

# Report of the Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) Fishers Forum

69th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI)  
Georgetown, Cayman Islands, 7-11 November 2016



## Sponsors



DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT  
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT



Ecological Research Associates, Inc.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

2016

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Suggested Citation</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Disclaimer</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4. Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>5. Process</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>6. Presentations</b> .....	<b>4</b>
6.1. Will Heyman: Session introduction and summary report on GMA winner interviews 4	
6.2. Ruth Perry: Shell support to GCFI Fisheries for Fishers Initiative .....	5
6.3. Scott Hickman: Fishers working towards sustainable fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico 5	
6.4. Croy McCoy: Presenting local fishers with conservation awards .....	6
6.5. Mitch Lay: Fisher Forum Wrap Up .....	6
<b>7. Fishers Field Trip to Georgetown</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>8. F4F Planning Meeting Results</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Interview Guide for GMA Winners (Administered during 2016) ...</b>	<b>11</b>



*Outstanding Fishers of the Cayman Islands, Mr. James Alric Robinson (left) and Mr. Wesley Wellington Dixon being recognized at the GCFI Fishers Forum*

# 1. Acknowledgements

The organizing committee for the 2016 Fisher Forum (including Mitch Lay, Nadine Nembhard, Patrick McConney, Bob Glazer, Alejandro Acosta, Jim Franks, and Will Heyman) wish to acknowledge the support received from the fiscal sponsors of the 2016 Fishers Forum including GCFI, Cayman Islands Department of Environment, Shell, University of Southern Mississippi, and LGL Ecological Research Associates, as well as assistance from many individuals. Among the organizers we wish to especially thank Bradley Johnson and Croy McCoy from the Cayman Islands Department of Environment who arranged logistics for the meeting, the Fishers Field Trip, and who identified and awarded extraordinary local fishers in Grand Cayman. We are also grateful to Fadilah Ali who created the new [F4F FACEBOOK PAGE](#). 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). We are grateful to Bertha Simmons who interviewed 10 of the 19 GMA winners to date. Unless otherwise indicated, photos in this report were kindly provided by Davon Baker, Fisheries Division, Grenada.

# 2. Suggested Citation

GCFI. 2017. Report of the Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) Fishers Forum: 69<sup>th</sup> Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), Georgetown, Cayman Islands, 7-11 November 2016. 11 pp.

# 3. Disclaimer

The views expressed in the report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute board, members or sponsors. Unless otherwise stated, this publication may be freely reproduced for non-commercial purposes provided suitable credit is given.

## 4. Introduction

The 2016 Fishers Forum consisted of an abbreviated Fishers Forum with four presentations, including an awards presentation for two Cayman Islands Fishers, a fishers' field trip, and a planning session for F4F.

## 5. Process

As in previous years the 2016 Fisher Forum development process was implemented through broad albeit loosely coordinated participation and collaboration among fishers, scientists and NGO supporters. In spite of several calls for nominations for GMA winners, the committee received complete nominations and no winner was selected for 2016. The process for nominating and selecting the GMA winner was improved during 2015 through the development and use of standard nomination forms that were widely distributed, and a selection committee that used standardized criteria and scoring for ranking the nominees. All of these forms are now downloadable from the GCFI website.

## 6. Presentations

### 6.1. Will Heyman: Session introduction and summary report on GMA winner interviews

Will Heyman (session moderator) offered a brief history of the Gladden Memorial Award (GMA) and the Fisheries for Fishers Initiative. There was no 2016 winner. Up to 2015 there have been 14 winners. In Heyman's presentation he reported on a recent interview with GMA winners. All are still engaged as ambassadors. Some are supporting fisher organizations. For example, Mitchell Lay, a past winner is CNFO's coordinator and offers support to other organizations. Some are affecting sustainable fisheries policy. For example, Angelica Mendez, build community fisher support for declaration of the first no take zone in Guatemalan Caribbean. In addition, Don DeMaria is helping spawning aggregation closures in United States South Atlantic. All are involved as educators and ambassadors for sustainable fisheries. Most participating in cooperative research with scientists.

During 2016, members of the GMA committee attempted to evaluate the current status and level of interest from past GMA winners and developed a guided interview form (Appendix A) which was administered during 2016 and 2017 to a large majority of past GMA winners. Not all GMA winners were interviewed so a full analysis was not completed. Instead, a few examples and quotations were provided.

“I got more exposure. I met with people from other countries but especially from Panama who liked what I was doing and how it was being done. I often get invited to share my experiences. I was invited to the Universidad de Medellin and spent 20 days there where I learned a lot from the scientists present on certain resources I am interested in; also, I shared my knowledge. To me being at GCFI was special as I learned and understood a lot of things I had little or no knowledge about.”

*Casimiro Newball (2015 GMA winner)*

Generally, all past GMA winners are willing to assist in further fisher activities and conservation efforts, at their level of capacity. Training and capacity building is needed. Support has been good but still needed.

## 6.2. Ruth Perry: Shell support to GCFI Fisheries for Fishers Initiative

Dr. Ruth Perry (Shell) thanked GCFI because Shell has been trying to understand what are the potential impacts of energy development on the environment and to support monitoring and science to do so. She emphasized that local content is important. Shell was looking for opportunities where they can work with in an interdisciplinary group like this, to collaborate together to combine science and local knowledge to provide all that information to the governments in the areas that they work. Open dialogue between fishing and oil and gas industries, managers, fishers, and scientists should set the stage for good policy and decisions that safeguard marine resources. GCFI approached Shell about three years ago, about this unique opportunity to support the Fishers’ Forum. Shell has supported the Forum for two consecutive years and plans to continue this support, including direct support for fishers to attend future meetings.

## 6.3. Scott Hickman: Fishers working towards sustainable fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico

Scott Hickman (Charter Fisherman Association, Texas), described the CFA’s mission to work on solutions for sustainable fisheries. They work with the scientific community doing some research making his life better and hopefully better fishery for his children. Hickman serves on the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Panel where he was recently selected as national volunteer of the year. He speaks regularly to regulators at the state and federal levels and participates actively in nearly every meeting of the Gulf of Mexico Regional Fisheries Management Council. Hickman believes that by working with scientists and regulators that they can achieve sustainable fisheries. Hickman expressed interest in working further with fishers from around the region.

#### 6.4. Croy McCoy: Presenting local fishers with conservation awards

James Alric Robinson- Cayman Brac: This fisherman discovered the Nassau grouper spawning aggregation in Little Cayman in 2000, shared the information with (Department of Environment) do all the necessary research to develop a management strategy and plan, more so supports the conservation efforts towards protection and conservation of this particular species that we are doing and at times voicing his opinion on how well it's working. He is well respected amongst his peers in the sister islands.

Wesley Wellington Dixon- Grand Cayman: One of the oldest fishermen in the Cayman Islands, was totally against the implementation of MPA's back in 1986, however one of them advocates now for fish conservation and MPA's. He has even gone on camera for us (DOE) promoting acceptance of our new MPA's. Mr Dixon is a very respected individual amongst his peers i.e. other local fishermen, has a peg leg, still fishes, and supports our efforts to manage our fishery for the better good.



*Mr. Croy McCoy (center, Department of Environment, Cayman Islands) presenting awards to two outstanding Cayman Island fishers, Mr. James Alric Robinson (left) and Mr. Wesley Wellington Dixon (right).*

#### 6.5. Mitch Lay: Fisher Forum Wrap Up

Mr. Mitchell Lay, (CNFO Committee and GMA Committee Chair) offered inspiring closing statements for the Fisher Forum. He described the plight of small scale fisheries, particularly in small island states and reiterated that fishers must play an active role in solutions and sustainable management. He stated that the GMA recognizes fishers who who are concerned about sustainability and act effectively towards fisheries conservation and management. Fishing for the future and not just fish for today. GCFI respects and honors fisherfolk that are driven by the consciousness that there is going to be life after us

and the next generation should have benefits just like we have. The GMA is about recognizing that kind of fisher who donates some of his time and resources to promote sustainability and spreading the consciousness sustainable fisheries.

## 7. Fishers Field Trip to Georgetown

On Tuesday November 8, 2016, there was a fisher's field trip to Georgetown, Grand Cayman Water Frong Fish Market organized by Bradley Johnson and Croy McCoy (Cayman Island Department of Environment). There were three commercial fishers from Grand Cayman who led the discussions. They described the local fisheries situation and informed the group that the fish stocks have been depleting, causing them to have to travel further out to fish. From the shoreline out to 200 feet depth around the island is reserved for subsistence fishing only and no commercial fishing is allowed. They also informed the group that there is a high demand for fish, and a lot of fisherfolk in the industry. As a result, "you have to be pretty good at fishing" to make a living. A short video about the field trip is available on Youtube: [Fishers Field Trip 2016](#) .



*Will Heyman (LGL) and Nicanor Requena (Environmental Defense) interacting with a fisher from Grand Cayman on the fishers' field trip. Photo from GCFI*

There are only about 10-15 fishers that frequently sell fish at the Water Front Fish Market, though this is one of the largest such markets in the Cayman Islands. These commercial fishers target tuna, dolphin, wahoo, red snapper, ocean turbot and other deep-sea fish using handlines and rods on vessels that are generally 25 - 32 feet in length. One fisher from

Grand Cayman commented that he fishes to sell to about 6-7 people. Another fisher commented that everyone in his family fish, all five of them, including his mother. They have a set rate for sales to customers and another rate for hotels and restaurants. Currently about 6-7 Honduran boats come to bring fish to sell, at least 100 lbs. of fish per day.

The fishers were asked if they have Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). They replied that they have a protected area and a protected species, the Nassau grouper. One fisher stated that as fisher everyone try to pull their way. He felt that the fishers need to unite to get more benefits. There are no size limits. They do not have a cooperative nor fisher association. As they have it there are no benefits. They thought that if they would organize they could get things like medical benefits.



*Water Front Fish Market, Grand Cayman, Fishers Fieldtrip*

## 8. F4F Planning Meeting Results

The meeting was attended by Mitch Lay, Nadine Nembhard, Bob Glazer, Jim Franks, Will Heyman, Bill Michaels, and Alejandro Acosta

### **Suggestions for GMA actions**

- Seek opportunities for capacity building and trainings for GMA winners
- Circulate information amongst GMA winners and improve communications among network of GMA winners (note that it is easier to reach newest ambassadors)
- Ask past GMA winners to nominate new fishers for GMA
- Build a network in countries that don't have a network as yet.
- Conduct case studies or other assessments and/or surveys of GMA winners

- GMA winners could meet and develop joint statements to be presented at significant meetings (e.g. COP 8)
- Highlight ambassadors work on F4F Facebook page
- Showcase two GMA winners per year on F4F Facebook page

---

*What is impressive is that the GCFI community embraces the involvement of fishermen. GCFI has taken leadership to involve fishers and bringing them into the mix on how we are going to manage fisheries for the long term – Dr. Will Heyman*

---

**Suggested activities for future GCFI conferences:**

- Have fishers present talks during the technical sessions, in addition to Fishers Forum.
- Possible session on interactions between oil/gas and the fishing industry (Shell)

**Promotional ideas:**

- Strengthen ties with past GMA winners.
- Plan a meeting(s) with winners to examine their interests and design activities
- Develop a F4F theme
- Develop F4F program
- Create a F4F Facebook page (completed November 2016)
- Update phone contact list
- Develop Whatsapp group



*CNFO leader, Ms. Vernal Nichols (right) and Bob Glazer (left) at the Calendar Launch: 4 Leading Ladies in Caribbean Fisheries 2017, as developed and sponsored by the Gender in Fisheries Team (GIFT)*

During the GCFI poster session the Gender in Fisheries Team launched a 2017 calendar as well as hosted a special poster session on “Gender in Fisheries”. The calendar featured 4 Caribbean leading ladies of the fishing Industry Ms. Anna Ramirez (Belize), Vernel Nicholls (Barbados), Corrine Bradshaw (Belize) and Nadine Nembhard (Belize). The roles women play in fisheries development is not clearly understood in the Caribbean. Women are actively involved in harvest, post-harvest and supporting services but their contribution is undervalued and often not recognized at all. Women are also instrumental in advocating for sustainable development, and in many countries, occupy leadership positions in fishing organizations and management authorities. The two activities were to raise public awareness of the importance of women in fisheries and their contribution to development.



*CNFO Leader Ms. Vernel Nicholls explaining the Gender Poster to Chief Fisheries Officer Montserrat, Mr. Alwyn Ponteen*

## Appendix 1: Interview Guide for GMA Winners (Administered during 2016)

GMA Winner Name\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer\_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview\_\_\_\_\_

- Since winning the Gladding Memorial Award (GMA) what sort of activities have you been involved in of the type that got you the award?
  
- Has winning the GMA made any difference to you or to the people that you interact with in fisheries? If so, how? what differences?
  
- We at GCFI see a GMA winner as someone who can be a strong role model and leader to improve fisheries and their stewardship for the future. What would you like to do or accomplish for the future of fisheries as a GMA winner? Do you have impediments to doing so? What might help?
  
- The GCFI GMA strategic plan includes a Fisher Ambassador initiative to allow GMA winners to influence and assist other fishers in the region that face problems that GMA winners have helped, or can help, overcome. If this initiative were to start soon, would you be interested in helping to design it and get it working? Does any particular aspect interest you most?