

Fishing Regulations

The regulations established by the Bahamas Department of Marine Resources are intended to accommodate legitimate sport fishing events and tournaments while still providing greater protection for important fish stocks within the 700 island archipelago.

Full information on recreational fishing regulations within The Islands Of The Bahamas is available at www.bahamas.com, but key changes to the existing statute include those listed below.

Any entity wishing to hold a sport fishing event or tournament must apply for a permit through the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources in order to sanction the event. Permits and tournament decals will be issued to approved events and each participating vessel must be in possession of a valid permit with decal in order for the following regulations to apply.

Limits per vessel:

- Migratory species such as kingfish, dolphin, tuna or Wahoo shall not exceed 18 fish per vessel at any time. The previous limit was six (6).
- No vessel shall have on board: marine turtles; more than six (6) conch; more than 10 crawfish; demersal species (groupers, snappers, etc.) in excess of 60 lbs or 20 fish.

Sanctioned sport fishing events or tournaments are the only circumstances under which billfish species such as marlin, sailfish or swordfish may be retained.

Fishermen on independent vessels must return these fish to the water unharmed.

Foreign vessels engaged in sport fishing for which a permit was issued will be allowed to export the fishery products aboard the vessel, within the catch limits above, for non-commercial purposes. Fishery inspectors have the right to board and inspect a vessel engaged in sport fishing to ensure compliance.

Previous revisions to the fishing regulations remain in effect stipulating that:

- A person shall fish by the traditional method of angling with a hook or lure attached to a line held in the hand or attached to a pole, rod or reel (for special guidelines **for fly/flats fishing** follow this link: http://www.bahamas.com/sites/default/files/flat_fishing_regulations_.pdf)
- A person, unless otherwise authorized by the respective permit, shall not use a spear, a fish trap, or a net other than a landing net;
- Each vessel shall use not more than six (6) rods or reels unless the operator is in possession of a permit authorizing the use of more rods or reels;

Special note: No mechanised spearfishing instrument is permitted, only the “Hawaiian Sling” type instrument or similar devices that use a rubber sling.

For more information on sport fishing, scheduled events or travel to The Islands Of The Bahamas please visit www.bahamas.com