



Testimony before the Caribbean Fishery Management Council

September 3, 2009

Good afternoon Chairman Pinero and fellow Council members. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input in support of science-based Annual Catch Limits and accountability measures for the fisheries of the US Caribbean.

My name is Holly Binns and I manage the Pew Environment Group's campaign to End Overfishing in the Southeast. The Pew Environment Group is the conservation arm of the Pew Charitable Trusts and advocates for sustainable fish populations around the world.

I would like to address the Council today on behalf of more than 3,800 citizens who care deeply about the future of fish populations in the U.S. Caribbean. These are people who are unable to be here today, but who would like to share both their concern about the state of the marine environment in the Caribbean, and their belief that small actions today can lead to large economic and ecological returns in the future.

These 3,800 people include Crucians, Thomians, and Puerto Ricans. They include visitors to these islands, sea food aficionados, fishermen, and wildlife advocates. They are the public who could not make the trip to Aguadilla this week to be with you. But they have sent us in their place to deliver their message.

And the message is simple. Overfishing must end. Overfished stocks must be rebuilt as quickly as possible. Low population levels cause harm both to the marine environment, and to the human populations of our islands. Healthy rebuilt fisheries will produce greater yields in the commercial fishing sector, greater opportunities for enjoyment of recreational fishing, and more local seafood for visitors and residents alike.

The stakeholders represented in these letters would like to urge you to act precautionarily, to value long-term over short-term economics, and to proceed without delay to enact annual catch limits and accountability measures for the region's fisheries.

Thank you.

Holly Binns
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Pew Charitable Trusts, Pew Environment Group