Key Informant Interview 8

Date: 8/2/2016

Occupation/Affiliation: Commercial fisher

Years of Experience in Occupation/Field: 6 years

Community/Area/Location: Patilla (villa pesquera)

Speaker 1. Describe your involvement with Puerto Rican fisheries.

Speaker 2. Informant has been a commercial fisher for 6 years, fishing in Patilla, Arroyo, Guayama, and Manaubo. They fish mostly for red snapper, grouper, lobster, conch, octopus, and shark (which he says is a relatively new fishery. Shark meat used for pinchos and nuggets). [Has licenses for lobster, conch, and all fish]. Is the only one in his family to be a fisher. Has had other jobs besides fishing [...].

Speaker 1. In general, how would you rate Puerto Rico coastal communities’ dependency on fisheries for their livelihood?

Speaker 2. Somewhat Dependent – Maybe 10% of the people depend on fishing.

Speaker 1. Describe (e.g. In what ways? Why do you think that is?).

Speaker 2. Informant said that there used to be more people fishing in this area (Patilla) (from 20 to 6 or 7). In the past 10 or 15 years the number of people fishing and the fish has been decreasing. Also mentioned fishing is very seasonal and that there are less people fishing in the summer months – one of the reasons being that there is less restaurant and tourism activity in the summer months. They said fishermen have part-time jobs and they work in construction or as bartenders or waiters in restaurants. The best months for fishing are Oct through Jan.

Speaker 1. In general, how would you rate Puerto Rico coastal communities’ dependency on coral reefs for their livelihood?

Speaker 2. Somewhat Dependent

Speaker 1. Describe (e.g. In what ways? Why do you think that is?).

Speaker 2. Informant mentioned that the reef species are the ones with a better market – they are the ones they can sell. Six years ago there were more fish and fish restaurants. At one time more than 6 restaurants, now maybe 3 or 4.

Speaker 1. What would you say is(are) the major problem(s) facing fishing communities in Puerto Rico? (If more than one please rank them in order of importance).

Speaker 2. The facilities (referring to the facilities at the villas pesqueras), they don’t maintain the facilities; The fact that the government “take the fishermen apart” or not include them in the decision making process. The government does not come here to talk to the fishermen. The come every 4 or 5 years, they say they will help and fix things, they ask questions, but they don’t do anything.

Speaker 1. Have you observed any changes to the fishery, environment, or other natural resources in Puerto Rico that you think can be attributed to climate change? Describe.

Speaker 2. The color of the water; the fish is moving farther deeper. While storms during the summer are normal, informant felt there were more storms. Such storms can damage coral.

Speaker 1. In your opinion, are Puerto Rican fishers concerned about climate change? Why or why not?

Speaker 2. No.

Speaker 1. In your opinion, are Puerto Rico fishery manager/decision-makers/researchers concerned about climate change? Why or why not?

Speaker 2. No, they don’t talk about that.

Speaker 1. Do you think people in this community can work together to solve community problems? Why or why not?

Speaker 2. Yes, they keep together, help each other.

Speaker 1. Do you think fishers could work together to solve problems in the fishery? Why or why not?

Speaker 2. Yes, we talk. Said fishers do things together.

Speaker 1. Can you think of any examples of this kind of community action occurring now in Puerto Rican fisheries? Describe.

Speaker 2. The fishers have been fighting to close the parking lot adjacent to the villa pesquera to make it exclusive for fishers and prevent the tourists from parking there. They have not been able to do it yet but he thinks they might.

Speaker 1. Do you think the government and fishers could work together to solve problems in the fishery? Why or why not?

Speaker 2. Informant said the fishers try to talk to the government but they don’t trust them. They make promises but do nothing. They mentioned that they pay fees to use the locker rooms, they pay water and electricity and they do not get any help from the government.

Speaker 1. Can you think of any examples of this kind of participatory action occurring now in Puerto Rican fisheries? Describe.

Speaker 1. Do you feel that fishery management in Puerto Rico is fair in the decisions they make? Why or why not? Be specific.

Speaker 2. The regulations are fair, they are good. Informant mentioned the new conch regulations, 90 days closure and that of you don’t follow you get a 10 thousand dollar fine.

Speaker 1. Do you think most fishers understand how managers make decisions? Why or why not?

Speaker 2. Yes, they are easy to follow and to understand. The government put papers and posters around the villas pesqueras with the regulations.

Speaker 1. In general how would you describe the relationship between fishers and fishery managers/decision-makers?

Speaker 2. No good communication. We have to go there one by one to get information, they don’t come here. Informant said they goes to the Guayama DNER office to get stickers for their boat and licenses and that’s how they gets most of the information about regulations. They said they are fair to the fishermen when they go there, but they need to go there.

Speaker 1. If they exist, how are conflicts between fishers and between fishers and managers/decision-makers resolved?

Speaker 2. Informant said they don’t do anything, don’t talk about it. “They drop it.”