

# GCFI78

First Announcement  
& Call For Abstracts



**GCFI78 | 27-31 OCTOBER, 2025 | CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA**

# GCFI78: Cartagena, Colombia

GCFI is pleased to announce that the 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI78) will be held in Cartagena, Colombia from 27 – 31 October, 2025. GCFI is partnering with the IOCARIBE Regional Secretariat for UNESCO-IOC and the UNDP/GEF PROCARIBE+ Project, to co-host GCFI78.

GCFI78 is an Endorsed Decade Action Program with the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and will provide a unique and valuable platform to:

- Celebrate and evaluate progress made under the UN Decade of Ocean Science.
- Foster dialogue and outline a collective vision for the future of ocean positive action in the region.
- Engage with a diverse range of partners to support the work of the Regional Ocean Coordination Mechanism

## Conference Theme

The theme for the Conference is “Partnering for the Oceans: Merging Ocean, Climate, and Biodiversity Efforts Through Regional Marine Data and Innovation”.

Topics could include:

- Connecting People, Management, and the Ocean through Shared Ocean Knowledge
- Collaborative Solutions for Climate, Coasts, and Communities
- Empowering Caribbean Communities through Regional Partnerships, Data Systems and the Blue Economy

## Sponsors



Sub-Commission for the Caribbean  
and Adjacent Regions

Subcomisión para el Caribe y  
Regiones Adyacentes



2021  
2030 United Nations Decade  
of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development



PROCARIBE+



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DEVELOPMENT BANK  
OF LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN



# Conference Venue

El Hotel Caribe by Faranda Grand will serve as the main venue for GCFI78. Designed by the Cuban architect Manuel José Carrerá Machado, this hotel offers a semi-Olympic outdoor swimming pool, elegant architecture, along with other amenities. This boutique jewel is located in the heart of the historic Walled City of Cartagena and merges contemporary comfort with colonial charm, providing a unique experience in the Colombian Caribbean. Brimming with history and showcasing a neocolonial design, the hotel was the area's first beach resort. The hotel has maintained its historical charm, from vintage lamps and bronze locks to the original elevator from the 1940s. Conveniently situated in the Bocagrande part of Cartagena, this property puts you close to attractions and interesting dining options.

To make reservations, please visit the hotel website:

<https://www.farandahotels.com/hotel/hotel-caribe-cartagena-by-faranda-grand>.

Enter the desired date on the page, the number of people per room, and enter the promotional code: **78PescaGolfoCaribe**





## Conference App

GCFI will be once again utilizing Whova, our Conference App, which will 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.

## Call for Abstracts: Technical, Special and Poster Presentations

Abstracts for GCFI 78 are due **15 June 2025**. Abstracts will be accepted in English, French, and Spanish. 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](#).

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 2025. 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.

# Special Session: The Future of Caribbean Fisheries: Investigating Gaps and Opportunities through the Role of GCFI

## Goals of the Session

The purpose of this session is to explore the future of Caribbean fisheries by identifying gaps and opportunities within the work of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI).

Our aim is to identify gaps and opportunities to strengthen sustainable fisheries management, promote scientific research, and enhance policy frameworks that support ecological resilience, economic viability, and community well-being throughout the region. Additionally, we seek to pinpoint future areas for GCFI's expansion, ensuring its ongoing impact on fisheries research, policy innovation, and capacity-building across the region.

## Areas to be explored:

- Support the Sustainability of Small-Scale Fisheries
- Enhance Climate Resilience in Fisheries
- Strengthen Policy Development and Governance
- Leverage the Role of GCFI in Research and Innovation
- Empower Coastal and Fisheries Communities
- Promote Regional Cooperation for a Blue Economy

# Special Session: Innovative Ocean Observation and Forecasting

## UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

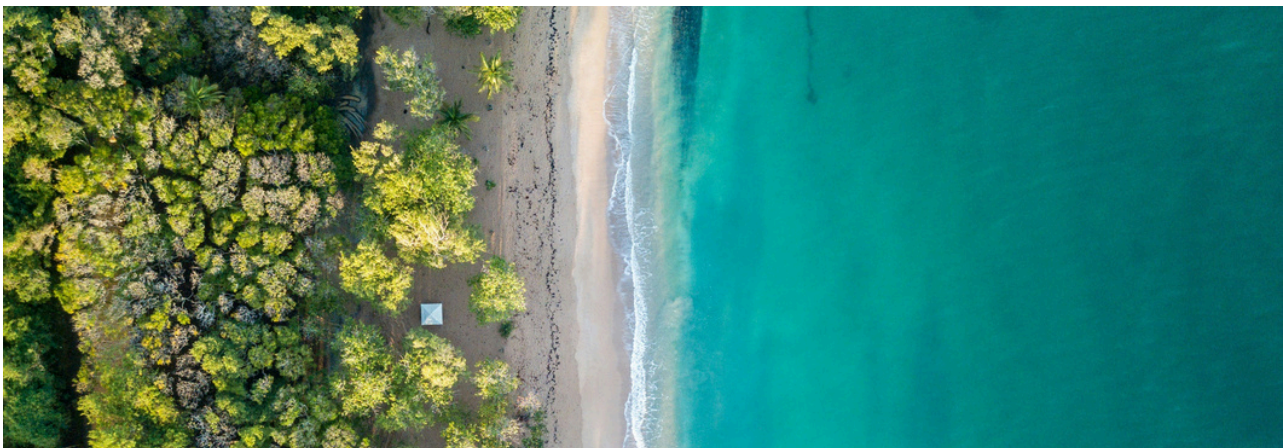
The "Innovative Ocean Observation and Forecasting" session is proudly sponsored by the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. This dynamic session will showcase cutting edge science, technologies, and initiatives that are revolutionizing ocean observation and forecasting to support sustainable ocean stewardship. Learn how these innovations align with the Decade's vision to deliver the science we need for the ocean we want.



# Technical Sessions:

The conference program features multi-disciplinary thematic sessions. Each session may have a mix of natural and social science, management, and technology related to the ecosystem or fisheries, highlighting the conference theme. Papers and posters are invited in the following areas (other subjects not listed below will also be considered):

- Governance, livelihoods, and organizations
- Socio-economics
  - Ecological and socio-economic impacts on the fisheries sector
  - Cooperation in the Caribbean: Large and small actions, results, and challenges.
  - Gender in fisheries
- 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
- Science and Innovation
- UN Ocean Decade: 10 Challenges on the road to 2030



# GCFI Student Awards

## Student Awards for Academic Achievement

GCFI is awarding \$1,500 scholarships to the best oral and poster presentations. The content of the presentation is typically related to final research done by the student related to their thesis or dissertation. If the work is already completed and the student graduated, the thesis or dissertation must not have been defended prior to 1 November 2024. For students with “near complete” projects it is recommended that they should apply for an oral presentation for the award, while those students not quite as far along should apply for a poster presentation for the award. It is recommended that the research should be at least 50% complete in order to be eligible for the awards. Oral presentations competing for the award must be presented in-person at the conference. Virtual poster presentations are eligible for the award. 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 **June 15, 2025**. 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 2025. Students may apply for a travel award and for consideration for the Student Achievement Award in the same year. Students who received the GCFI77 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 **June 15, 2025** and students will be notified of acceptance/rejection by July 2025. 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.

# 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 GCFI78. 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. The winner will be sponsored to attend GCFI78 in Cartagena

You are invited to submit award nominations to the GMA committee at [gma@gcfi.org](mailto:gma@gcfi.org). All nominations must be received by **July 15, 2025** 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 and a field trip especially for fishers. Details of the Fisher Forum session and Fishers field trip will be provided in the second GCFI78 announcement.

## Conference Field Trips

On the afternoon of October 29, 2025, 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

## CINEFISH Film Festival

Are you interested in submitting a short film for this year's CINEFISH Film Festival at GCFI78? 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](mailto:fadilah.ali@gcfi.org).



# Become a Sponsor of GCFI78

By sponsoring an annual GCFI meeting, your company's logo and profile will be featured on GCFI's social media platforms, website, conference program, printed promotional materials, and at the event registration area.

The conference app (Whova) also provides an opportunity to further showcase sponsor profiles and allow for direct interaction with all participants. Sponsors and Exhibitors will have the opportunity to provide outreach materials, schedule appointments with attendees where appropriate, and promote their organizations by sharing images, videos, text, and link to relevant websites etc.

## Why Sponsor?

- **Increased Brand Visibility & Exposure:** The annual GCFI meeting provides a platform to showcase your brand to a wider audience, potentially reaching new customers/stakeholders
- **Targeted Audience Engagement:** Sponsoring events that align with your target audience allows you to connect with potential customers/stakeholders who are already interested in your industry or product/service.
- **Networking Opportunities:** The annual GCFI meeting offers valuable chances to connect with your target audience, potential partners, and clients, fostering valuable relationships.
- **Building Business Relationships:** Sponsoring events can help you build relationships with other organizations, leading to potential collaborations and partnerships.
- **Gaining Valuable Insights:** Events such as the GCFI annual meeting can provide valuable insights into customer/stakeholder views, trends and preferences, and other activities.

There are various sponsorship packages available, ranging from being a conference partner, sponsoring sessions, social receptions or other activities. For more information, please see the [GCFI Sponsorship Prospectus](#).

If interested, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can tailor a sponsorship package to meet your specific needs and objectives. Please don't hesitate to contact us at [gcfi@gcfi.org](mailto:gcfi@gcfi.org) with any questions or to schedule a meeting.

# Visas

For GCFI78, all participants traveling by sea or air will require a passport or other accepted official form of identification to enter the country. Participants from some countries will require visas to travel to Cartagena, Colombia. Please contact your local Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Immigration Department for inquiries. Remember, advance planning can smooth your visa application process. Apply for your visa well in advance of your travel!

For more information on Visa Requirements to visit Colombia, please visit:

[www.cancilleria.gov.co/en/procedures\\_services/visa/requirements](http://www.cancilleria.gov.co/en/procedures_services/visa/requirements)

For more information on traveling to Colombia, please visit:

[www.colombia.travel/en](http://www.colombia.travel/en)

# Travel Insurance

For your convenience and peace of mind while attending GCFI78 in Cartagena, we strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance, especially considering potential unexpected events like cancellations or medical emergencies.

Where to Find Travel Insurance:

- **Online Travel Insurance Providers:** Websites like Allianz, Squaremouth, and CoverTrip offer a wide range of travel insurance plans.
- **Travel Agencies:** Your travel agency can often help you find and purchase travel insurance policies.
- **Credit Card Benefits:** Some credit cards offer travel insurance benefits, so check your card's terms and conditions.

**We look forward to seeing you in  
Cartagena, Colombia for GCFI78!**