



Vol.2, No.5, Year 2 [www.fconamar.org](http://www.fconamar.org) May-December 2007

## FISHING SECTOR CONTINUES ANCHORED



All the expectancies generated by the creation of the Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP) in November 2006, as the steward of sustainable utilization of marine resources, were quickly dashed during the year 2007.

- The initiatives that were being carried toward by the National Commission for Responsible Fisheries to modernize fishing legislation, establish appropriate controls to fishing activities, and promote cooperative monitoring schemes, were frozen with the creation of this institution.
- ARAP engaged itself instead in an exhausting conflict with environmental groups because of the Government's intention to authorize the operation of a dolphinarium in our country. At the same time it took the first steps towards the establishment of tuna farms, proposing the change of the Law that created the Coiba National Park.
- The budget funding required in order to have a qualified staff and the necessary equipment to operate, is not yet in place due to governmental bureaucracy.
- Moreover, the required technical support for the programs and projects of the institution by international organizations of recognized experience, has not been consolidated.

- Before the end of the first year of operation, the Government changed ARAP's Administrator and the institutional approach continues focused on the development of aquaculture.

Soon, the fishing community became concerned because the vote of confidence given to the Government for the strengthening of the sector through management based on the sustainability of the aquatic resources and the ecosystems that support them, fell into a large vacuum.

In order to concentrate its efforts consolidating a regional initiative, CONAMAR Foundation resigned from a couple of governmental committees in which it was actively involved.

Thus in the Board of Directors of Panama's Marine Corridor (where CONAMAR represented the fishing sector as a whole, not just the anglers or the Foundation), the seafood exporters organization (APPEXMAR) assumed the representation. In turn, the representation at the Commission for Sustainable Fishing Management of the Special Marine Protection Zone of Montuosa Island and Hannibal Bank, was assumed by the Association of Sport Fishing Clubs.

## PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release  
Washington, D.C.  
December 28, 2007*

### **CENTRAL AMERICAN BILLFISH CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION FORMED**

Leading sport fishermen from Central America and the United States announced the formation of the **Association for the Conservation and Sustainability of Eastern Pacific Billfish (ACSEP)** after a December 15, 2007 meeting at the Costa Rican Pacific resort of Los Suenos. The Association is a non-profit organization with the goal of promoting the conservation and sustainable use of the billfish resources found in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Its offices will be in Central America and Washington, D.C. Billfish are large game fish, primarily sailfish and various species of marlin.

The sport fishing industry in Central America and Panama is a major tourist attraction for the region, generating hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the economies of the countries in the area. The very existence of this industry is threatened, however, by the predatory practices of unregulated and unrestrained semi-industrial commercial fishing fleets and unsupervised long-lining activities along the region's coastlines. The Association was formed primarily to urge regional governments to take action to preserve and properly manage this fragile resource and to pressure countries to meet their fisheries conservation commitments under the terms of the Environmental Chapter of the US-Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

While Central American economic integration moves forward impressively in a number of areas, countries of the region have failed

to include its highly valuable sport fishery in the Central American Integration (SICA) process. Efforts to date in the SICA process have focused almost exclusively on exploitation of the already endangered commercial fishery.

Officers of the Association include leading private sector individuals from the five CAFTA countries, Panama and the United States. Dr. Marcos D. Ostrander M. was elected President of the Board of Trustees and the Ambassador Donald Planty, as Executive Director.

The Association intends to launch a major effort in 2008 to make governments aware of their responsibilities for billfish conservation and sustainable use. This effort will be backed by the latest scientific research developed by the Rosenstiel School of Marine & Atmospheric Science at the University of Miami.

Contributions to support the Association's work are tax deductible in the United States under the terms of Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

**For more information, please contact the Association for the Conservation and Sustainability of Eastern Pacific Billfish, 701 12 th St., N.W., Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005, or contact us in Tel. 001 202 558-5100**

Los Sueños Resort and Marina, Costa Rica



Meeting held on December 15, 2007



CONAMAR Foundation will continue its efforts at the national and international levels, promoting the sustainable use of fishing resources and the protection of ecosystems.

We wish to thank **Tropic Star 2007 Fishing Tournament** for the important economic support provided to the Foundation.



**WE ARE MIGRATORY SPECIES, SO WE  
NEED REGIONAL PROTECTION!**

We appeal to all sport fishing lovers in order to support the CONAMAR Foundation and achieve our objectives together. With your donation you can become a Dorado, a Wahoo, a Tuna, a Sailfish, a Swordfish or a Marlin.

To all our friends and contacts we wish a very productive 2008 year.