blockchain to support efficient operations and promote traceability in an effort to build sustainable sargassum value chains.

2) Linking The International Year Of Artisanal Fisheries And Aquaculture To Sustainable Blue Economy Development In The Gulf And Caribbean Region.



Organizers: Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) through financing from the European Union, Gulf Caribbean Fisheries Institute.

The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Western Central Atlantic Region is being celebrated under the theme of Recovery and Resilience. Across the region, a cross-section of stakeholders in artisanal fisheries and aquaculture has been mobilized to bring awareness to the importance of these sectors at the national, regional, and global scales. This special session welcomes presentations from scientists, researchers, managers, fishers, government officials, and other stakeholders that span research and practice on artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in the region. Presentations that address one or several of the following themes will be prioritized: Social Resilience, Innovation, Intersectoral Linkages, Artisanal fisheries, Aquaculture/aquaponics, Gender, and Youth in the Gulf and Wider Caribbean region. The intent of this session is to bring together collective perspectives and expertise from stakeholders on artisanal fisheries and small-scale

aquaculture in the region. At the end of this session, we aim to identify opportunities to contribute to the continued development of the sector and integration into the blue economy dialogue in the region. At the same time, discussions from this section will contribute to ongoing work in the region on the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Guidelines for Small-Scale Fisheries and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Contact: Dr. Eric Wade Eric.Wade@fao.org or wadee21@ecu.edu

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

The conference program features multi-disciplinary thematic sessions that have a mix of natural and social science, management, and technology related to the ecosystem or fisheries. Abstracts are solicited in the following areas (other subjects not listed will also be considered):

- Governance, livelihoods, and organizations
- Reefs and associated ecosystems and fisheries
- Marine protected areas science and management
- Pelagic ecosystem and recreational fisheries
- Habitats and coastal management



- Climate change science and adaptation
- Sargassum science and management
- Aquaculture
- Communication and environmental education
- Marine litter science and management
- Queen conch, spiny lobster, oysters and other invertebrates

E-POSTER SESSION

Instead of printed posters, we will be showcasing dynamic electronic posters (e-posters). An e-poster is a collection of multimedia resources related to the author's research. E-posters will be available one week before the conference and they will be accessible even after the conference. Poster specification guidelines will be available on the GCFI website.

WORKSHOPS

1) Regional Women in Fisheries Forum

Organizers: Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), University of West Indies – Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (UWI-CERMES), GCFI

As part of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA 2022), we will be hosting a Regional Women in Fisheries Forum. This special session aims to acknowledge, celebrate, and recognize the important role women play across the small-scale fisheries and aquaculture value chain. In this session, women from across the region will have the opportunity to network and learn from each other based on experiences in their respective countries. This session will aim to identify current best practices across the region on the integration of gender in fisheries and fostering an arena for equal participation of women in policy and practice. This workshop will feature small-group discussions, keynote presentations, and scenario planning.

If you are interested in participating, please complete this [Expression of Interest Form](#)

Contact: Dr. Eric Wade Eric.Wade@fao.org or wadee21@ecu.edu and Ms. Maria Pena: maria.pena@cavehill.uwi.edu

2) Advancing the Science of Fish Ageing Workshop

Organizers: NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Gulf Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Purpose: Demonstrate and teach the range of techniques from simple to advanced tech that might be used to improve the capacities of local agencies as well as improve the quality of age data needed in fishery assessments. The goals would be to familiarize attendees with various methods to age fish, including less traditional alternatives that might be accomplished in simplified ageing labs as well as advanced techniques that offer improvements and efficiencies over traditional visual ageing.

Format: The workshop will be presented by staff of the NOAA/NMFS/Southeast Fisheries Science Center's Biology & Life History Branch based in Panama City, FL. Invited speakers (tentatively identified but not confirmed) will be included in each session to demonstrate

real-world examples of the presentation material. Workshop report will consist of manuscripts from staff presenters and invited speakers so that all material is covered. The report could be produced as a NOAA Tech Memo or in another preferred format.

Target audience: For fisheries scientists and managers interested in building local capacity for ageing or just gaining a better understanding of how ageing is done and how ageing affects assessments, the workshop should be of interest. Graduate students interested in potential research projects could benefit, as well.

Contact: For more information, please email Dr. Ron Hill, Chief, Biology & Life History Branch: ron.hill@noaa.gov

SOCIAL MEDIA

To stay informed of all GCFI75 updates, we encourage you to follow GCFI on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) and use the Conference Hashtag #GCFI75.



We look forward to welcoming you to Fort Walton Beach, Florida for GCFI75