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Shifting Fish Stocks and Changing Ocean Conditions for the US Caribbean

In the US Caribbean, given the relatively small size of fishing grounds is very difficult to document shifting stocks. However, anecdotal information from fishers indicates that



some species, such as the spiny lobster, are moving from shallow areas to relatively deep waters due to climate changes in temperature, composition of habitats, and coastal development.

In the case of deep-water snapper-grouper fisheries these have shifted from traditional fishing grounds due to fishing pressure and changes in the components of their environment, e.g., temperature and salinity, but these changes are being studied presently. No historical scientific information is available to determine exact causes of shifting stocks in this realm.

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Further studies are needed to assess the shifting stock phenomenon and its consequences on the biomass of species available to fisheries and the effects on the socioeconomic parameters of the islands in the US Caribbean that depend to an important extent on their fisheries. Once the Island Based Fishery Management Plans, are adopted for Puerto Rico, St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix, there will be better scientific information on the shifting stock of the species under management in each island.

