

Belize spiny lobster - free-diving and casitas

Overview

FIP Description

The small-scale and artisanal lobster fisheries of Belize began in the mid-to-late 1950s, with species harvested mainly for export to the United States. Today, the fisheries sector contributes significantly to the economy of Belize, ranking 5th in export earnings in 2015. Spiny lobster and queen conch are the most productive capture fisheries, with more than 90 percent of catch exported to the U.S. The Belize spiny lobster stock is part of a larger target stock that ranges from North Carolina to Brazil including Bermuda, the Gulf of Mexico, West Indies and Caribbean.

Fishermen harvest lobster and conch from the shallow waters of the barrier reef and offshore atolls using two types of vessels: small wooden sailboats and fiberglass skiffs. Sailboat fishers often fish for six to ten days and carry approximately eight dugout canoes and up to ten fishers, who free-dive and collect conch and lobster by hand using a hook stick. Fishers using skiffs are at sea for varying periods of time, usually two to three days and at times up to a week. Skiff fishers generally use traps or shades (casitas) to attract lobster and harvest using either hand, hook stick, noose/lasso or jamo net. The fleet pursuing the stock that will be part of the FIP is defined as fishers legally licensed by the Belize Fisheries Department and are members of the National Fishermen Cooperative or Northern Fishing Cooperative in Belize.

National Fishermen Cooperative and Northern Cooperative are the two largest fishing cooperatives in Belize, representing approximately 80 percent of Belize's 2700+ commercial fishers combined. These Co-ops and two private companies are currently the only entities allowed to export lobster, with an average of 500,000 lbs of lobster tails are exported annually. According to Belizean law, the fishing cooperatives are required to sell 5% of their lobster to local markets. The rest is exported, mainly to the U.S.

How is this FIP Doing?

Current Status:



Actions Progress This shows the proportion of actions in the workplan that the FIP has completed.

20%

Actions Overview This shows the proportion of actions that are behind schedule, on track, completed, or not yet started.

Behind	On Track	Complete	Future
24%	56%	20%	0%

Red Indicator Progress This shows the proportion of actions specifically addressing red indicators that are behind schedule, on track, completed, or not yet started. This helps users understand the progress the FIP is making on the biggest challenges in the fishery.

Behind	On Track	Complete	Future
25%	75%	0%	0%

FIP Progress Rating

A - Advanced Progress

FIP Objective(s)

The Belize casita and free-diving (hook stick) spiny lobster FIP seeks to generate environmental, economic, and social benefits by engaging national and international stakeholders in an expanded approach to fishery improvement that results in measurable change by 2024. To achieve this goal, the FIP aims to meet the following objectives:

- (1) To test the validity and potential of a FIP+ model (Environment, Social and Economic) as a way of enhancing FIP progress in Belizean Lobster throughout 2020-2025 and use this as a test case for other fisheries globally;
- (2) To coordinate and continuously promote the collaboration of national and international stakeholders of the Belizean lobster fishery to work on improvement across environmental, social and economic components of the fishery throughout the life of the FIP, minimally until Dec 2025;
- (3) To develop a blended finance approach to fund the FIP longterm, beginning in Q1 of 2020;
- (4) To develop and test tools which can support this and other FIP+ projects globally, by end 2021;
- (5) To create measurable change environmentally, socially and economically within the fishery based on an extended FIP+ workplan, by 2025;
- (6) To build social and economic capacity within the Belizean based co-operatives as a way to enhance the co-operatives' ability to engage in environmental improvements longterm, by 2023.

FIP Type

Comprehensive

FIP Stage

Stage 4: Improvements in Fishing Practices or Fishery Management

Start and Projected End Dates

November, 2019 -

November, 2024

Species

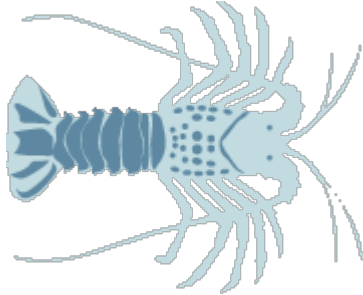
Common Name

Spiny Lobster (Caribbean)

Scientific Name

Panulirus argus

[Buying Guide Link Image](#)



[Spiny Lobster \(Caribbean\)](#)

[Buying Guide](#)

Gear Type

[Casita/Condominium](#)

[Diver-Harvest](#)

[Pot/Trap](#)

Location

FAO Major Fishing Area

[Area 31 \(Atlantic, Western Central\)](#)

Exclusive Economic Zones

Country

Belize

Geographic Scope

Belize

Country Flag of Vessel

Belize

Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO)

High Seas Name

Caribbean Sea

Estimated Total FIP Landings

709 metric tons

FIP Leads

Organization Name

Future of Fish

Organization Type

NGO

Primary Contact

Marah Hardt

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Website Name

[Future of Fish](#)

Organization Name

The Nature Conservancy Belize

Organization Type

NGO

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[The Nature Conservancy](#)

Organization Name

National Fishermen's Producers Cooperative Society Ltd.

Organization Type

Industry

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Website Name

[National Fishermen's Producers Cooperative Society Ltd.](#)

Organization Name

Northern Fishermen Cooperative Society Ltd

Organization Type

Industry

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Website Name

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Northern-Fishermens-Cooperative-Society-LTD/58997...>