

Developing a Management Strategy for the Queen Conch (*Strombus gigas*) in the Turks and Caicos Islands

SIMON HUGHES and CHRIS NINNES

Department of Fisheries

Grand Turk

Turks and Caicos Islands

ABSTRACT

To provide data for the future management of the overfished conch resources of the Turks and Caicos Islands various aspect of its biology (growth, gonadal maturity and morphometrics), ecology (habitat assessment) and fishery (catch and effort data) are being studied.

Preliminary analyses of these data have indicated that reproductive activity is seasonal on the Caicos Bank, that modal progressions cannot clearly be identified from weight frequency data and that management based on enforcing minimum size limits to maximize yield is not practical.

Future management measures may have to consider the restriction of fishing effort, the setting of catch quotas and areal fishing constraints. Success will depend on ensuring that recruitment to the stock can be maintained.