



FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT & CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

76th Annual Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Bahamas.com

GCFI76: Nassau, The Bahamas

GCFI is pleased to announce that the 76th Annual Conference of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI76) will be held in Nassau, The Bahamas from 6 -10 November 2023 at the Atlantis Paradise Island Hotel.

GCFI is partnering with The Bahamas Ministry of the Environment, to host GCFI76.


Conference Theme

The theme of this year's conference is "**Linking science and society towards a vision for sustainable fisheries**".

Join us in Nassau, Bahamas, this November to exchange ideas and perspectives on emerging research and science with direct relevance to management and governance. The theme of this meeting highlights the importance of engagement and dialogue among diverse sectors to ensure a sustainable future of the region's fisheries and marine resources. The marine environment continues to be threatened by impacts from overfishing, habitat loss and climate change, resulting in decreased biodiversity, increasing social inequality, and increasing food insecurity. These impacts present significant challenges now and into the future. During the meeting, we will discuss key topics for engaging in, and supporting, innovative approaches including ocean literacy, strengthening governance mechanisms, and developing inter- and transdisciplinary research.

As we look forward to a future of sustainable fisheries, it is necessary to examine options, paths, and barriers. Considering this, we are preparing a program comprised of an opening plenary, general sessions, workshops, and technical sessions related to sustainability, fish and aquatic ecosystems, fisheries and society, and innovations in fisheries. We will bring together experts, academics, policymakers, managers, fishers, and relevant organizations interested in marine issues, natural resources, sustainable fisheries, and tourism.





In keeping with the theme of the conference, submissions for oral and/or poster presentations on the following topics are encouraged:

- Innovative strategies that promote management and fishery conservation.
- Potential short-term and long-term impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture sustainability including integrating knowledge on climate change into fisheries management and marine spatial plans (e.g., modelling and mapping tools, risk and vulnerability analyses, sea-use scenarios; ocean planning and management initiatives)
- Innovative strategies that support fishers and communities as they work to meet the sustainable fisheries goals.
- Social justice, equity, and fairness in marine fisheries and how these can be integrated into national and international fisheries management and science,
- Promoting research and training to build capacity and improve sustainability of local and regional fisheries.
- Integrating approaches to restore key species, communities, ecosystems, and ecological processes
- Aquaculture approaches to address food insecurity and depleted stocks

Venue

Atlantis Paradise Island, a lush, oceanside resort located on Paradise Island will serve as the main venue for GCFI76. Please check the GCFI76 conference website for information on rates and accommodations as these will be updated as information becomes available.

Conference App

GCFI will be once again utilizing Whova, our Conference App, which can help improve networking and facilitate connections between in-person and virtual participants. Attendees can create profiles, communicate with and schedule meetups with other attendees (in-person or virtually) whilst also being able to create personalised agendas, take notes, share documents, and much more.

Registration

GCFI76 registration includes technical sessions, the Fisheries for Fishers forum, special thematic sessions, a poster session, the CINEFISH film festival, field trips, and social events. Registration can be completed online at this link.

The registration rates are as follows:

GCFI Members	In Person Rate (USD)	Virtual Rate (USD)
Regular Early-Bird (30 September)	200	125
Regular	250	150
Regular Onsite	300	N/A
Student Early-Bird (30 September)	75	25
Student	95	50
Student Onsite	125	N/A
GCFI Non Members	In Person Rate (USD)	Virtual Rate (USD)
Regular Early-Bird (30 September)	300	200
Regular	350	250
Regular Onsite	400	N/A
Student Early-Bird (30 September)	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 or other issues. Please email gcfi@gcfi.org to submit a request for waiver of virtual registration fees.

Call for Abstracts for Technical, Special and Poster Sessions

Abstracts for GCFI 76 are due 31 May 2023. Abstracts will be accepted in English, French, and Spanish. Abstracts are only required in one of the three languages; but titles **must** be in all three languages and must not exceed 250 words (275 for Spanish and French). Abstracts must be submitted using the secure online Abstract Submission Form.

Acceptance to present within an oral or poster session requires submission of an extended abstract. Extended abstract preparation guidelines are available online. Members of GCFI are encouraged to submit full manuscripts or short communications based on presentations given at GCFI meetings to Gulf and Caribbean Research for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published open access at no charge to the authors through the GCFI-GCR partnership. Full manuscripts will also be accepted for publishing in the GCFI Proceedings.

Authors of accepted presentations will be notified via e-mail in July 2023. Submissions intended for the oral presentation, but not granted a slot, would automatically be accepted as a poster presentation. Regardless of the format, we encourage everyone who is interested in participating to submit an abstract.

Technical Sessions

The conference program features multi-disciplinary thematic sessions. Abstracts are solicited in the following areas (other subjects will also be considered):

- Governance, livelihoods, 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
 - Shrimp and demersal trawl fisheries
- Habitats, climate change, and coastal management
 - Essential fish habitats
 - Integrated coastal management
 - Climate change science and adaptation
 - Sargassum
- Aquaculture
- Marine Litter/Debris
- Vision of the UN Ocean Decade

Special Session: Research and stakeholder collaboration to inform and execute conservation and restoration

Organizer: Bonefish and Tarpon Trust

Session Description: Fisheries and habitat conservation in the modern world is faced with many challenges, including habitat loss/degradation, water quality declines, climate change impacts, and fishery capacity issues. These challenges are especially acute in nearshore areas, where anthropogenic impacts are most intense. Addressing these challenges requires a multidisciplinary, collaborative effort from scientists, stakeholders, resource managers, and others on research, education, advocacy, and application of actionable knowledge to address conservation needs. Stakeholder engagement and collaboration in research is essential to conserve and restore ecosystems, associated biodiversity, and the fisheries that depend upon healthy ecosystems. Outdoor recreation specialists, such as commercial/artisanal fishermen, guides, and anglers, represent a stakeholder group that have unique incentives to contribute to conservation and stewardship. This session invites presentations and posters that highlight collaborative projects that address conservation challenges, and share successes, failures, and lessons learned. Areas of focus include fish habitat use, habitat conservation, habitat restoration, protected areas, education, user conflicts, collaborative fishery assessments, water quality.



Target Audience: Academia, NGOs, resource agencies, fishers, resource managers, policymakers and policy specialists

Contact: For more information, please contact Aaron Adams or Justin Lewis:

aaron@bonefishtarpontrust.org

justin@bonefishtarpontrust.org

Special Session: MPA networks as tools to implement ecosystems monitoring programs?

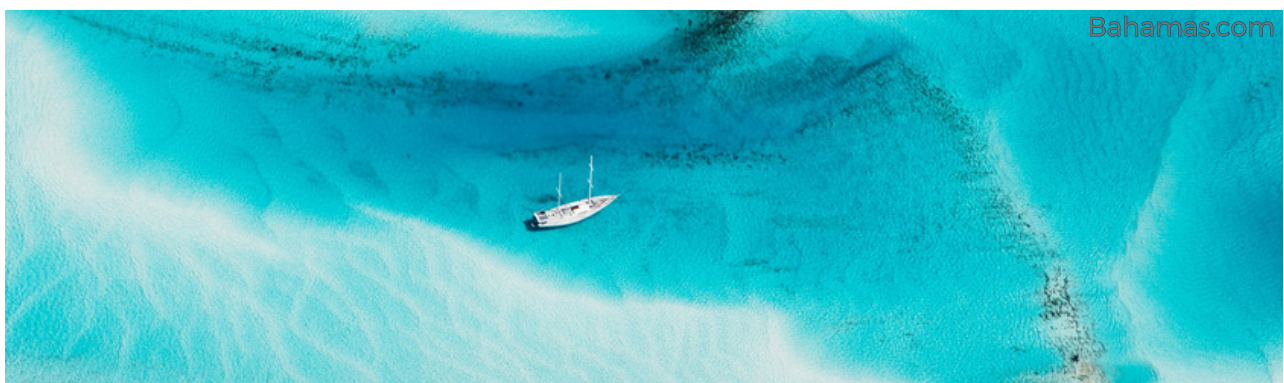
Organizers: Regional Activity Centre for the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife for the Wider Caribbean Region - SPAW RAC and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute.

Context: Monitoring is critical to know what is occurring on the ground and give regular, robust and strategic reporting to influence coastal management decision-making at regional, national and local levels. Such reports on the status of ecosystems can provide more reliable and accurate data and information to inform national /regional level policy, decision-making and reporting, and support the reporting by countries on their achievement of global objectives and targets e.g. Convention on Biodiversity, Global Biodiversity Framework, Ramsar Convention, Sustainable Development Goals, etc.). Monitoring programs also help to understand broader environmental trends and identify emerging issues impacting marine ecosystems.

At national, sub regional or regional scale, marine protected areas (MPA) manager networks build capacity and improve the effectiveness and sustainability of MPAs through sharing of experiences, best practices, knowledge and technical and scientific information. They allow for exchanges between managers and stakeholders with common issues in different local contexts and facilitate creative solutions, problem solving and resource sharing.

Given the existence of various national and regional monitoring programs and the role of regional marine protected areas networks in supporting such monitoring, this proposed GCFI special session represents an opportunity to identify opportunities for further collaboration and action.

Goal: To discuss and exchange ideas on how MPA managers networks can be used as a mechanism to develop, enhance and/or implement comprehensive ecosystems monitoring programs in the Wider Caribbean Region.



Special Session: MPA networks as tools to implement ecosystems monitoring programs

Proposed agenda:

1. Tropical Ecosystems Monitoring Programs in the Caribbean - 1h30

The first part of the session will cover existing monitoring networks in the Caribbean with regard to the tropical ecosystems including coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds. Technical presentations will be made to showcase the existing initiatives in the region, their objectives, work done, actors involved, capacity-building, tools available and main results in terms of ecological trends of these ecosystems in the Caribbean. A strong focus will be made on the GCRMN-Caribbean network which ensures the collection of useful, comparable and accessible data that can effectively reveal the status and trends of the coral reefs in the region. This session will help contribute to efforts by the Cartagena Convention Secretariat to develop its second State of Marine Habitats Report and to report on various regional and global objectives and targets.

2. Caribbean MPA Networks working on monitoring practices - 1h30

The second sub-session will focus on existing marine protected areas networks in the wider Caribbean region, including the SPAW-listed protected areas network, MPA Connect, DCNA Network, Red Golfo, etc. Presentations will cover existing links and synergies between these networks of MPA with regards to ecosystem and biodiversity monitoring programmes, evaluation, contribution to conservation, knowledge sharing, etc. MPA Networks can be force multipliers to increase knowledge on the state of marine ecosystems. Information collected in MPAs are crucial in order to provide relevant indications on ecological trends inside and outside protected zones.

3. Opportunities of collaboration between MPA Networks, and regional monitoring programs - 1h00

The third part of the session will be dedicated to explore opportunities for collaboration between the MPA networks and regional monitoring programmes, identification of needs and ways to bridge the gaps.

Target Audience: Regional MPA managers, scientists, NGOs, government officials/decision-makers and regional/international organizations.

Contact: For information please contact Geraldine Conruyt:
geraldine.conruyt@developpement-durable.gouv.fr

Workshop:

Developing Harvest Strategies Using FishPath & Using Adaptive Implementable Management to Achieve Human & Ecological Welfare Objectives

4-5 November, 2023 | 1- 5 pm | Pre- Registration required

Organizers: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), The Nature Conservancy, and Gulf Caribbean Fisheries Institute,

Conveners: Josh Nowlis (NOAA Fisheries) and Jason Cope (NOAA Fisheries) and William Michaels

Scope of workshop: Fisheries managers often feel that inadequate data prevent them from actively managing their fisheries. This perception can manifest itself in lack of clarity to move forward, feelings of hopelessness and management paralysis. Although many data-limited methods exist, they were previously scattered through the literature and not clearly linked to data collection schemes and management measures. FishPath is a decision-support tool developed by The Nature Conservancy, NOAA Fisheries, and CSIRO Australia to guide managers through the full range of data-limited options for fisheries management. It helps identify fisheries-specific options for effective data collection, assessment models and indicators, and systems of management response to stock status. FishPath provides an objective and transparent tool to develop robust harvest strategies regardless of data and management impediments in order to make the most of available data and other resources. It also provides pathways for adaptive management and strategic thinking. This workshop will provide an overview of this powerful new tool, including hands-on exercises so that participants can explore the potential to improve their sustainable fisheries management practices. Theme topics will include:

1. Overview of the Management System

- a. Data collection
- b. Assessment methods
- c. Management methods

2. FishPath Questionnaire

- a. Walk through specific example while encouraging attendees to follow along and answering questions with respect to their own fisheries.
- b. Review results from our example
- c. Review results from participants
- d. Demonstrate how to identify the most relevant options
- e. Highlight some common issues and opportunities:
 - i. Size-based assessment methods
 - ii. Harvest control rules and addressing uncertainty
 - iii. Compliance and enforcement

Registration: Workshop registration and invitation will be limited to 40 participants, and must be completed [via this link](#) before August 30th.

Contact: For more information, please contact Josh.Nowlis@noaa.gov.

Workshop: **Interactions between human activities and marine megafauna of the Caribbean: Progress made through the CAMAC project and potential for future actions.**

5 November, 2023 | 1- 5 pm | Pre- Registration required

Organizers: The Agoa Sanctuary and the SPAW-RAC and Gulf Caribbean Fisheries Institute,

Conveners: Magali Combes, Claire Pusineri, Lucas Genève, Célie Nazical, , Amandine Escarguel, Géraldine Conruyt

Scope of workshop: The habitats of most species of marine megafauna (sharks, sea turtles, marine mammals and seabirds) strongly overlap with human activities such as fishing, shipping and tourism. These frequent interactions can lead to negative impacts on these vulnerable species, as well as socio-economic issues for the human coastal communities. In the Caribbean, these impacts remain poorly quantified and mitigated.

The regional cooperation project CAMAC, for Caribbean marine Megafauna and anthropogenic Activities, aims to improve knowledge and strengthen regional collaboration and stakeholder capacities around these issues. CAMAC will ultimately provide Caribbean governing bodies and environmental stakeholders with recommendations and tools to reduce the negative impacts resulting from the interactions between marine megafauna and human activities. The CAMAC project will address these objectives through four thematic work packages:

1. Interactions with fisheries: assessment of socio-economic and environmental issues in collaboration with Caribbean fisheries organizations.
2. Stranding networks: harmonization of protocols and capacity building.
3. Awareness raising strengthening of environmental education skills and creation of a school twinning program.
4. Knowledge enhancement: development of a scientific framework for regional megafauna assessment and enrichment of knowledge of poorly known areas or species through surveys.

The project is planned for 5 years (2023-2028) and is structured in 2 phases:

- Phase 1 has already started and will end in December 2023. It focuses on the review of available information and data, on the development of partnership with regional stakeholders and on the determination of the protocols and needs for phase 2.
- Phase 2 is expected to be confirmed in 2023 and should take place from 2024 to 2028. It will be dedicated to the implementation of the protocols determined during phase 1, in collaboration with identified partners.

Objective: This workshop aims to bring together the CAMAC partners and other Caribbean stakeholders working on fisheries, megafauna conservation, and environmental education, to discuss and validate the major outputs of CAMAC phase 1. These outputs (review of available information, partnership building and identification of protocols and needs for phase 2) will first be presented and the attendees will then split into 4 thematic round tables to discuss and validate the protocols for phase 2.

Expected outcomes of workshop

- To communicate on the project, how it could benefit the Caribbean territories/organizations, and how they can get involved.
- Strengthen networking with and between CAMAC partners.
- Make sure the protocols for phase 2 meet their needs.
- Encourage other organizations to become involved in the project.

Target audience:

- Scientists, MPA managers and stakeholders working on megafauna conservation (sharks, sea turtles, marine mammals and seabirds);
- Scientists, managers, and practitioners working on fisheries and marine traffic.
- Stakeholders in environmental education and sensitization.
- Local authorities and governing bodies of the Caribbean.
- Any GCFI attendee willing to contribute to the project will be welcome, but we will open the workshop in priority to organizations and individuals who have expressed an interest in the CAMAC project during Phase 1.

Registration Deadline: Registration should be completed [via this link](#) before August 15, 2023.

Contact: For more information please contact Magali Combes, CAMAC project manager (magali.combes@ofb.gouv.fr)



GCFI Student Awards

Student Awards for Academic Achievement

GCFI is awarding \$1,500 scholarships to the best oral and poster presentations (both virtual and in-person presentations are eligible). The content of the presentation must be related to final research done by the student related to their thesis or dissertation. If already submitted, this thesis or dissertation must be no older than one year. The award winners will receive their scholarship at the following year's conference, to help support their participation in this meeting. Complete instructions and eligibility requirements are on the Outstanding Student Achievement Awards web page.

GCFI Travel Awards

GCFI will offer two travel awards of US\$750 each to eligible students to help offset travel costs to GCFI76. The deadline for students to apply for this award is **May 31, 2023**. Complete instructions and eligibility requirements are on the GCFI Student Travel Awards web page. Students will be notified of acceptance/rejection of their application by July, 2023. Students may apply for a travel award and for consideration for the Student Achievement Award in the same year. Students who received the GCFI75 Student Achievement Award are not eligible for a travel award.

Ron Schmied Scholarship

The Ron Schmied Scholarship, a GCFI initiative supported by the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) and private individuals 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 to apply is **May 31, 2023** and students will be notified of acceptance/rejection by July 2023. Instructions and eligibility requirements are on the Ron Schmied Scholarship page. Students may apply for the Scholarship and be considered 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 but will only receive one award.

SCRFA Award

Science and Conservation of Fish Aggregations (SCRFA) will offer a Travel Award of US\$800 to a student to attend GCFI 76. 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 (including abstracts and supporting paperwork) should be submitted by **May 31 2023** to Martin Russell (SCRFA Chair) martinrussell99@gmail.com

Gladding Memorial Award

As a component of the Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) Initiative, the GCFI Gladding Memorial Award (GMA) committee is requesting nominations of outstanding fishers for GCFI76. This annual award is presented to select fishers (male or females) 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. 2024 will represent the 20th year anniversary of the first award. The winner will be sponsored to attend GCFI76 in Nassau, The Bahamas to receive his or her award, and to participate in the entire conference including the Fisheries for Fishers Forum and Fishers field trip.

You are invited to submit award nominations to the GMA committee at gma@gcfi.org. All nominations must be received by 15 August 2023 and nominators are welcome to request further information and guidance. Background information on the GMA, nomination forms with award criteria, and details of the process are available on the [Gladding Memorial Award webpage](#).

Fishers Forum & Fishers Field Trip

The Fisheries for 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). 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 Prescott Smith (psmith@bahamasconservation.org) by 15 August 2023. Details of the Fisher Forum session and Fishers field trip will be provided in the second GCFI76 announcement.



CINEFISH Film Festival

Are you interested in submitting a short film for this year's CINEFISH Film Festival at GCFI76? If so, please complete this form with the following information.

- Title of film
- Brief description of film (2-3 sentences)
- Film makers(s)
- Duration of film – Note: films should be a maximum of 15 minutes
- Image for film (png or jpg) – To be used for promotion
- Link to preview the film (YouTube, Vimeo, GoogleDrive etc)
- Type of film (Documentary, Animation or New Media)

For more information please contact: fadilah.ali@gcfi.org.

Conference Field Trips

On the afternoon of Wednesday 8 November, you will have the opportunity to choose from various activities and tours that have been specially designed with GCFI members in mind. A contribution to some tours might be required from participants. Please check the GCFI website for updates on field trips

Visa Application

For GCFI 76, all participants travelling by sea or air will require a passport or other accepted official form of identification to enter the country.

Participants from a number of countries will require visas to travel to the Bahamas. Please contact your local Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Immigration Department for enquiries or to obtain one.

Visas requirements for the Bahamas can be found at this web address:

<https://www.bahamas.com/plan-your-trip/island-faq/visa-immigration>

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

**We look forward to seeing you in
Nassau, The Bahamas for GCFI76!**