



To: CFMC/OSPESCA/WECAFC/CRFM
Working Group on Queen Conch (QCWG)

The Declaration of Panama City, October 2012 identified seven recommendations for immediate implementation. At that time no plan was determined for HOW to accomplish the recommendations, except to have the weight fall upon local fishing authorities for monitoring and enforcement. Many of the Queen Conch fishing countries have limited resources and finances to provide adequate monitoring.

A list of the seven recommendations is as follows:

1. RECOMMEND the immediate implementation, as applicable, of the recommendations made by the Queen Conch Expert Workshop, held in Miami, USA, 22-24 May 2012, and reviewed and validated by the Working Group during the meeting in Panama City on 23-25 October 2012, taking into account recommendations made by the Working Group on paragraphs 1 and 5 (see Annex);
2. RECOMMEND that WECAFC, OSPESCA, CRFM and CFMC support the development of a regional plan for the management and conservation of Queen Conch, in accordance with the best available scientific evidence to be presented to the 15th session of WECAFC for review, consideration and regional adoption;
3. RECOMMEND that the Conference of the Parties to CITES take account of and discuss the information and “draft decision” provided by Colombia at its 16th meeting, and adopt recommendations as appropriate to support the sustainable utilization, conservation and international trade in Queen Conch;
4. RECOMMEND that OSPESCA and CRFM support the development and adoption of sub-regional regulations for Queen Conch, and support the implementation of these regulations by their member States;
5. RECOMMEND that the fisheries authorities in the region increase awareness and build capacity among fishers on Safety-at-Sea and in particular address risk management in and alternatives to compressed air diving for Queen Conch and seek assistance where necessary;
6. RECOMMEND the Queen Conch range States, CITES and FAO to cooperate closely and work jointly on the improvement and standardization of trade data and statistics (through regionally agreed conversion factors) for Queen Conch and its derivatives such as pearls, shells and opercula;
7. RECOMMEND that fisheries authorities with support of CRFM, OSPESCA, CFMC and WECAFC strengthen the participation of fishers in the decision making related to implementation of measures for management and sustainable utilization of Queen Conch.



The final guiding recommendation was, “SOLICIT the support for, and the direct and immediate implementation by the countries in the Wider Caribbean Region of the above listed recommendations”. Strombus Gigas Alliance (SGA), a Caribbean registered NGO, is ready to help.

SGA has developed a plan to assist the above recommendations and secure the Queen Conch for a sustainable future. We are prepared to develop, find financing, and implement our plan, initially in Belize and Bahamas as test sites though replicable throughout the Caribbean, in accordance with fishing authorities, regional plans and regulations governing the harvest for the trade in meat. At present the CITES approved fishing methods for the Queen Conch support an 85%-92% waste of the catch. We believe this contravenes the intent of the regulations and have developed the following plan to provide authentic sustainability and complete usage of the whole animal.

The basis of the SGA plan to establish an authentic Queen Conch fishery is threefold:

1. Establish a Conch Harvester’s Association

- Engage fishers and communities in management of the Queen Conch
- Establish a secondary income stream for fishers and communities (prevent overfishing)
- Employ communities in secondary activities
- Keep money in fishing communities

2. Improve standardization for fishing conch and its derivatives

- Support regional harvest plans
- Collect scientific data on conch harvest
- Petition CITES to annotate derivatives from regulations
- Reduce waste of derivatives by 90%

3. Assist with regulatory mechanisms

- Monitor and record catch sizes (Prevent overfishing and undersize catch)
- Monitor and report border infringement
- Monitor and report illegal fishing methods
- Create awareness for species protection
- Collect shells direct from fishers (prevent underwater mounds and shrinking habitats, develop secondary income stream)
- Collect ‘dirty meat’ for processing (secondary income stream)
- Collect the pearl for jewelry purposes (secondary income stream)

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Strombus Gigas Alliance



Strombus Gigas Alliance is anxious to implement this plan and seek your endorsement and assistance. We recognize the threat posed to the multi-million dollar conch fishing industry if an action plan is not enacted soon. A second threat to the Caribbean fishing industry is also posed by WildEarth Guardians of Denver, Colorado with their Petition to List the Queen Conch under the Endangered Species Act (Appendix 1, CITES). We look forward to your quick response to ensure the sustainability of the Queen Conch fisheries for future generations.

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