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, except where permitted under the terms of a fishing tournament.

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.
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 Jan. 2020. Please download the “Fish Rules” app.

For additional information contact:
The Department of Marine Resources
Nassau, NP, The Bahamas (242) 393-1777
Complete regulations are available at http://laws.bahamas.gov.bs/cms/