



Mac Stone/ WWF-US

UPDATES FROM THE WATER

OCTOBER 2020

NICARAGUA SPINY LOBSTER - TRAP FISHERY

Gear Type: Traps

Volume: 3,3,47 MT

FIP Stage: Stage 5 (Improvements on the Water)

Progress Rating: A (Advanced Progress)

Start Date: January 2012

Nicaragua is the eighth largest lobster producer in the world and the largest in Central America, with an average production of over 4,300 tons per year for the trap and dive fisheries, and approximately 3,300 tons annually for the trap fishery alone. The spiny lobster fishery in Nicaragua generates about \$55 million annually from exports, making it one of the country's most important fisheries. The industrial trap fleet is made up of 64 vessels which employ 767 fishers. As the FIP is led at the national level by Nicaragua's Fisheries Institute (INPESCA), fishers are mostly engaged via meetings to update them on management regulations and FIP progress. Since the start of the FIP in 2013, fishers and fishing communities are benefiting from stable catches and increasing employment opportunities in the fishery. The FIP has helped generate new information about the impact of the fishery on the lobster population, the habitat, and ecosystem, which has helped the Nicaraguan government to improve its management measures in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fishery and minimize its impact on the environment.

To date, the coronavirus pandemic has had minimal impact on the Nicaragua lobster fishery. The season opened in July and although the decreased demand for lobster from the international market is likely to impact the fishery, the full impact has not yet been measured. Despite travel restrictions due to the pandemic, activities have continued with few delays as the FIP has adapted to conducting virtual workshops and meetings.

FIP efforts this year are focused on completing the first ever bi-national stock assessment for spiny lobster—a stock shared with Honduras.

The joint assessment, which is required for the Honduras and Nicaragua lobster fisheries to meet the MSC standard, will provide a more accurate measure of the impact of both countries' fisheries on the lobster population and will inform whether additional management measures need to be implemented. In March, just before the coronavirus pandemic hit and travel restrictions were put in place, Nicaraguan government scientists led a successful workshop in Honduras in which government researchers, university scientists, and processing plant managers were trained on the new stock assessment model and how to best collect catch data at the plants to inform the stock assessment.

The adoption of the Nicaraguan lobster fishery management plan has been put on hold due to it being lower priority during the coronavirus pandemic and there is currently no date set for when it will be adopted. WWF will continue to urge INPESCA to finalize and adopt it as soon as possible. Priority activities expected to occur over the next several months include: compiling Honduras catch data from processing plants to inform the binational stock assessment by September; conducting a virtual workshop to run the stock assessment model by October; developing a strategy to combat illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing by January 2021; and finalizing the binational stock assessment report by February 2021.

Become a WWF FIP participant today by visiting:

<https://seafoodsustainability.org/fisheries/fishery-improvement-projects-signup>

Being a WWF FIP Participant provides a pre-competitive space for companies to engage with fisheries in their supply chains and leverage power across multiple companies to drive fishery improvements forward. By signing on to support a FIP, you are joining forces with other leaders in the industry that seek to help conserve marine ecosystems and advance the livelihoods for millions of people who depend on them.

WWF recognizes FIP participants on the industry website, SeafoodSustainability.org. WWF also works with FIP participants to communicate the benefits of FIPs among key buyers, sustainable business leaders, employees, environmental activists, and other key constituencies.

Together we can protect oceans and the food and livelihoods they can sustainably provide.

For more information or to partner with WWF, please visit SeafoodSustainability.org or contact us at info@seafoodsustainability.org
