



Spiny Lobster Fishery Country Profile

Turks & Caicos Islands

Overview of the Fishery

- The Turks & Caicos lobster fishery is centered on a well-organized processing sector. The first land-based processing plant was established in 1957.
- There are high variations in landings of lobsters in Turks & Caicos.
- The industrial fishing for spiny lobster is based primarily on the Caicos Bank (the largest of the shallow water banks). There are a small number of vessels that sometimes engage in subsistence fishing around the Turks Bank.
- Lobsters are usually landed whole by free divers.



Resource Status

- Fisheries statistics indicate that the spiny lobster stock in Turks & Caicos has been **fully exploited** since 1977.
- Landings have continued to vary over the years, with a slight decline in 2008 and 2009 as a result of hurricanes Ike and Hanna.

Export Quantities of Spiny Lobster Product 2005 – 2010

Year	Frozen Meat (lbs)	Frozen Tail (lbs)	Whole (lbs)
2005	9,800	202,825	-
2006	13,560	255,356	-
2007	8,800	177,770	1,237
2008	5,965	112,446	-
2009	600	14,684	-
2010	1,160	80,250.5	-

Economic and Social Importance

- In terms of production, employment and government revenue, the spiny lobster is the most important marine resource in the Turks & Caicos Islands, and has played an important part of community life for generations.
- Annual production of the lobster and conch fishery, including domestic consumption, is estimated at about US \$4 million, or about 10% of the country's GDP.
- The fishing industry provides direct employment for approximately 8% of the country's labour force in the harvesting and processing plants.
- In particular, on the island of South Caicos, over 75% of the working population is dependent (directly or indirectly) on the fishing industry.
- The majority of the landed lobsters end up at one of four processing plants, where they are prepared for export to international markets, mainly the USA.

Management Objectives and Regulations

- Objectives for the management of spiny lobster in Turks & Caicos include:
 - Reduce fishing effort;
 - Stabilize fluctuations in the fishery;
 - Improve control over size of first capture;
 - Increase revenues;
 - Reduce catches made during the closed season.
- In Turks and Caicos, regulations specific to the Caribbean spiny lobster fishery (according to the Fisheries Protection Ordinance, the Fisheries Limit Ordinance and the Fisheries Management Plan) include:
 - Minimum size limits (carapace length > 83mm; tail weight > 5 oz);
 - Prohibition on taking berried, tar spotted, or moulting individuals;
 - Closed season (April 1st – July 31st);
 - Gear restrictions;
 - License restrictions;
 - Prohibition on use of SCUBA or hookah diving;
 - Restricted possession of lobster during the closed season including restaurants and establishments.



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