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UPDATES FROM THE WATER

OCTOBER 2021

HONDURAS SPINY LOBSTER - TRAP FISHERY

Gear Type: Traps

Volume: 2,765 MT (average 2010-2020 Whole Weight - Trap Only)

FIP Stage: Stage 5 (Improvements on the Water)

Progress Rating: C (Some Recent Progress)

Start Date: July 2012

Honduras is the second-largest lobster producer in Central America after Nicaragua with an average production of over 3,700 tons (whole weight) per year for the trap and dive fisheries, 2,765 tons of which come from the trap fishery alone. In 2019, Honduras spiny lobster generated \$46.7 million in exports. Approximately 90% of the catch is exported to the United States, so the leverage that buyers have upon the fishery is significant. The industrial trap fleet is made up of 91 vessels that employ approximately 1,500 fishers. Fishers are engaged in the trap FIP mainly through the industrial fishing associations APESCA and APICAH, where representatives attend FIP meetings to get updated on the latest management regulations and FIP actions. The FIP has helped fishers to better understand the fishery management regulations and improve their catch data collection efforts by learning what information is required to inform the stock assessment. Under the FIP, studies have been conducted to evaluate the impact of the fishery on the habitat. The research found that there is a risk that the fishery is negatively impacting deep coral reefs (deeper than 25 m) and in response, the government is considering new measures such as improving the monitoring of coral reef distribution and prohibiting discards of lobster traps to reduce the fishery's impact on vulnerable marine habitats.

FIP efforts have been focused on completing the first-ever binational stock assessment for spiny lobster—a stock shared with Nicaragua. The joint assessment, which is required for the Honduras and Nicaragua lobster fisheries to meet the MSC standard, was recently finalized in August 2021. The results indicated that the spiny lobster fisheries in both Honduras and Nicaragua are fully exploited and overfishing is not occurring, but the scientists cautioned that it is important to ensure that fishing effort does not increase and recommended that additional management measures should be taken to increase control of fishing effort through implementing and enforcing catch quotas in both countries; better monitor traps including the number deployed, their location, and ensuring they are removed from the water in the closed season to prevent ghost fishing, and strengthen enforcement to ensure fishers are complying with the regulations. The Nicaraguan lobster fishery management plan, which is

still pending official authorization, 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 similar measures as well.

Priority activities expected to occur over the next several months include Conducting an external scientific review of the binational stock assessment; finalizing the Honduras lobster fishery management plan by December 2021; and implementing updated logbooks to improve the collection of bycatch data in the trap fishery.

Sign up to become a FIP Participant today by visiting:

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

Help conserve marine ecosystems, protect livelihoods, and increase the number of sustainable fisheries and the overall supply of sustainable seafood.

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](https://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, please visit seafoodsustainability.org