

# SUMMARY OF CAYMAN ISLANDS MARINE CONSERVATION LAWS (REVISED 2001)



Recent amendments to the Marine Conservation Legislation are outlined below. Details for the implementation of some amendments are still being finalised by the Marine Conservation Board and members of Government. As soon as this information is available the public will be informed.

## Lobster

- Closed season runs from 1 March through 30 November each year.
- Catch limit: three per person or six per boat per day, whichever is less.
- Six inch tail minimum size.
- No one may purchase or receive more than three lobster from Cayman waters in any one day.
- Only spiny lobster (*P. argus*) may be taken.

## Conch

- Closed season runs from 1 May through 31 October each year.
- Catch limit: five per person or ten per boat per day, whichever is less.
- No one may purchase or receive more than five conch from Cayman waters in any one day.

## Whelks

- Catch limit: two-and-a-half gallons in the shell or two-and-a-half pounds of processed whelks.
- No one may purchase or receive more than two-and-a-half gallons in the shell or two-and-a-half pounds processed from Cayman waters in any one day.
- Chitons, periwinkles and bleeding teeth may not be taken from Cayman waters at any time.

## Nassau Grouper

- Designated Grouper Spawning Areas are protected.
- Line fishing only is permitted in these areas by Caymanians.
- Closed season: 1st January until 31st December 2003 and every alternate year thereafter (i.e. 2005,2007,2009 etc.)
- Open season years: a catch limit of twelve grouper per boat per day applies in these areas and no one may purchase, receive or possess more than twelve groupers.
- Twelve inch minimum size limit applies throughout Cayman waters, year round.

## Other Fish

- Jew fish, tilefish (whities), filefish (pipers) and angelfish, including grey, French and queen angels (old monks), may not be taken from Cayman waters at any time.
- Eight-inch (8) minimum size on all other fish except goggle eyes, herrings (including sprats), anchovies and silversides (including loggerhead and fine fry).

## Fish Pots

- Maximum two per household.
- Must be licensed by the Marine Conservation Board (at a cost of \$10 per pot).
- Only Caymanians over 18 may be granted licenses.
- Must be identified with a DoE tag.
- No fish pot may be set within a one-mile radius of any grouper spawning area from 1 November through 31 March.
- Must have no more than one entry funnel.
- Mesh must be at least two-and-a-quarter inches, and vertically oriented to allow undersized fish to swim through.
- The trapdoor must be at least eight-and-a-half inches high by eleven inches wide, and hinged at the bottom. It must also be secured with a decomposable material in the event of the fish pot becoming lost underwater.



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### **Sharks**

- No one may feed, attempt to feed or provide or use food to attract any shark in Cayman waters.

### **Turtle**

- No one may disturb, molest or take turtle in Cayman waters without a license from the Marine Conservation Board.
- Possession of turtle eggs is prohibited.
- For licensed fishermen, closed season is May 1 through October 31.

### **General Rules**

- Damaging coral by anchor, chains or any other means **ANYWHERE** in Cayman waters is prohibited.
- No taking of **ANY** marine life while on scuba.
- No taking of any coral, sponges, etc. from Cayman waters.
- No one may use a speargun, Hawaiian sling, polespear or seine net without a license from the Marine Conservation Board.
- Export of live fish or other marine life is prohibited.
- Fishing with gill nets, poison or other noxious substances is prohibited.
- Dumping **ANYTHING** in Cayman waters is prohibited.

### **The DoE wishes to remind the public that the following laws still apply:**

#### **Marine Parks**

- No taking of any marine life alive or dead *except*:
  - Line fishing from shore is permitted.
  - Line fishing at 80ft and beyond the drop off is permitted.
  - Taking fry and sprats with a fry or cast net is permitted.
- Note that fish pots, spear guns, pole spears and seine nets are totally prohibited in these areas.

#### **Replenishment Zones**

- No taking of conch or lobster by any means.
  - Line fishing is permitted.
  - Taking fry and sprats with a fry or cast net is permitted.
- Note that these zones include the outside edge of the reef to a depth of twenty feet.

#### **Environmental Zones**

- No taking of marine life, alive or dead, with no exceptions.
- No in-water activities are permitted.
- Public may access only at speeds of five m.p.h. or less.
- No anchoring of any boat.

### **Penalties**

Violation of any of these laws is an offence carrying a maximum penalty of CI\$500,000.00 fine and one year in jail. Upon conviction, forfeiture of the vessel or other equipment may also be ordered.

**Call for further information  
Department of Environment  
Phone: 949-8469  
VHF: Channel 17**