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MRAG Americas, Inc.

Pedro Bank, Jamaica Queen Conch Industrial Dive Fishery

MSC Fishery Announcement

April 28, 2023

Site visit update June 2, 2023

MRAG Americas, Inc. is pleased to announce that a Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) assessment of Pedro Bank, Jamaica queen conch industrial dive fishery has begun. The assessment will evaluate the fishery for compliance with the MSC's Standard for well-managed and sustainable fisheries.

As part of the assessment, MRAG Americas announces that stakeholder meetings and assessment of relevant documentation will be undertaken with a visit to the fishery in **July 2023**. **The assessment team will meet in Kingston, Jamaica July 4-6, 2023.** The purpose of these meetings is for a fishery assessment and stakeholder consultation to receive information from fishery representatives, government management agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other interested stakeholders.

MRAG invites stakeholders to provide input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report or any other information considered relevant, including knowledge and concerns about the fishery and to the assessments of the fishery. Stakeholders must provide objective evidence and references in support of any claims or claimed errors of fact. Unless covered by FCP 4.3.3 any information that cannot be shared with other stakeholders even under a confidentiality agreement shall not be: referenced in the assessment, used to determine the assessment outcome or used as the basis for an objection to a certification.

MRAG will schedule meetings with stakeholders if requested. To schedule a meeting please provide:

- your name and contact details
- your association with the fishery
- the issues you would like to discuss
- where and when you would like to meet

To be considered as a registered stakeholder you must provide written input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report using the '[MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments](#)' or attend the site visit, in person or remotely. Per FCP v2.2 7.20.9.1 only registered stakeholders may provide input or comment on future stages of the assessment.

Stakeholders are encouraged not to withhold information, including their concerns and knowledge about the fishery. We ask stakeholders who wish to meet with the team to make the request for a meeting by 5pm UTC on June 27, 2023.

Stakeholders wishing to comment on the Announcement Comment Draft Report must do so by 5pm UTC June 27, 2023.

The MSC has developed a guide for stakeholder input, available at <https://www.msc.org/what-you-can-do/engage-with-a-fishery-assessment> and a template ([MSC template for stakeholder input into fishery assessments v5.0](#)) for stakeholder responses. You must use the template to provide your response.

More information on the fishery is available at <https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/>

Please send any documentation, requests for meetings, or inquiries to:

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Submitted by: Haley Tomberlin

Date: April 27, 2023

Table 1 – Fishery announcement	
1	Fishery name
	Pedro Bank, Jamaica Queen Conch Industrial Dive
2	Assessment number
	Initial assessment
3	Reduced reassessment (Yes/No)
	No
4	Statement that the fishery is within scope
	MRAG Americas confirms that this fishery is within scope of the MSC Fisheries Standard.
5	Unit(s) of Assessment - UoA(s)
UoA 1	Description
Species	Queen conch (<i>Aliger gigas</i> , original name: <i>Strombus gigas</i>)
Stock	Jamaica queen conch

Fishing gear type(s) and, if relevant, vessel type(s)	Hand gather, using free-diving, scuba or hookah dive gear
Client group	Jamaica conch cluster: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&D Trawling Ltd • Newport Fish & Meats Ltd • TonRick Enterprises Ltd • Seafood Incorporated Ltd • Clarendon Seafood
Other eligible fishers	Rainforest Seafoods, Branmar, Knights Commodity and Trading, and other companies that participate in the export fishery or vessels or fishers that are Individual Conch Quota (ICQ) holders or fish on behalf of ICQ holders.
Geographical area	FAO Fishing Area 31 Atlantic Western-Central, U.S. EEZ, Jamaica EEZ, Pedro Bank
6	Certificate sharing statement
	None at this time.
7	Name of proposed team leader
	<p>Dr. Mónica Valle-Esquivel joined MRAG Americas in 2010 as Senior Fisheries Biologist. She has over 15 years of experience in sustainable management of marine fisheries. She specialized in fish and shellfish population dynamics, stock assessment, design and evaluation of management strategies, statistical analysis, risk analysis, and fishery simulation modeling. Dr. Valle worked with the University of Miami and NOAA Fisheries as a post-doctoral stock assessment scientist, and has provided scientific advice to FAO, CITES, CARICOM, ACP Fish II, and other international organizations for the management of tropical marine species the US, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In Mexico she coordinated a United Nations (UNIDO) coastal management project within the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem program. At MRAG, Dr. Valle has worked with institutions, scientists, fishers, managers, NGOs, and other stakeholders to promote and achieve sustainability of fishery resources around the world. She is a certified Marine Stewardship Council lead assessor, and for seven years has served as a team leader and member for several fisheries, ranging from invertebrate fisheries to highly migratory fish. Among other professional achievements, Dr. Valle has acquired wide experience in the development and implementation of fishery improvement projects and fishery management plans, in the design and analysis of various monitoring programs, and in essential fish habitat and ecosystem assessments. Dr. Valle received a B.S. degree in Biology from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and a Ph.D. in Marine Biology and Fisheries from the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Dr. Valle-Esquivel meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team leader as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has an appropriate university degree and more than three years' experience in management and research in fisheries; • She has passed the MSC team leader training; • She has the required competencies described in Table PC1, section 2; • She has passed the MSC Traceability training module; • She meets ISO 19011 training requirements;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has undertaken two fishery assessments as a team member in the last five years, and • She has experience in applying different types of interviewing and facilitation techniques and is able to effectively communicate with clients and other stakeholders. <p>In addition, she has the appropriate skills and experience required to serve as a Principle 1 assessor as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Dr. Valle-Esquivel has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p>
8	Name(s) of proposed team members
	<p>Dr. Nick Hahlbeck holds a B.S. in marine science and biology from the University of Miami, with minors in mathematics, computer science, and chemistry, as well as a Ph.D. in fisheries science with extensive coursework in mathematics and modeling from Oregon State University. He has conducted empirical research and statistical modeling studies in freshwater and marine fisheries and authored two peer-reviewed publications. His research has included topics such as fish ecology, bioenergetics and growth, and bycatch. As part of his research, he has collaborated extensively with academic institutions, state and federal agencies, nonprofits, tribes, and recreational fishing communities, and has communicated scientific advice to other fisheries scientists, managers, and stakeholders.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Dr. Hahlbeck meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has an appropriate university degree and more than three years' experience in management and research in fisheries; • He has undertaken at least two MSC fishery assessments or surveillance site visits in the last three years; • He is able to score a fishery using the default assessment tree and describe how conditions are set and monitored. <p>In addition, he has the appropriate skills and experience required to serve as a Principle 2 assessor as described in FCP Annex PC table PC3, and MRAG Americas confirms he has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p> <p>Ms. Erin Wilson joined MRAG Americas, Inc. in February 2015, where she currently works as a Senior Manager in the Fisheries Certification Division. She serves as the team leader on several MSC assessments, including North and South Pacific albacore tuna fishery, US West Coast Groundfish fishery, and all the Alaska Groundfish fisheries, and has served as a team member for several other fishery assessments, including both MSC and Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM). She also provides routine audit services for the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF). Prior to joining MRAG Americas, she worked at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) as a Natural Resource Specialist and Biological Technician for the Oregon Marine Reserves. She has conducted qualitative interviews with commercial fishermen and fishing communities along the west coast regarding catch share programs, limited entry, and proposed designations of marine reserves. She has collaborated on a multitude of projects that focus on marine science and conservation in both a biological and social science aspect. She has completed ISO 19011 Lead Auditor for Management Systems, SA8000, the SRA training for Fishery Progress, and all the MSC and RFM required trainings for team leader and assessment team member. She received a M.Sc. in Marine Resource Management from Oregon State University and a B.S. in Zoology from Colorado State University, along with a Spanish minor.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms that Ms. Wilson meets the competency criteria in Annex PC for team members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She has an appropriate university degree and more than five years' experience in management and research in fisheries;

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9	Stakeholder opportunities
	<p>Provide input or comments on the Announcement Comment Draft Report (ACDR). We ask stakeholders to provide input or comments on the ACDR by 5pm UTC on June 27, 2023.</p> <p>Stakeholders must use the MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments v5.0 (Ctrl+click to follow link). Interested parties are invited to comment on the factual content of the reports; comments should be clearly related to specific scoring indicators or report sections and supported with evidence for the assessment team to evaluate.</p> <p>Participate in the site visit: all team members are available to meet in person or remotely (FCP v2.2 7.12.2.e.i).</p> <p>To be considered as a registered stakeholder you must provide written input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report or attend the site visit, in person or remotely. Per FCP v2.2 7.20.9.1 only registered stakeholders may provide input or comment on future stages of the assessment.</p>
10	Assessment tree to be used
	<p>The default assessment tree contained within MSC Fisheries Standard v2.01 will be used for this assessment.</p>

11	Estimated timeline										
	Activity	Month 2023 - 2024									
		A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J
	MSC Announcement, team and assessment visit notification, publication of Announcement Comment Draft Report										
	Stakeholder consultation (ongoing)										
	Assessment visit, stakeholder meetings										
	Examination of evidence and scoring										
	Consultation and confirmation of peer reviewers										
	Client review of draft report										
	Peer review of draft report										
	Stakeholder review of draft report										
	Final report/certification determination/objections period										
	Certification decision (if no objection)										
12	Site visit										
	We invite interested stakeholders to participate in the site visit in Kingston, Jamaica in person or remotely July 4-6, 2023 . <i>Please note the site visit dates have changed from June 28-30 to July 4-6, 2023.</i>										
14	Announcement Comment Draft Report stakeholder input deadline										
	We ask stakeholders to provide input or comments on the ACDR by 5pm UTC on June 27, 2023 . The Announcement Comment Draft Report can be found on the fishery page located on Track a Fishery: https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/										

Appendix 1: Summaries of CVs of team leader and team members

Dr. Mónica Valle-Esquivel joined MRAG Americas in 2010 as Senior Fisheries Biologist. She has over 15 years of experience in sustainable management of marine fisheries. She specialized in fish and shellfish population dynamics, stock assessment, design and evaluation of management strategies, statistical analysis, risk analysis, and fishery simulation modeling. Dr. Valle worked with the University of Miami and NOAA Fisheries as a post-doctoral stock assessment scientist, and has provided scientific advice to FAO, CITES, CARICOM, ACP Fish II, and other international organizations for the management of tropical marine species the US, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In Mexico she coordinated a United Nations (UNIDO) coastal management project within the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem program. At MRAG, Dr. Valle has worked with institutions, scientists, fishers, managers, NGOs, and other stakeholders to promote and achieve sustainability of fishery resources around the world. She is a certified Marine Stewardship Council lead assessor, and for seven years has served as a team leader and member for several fisheries, ranging from invertebrate fisheries to highly migratory fish. Among other professional achievements, Dr. Valle has acquired wide experience in the development and implementation of fishery improvement projects and fishery management plans, in the design and analysis of various monitoring programs, and in essential fish habitat and ecosystem assessments. Dr. Valle received a B.S. degree in Biology from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and a Ph.D. in Marine Biology and Fisheries from the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami.

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