



Report of the Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) Activities

**72nd Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI)
Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, 4-8 November 2019**



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1. Acknowledgements

The organizing committee for the 2019 Fisher Forum (included Don DeMaria, Manoj Shrivani, Michelle Schärer, Bertha Simmons, and Will Heyman). We wish to acknowledge the support received from the fiscal sponsors of the 2019 Fishers Forum including the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, Shell, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The organizers also wish to thank Milton Ginebra, Director of the Dominican Council on Fisheries and Aquaculture (CODOPESCA) and Janette Mateo, Director of Fisheries Resources in the Dominican Republic who arranged and hosted the Fishers Field Trip to Boca de Yuma. We are particularly grateful to Fadilah Ali for tireless coordination and assistance to the F4F Initiative and to Michelle Schärer for edits and contributions to this document. We also thank those organizations who sponsored fisherfolk (men and women with livelihoods in harvest and postharvest sectors) to attend and participate in GCFI this year and all years. Finally, we acknowledge that fisherfolk face enormous challenges throughout the Gulf and Caribbean Region and we admire their perseverance and grace. This report was prepared by Will Heyman and Bertha Simmons.

2. Introduction

This is a report on the 2019 Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) activities at the 72nd Annual Meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, 4 – 8 November 2019. Activities consisted of a plenary Fishers Forum, a fishers field trip to the village of Boca de Yuma and a planning meeting for the F4F Initiative. Based on increasing interest and leadership from Don DeMaria and other past GMA winners (Appendix 1), this year's forum was centered around Fishers Experiences – the theme of the plenary session. Don suggested the format whereby presenting fishers created videos and presented them orally.

3. Fishers Forum: Fisher Experience

Following the engaging format and success of the 2018 Fisher Exchange session at GCFI in San Andres, the 2019 Fishers Forum was subtitled, Fisher Experience. The session was designed to foster dialogue whereby fishers shared their direct experiences with the wider GCFI community using videos, pictures and story-telling to illustrate the realities of their fisheries. Presentations were designed in part to facilitate cooperation between fishers and the larger GCFI community. These served as touchpoints for discussions. Members of the audience were able to ask questions and engage with presenting fishers in a forum setting. The session was moderated by Don DeMaria – the first GMA winner.

Fishers forum - Fishers Experience & Gladding Memorial Award Ceremony

Held on Monday 4 November 2020 16:00 – 18:00 in the main conference room

Don DeMaria	Introduction
Cecil Marquez	Big Fish from small boats – pelagic longline fishing
Don DeMaria	Florida Marine Life Fishery
Andres Maldonado	Championing grouper conservation in Puerto Rico
Ron Surrency	Snapper/grouper and lionfish in FL (bandit, powerhead, spear)
Angelica Mendez	Cooperative fisheries management in Guatemala
Scott Hickman	Catch shares in the Gulf of Mexico
Moderator	Fisher Forum Questions and Answers
Martin Russell	Presentation of the 2019 Gladding Memorial Award

3.1. Cecil Marquez: Big Fish from small boats – pelagic longline fishing

Cecil Marquez (2018 GMA winner) focused on two main areas: conservation and fishing techniques in Grenada. He presented a short video on fishing techniques and how they link to the type of vessel. A typical, Type 1 longline vessel (the smallest of three types) is shown



below. Fishers have begun to use this type of boat and gear to fish for yellowfin tuna. They have been trying to share their techniques with fishers on nearby islands however these islands have yet to follow their lead. He stated that they have been experimenting with circle hooks and are following ICCAT guidelines – as the country is now signatory – and currently negotiating with the United States regarding exports.

Regarding conservation, Marquez explained that after extensive

community consultation, fisherfolk in the area have pledged to protect 25% of the reef contained within the Gouyave Marine Protected Area. He also described an innovative “biorock” project in which fishers are helping to farm coral (right).



He concluded by saying that winning the Gladding Memorial Award has inspired him and made him feel much more confident in his efforts to address fisherfolk challenges in his community and beyond. He made a call for people to take up the mantle of conservation and protection of marine resources.

3.2. Don DeMaria: Florida Marine Life Fishery

Don DeMaria (2004 GMA winner) presented a video illustrating his fishery for aquarium fishes using low cost techniques. Don and others have fished the waters of Florida to supply specimens for the marine aquarium trade. The main targets include blue and queen



angelfish, lionfish, emerald crabs (left), turbo snails, and many other species of fishes and invertebrates. Live specimens are generally sold to wholesalers or aquarium fish dealers. Don illustrated the use of quinaldine, a mild anesthetic, to capture fishes without harming them. The fishery results in very low incidental mortality of harvested species.



The Marine Life Trade is a classic “data-poor” fishery where little was known about the biology of harvested species, and almost nothing about levels of effort and harvest rates. Don explained that fishers in this industry worked closely with regulators to develop the Florida Marine Life Rule in the early 1990s – legislation that continues to guide the management of the fishery. The cooperative development of the rule is an

important example of fishers guiding sustainable regulations for a growing commercial fishery.

As a result of the collaborative rulemaking process, fishers for aquarium fishes are now required to have a permit and follow strict guidelines. A challenge they face is with the influx of sargassum, as this algae rots, sinks and can cause of death to small reef fishes.

3.3. Andres Maldonado: Championing grouper conservation in Puerto Rico

Andres Maldonado (2009 GMA winner) spoke about commercial fisheries, collaborative research, and other marine related work in which he has participated. His primary fishery is for queen conch. Early 1990s along with a marine organization he worked on a research regarding how sea urchin populations were affecting queen conch populations. From this he learned of the 4 conch varieties and went onto explain the differences. He also managed to convince a group of scientist to do DNA sampling for queen conch in order to demonstrate that the population was genetically different. Following hurricane Maria (2017) the queen conch population has diminished which created a challenge for fishers such as himself.



Another collaborative research project focused on lionfish (right). Andres collected tissue and shared his observations and experiences with this species. He reported seeing lionfishes with wounds and lionfishes being captured by barracudas and nurse sharks.

He finished by describing his collaborating with researchers regarding populations of the endangered Nassau grouper. He stated that action is needed to protect them.

3.4. Ron Surrency: Snapper/grouper and lionfish in Florida

Ron Surrency, fishes from Gainesville FL, on SCUBA with spear guns. He shared videos of his fishing techniques, including underwater footage of spearfishing. The videos showed Ron spearing groupers. He pointed out it is a highly selective fishery, with zero by-catch. Surrency also targets invasive lionfish (right). By catching over 5,000 pounds, he won the Lionfish Challenge (a tournament) in 2018.



3.5. Angelica Mendez Parham: Cooperative fisheries management in Guatemala

Angelica Mendez, (2010 GMA winner) serves as the Coordinator of the Network of Artisanal Fishers from the Guatemalan Caribbean and Lake Isabel. She stated that government aid for the Guatemala fishers is lacking. The fisherfolk recognize the importance of resource protection and conservation and the need for fisheries resource management. Fishers worked alongside government authorities and managed to define closed



seasons based on scientific and traditional knowledge and declared a pilot fish recovery zone, which if successful would permit them to increase these

zones. It has not been an easy task. They are now seeing positive results which motivates them to continue. They are also proud, states Angelica that they are now seen as an example within the country. Fishers on the Pacific side of Guatemala are reaching out to them for assistance in establishing fishing recovery zones.



3.6. Scott Hickman: Catch Shares in the Gulf of Mexico

Scott Hickman, (2018 GMA winner) works as a commercial fisher after many years working as a charter fishing captain. He serves on the board of the Charter Fisherman's Association (CFA). CFA's mission is to develop solutions for sustainable fisheries. CFA works closely with the scientists doing marine fisheries research. He is also dedicated to fisheries management, serves on advisory panels, and attends every meeting of the Gulf of Mexico Regional Fisheries Management Council. Hickman described the "Catch Shares" Program in the Gulf of Mexico – a system of Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQs) for red snapper and several other species in the Gulf. By allocating quota to individuals, and carefully monitoring landings with Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) and mandatory logbook reporting, managers have relatively accurate, real-time counts of extraction with which to manage the fishery. Red snapper have rebounded in the Gulf of Mexico. Hickman designed and now runs Catch Share Experience trips whereby anglers can learn about catch shares by participating as volunteer commercial fishers. Clients serve as anglers after pre-purchase of a minimum amount of fish that they then capture during that day.



Hickman also described another sustainability project he is involved with, aimed at reducing marine debris. Plastics, including balloons are harmful to marine life such as turtles. Hickman developed and participates in "balloon rodeos" (above) in which prizes are offered to fishers who bring in the highest number of balloons in a day.

3.7. Gladding Memorial Award (GMA)

The aim of the GMA has been to recognize fishers from around the region who share enduring visions and demonstrate active support for the sustainable use of marine resources in their home countries and beyond. There have been 21 GMA winners from around the region to date (Appendix 1). The 2019 GMA award was bestowed upon Winsbert Harry from St. Vincent, who became the 22nd winner of this prestigious award.



Winsbert Harry, GMA 2019 (center) from St. Vincent and the Grenadines received the 2019 Gladding Memorial Award from Martin Russell, GCFI Board Chairman. The ceremony included (left to right) Scott Hickman (GMA winner), Cecil Marques (GMA winner), Martin Russell, Will Heyman, Sean Walker, Winsbert Harry, Earl George, Andres Maldonado (GMA winner), Angelica Mendez (GMA winner), Ron Surrency and Don DeMaria (GMA winner).

Winsbert Harry learned to fish from his grandparents and left school at 15. Winsbert has shown great leadership in his community, working on behalf of fishers, raising their awareness of environmental issues, advocating for their rights, raising funds for training, and representing fishers in national and international organizations. He serves as president of the St. Vincent National Fisherfolk Organisation and Fisheries Liaison Officer to the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations. Winsbert expressed his pleasure at winning the award as a validation of his work to motivate other fishers to protect their marine environment. More about Winsbert's contributions are detailed on the next page of this report.

Details of the GMA award, nomination forms in three languages and the judging rubric are available on the Fisheries for Fishers area of the [GCFI website](#). Each year, winners are selected through a transparent process in which nominations are broadly requested from GCFI members, fishers are nominated, using a standardized nomination form, and a winner is selected in a process whereby a group of 5-7 rotating judges (including past GMA winners) use a pre-selected criteria and a systematic scoring process to rank nominees. The judges select a winner by consensus based on discussions of the rankings. Winners receive a complementary trip to the annual conference (including accommodations, meals, and registration).

About Winsbert Harry



Fishing Experience

- > 25 years fishing experience
- > Fishes 8 mo/yr for pelagics (tuna, swordfish, mahi, and marlin) and 4 mo/yr for deep water groupers and snappers.
- > Youngest fisher in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to have won fisherman of the year award which he did in 2009, capturing 870 lbs. in a day.
- > Fishes as captain (not vessel owner) ~6 d/wk, 10-12 h/d, 15-60 miles offshore from a 26' open vessel with a 75 hp engine



Conservation and Sustainability

- > To mitigate impacts to the new South Shore Marine Conservation Area, Winsbert trained fishers in marine ecosystem conservation and helped secure funding for alternative livelihoods training - leading to SCUBA certification for 15 fishers.
- > Active and vocal in the protection of Rose Place fishing community and fair treatment to its people.
- >

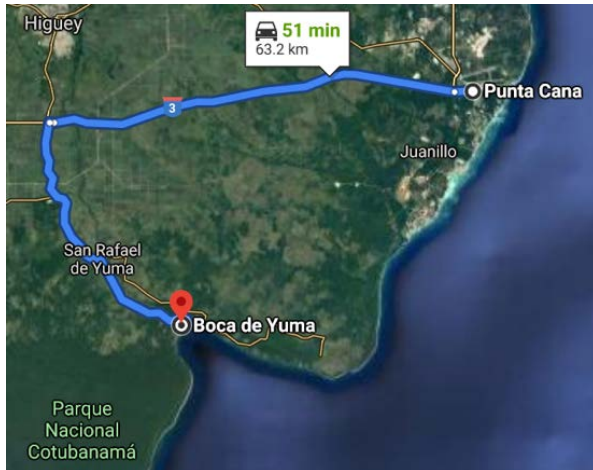


Support to Fishing Communities

- > As director of the Goodwill Fishing Coop in Kingston, SVG, Winsbert serves as a vocal advocate for the rights of fishers being displaced by port development.
- > Advocating for inclusion, Winsbert created space for fishers (not just boat owners) on the Coop Board
- > Advocates for safety at sea, based on his "lost at sea" experience.
- > Motivates other fisher to be active members in the National Fisherfolk Organization

4. Fishers Field Trip: Boca de Yuma

The fisher's field trip was generously organized by the Dominican Republic's national fisheries agency, CODEPESCA and focused on the fishing community of Boca de Yuma. Forty



participants travelled one hour by bus from the conference hotel to the village. Visiting fishers had a brief informal exchange with assembled local fishers (~ 30 persons), and everyone was offered a presentation from Mr. Ginebra, director of CODEPESCA



gave a brief history of the formation of the fishers association and explained ways in which the government supports local fisherfolk. The local fishers took some of the visitors on boats trip around the area. The full list of field

trip participants is shown in Appendix 2). Local fishers also shared information on their target fisheries including mahi mahi about 10 - 15 miles from shore and 30 – 40 miles for snapper. They used vertical drop lines and hand lines. Trammel nets are banned. There is an agreement between the fishers association and the local cooperative whereby all members must sell their fish directly to the cooperative. Sargassum has at



times extended their fishing season as it brings with it other species of fish which have acceptance within the community.



Milton Ginebra, director of the national fisheries agency, CODEPESCA addressing fishers and other field trip participants in the village of Boca de Yuma.



The fisher field trip creates opportunity for informal interaction between fishers and managers from many nations around the Gulf and Caribbean.

5. F4F Planning Meeting Summary Results

A energetic planning meeting was held from 7:30 – 9:30 PM on Tuesday 5 November, 2020. In attendance were five GMA winners (Don DeMaria, Angelica Mendez Parham, Scott Hickman, Cecil Marquez, Andres Maldonado, and Winsbert Harry); and others - Ruth Perry, Ron Surrency, Eric Castro, Fabio Palacio Howard, Manoj Shivlani, Will Heyman, and Bob Glazer. The group highlighted and summarized the importance of the F4F initiative. The group recognized that a unified voice can have powerful national and regional conservation impacts. The group further recognized the value of the F4F in highlighting the importance and value of GCFI. The group reaffirmed the desire to enact Peter Gladding's vision through a "Fisher Ambassadors Program", i.e. GMA winners, travelling and promoting marine conservation and management.

The group focused on ways to improve its effectiveness. Decisions were made to formalize governance including election of a chairperson and other officers. The group discussed the institutional relationships between the Fisher Engagement Committee of the GCFI Board and the GMA Committee which has functioned in the past as a subcommittee of the board with representation from a single board member as a liaison. At that time of the meeting, those present felt GMA winners and the GMA committee may be better represented as a committee, rather than a subcommittee. Further, the group agreed that GMA winners should be play a larger role in Fisher Engagement Leadership. In an effort to address these concerns, meeting participants asked Ruth Perry to have the board consider amalgamation of the Board's Fisher Engagement Committee with the GMA committee and that the committee should have greater representation from GMA winners. Meeting participants suggested that a re-named amalgamated committee might be called the Gladding Conservation Committee. Subsequent to the board meeting and discussions with a larger group of interested parties, no resolution had been reached regarding institutional changes. Indeed, Bertha Simmons, who was not present at the meeting but who has played an instrumental role in F4F and GMA activities since its inception, concurs with meeting participants about the need for greater fisher involvement believes that the existing structure as a subcommittee offers an autonomy in which fishers could take greater leadership so suggested that structure should remain as is. She further voiced her concerns regarding the proposed name change.

Discussions within the meeting (with limited participation) and after the meeting (as reported herein) underlines the need for better coordination. There is wide agreement that subsequent planning meeting needs to be scheduled well in advance to ensure maximum participation. The full meeting notes are included as Appendix 3.

Appendix 1: GMA Winners 2004 - 2019



#	GMA Winner	Affiliation, Country	Year Won
1	Don DeMaria	Sea Samples, Summerland Key, Florida, USA	2004
2	Eloy Cuevas	Monkey River, Belize , Central America	2005
3	Anderson Kinch	Barbados Fishing Cooperative Society, Oistins, Barbados	2005
4	Harvey Robinson	Fish and Farming Cooperative, Providencia, Columbia	2005
5	Carleton (jack) Young, Sr.	Placencia Fisherman's Cooperative, Placencia, Belize	2006
6	Ceylon Clayton	Negril Coral Reef Preservation Society, Little Bay, Jamaica	2006
7	Linwood Outerbridge	Bermuda Marine Resources Board, Hamilton, Bermuda	2007
8	Claudio Gonzalez	Jaragua National Park, Jaragua, Dominican Republic	2007
9	Toribio Mata	Los Roques Archipelago National Park, Los Roques, Venezuela	2008
10	Jaime Medina	Federation of Quintana Roo Fishing Cooperatives, Cancun, Mexico	2008
11	Ruben Penot	Mochimo, Venezuela	2009
12	Andres Maldonado	Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico	2009
13	Mitch Lay	Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations, Antigua and Barbuda	2009
14	Angelica Maria Mendez Parham	Red de Pescadores Artesanales, Livingston, Guatemala	2010
15	Martha Gomez	Quintana Roo, Mexico	2011
16	Casimiro Newball	Providencia, Columbia	2012
17	Eddie Toomer	Captain Eddie's Fishin', Venice, FL, United States	2013
18	Edwin Font-Acevedo	Rincón, Puerto Rico	2015
19	Abel Ruiz	Corregimiento de Hicaco, Soná, Veraguas. Panamá	2015
20	Scott Hickman	Circle H Charters, Galveston TX USA	2017
21	Cecil Marquez	Gouyave, St. John's, Grenada W.I.	2018
22	Winsbert Harry	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	2019

Appendix 2: Fisher field trip participants

TRIP PARTICIPANTS				
	Name	Affiliation	Country	Fisher
1	Alex Barrios	ASOPACFA	San Andres	fisher
2	Alvergo Martinez	ASOPACFA	Colombia	fisher
3	Fabio Palacio Howard	ASOPACFA	Colombia	fisher
4	Nury Jay Henry	ASOPACFA	Colombia	fisher
5	Sixto Davis Forbe	ASOPACFA	Colombia	fisher
6	Ashanda Allen	BICU	Nicaragua	
7	Darven Danny Siu	Bluefields Indian & Caribbean University BICU	Nicaragua	
8	Earl George	Cabso/CNFO	Dominica	fisher
9	Sean Walker	Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations	Grenada	fisher
10	Patrtick McConney	CERMES	Barbados	
11	Scott Hickman	CFA	USA	fisher
12	Graciela Garcia Molinar	CFMC	Puerto Rico	
13	Ron Surrency	Coast Atlantic Charters	USA	fisher
14	Juan Oswaldo Guzman	COBI	Mexico	fisher
15	Erik Castro	Coralina	Colombia	
16	Nacor Bolanos	Coralina	Colombia	
17	Omar Abril Howard	Coralina	Colombia	
18	Nancy Montes	FL Sea Grant	USA	
19	Yvette Diei Ouqsh	FAO	Barbados	
20	Tom Matthews	Fish and Wildlife Research Institute	United States	
21	Javiere Adams	Fisheries Officer	Montserrat	
22	Rishma Mansingh	Fisheries Officer	Montserrat	
23	Cecil Marquez	Gouyave Fishermen Cooperative	Grenada	fisher
24	Tylon Joseph	Gouyave Fishermen Organization	Grenada	fisher
25	Bertha Simmons	Independent Consultant	Barbados	
26	Will Heyman	LGL	USA	
27	Bill Michaels	NOAA	USA	
28	Tim Rowell	NOAA	USA	
29	David Demer	NOAA Fisheries	USA	
30	Manoj Shivlani	NTVI Communications, Inc.	United States	
31	Claire Rosemond	OSU	USA	
32	David Ortiz	PEW Charitable Trusts	Puerto Rico	
33	Yuriv Kamper	Piskabon	Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba	
34	Angelica Mendez	Red de Pescadores del Caribe Guatemalteco	Guatemala	fisher
35	Andres Maldonado	Rivera	Puerto Rico	fisher
36	Ruth Perry	Shell	USA	
37	Winsbert Harry	St. Vincent & the Grenadines	St. Vincent and t	fisher
38	Conor MacDonnell	UF	USA	
39	Brad Erisman	UT Austin	USA	
40	Don DeMaria	Sea Samples, Summerland Key, Florida, USA	USA	fisher

Appendix 3: Planning Meeting Summary

Planning Meeting Summary Fisheries 4 Fishers Initiative Planning Meeting

5 November 2019, 7:30 – 9:00 PM
Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Objective Enact Peter Gladding’s vision through a “Fisher Ambassadors Program”, i.e. GMA winners, travelling and promoting marine conservation

Participants GMA winners - Don DeMaria, Angelica Mendez Parham, Scott Hickman, Cecil Marquez, Andres Maldonado, Winsbert Harry; and others - Ruth Perry, Ron Surrey, Eric Castro, Fabio Palacio Howard, Manoj Shrivani, Will Heyman, and Bob Glazer

Recognizing potential

- GMA winners are strong leaders already but not unified, examples include:
 - Angelica represents all (5,000) artisanal fishers on the North Coast of Guatemala
 - Scott represents all charter boat captains in the Gulf of Mexico
- A unified voice can have powerful national and regional conservation impacts
- Groups of GMA ambassadors could travel to several countries to reinforce local winner conservation efforts – i.e. support access to and influence over decision makers

What we can provide to GCFI

- A lightning rod to show the importance and raise the status and value of GCFI
- A network of fishers that managers, students and scientists can reach out too for trustworthy cooperative research partners

Issues to address

- Fisheries decline and Illegal and unreported unregulated (IUU) fishing
- Gear issues e.g. flying fish mesh net size (Grenada)
- Recreational fisheries (Gulf of Mexico)
- Log books and fisheries monitoring
- Citizen science
- Marine Debris

Potential Products

- Ambassador program
- Cooperative research clearing house for students and scientists to identify and partner with pre-vetted fishers
- Simple messages and slogans to share and adopt

- Expanded website with links to existing GMA stories, websites, films, success stories
- New video products including clips of GMA winners addressing Marine debris issues

Strategy

Focus initial GCC efforts first on Marine Debris, a non-controversial issue that is relevant to all countries and regions. This sexy, attention catching focus will create a lightning rod for attention and funding. . .Work on all other issues can follow under the umbrella

Short term action steps

- Re-connect and re-engage all winners (Will, Manoj, Don, Angelica)
- Update GMA winner database (Will)
- All winners to complete Manoj's GMA survey
- Create What's App group for internal communications
- Expand the GCFI website presence to include GMA winners pages with photos, links, videos, articles, etc.

Institutional development: pending issues and discussions

- Evaluate potential institutional changes to ensure greater effectiveness, GMA Winner leadership, governance and official recognition for F4F activities. It was suggested that this might be accomplished by amalgamation of the Fisher Engagement Committee with the GMA committee and annual F4F organizers group into a single body, possibly named, the Gladding Conservation Committee. The same goals might also be achieved by formalizing the existing GMA committee into a self-governing sub-committee of the board, with one board member represented.
- There is a feeling of urgency to define a process to select GMA winners into GCC governance positions (Chair, Assistant Chair, others?)
- Hold a virtual committee meeting (via webinar) (Bob to organize) to select/appoint chair holders and define next steps
- Evaluate possible linkages and funding support from GCFI Marine Debris Program (Bob) and Ocean Conservancy (Scott)