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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON NEW SPORTSFISHING RULES.

1. [What's new in the Fisheries Regulations in The Bahamas?](#)

There have been important changes to the bag limits or quantities of fish that a Non Bahamian fisherman can have onboard his vessel. These bag limits are no longer expressed in terms of quantity per person, but quantity per vessel. In addition the harvesting of conch has been restricted and fishermen are required to have the head and tail intact on any fish retained.

2. [How much fish am I allowed to keep?](#)

The catch limits in the new Regulation are expressed in terms of amounts that may be aboard the vessel at any time. They are not per day limits, or per trip limits. The new bag limits are:

6 pelagic fish (Dolphin, Wahoo, Kingfish or Tuna),

6 lobsters,

20 pounds of demersal fish

Fish that is used for food during the visit, or otherwise removed from the vessel, cannot be counted since it is no longer aboard the vessel.

3. [Am I allowed to eat any of the fish I catch?](#)

The recent changes include a requirement to keep the head and tail intact. This is to enable an inspector to properly identification and count the fish caught. This does not prevent you from consuming fish you catch.

4. [Can I clean and filet the fish I keep?](#)

The recent changes include a requirement to keep the head and tail intact. This is to enable an inspector to properly identification and count the fish caught. This does not preclude the cleaning of fish caught, does not prevent you from consuming any fish caught or from cutting a fish into 2 pieces to facilitate storage. It does preclude you from cutting of fish into filets for storage.

5. [What should I do if I catch a demersal fish \(such as snapper or grouper\) more than 20 lbs in weight?](#)

Inspectors are allowed to use their discretion in regards to "just over the limit" fish. You should avoid difficulties by either, practicing catch and release for larger sized fish, or targeting smaller sizes

6. [Can I still use a spear for fishing?](#)

The rules regarding use of a spear were not a part of the recent changes to the Fisheries Regulations. Sportsfishermen visiting The Bahamas were, and still are, limited to angling by with a hook and line held in the hand or attached to a rod and reel. The Fisheries Regulations still prohibit sportsfishermen from 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.

7. [How do I get permission to engage in spearfishing?](#)

A person wishing to use a spear should put this on their application form for the sportsfishing 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

8. [Where can I go spearfishing?](#)

Spearfishing is not allowed within 1 mile of the coast of New Providence or the southern coast of Grand Bahama Island. It is also prohibited within 200 yards of the coast of any Family Island.

9. [Can I use a spear gun?](#)

The use of a spear gun for fishing is not allowed in The Bahamas.

10. [How many fishing reels can I have on my boat?](#)

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 sportsfishing vessel. The fee for such a permit is \$10,000.00 per year.

11. [Can I use an electric reel?](#)

Yes.

12. [I own a home in The Bahamas. Do I still need a sportsfishing permit?](#)

Any person who is not a Bahamian needs a sportsfishing permit if they wish to engage in fishing from a vessel that is not Bahamian owned.

13. [I intend to fish from the shore or a dock. Do I need a sportsfishing permit?](#)

No, because you will not be using a foreign owned vessel.

14. [Can I use a cast net to gather bait fish?](#)

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 Sportsfishing Permit Application Form. Once approved the issuing officer will include the use of the cast net when he issues the Sportsfishing Permit.

15. [I intend to rent a boat when I visit The Bahamas. Do I need a sportsfishing permit?](#)

You will only need a sportsfishing permit if the boat you rent is not Bahamian owned. Even when fishing from such a boat, a Non-Bahamian person must observe the sportsfishing catch limits.

16. [Can I still gather conchs while in The Bahamas?](#)

Sportsfishermen are no longer allowed to gather conchs. Conch can still be enjoyed in restaurants, and purchased from Bahamian seafood dealers.

17. How much fish can I take home when I leave The Bahamas?

Any person leaving the Bahamas is allowed to take with him, for non-commercial purposes, a certain quantity of fishery products as a part of his personal baggage. The limits are:

6 pelagic fish (Dolphin Wahoo or Kingfish)

20 lbs. of demersal fish

10 pounds of lobster or conch

18. Do I need a sportsfishing permit to go after bonefish?

This depends upon whether or not you are using a Non-Bahamian owned vessel. A sportsfishing permit is required if you are fishing using a Non-Bahamian owned boat

19. Is there a catch limit for bonefish?

There is no catch limit for bonefish. Catch and release is strongly encouraged.

20. Do I have to use a local fishing guide?

There is no requirement that you use a Bahamian guide. The Department of Marine Resources encourages the use of Bahamian fishing guides as this provides an enhanced fishing experience.

21. Can I sell some of the fish I catch in The Bahamas?

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.

22. Where can I get up-to-date information about the laws in The Bahamas online.

Visit the Official Bahamas Government website www.bahamas.gov.bs or the Official Tourism Website of the Islands of The Bahamas www.bahamas.com