



# **THE BAHAMAS SPINY LOBSTER FISHERY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

**Presented by  
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**Marine Aggregations 2014**



## The Fishing Industry of the Bahamas

There is approximately 10,000 commercial fishermen in the Bahamas.



Primary market base is the European Union (30%) and United States (60%).

Approximately 5 millions pounds of lobster tails is exported annually generating up to \$75 million dollars.



## **Current Management and Protection Efforts**

### **Lobster Fishery Regulations:**

- **Closed Season between April 1 to July 31,**
- **No harvesting of lobsters with a tail less than 5 1/2 inch tail,**
- **No harvesting of egg bearing lobsters and,**
- **Restrictions on types of fishing gear.**

**Establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).**





## Enhance Management of the Bahamian Lobster Fishery

The Bahamas has Adopted the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standards to attain MSC certification for the Bahamian lobster.



*Benefits:* Improve management, seafood traceability, and increase inventory of scientific data.



## Spiny Lobster Fishery Improvement Project (FIP)

- **Marine Resources Assessment Group (MRAG) Americas** conducted pre-assessment of the Bahamian lobster. *Completed in 2009.*
- An FIP action plan was developed and implementation began shortly after to meet MSC standards. *Finalized in December 2011.*



## The Bahamas Spiny Lobster FIP

### *Core Team Members:*

- The World Wildlife Fund (WWF),
- The Bahamas Marine Exporters Association and (BMEA),
- The Bahamas Department of Marine Resources,
- The Nature Conservancy.





## The Bahamas Spiny Lobster FIP

### *Project Objectives:*

- **Enhance Data Collection and Data Management System,**
- **Conduct Outreach and Education Efforts,**
- **Improve Monitoring and Enforcement and,**
- **Conduct Assessments and Reviews.**



# The Bahamas Spiny Lobster FIP

## *Progress to Date:*

- **Stock Assessment completed,**
- **Zero Tolerance program established by the Bahamas Marine Exporters Association,**
- **Catch Certificate Program implemented at the Department of Marine Resources,**





## The Bahamas Spiny Lobster FIP

### *Progress to Date (cont'd):*

- **Bycatch assessment completed,**
- **Upgraded data collection and management system and,**
- **Government appointed the Bahamas Spiny Lobster Working Group (BSLWG).**



## The Bahamas Spiny Lobster FIP

### *Project Challenges:*

- Complete support by fishing community;
- Sustainable funding to support the FIP activities and;
- Government active and timely decision making on critical items.



## The Bahamas Spiny Lobster FIP

### *Benefits of the Project:*

- Improve management of the lobster fishery;
- Maintain access to the international market;
- Forge partnerships between industry, government and conservation organizations and;
- Compliment TNC's efforts to help sustain the country's fisheries while securing livelihoods.



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To learn more about FIPs around the world visit:  
(<https://sites.google.com/site/fisheryimprovementprojects/home>)