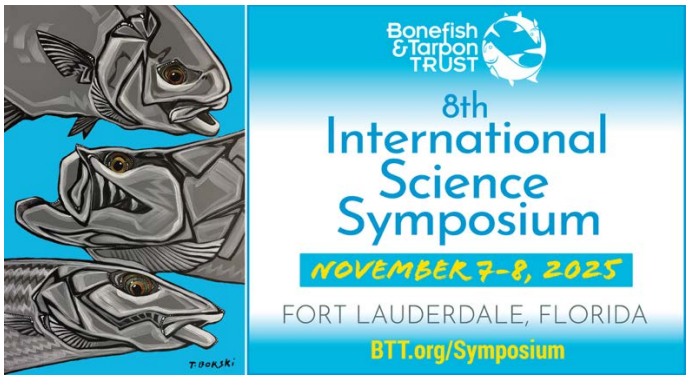


Conflict resolution strategic plan for socio-ecological systems in the Yucatán Peninsula as a model for improved conservation and management of coastal and ocean resources in protected areas

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Coastal and ocean resources support many diverse livelihoods that largely depend on healthy and well managed ecosystems through conservation mechanisms such as protected areas. Nonetheless, interactions of users results in conflicts in resource use exacerbated by limitations of human and economic resources by resource managers in Latina America. To help, we employed a mixed methods approach to identify conflict resolutions using interviews, questionnaires, field notes, participant observation and workshops with artisanal fishers, recreational fishing guides and owners, tour-operators, cooperatives (local-civil organizations) and resource managers as the main stakeholders near two coastal communities of the Yucatan Peninsula adjacent to Los Petenes and Ria Lagartos Biosphere Reserves in Campeche and Yucatan Respectfully. Additionally, we applied a strengths and weaknesses analysis scheme (SWOT) to understand the root causes of the conflicts and the areas of opportunity and improvement for each stakeholder as representative of a sector. From these were able to develop with stakeholder input, participation, collaboration and corroboration, a six goals conflict resolution strategic plan focusing on community-based or ecosystem-based approaches to resource management: 1) socio-environmental research to fill-in knowledge gaps, inform and guide, 2) development and integration of microregions for efficient actions by decision makers, 3) social cohesion for efficient community action and implementation, 4) education and outreach to inform all sectors, 5) sustainable uses and practices to value and protected resources, and 6) social participation in control and surveillance for more legitimate management. The main vision of the strategy is a paradigm shift to strengthen local governance at multiple levels and increase collaboration with local communities and across sectors. This would bring resource managers and other institutions closer to the communities for dialogue and knowledge exchange on challenges and opportunities. Finally, transforming a bottom-up perspective and approach to relieve tensions and conflicts created by a policy approach of top-bottom.

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