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## A collaborative approach to sustainable fishing in The Bahamas through effective marine management and regulation compliance

***A fundamental part of the Bahamian way of life, the ocean and its fragile ecosystems provide livelihoods for tens of thousands of fishers and contribute over \$2.5 billion annually in tourism revenue to the national economy.*** For The Bahamas to thrive today and in the future, it is imperative to protect the long-term health and productivity of the marine resources that millions of residents and visitors rely on every day.

The Bahamas has long been a Caribbean leader in ocean conservation and currently has 10 percent of its waters declared as marine protected areas. However, without effective marine management and implementation of regulations, establishment of marine protected areas alone will be insufficient to protect Bahamian waters and the communities that depend on them.

The Marine Action Partnership (MAP) for Sustainable Fisheries is a multi-year partnership that coordinates and enhances the efforts of conservation organizations and government agencies to improve marine resource management, through effective collaboration with fishing communities and other stakeholders.

### Program Outcomes

- Sustain livelihoods
- Reduce foreign and domestic poaching
- Increase consumer awareness of fisheries regulations and compliance
- Establish collaboration pathways between law enforcement agencies and fisheries stakeholders
- Conserve biodiversity of species



## Taking Action to Preserve the Precious Marine Resources of The Bahamas

In The Bahamas today, illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, including foreign and domestic poaching, are widespread and pose a myriad of threats to the ocean, the fishing industry and communities throughout the country. Not only are livelihoods, households and local economies put at risk, but a decline in marine species populations threatens the balance necessary for the survival of ecosystems such as coral reefs. **The MAP for Sustainable Fisheries aims to expand the capacity of government agencies and marine protected area managers to enforce marine regulations, and the capacity of fishers and the broader industry to adhere to them—with the goal of markedly increasing overall compliance by 2025.**

For two decades, The Bahamas Department of Marine Resources and The Nature Conservancy have collaborated with one another, and other partners, to establish marine protected areas and promote sustainable fisheries. Most recently, this collaboration helped The Bahamas make history in 2018 by earning the Marine Stewardship Council ecolabel certification for its \$90M-per-year spiny lobster fishery—the first Caribbean fishery to achieve this renowned certification. The MAP for Sustainable Fisheries—launched by The Bahamas Department of Marine Resources, The Nature Conservancy and WildAid—will build on this model and momentum, working closely with additional partners including the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, the Bahamas National Trust and other key stakeholders.

### Four Objectives of the Marine Action Partnership

- 1 | Assess the strengths and areas for improvement in current marine compliance management in The Bahamas
- 2 | Identify and leverage national and international support for strengthening the capacity of local marine enforcement agencies
- 3 | Develop and implement an action plan with key enforcement stakeholders and fishing communities to address compliance gaps in five key areas:
  - Surveillance and Enforcement
  - Policies and Consequences
  - Consistent Funding
  - Training and Mentorship
  - Community Engagement
- 4 | Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of the action plan put in place, including a follow-up marine compliance management assessment and recommendations for further improvements

**Through the MAP for Sustainable Fisheries, we will work to ensure a healthy, resilient marine environment to sustain livelihoods and communities in The Bahamas today and into the future.**

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**The MAP is advancing the alignment of regional and global agreements to close enforcement gaps and combat IUU fishing in The Bahamas and beyond by supporting the goals of the:**

- Convention on Biological Diversity
- Caribbean Challenge Initiative
- Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species
- FAO Port State Measures Agreement
- United Nations Convention on The Law of the Sea



[bahamas.gov.bs/marineresources](http://bahamas.gov.bs/marineresources)



[nature.org/bahamas](http://nature.org/bahamas)



[wildaid.org/marine](http://wildaid.org/marine)