



# Spiny Lobster Fishery Country Profile

## Saint Lucia

### Overview of the Fishery

- The spiny lobster fishery is one of the high value fisheries in Saint Lucia.
- The fishery has expanded rapidly due to increasing development of the tourism sector.
- Accurate estimates for total lobster catch are prevented by the nature of these landings and illegal trade thought to occur with the neighbouring island of Martinique.
- The majority of lobster landings occur during the first four months of the fishing period (i.e. August to November of each year).
- The Antillean fish trap is the gear most used. Fishers operate out of a variety of open fiberglass pirogues ranging from 8 to 10 meters in length and powered by outboard motors. Most vessels are multi-species operations targeting a range of off-shore pelagic species and also nearshore demersal species including lobster at different times of the year.
- Landings occur most on the southern and eastern coasts, primarily at Dennery, Micoud, Savannes Bay, Vieux Fort and Laborie. Landings in the northeast have declined significantly largely due to habitat degradation.

### Resource Status

- Lobster populations are considered **overexploited** in nearshore areas and also significantly impacted by declining habitat quality due to land-based sources of pollution.
- Fishers have increasingly reported scarcity in traditional fishing areas.



Production and value of spiny lobster landed in Saint Lucia from 1999-2006

Year	Production (tons)	Value (USD)
1991	10	122,222.10
1992	21	256,666.41
1993	15	183,333.15
1994	15	183,333.15
1995	13	158,888.73
1996	13	158,888.73
1997	13	158,888.73
1998	32	391,110.72
1999	30	366,666.30
2000	24.9	304,333.03
2001	36.1	441,221.78
2002	9.2	125,077.24
2003	23.37	306,501.81
2004	10.6	154,271.22
2005	15.34	219,740.99
2006	9.36	141,368.71
2007	12.66	184,343.62
2008	12.64	181,869.8737
2009	9.63	144,108.73
2010	19.20	288,445.63
2011	24.08	368,910.06

### Economic and Social Importance

- Fishing in Saint Lucia is largely open access, although each vessel must have a valid license for the year. Yet the potential effort that can be applied to the fishery is high as all vessels are allowed to target lobster among other species is high.
- With trade requirements of the EU, lobster is no longer legally exported to neighbouring Martinique; however, there is concern that illegal, unreported and unrecorded exports continue.
- The quantity of lobster caught by fishers would also not be enough to meet any export demand as most lobster are used domestically, sold to hotels, restaurants and the general public.
- In 2011, 2429 fishers and 600 boats were registered in the fisheries sector.
- There are 8 fishing cooperatives established in the country.

### Management Objectives and Regulations

- The primary objective of the management of spiny lobster in Saint Lucia is to create sustainable exploitation of the stocks.
- Regulations specific to the spiny lobster fishery (according to the Fisheries Act and the Fisheries Regulations) include:
  - Minimum size limits (carapace length  $\geq 95$ mm);
  - Prohibition of taking berried or moulting individuals;
  - Closed season between 1 May - 1 August;
  - Prohibition on use of spearguns, hooks/gafs and SCUBA gear for catching lobster.



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