



© Mac Stoner/ WWF-US

UPDATES FROM THE WATER

OCTOBER 2021

NICARAGUA SPINY LOBSTER - TRAP FISHERY

Gear Type: Traps

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

FIP Stage: Stage 5 (Improvements on the Water)

Progress Rating: C (Some Recent 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 (whole weight) 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 generated \$65.8 million from exports in 2019, making it one of the country's most important fisheries. About 90% of Nicaragua's lobster is exported, mostly to the US (51%) and EU (36%). 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 2012, fishers and fishing communities have benefited from stable catches and increasing lobster prices locally and internationally. 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 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, 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; Conducting an external assessment of the fishery 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.

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