IDENTIFICATION

SCIENTIFIC NAME
Panulirus argus

SPECIES NAMES
Caribbean spiny lobster

STOCK IDENTIFICATION

The complete stock structure of the Caribbean spiny lobster is not fully understood. Silberman et al. (1994) concluded that there is a single genetic stock throughout its entire distribution area, however, a recent review of oceanographic and genetic available data indicates that Brazilian populations are characterized by a considerable degree of self-recruitment, and are assessed independently of the Caribbean populations (Andrade, 2015). Larval connectivity in the Caribbean has been described by Kough et al. (2013): larval exchanges transcend international boundaries, nonetheless, self-recruitment of lobsters dominates larval recruitment in the Bahamas, Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, while the Cayman Islands, Colombia, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, and Puerto Rico lobster populations depend largely on larval subsidies from outside their borders.

This profile considers the Caribbean lobster meta-population, and includes assessments conducted at national level, when available. The assessment unit and supposed stock along the Northern Brazilian coast is considered separately in the Northern SW Atlantic profile.

RELATED LINKS:
- Bahamian Department of Marine Resources
- Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC)

ASSESSMENT

Strengths
- There have been improvements in knowledge about larval dispersion and populations connectivity.
- There have been improvements at regional level, such as the establishment of recent working groups on Fisheries Data and Statistics and on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing.
- Stocks in 2014 were considered in better condition.
- Stock assessment has improved in recent years.
- Spawning stock biomass is estimated to be above the limit reference point, and probably at the target level.
- Experts are contracted to conduct stock assessments and peer reviews.
- Reference points and a harvest control rule were defined.
- Management as improved in recent years, including establishment of a multi-stakeholder advisory group for the fishery of a Bahamas Spiny Lobster Working Group.
- Landings data are gradually being improved.
- Resources are being dedicated to fight illegal fishing practices.

Weaknesses
- Stock assessment reports are not publicly available.
- Fishing mortality estimates are not available.
- Under-sized lobsters are commonly sold in the local market.
- Not all fishery removals are known, as there is still unreported local and foreign illegal catches of spiny lobster in The Bahamas.

SCORES

Management Quality:

- Management Strategy: ≥ 6 to ≥ 8
- Managers Compliance: ≥ 6 to 10
- Fishers Compliance: ≥ 6

Stock Health:

- Current Health: ≥ 7.6
- Future Health: 7.6

FIPS
No related FIPs

MSC
- Bahamian Spiny Lobster Fishery: MSC Certified

RECOMMENDATIONS

RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN
- Start or join an existing fishery improvement project to address sustainability issues in this fishery. I'm advised on starting a FIP, see SFPI’s Seafood Industry Guide to FIPs at http://www.sustainablefish.org/publications/2014/04/02/the-seafoodindustry-guide-to-fips.
- Communicate to fishery managers that there are sustainability issues in this fishery that may be affecting the sale of products, and request that they comprehensively evaluate and address such issues.

Fishery Profile
https://www.fishsource.org/fishery_page/3842
This profile last updated on 3 August 2018