

A Quick Guide to the Fisheries Regulations of The Bahamas

Fisheries Regulations of The Bahamas - Make Responsible Choices so that We Will Have Fish for the Future

Your choice to fish responsibly protects livelihoods and the food security of Bahamians

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).
- 20 fish or 60lbs in total of demersal fish (groupers, snappers, etc.).
- 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.

RESPONSIBLE 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.

Corals: 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 *

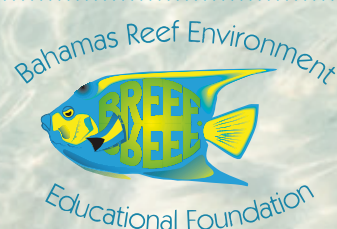
- Netting of Bonefish is prohibited.
- The purchase and sale of Bonefish is prohibited.
- Grouper and rockfish must weigh at least 3lbs.
- The capture, purchase and sale of Nassau grouper is prohibited during the 1st December- 28th February closed season.

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.**



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For additional information contact:

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Complete regulations are available at
<http://laws.bahamas.gov.bs/cms/>