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MAST 883-010

Abstract

“Development of a Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for Sustainable Fisheries in Jamaica”. A Critical Analysis of Section V.

This presentation will attempt to analyse one part (Section V) of a Draft Policy Review document with the abovementioned title. The draft policy document is part of an ongoing process by the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) to review and amend the existing laws governing the Jamaican fishing industry.

From as early as 1995, the GOJ began a process of policy review of the Fishing Industry Act with some assistance from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). These initial efforts led to the Jamaican cabinet issuing instructions for the drafting a new comprehensive fisheries industry act, in an attempt to effectively administer the industry. The new draft law is currently under review and the proposed amendments are based largely on recommendations from the above titled draft policy document. In fact this policy review document is also currently under review and is being amended based on comments from a series of consultations and input from various stakeholders.

Section V of the Draft Policy Framework focuses on the management of the very important offshore banks which contribute to the majority of the nations industrial conch and lobster fishery. Section V articulates the GOJ’s policy objective, and provides possible strategies to manage this very valuable management area. Many of the strategies recommend the implementation of regulatory and administrative solutions to deal with the problems of access and poaching as well as improving safe industry practices such as diving and post harvest processing.

This discussion will highlight some of the challenges faced by the existing management framework in implementing these recommendations. It will also highlight gaps in information that may prove useful to the final development of the policy framework for proposed amendments to the Fishing Industry Act.

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