

Report of the Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) Activities

76th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) Nassau, Bahamas



7 – 11 November, 2023



BUILDERS INITIATIVE



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN
MISSISSIPPI



Shell
ENERGY



Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	3
1. FISHERS FORUM 2023	4
1.1. DR. RUTH PERRY (SHELL ENERGY): INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME	4
1.2. WILL HEYMAN (LGL): SOME GMA HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....	4
1.3. PATRICK McCONNEY (CERMES): MEMORIAL FOR ANDERSON KINCH (GMA 2005, BARBADOS)	5
1.4. CARLETON (JACK) YOUNG, SR. (GMA 2005, BELIZE)	5
1.5. DON DE MARIA (GMA 2004, USA)	6
1.6. ANGELICA MENDEZ PARHAM (GMA 2010; GUATEMALA).....	6
1.7. SCOTT HICKMAN (GMA 2017, USA)	7
1.8. CECIL MARQUEZ (GMA 2018, GRENADA).....	7
1.9. WINSBERT HARRY (GMA 2019, SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES).....	8
1.10. MIMI STAFFORD (GMA 2021, USA)	8
1.11. PRESCOTT SMITH (GMA 2021; THE BAHAMAS)	9
1.12. PRESENTATION OF THE 2023 GLADDING MEMORIAL AWARD.....	9
2. FISHER FIELD TRIP	10
3. REPORT FROM SUNDAY WORKSHOP: PRESENTED BY ANGÉLICA PARHAM	13
APPENDIX 1: FISHER FORUM AGENDA 2023	14
APPENDIX 2: GMA WINNERS MAP	15
APPENDIX 3: GMA WINNERS DATABASE.....	16

Acknowledgements

The organizing committee for the 2023 Fisher Forum included Fadilah Ali, Scott Hickman, Eric Wade, Will Heyman, Sepp Haukebo, Ruth Perry, Alejandro Acosta, Bob Glazer, Cecil Marquez, Don DeMaria, and Bertha Simmons. The Forum was funded through generous donations from Shell Energy, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's NOAA Fisheries, Builders Initiative, The University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance, CERMES, LGL Ecological Research Associates, and Environmental Defense Fund. The committee is grateful to Prescott Smith for encouraging The Bahamas to host the annual meeting and helping to organize the Fisher Field Trip. The committee wishes to thank the Fisher Engagement Committee of the GCFI Board of Directors for integration with other GCFI activities and the Gladding Conservation Committee for the nomination and selection of the 2023 GMA winner.

Introduction

This is a report on the 2023 Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) activities at the 76th Annual Meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, held in November 2023 at the Atlantis Hotel in Nassau, The Bahamas. The three main activities are reported in sections below as follows:

1. Fishers Forum and Gladding Award Presentation, Monday 6 November
2. Fisher Field Trip, Wednesday 8 November
3. Planning meeting, Sunday 5 November
4. Appendices



1. Fishers Forum 2023

Following tradition, the Fishers Forum took place the first day of the GCFI conference, Monday 2 November 2023. This marked the 20th year anniversary of the GMA so organizers felt it important to have as many GMAs attend as possible and to highlight the activities and actions that this group has taken. The 2023 Forum therefore centered around seven speed talk presentations from GMA winners. In addition, there were introductory remarks, honorary recognition for past winners, and the presentation of the 2023 Gladding Award. The full agenda is included as Appendix 1.

1.1. Dr. Ruth Perry (Shell Energy): Introduction and Welcome

Ruth shared that she was invited to get involved with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) Fishers for Fishers Initiative in 2015 and has been actively engaged ever since. Ruth shared that the company she works with, Shell, is a great supporter of the fishing industry and works with the fishing industry to support conservation efforts, which motivated Shell to join with GCFI to support the Fisheries for Fishers Initiative and the Gladding Memorial Award Program. She was happy to say that this year marks the 20th year of the GMA.

1.2. Will Heyman (LGL): Some GMA History and Accomplishments

Will, as chair of the Gladding Conservation Committee, welcomed everyone to share in the celebration of 20 years of Peter Gladding's legacy with the presence of many of the former GMA winners. He expressed his appreciation towards Shell, CERMES, NOAA, Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance, Environmental Defense Fund, and the Builders Initiative, Alejandro Acosta, Bob Glazer, Fadilah Ali, and the members of the GMA Committee and the GCFI Fishers' Engagement Committee.

Peter was an exceptional commercial handline fisherman in the Florida Keys who contributed greatly to conservation. Among his contributions - he built consensus for creation of the large no-take zone to protect Riley's Hump spawning aggregation site and was influential in Belize's decision to protect 11 spawning sites in 2003. After Peter died, GCFI started the Gladding Memorial Award in 2004 to honor him. Will offered notes on a few exceptional winners that could not attend – Eloy Cuevas (2005, Belize) and Mitch Lay (2009, Antigua and Barbuda). He also mentioned the influential Fisher Summit (Cumaná, Venezuela in 2009) and other notable events of the Fisheries for Fishers Initiative.

In conclusion, he suggested that GCFI participants can continue Peter's legacy by learning about Peter Gladding and GMAs, nominating exceptional candidates, including GMAs in proposals, and activities such as GMA conference attendance, fisher ambassador trips and exchanges,

invited talks and consultancies. Finally – he urged participants to mention the GMA in other arenas and conferences.

1.3. Patrick McConney (CERMES): Memorial for Anderson Kinch (GMA 2005, Barbados)



Anderson “Rogie” Kinch, lived in Barbados from 19 July 1955 to 15 June 2023. Patrick stated, “I have known Anderson for over 20 years during which he shared my fisheries journey. Rogie was an expert fisherman with great respect for the marine environment and one of those persons who you know could contribute to GCFI. He went from being a member to being part of the GCFI board of directors. He loved an argument that helped him share a lot of his knowledge with fishers and experts. He was very eloquent and contributed a lot to science through his publications and presentations. He was always open to gaining knowledge. GCFI really became his family after participating in so many of these meetings, he would have been here with us this year. He will be missed by several of us. They were lots of tribute some from UWI as he helped train many students and from his GCFI family. We all miss him, none more so than his wife Eutavine who would always be seen at his side at the GCFIs he attended.”

1.4. Carleton (Jack) Young, Sr. (GMA 2005, Belize)



Carleton was invited to attend but unable to travel for health reasons. He was honored through a film created by the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association (TASA) featuring him. Carleton was a fisherman with over 40 years’ experience. He began fishing when he was 15 years old. He was considered one of the best fishermen in his community. He was a member of Belize Fisheries advisory board for many years. He was instrumental in supporting Belize’s efforts to study and protect fish spawning aggregations at the national scale. After observing the changes within the fishing industry and fishing practices over the years he stated that if fishers “do it the right way we will have it longer, but if they don’t do it with proper control, we will lose entirely.”

1.5. Don De Maria (GMA 2004, USA)



Don is a full-time commercial fisherman, since 1972, working on the collection of fish and invertebrates for the aquarium trade and for medical research. Don along with Peter Gladding helped establish the Tortugas South Ecological Reserve, was involved in the protection of Goliath Grouper and assisted with the creation of marine life regulations to govern the aquarium fish trade. Don focused his presentation on shallow sewage injection – 60 foot deep with no treatment in the Florida Keys. To address this issue, they formed the nonprofit “Friends of the Lower Keys”. As a result of their struggle at least 8 shallow sewage injection wells were stopped (by cities and counties) and they are looking for better means of sewage disposal. The lesson: hold decision makers accountable; data and peer reviewed papers often don’t make a difference and sometimes, litigation is the only means of conservation.

1.6. Angelica Mendez Parham (GMA 2010; Guatemala)



Angelica stated she had over 20 years’ experience as a fisherwoman. She has always been committed to marine conservation and always looks forward to continuing Peter’s legacy. She worked tirelessly to form the legally constituted Red de Pescadores del Caribe Guatemalteco y Lago de Izabal, to form strategic alliances with governmental and non-governmental organizations and ensure training for fisherfolks on various topics. She outlined several goals and challenges for fisheries sustainability, fish stock recovery and conservation such as: modernization of fishing gear, reactivating participation processes post COVID, increasing fish stock recovery areas among others. Angelica sees fish stock recovery areas as having a bank in the ocean that will ensure fishers livelihood.

1.7. Scott Hickman (GMA 2017, USA)



Scott began by acknowledging that every presenter in the session stands on the shoulders of Peter Gladding. His work in the fisheries sector is as a commercial and charter for hire, theirs being the largest charter group in the Gulf of Mexico. Following the major oil spill in the Gulf he got involved in habitat conservation. His involvement included protection of coral reefs in the Gulf, cooperative research, actively supporting the expansion of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (from 4 – 17 shelf edge banks) and outreach to the highest levels of US government. Scott emphasizes the need for collaborative science policy and science work, understanding that policy makers change over time and sometimes even starting over as. The goals and challenges going forward as he sees them are to develop climate resilient fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico, and functional fishery ecosystem plans. He would like for the GMA winners come together to draft a regional spawning aggregation strategy. Concerning the need for management, he concluded, he has “seen places where once we use to fish and now, they are changed”.

1.8. Cecil Marquez (GMA 2018, Grenada)



Cecil affirms that three decades ago he introduced surface longline for pelagic fisheries in Grenada which went on to increase the country’s export of yellow fin tuna to the USA, he also introduced and promotes safety at sea, started a public awareness programme that led to the establishment of a Marine Protected Area, and helped train young coral gardeners. Cecil acknowledges that winning the GMA motivated him to be even more committed to ocean sustainability and conservation. He challenged folks to ensure the dream of Peter Gladding lives on, and to build coral nurseries and MPAs not only in Grenada but in other parts of the world so they can leave

a legacy behind and to remember the words of Nelson Mandela “It always seems impossible until it is done”.

1.9. Winsbert Harry (GMA 2019, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)



Winsbert started by saying that he was happy to be a fisherperson addressing other fishers participating in the GCFI meeting. He said he was proud to be a fisherperson committed to ocean sustainability. He is also creating awareness in his community beginning with his daughters who assist him in speaking out on issues affecting the fishing community. Winsbert has lobbied with the government to create a better working and living environment for fishers. He states that among the challenges they are facing is the ageing of the fishing community. He insists that including fishing within

school curricula, could support professionalism in new young fishers. He calls for promoting learning exchanges among fishers from other countries that will strengthen their knowledge in marine conservation and sustainability especially in the face of climate change. He closed by thanking GCFI for giving fishers the space to participate in the meeting, which gives fisherfolk the opportunity to share and receive valuable information.

1.10. Mimi Stafford (GMA 2021, USA)



Mimi began by sharing that her experience with the ocean was inherited from her father. She is a marine biologist and microbiologist with 60 years of observation and engagement in the fishing industry. She has been involved in trap certification programme, sponge restoration projects and have served on number of boards over 50 years. She went into commercial fishing focusing on sponge fishing as it was something she could do on her own. Currently her entire family is involved in the fishing industry. She believes in sharing challenges and solutions for the most efficient use of efforts of those involved. Given climate change events occurring worldwide and after observing never before occurrences on the keys, she sees the need to adapt

methods to deal with current and anticipated challenges while setting attainable goals.

1.11. Prescott Smith (GMA 2021; The Bahamas)



Prescott hails from Andros Island and serves as an icon in the catch-and-release fly fishing industry. He noted that flying fishing on the flats is the largest income generator in the family islands of The Bahamas. Fly fishers are the backbone of the economy and strong voices for conservation. Prescott urged that the resource needs to be protected as the livelihood of many depend on it. Among his many achievements, he spearheaded national and regional guide training programmes as an alternative livelihood in rural communities; the protection of millions of acres of mangroves and other nursery habitats on Andros, and passage of national flats-fishing management and

conservation legislation. He is currently fighting a proposal mine 5,000 acres in Andres.

Some of the challenges he has faces are the lack of support from the Forestry and Marine Resources Departments, and the growing need for resources, partnership and capacity building aimed at empowering local communities to fight and protect their environment. He would like to see environmental education programmes for locals, like those being modelled by the University of the Bahamas and The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute. Most importantly, Prescott was instrumental in bringing support from the Government of the Bahamas, to host this year’s event.

1.12. Presentation of the 2023 Gladding Memorial Award

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 25 GMA winners (Appendix 2, 3) from around the region based on nominations using a standardized form and review by an independent group of rotating judges using standardized criteria.

A total of ten (10) outstanding nominations for the Gladding Memorial Award were received in 2023 hailing from Grenada, Haiti, Belize, Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago and the USA. Nominations were carefully reviewed by a group of ten (10) judges, using pre-determined criteria and a quantitative ranking system. After careful deliberations, the 2023 GMA was bestowed upon Paulino Elmer Rodriguez from Belize.



Mr. Rodriguez is from the fishing community of Sarteneja, Belize and has been a fisherman for over 40 years. He is currently the Chairman of the Executive Committee for National Fishermen Cooperative Society Ltd (NFCS) and has served on various committee roles for over 25 years and represented the cooperative national and international forums. Mr. Rodriguez has been able to lead the board of directors of NFCS to restructure and strengthen the affairs of the cooperative thus making NFCS a progressive fishing cooperative in Belize. He is an advocate for sustainable fishing and is involved in several initiatives

to build awareness and strengthen overall fisheries management. As Chairman of NFCS he is currently leading a traceability system along with the Fisheries Department and other local and international partners aimed at improving management of fisheries resources in Belize. He also is a member of the Board of Directors for Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association and he contributed and supported the declaration of the Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve. He also played a key role in piloting, and national expansion of the Managed Access Program (right-based fisheries management) in Belize. Elmer has been a member of and participated in several national working groups and committee aimed at enhancing fisheries management in Belize, including the Fisheries Bill Taskforce and the Replenishment Zone Steering Committee. In 2019 Mr. Rodriguez was the recipient of the “Fisher of the Year” in recognition of his contribution to marine conservation and fisheries management in Belize. He is currently a member of the Belize Fisheries Council, a body that advises on policy decisions for fisheries management in Belize. He was part of the Belize delegation that participated and presented at the 2022 UN Oceans Conference held in Portugal. Martin Russel, GCFI Board Chair presented the award.

2. Fisher Field Trip

The fisher field trip was organized with the support of Environmental Defense Fund (Sepp Haukabo) and Bahamian GMA winner Prescott Smith. The trip costs were mostly covered by the Builders Initiative. The field trip included nearly 40 participants divided among two busses. Each bus was accompanied by a highly knowledgeable local fishermen serving as guides, Duggie Sanders and Ronald Labranche.

Participants included fishers from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize, Guatemala, Barbados, U.S., Haiti, Culebra Puerto Rico, Bonaire, Haiti, and The Bahamas, as well as a few scientists, fishery managers, conservation NGO representatives, a film maker, and members of the GCFI Board.

The Fishers Field trip had three destinations: Montagu Beach Fish Market, Potter’s Caye Industrial Fishing docks and Fish Market and, Tropic Seafood. Half the group visited the state-of-the-art facility at Tropic Seafood, the largest major exporter of conch, lobster and finfish.

Tropic also works on experimental aquaculture to reduce pressure on wild stocks. They are working with several species including Nassau grouper and red snapper as visitors observed. Visitors also observed the seafood export process and noted the extensive focus on sanitation, quality control, and efficiency. The facility is the first in the nation to use ozone injection to sanitize the facility and products for export.

All participants visited commercial fishing docks both small scale (Montagu) and large scale industrial, Potter's Caye. Without guided interaction at the markets, the diverse group of participants engaged in fruitful exchanges with each other and with local fishermen and processors. Camaraderie was enhanced by sharing fresh local seafood dishes at roadside stalls.





3. Report from Sunday Workshop: Presented by Angélica Parham

The Gladding Memorial Committee in conjunction with 8 GMA Winners, Fisher Engagement Committee Members and members of the GCFI Board held a meeting on Sunday November 6th to discuss revamping the GMA selection criteria. Participants agreed that the number and quality of nominations continues to improve. The group therefore looked carefully at the selection criteria and process and made the following agreements:

- Continue and maintain the theme of the award to honor Peter Gladding's legacy
- Continue to focus on accomplishments to date
- Add more consideration on what the nominee is likely to accomplish in the future
- Expand definition from "fishers" to "fisherfolk" thus including workers along the fishery value chain) to expand diversity and inclusion
- Include interviews of finalists as part of the selection process
- Revise nomination forms and scoring sheets and make changes as necessary

The Committee challenged the GCFI Community in the Bahamas to find and meet with three GMA winners, ask about their challenges and aspirations and share their findings on the conference app.

Appendix 1: Fisher Forum Agenda 2023



Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) Programme

Restoring Big Fish: Fisher Ambassadors for Marine Conservation 20th Anniversary of the Gladding Memorial Award Monday November 6th, 2023, 2:30 – 5:00

- 3:00 Introduction and Welcome (Ruth Perry)
- 3:10 GMA History and Accomplishments over 20 years (Will Heyman) 
- 3:20 Memorials and Acknowledgements
- Anderson Kinch (Barbados 2005) (Presented by Patrick McConney)
 - Tribute to Carleton (Jack) Young, Sr. (Belize 2005) (Film presented from TASA)
- 3:30 Gladding Memorial Award Winner Speed Talks (5 min each)
- Don DeMaria (USA, 2004)
 - Eutavine Kinch (for Anderson Kinch, Barbados, 2005)
 - Angélica Mendez Parham (Guatemala, 2010)
 - Scott Hickman (USA, 2017)
 - Cecil Marquez (Grenada, 2018)
 - Winsbert Harry (St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2019)
 - Mimi Stafford (USA, 2021)
 - Prescott Smith (Andros, The Bahamas, 2021)
- 4:15 Report from Sunday Workshop (Angelica Mendez Parham)
- 4:20 Facilitated Panel Discussion with GMA Winners
- 4:45 Presentation of the Gladding Memorial Award (Martin Russell)
Paulino Elmer Rodriguez
- 5:00 Closure: Prescott Smith



Appendix 2: GMA Winners Map

GMA Winners 2004 - 2023



Appendix 3: GMA Winners Database

#	GMA Winner	Year Won	Gender	Language	Country
1	Don DeMaria	2004	M	English	USA
2	Eloy Cuevas	2005	M	English	Belize
3	Anderson Kinch	2005	M	English	Barbados
4	Harvey Robinson	2005	M	Spanish	Columbia
5	Carleton (Jack) Young, Sr.	2006	M	English	Belize
6	Ceylon Clayton	2006	M	English	Jamaica
7	Linwood Outerbridge	2007	M	English	Bermuda
8	Claudio Gonzalez	2007	M	Spanish	Dominican Republic
9	Toribio Mata	2008	M	Spanish	Venezuela
10	Jaime Medina	2008	M	Spanish	Mexico
11	Ruben Penot	2009	M	Spanish	Venezuela
12	Andres Maldonado	2009	M	Spanish	Puerto Rico
13	Mitch Lay	2009	M	English	Antigua and Barbuda
14	Angelica Mendez Parham	2010	F	Spanish	Guatemala
15	Martha Gomez	2011	F	Spanish	Mexico
16	Casimiro Newball	2012	M	Spanish	Columbia
17	Eddie Toomer	2013	M	English	USA
18	Edwin Font-Acevedo	2015	M	Spanish	Puerto Rico
19	Abel Ruiz	2015	M	Spanish	Panamá
20	Scott Hickman	2017	M	English	USA
21	Cecil Marquez	2018	M	English	Grenada
22	Winsbert Harry	2019	M	English	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
23	Mimi Stafford	2021	F	English	USA
24	Prescott Smith	2021	M	English	Bahamas
25	Paulino Elmer Rodriguez	2023	M	English	Belize