



Mike Harterink / WWF

UPDATES FROM THE WATER

MARCH 2021

NICARAGUA SPINY LOBSTER - TRAP FISHERY

Gear Type: Traps

Volume: 3,347 MT (2018-2019 -- Trap Only)

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, 3,300 tons of which comes from 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 that 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 the ecosystem, which has helped the Nicaraguan government to improve its management measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fishery and minimize its impact on the environment.

FIP efforts have been focused on completing the first-ever binational 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. The compilation of catch data from Honduras was completed in November 2020, and scientists from INPESCA conducted a preliminary run of the stock assessment in January 2021 using ten years of Honduras and Nicaragua spiny lobster data. The results indicated that the fisheries are fully

exploited and overfishing is not occurring. However, the scientists cautioned that it is important to ensure that fishing effort does not increase and recommended that additional measures be implemented in both countries to better monitor artisanal fishing effort and put a limit on the size and number of traps that are used. The Nicaraguan lobster fishery management plan, which is expected to be officially adopted by March 2021, includes measures to put a cap on fishing licenses, establish a lobster catch quota, and improve the monitoring and control of the artisanal fleet. A Honduras spiny lobster fishery management plan is currently being drafted and is expected to include additional measures as well.

Priority activities expected to occur over the next several months include: Conducting additional runs of the stock assessment model and finalizing the binational stock assessment report by March 2021; and conducting an external assessment of the management system, developing a strategy to combat illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, and developing a complete description of harvest control rules and tools for the Nicaraguan lobster fishery by June 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 of 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