In The Bahamas, we depend heavily upon marine resources for food, recreation and employment. Our marine resources are therefore managed to protect our fisheries from over-exploitation through:

- Fisheries Regulations
- Establishment and Management of Marine Protected Areas
- Public Education and Awareness
- Restriction of commercial fishing to Bahamians.

PERMITS AND LICENCES

A permit or license is required for:

- Foreign vessels to engage in sportsfishing.
- To conduct foreign fishing for scientific or research purposes.
- Commercial fishing vessels greater than 20ft in length.
- Commercial export or sale of fishery product or resources.
- To harvest crawfish by means of traps or air compressors.
- For sportsfishing tournaments.
- To engage in aquaculture.
- For Flats fishing.

SPORTSFISHING

Sportsfishing regulations apply to foreign vessels, and to Bahamian vessels used by non-Bahamians. Residents will be treated the same as Bahamians.

A permit is required for sportsfishing and unless otherwise authorized:

- Fishing gear is restricted to hook and line.
- The number of rods or reels in the water is restricted to six.
- The sale of fishery product derived from sportsfishing is prohibited.
- Maximum catch per vessel at any time:
  - 18 migratory fish in total (kingfish, tuna, dolphin, wahoo).
  - 6 conch.
  - 10 crawfish (spiny lobster).
- Any resources not intended for capture under tournament rules shall be returned to the sea alive.
- Billfish (marlins, sailfish, swordfish, etc.) must be returned to the sea unharmed.

RESPECTFUL FISHERS

- Know and obey fisheries regulations
- Respect closed seasons
- Respect the rules of Marine Protected Areas
- Purchase legally and sustainably harvested seafood

PROTECTED SPECIES

Marine Mammals: capture or molestation is prohibited.

Coral: harvest is prohibited.

Marine turtles: harvest, purchase or sale of turtles, turtle parts or eggs and interfering with nests is prohibited.

Sharks: harvest, sale, import/export of sharks, shark parts or products is prohibited.

PROHIBITED GEAR AND METHODS

- Use of bleach, noxious/poisonous substances, firearms or explosives.
- Spearguns.
- Longline fishing apparatus with more than 10 hooks.
- Use of SCUBA gear.
- Use of fish traps without a self-destruct panel or less than minimum mesh size.
- Nets with a mesh gauge of less than 2 inches except for nets used to catch goggle-eyes or pilchards.
- Spearfishing within one mile of New Providence or the southern coast of Grand Bahama and 200 yards of a family island.

SPECIES REGULATIONS CONCH

- Harvested conch must have a well-formed, flared lip.

CRAWFISH

- Annual closed season: April 1-July 31.
- Minimum tail length of 5½”.
- Possession of egg bearing females and/or removing eggs is prohibited.
- A permit is required for vessels trapping crawfish.
- Crawfish traps shall be wooden slats with size restrictions.
- Use of compressors is restricted to the harvest of crawfish from August 1-March 31 and within a depth range of 30’-60’.

SCALEFISH

- Netting of Bonefish is prohibited.
- The purchase and sale of Bonefish is prohibited.
- Grouper and rockfish must weigh at least 3lbs.
- The capture, purchase and sale of Nassau grouper is prohibited during the 1st December-28th February closed season.

STONE CRAB

- Possession, harvest or sale of fresh product during the closed season, June 1-October 15 is prohibited.
- Possession or sale of females and stone crab claws measuring less than 4” is prohibited.

* Refer to bag limits for sportsfishing

Please refer to Bahamas Laws online: Fisheries (Jurisdiction and Conservation) Act and associated regulations for complete and updated information. Quick Guide was last updated June 2019. Please download the “Fish Rules” app.