

FISHERIES REGULATIONS OF THE BAHAMAS

HELP ENSURE THAT WE WILL HAVE FISH FOR THE FUTURE

★ SPORTSFISHING

Sportsfishing regulations apply to foreign vessels and Bahamian vessels used by persons who are not Bahamians. Residents will be treated the same as Bahamians.

MAXIMUM CATCH PER VESSEL AT ANY TIME

- 18 migratory fish (kingfish, tuna, dolphin, wahoo).
- 6 conch.
- 10 crawfish (spiny lobster).
- 20 fish or 60lbs of demersal fish (groupers, snappers, etc.).

A PERMIT IS REQUIRED FOR SPORTSFISHING.

- 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 resources or product derived from sportsfishing is prohibited.
- 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.

★ SPECIES REGULATIONS

* Refer to catch limits for sportsfishing

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.
- Use of compressors is restricted to the harvest of crawfish from August 1- March 31, within a depth range of 30’- 60’ and requires a permit.

SCALEFISH *

- The closed season for Nassau grouper is declared annually by The Minister and usually runs from Dec 1- Feb 28.
- Grouper and rockfish must weigh at least 3lbs.
- Netting of Bonefish is prohibited.
- The purchase and sale of Bonefish is prohibited.

STONE CRAB

- Annual closed season: June 1- October 15.
- Capture, possession or sale of fresh stone crab is prohibited during the closed season.
- Harvest, possession or sale of females is prohibited.
- Possession or sale of stone crab claws measuring less than 4” is prohibited.

PROTECTED SPECIES

- Marine mammals: capture or molestation is prohibited.
- Corals: harvest is prohibited.
- Marine turtles: harvest, possession, purchase or sale of turtle, turtle parts and/or eggs and interfering with nests is prohibited.
- Sharks: sale, import and export of sharks, shark parts and shark product is prohibited.

★ 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 and/or for compressors.
- Commercial export or sale of fishery product or resources.

There are penalties for violations.

★ PROHIBITED FISHING GEAR and METHODS

- Use of bleach or other noxious or poisonous substances.
- Use of firearms or explosives.
- Spearguns.
- Longline fishing apparatus with more than 10 vertical or horizontal hooks.
- 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.

RESPONSIBLE FISHERS

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

Refer to Bahamas Laws online: Fisheries Resources (Jurisdiction and Conservation) Act for the complete regulations or www.breef.org

