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P R E S S R E L E A S E

AMENDMENT OT THE SPORTSFISHING REGULATIONS

The Department of Marine Resources wishes to advise the general public that the several amendments to the Regulations governing sportsfishing have been made and that these changes came into force on 1st January, 2007. The amendments which have been made to Regulation 48 of the Fisheries Regulations (Ch. 244 – Subsidiary Legislation of The Bahamas – 2000) have the effect of curtailing the amount of marine resources which can legally be harvested by foreign boaters visiting the Bahamas.

The general public is informed that Regulation 48 now reads:

48. (1) In sportsfishing the following rules apply-

- a) A person shall fish by the traditional method of angling with a hook or lure attached to a line held in the hand or attached to a pole, rod or reel;
- b) A person, unless otherwise authorized by the respective permit, shall not use a spear, a fish trap, or a net other than a landing net;
- c) Each vessel shall use not more than six (6) rods or reels unless the operator is in possession of a permit authorizing the use of more rods or reels;
- d) Any migratory fishery resource that is caught shall not in total consist of more than six (6) Kingfish, Dolphin, Tuna or Wahoo per vessel and any resource not intended to be used shall not be injured unnecessarily but be returned to the sea alive;
- e) No vessel shall have on board any conch, turtle or more than twenty pounds of any demersal fishery resources (groupers, snappers, etc.) per vessel at any time and excluding not more than six crawfish per vessel.

(2) The limitations specified in (1)(d) and (e) shall also apply to a Bahamian vessel engaged in fishing for purposes other than commercial by persons who are not Bahamians;

(3) Subject to paragraph (1) no vessel shall have on board any fish unless its head and tail is intact.

The general public is advised that the Queen Conch (conch) is considered to be an endangered species throughout much of its range within the wider Caribbean area, including The Bahamas. The Government, in an effort to ensure the continued sustainability of local conch stocks, has decided to prohibit the harvesting of the species by foreign boaters.

The general public is further informed that the changes to the Sportsfishing Rules may be found in the Gazette SI 79 of 2006 dated 28 December 2006.