

The Belize Fisher's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing



The Belize Federation of Fishers

As stewards of Belize's rich marine resources, members of the Belize Federation of Fishers, and its associations, recognize the vital role fishers play in the delicate balance of Belize's coastal ecosystems. This Code of Conduct highlights our commitments to sustainable fisheries management by promoting ethical behaviour, sustainability-minded practices, a commitment to safeguarding the long-term health and resilience of our marine environments and equity and equality for coastal communities. Grounded in principles of responsible resource use, effective participation, and community collaboration, this Code of Conduct aims to address ethical principles, integrity, respect, responsibility, and transparency by establishing clear guidelines for behaviour and expectations within the small-scale fishing sector in Belize. The following ten commitments have been crafted to guide the conduct of fishers and promote fundamental values, robust principles, and standards that ensure sustainable fishing practices, the sustainable use of marine resources, and the well-being of local communities for the current and future generations of fishers.

We Commit To:

- 1. Respect Belize's Marine Ecosystems:** We shall treat Belize's reefs, oceans and waterways with respect, avoiding harmful practices to safeguard our unique marine ecosystems and promote sustainable fishing – including adhering to all Fisheries Laws and Regulations.
- 2. Commit to Improving the Voice of Fishers in the Governance of Fishery Resources:** We shall unwaveringly commit to the inclusive governance of the fisheries resources of the Nation by committing to sustained inclusion in any policy, legislation, and activities connected thereto so that fisheries management decisions are not taken in isolation of salient inputs of fishers and the fishing community.
- 3. Adopt Sustainable Fishing Practices:** We shall embrace sustainable fishing practices, supporting initiatives that contribute to the conservation of Belize's marine species, including:
 - Respecting marine reserves, conservation zones and closed seasons;

- b. Releasing berried and undersized lobsters alive;
 - c. Eliminating the landing of undersized conch or the smashing of small conch for pearls;
 - d. Using fishing gear and other methods that minimise environmental impact.
- 4. **Prioritise Safety in Belizean Waters:** We shall ensure that vessels and equipment are well-maintained, and our crews are adequately prepared to handle equipment and respond to emergencies, and stay informed about local maritime conditions.
- 5. **Engage and Collaborate for the Common Good as a Unified Fishing Community:** We shall encourage effective collaboration among fishers, local communities, government officials, researchers and relevant stakeholders to share knowledge, resources, and best practices to strengthen the small-scale fishing sector in Belize. We will participate in discussions and negotiations about fisheries policy and management in good faith especially as it relates to safeguarding the livelihood of fishers that would extend to the sharing of knowledge and traditional practices for future generations.
- 6. **Implement Transparent Fishing Practices:** We shall maintain and report accurate records of catches and sales, supporting transparency and data collection in Belize's fisheries, and demand transparency from other stakeholders.
- 7. **Assure Equity and Social Justice for Fishers:** We will do everything in our powers to ensure that any projects, programme or activities that would benefit conservation-driven efforts also benefits fishers in a meaningful way such as grants, loans and opportunities for further training and education.
- 8. **Protect Belize's Biodiversity:** We shall proactively participate in efforts to strike the appropriate balance between the conservation of habitats and ecosystems and the livelihood of fishers that would include the preservation of Belize's marine biodiversity by respecting and safeguarding marine habitats, breeding grounds, and conservation areas while at the same time assuring access and responsible fishing practices of fishers. We shall avoid harmful practices that may waste marine resources, damage sensitive ecosystems or endanger non-target species.
- 9. **Responsible Market Participation:** We will actively seek responsible markets for our seafood, ensuring that our products enter value networks that respect human and labour rights and sustainable seafood practices, and we will explore opportunities to add value and increase income for fishing communities.
- 10. **Continuously Learn:** We shall pursue ongoing formal and informal education and training opportunities specific to Belizean fishers, such as apprenticeship programs for new entrants into the national fishery and ensuring that fishers stay informed in regard to best practices and technologies that contribute to responsible and sustainable small-scale fishing in Belize.

Signatures of BFF Executive Managing Committee Members/ Community Association Leaders



Nestor Lopez
Corozal Town Fishers



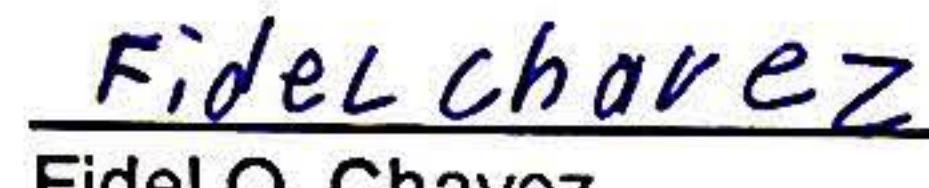
Jamie A Cobb
Copper Bank Fishers



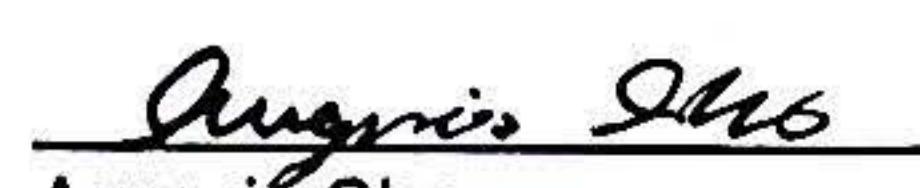
Carlos Arevalo
Vice Chairman Chunox Fisherman Association



Reidrigo Lopez
Sarteneja Fishers



Fidel O. Chavez
San Estevan Fishers



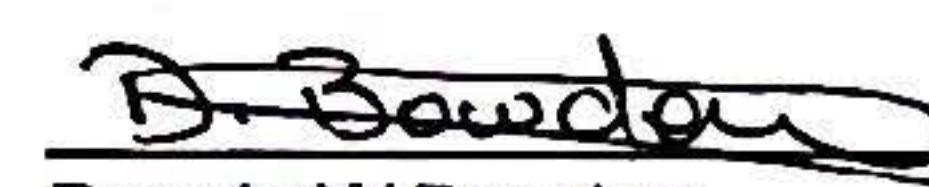
Augurio Sho
Libertad Fishers



Ismael Lopez Jr
Orange Walk Fishers



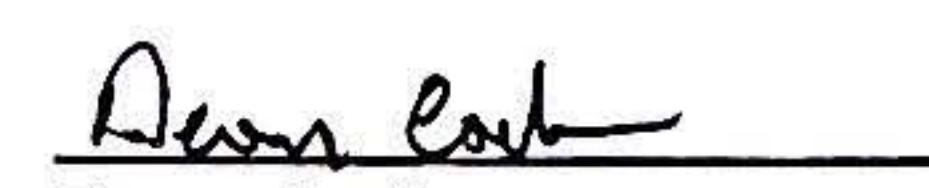
Wayne A Whittaker
Yabro Fishers



Dennis W Bowden
North Front Street Fishers



Vern R Fitzgibbon
Barrack Fishers



Dean Cadle
LadyvilleFishers



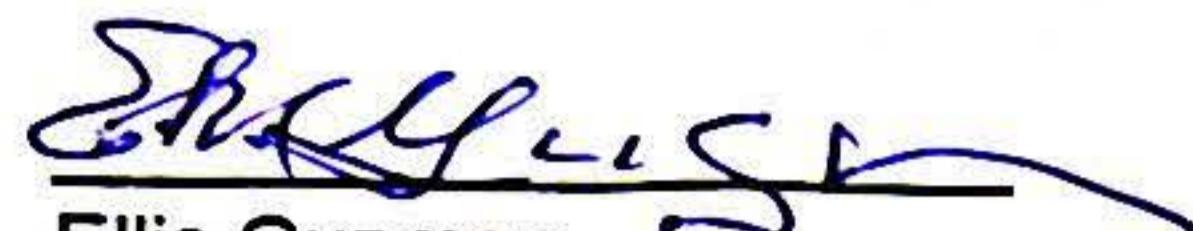
Hopeton Westby Jr
Belize City Central Fishermen Association



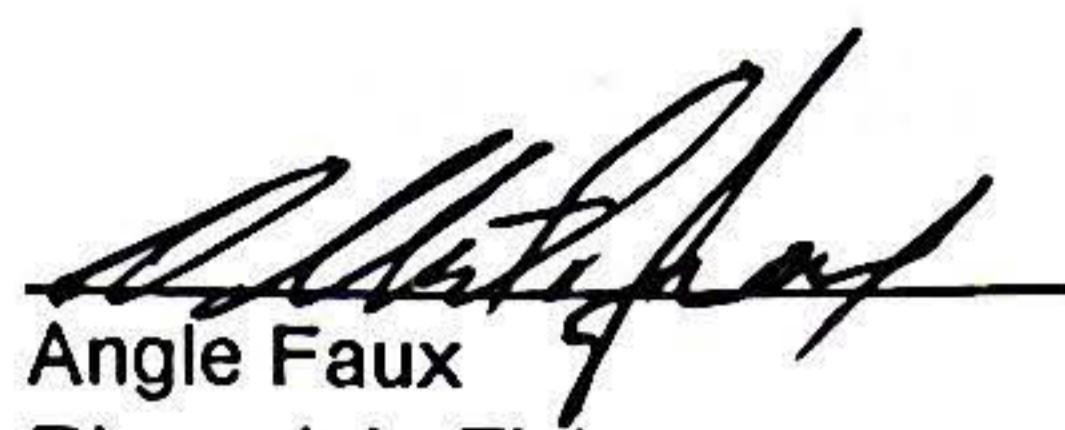
Norman Castillo
Hopkins Fishermen Association



Vonetta Dawson
WABAFAU Fishermen Association



Ellis Guzman
Seine Bight Fishermen Association



Angle Faux
Riversdale Fishers



Lasel Coote
GeorgeTown Fishers



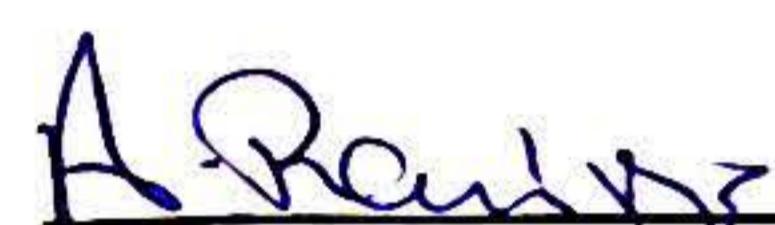
Kurt C. Godfrey Sr.
Placencia Fishers



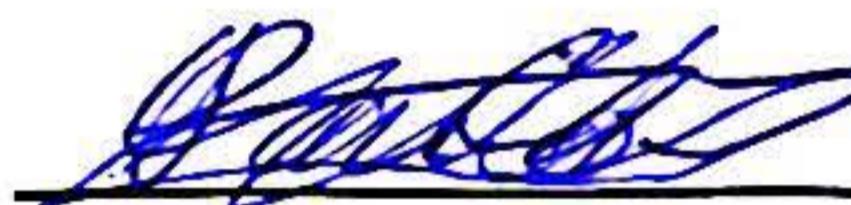
Reinato S Bol
Independence Fishermen Association



Danette Young
Monkey River Fishers



Anna Ramirez
Toledo Fishermen Association



Paul Jacobs
Punta Negra Fishers



Guillermo R Carillo
Barranco Fishers

Signatures of BFF Executive Officers



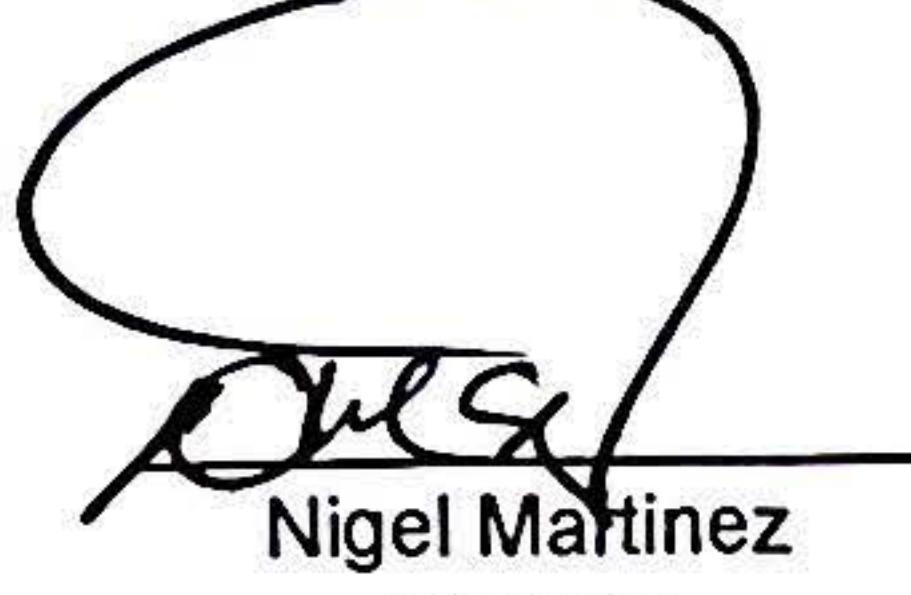
Dale Fairweather
Chairman



Harrison Palacio
Vice Chairman



Hopeton Westby Jr.
Treasurer



Nigel Martinez
Director



Anna Ramirez
Secretary