

Fishing Regulations for The Bahamas

- Any person who is not a Bahamian citizen needs a permit if they wish to engage in fishing from a vessel that is not Bahamian owned.
- The vessel must clear Bahamas Customs at a Port-of-Entry and obtain the permit at that time. You should not engage in any fishing until this has been done.
- Vessels with a valid fishing permit are allowed 60 pounds or up to 20 demersal fish such as snappers and groupers whichever is the lesser, 6 conchs (legal size), 10 lobsters (in season), and **18 pelagic fish (any combination of Dolphin, Wahoo, Kingfish or Tuna) at any time.**
- No turtles are allowed aboard a vessel at any time.
- All other migratory fish shall be returned to the sea alive unless it is to be used immediately.
- No grouper or rockfish weighing less than three pounds may be taken.
- A vessel is limited to angling with a hook and line held in the hand or attached to a rod and reel. The Fisheries Regulations prohibit the use of a spear, trap or net (other than a landing net), unless such use is specifically authorized. The authorization to use a spear is easy to get.

- A person wishing to use a spear should put this on their application form for the fishing permit. Permission may be granted by the officer issuing the permit for the use of a spear with a hand-held sling, referred to as a Hawaiian sling in The Bahamas, or a pole spear. When permission is granted for the use of a spear, this must be endorsed in writing on the permit by the issuing officer.
- No spearfishing within 200 yards of any Out Island in the Bahamas.
- The use of a spear gun is not allowed in The Bahamas.
- It is illegal to use any type of underwater air supply for spear fishing or collecting of any marine life. This includes scuba gear as well as air compressors.
- **There is no limit to the number of rods you may have onboard the vessel. You are limited to the use of six or less at any given time. The use of more than six rods moves you to another category of sports fishing vessel.**
- **The use of an electric reel is allowed.**
- There is no catch limit for bonefish. Catch and release is strongly encouraged.
- **Unless you are fishing in an approved tournament, all billfish (Marlin, Sailfish, or Swordfish) caught must be returned to the sea unharmed.**

- **Visitors to The Bahamas are not allowed to sell or trade any fishery products. This constitutes commercial fishing and would be a serious violation of the law.**
- The use of a net must be specifically authorized. If you wish to use a cast net to gather bait, you must specify that you want to use this kind of gear on the permit application form.
- It is illegal to take coral, tropical fish or sea fans.
- Nothing may be taken from Bahamas National Underwater Parks.
- No vessel shall have on board any fish unless its head and tail is intact.
- A vessel is allowed to gather conchs. The maximum number that you may have aboard the sportfishing vessel at any time is six (6). Remember that there is a legal size limit for conch in The Bahamas. The shell must have a well developed flaring lip. This is a sign of maturity.
- **Sharks are now protected in The Bahamas, and must only be taken under special permits for very specific purposes. A shark that is hooked during any fishing activity is to be released unharmed.**