**Conch Management – St. Kitts and Nevis**

**Legislation**

The Fisheries Act and Regulations of 2002 is the legislation that governs the fisheries resources of St. Kitts and Nevis. With respect to the conch fishery the Regulation states:

 (1) *In this regulation, “immature conch” means*

 *(a) a conch, the shell of which is smaller than eighteen centimeters in length; or*

 *(b) a conch, the shell of which does not have a flared lip; or*

 *(c) a conch with a total meat weight of less than two hundred and twenty- five grams (0.5 lbs) after removal of the digestive gland.*

 *(2) No person shall take, sell or purchase or have in his or her possession any*

*“immature conch”.*

 *(3) The Minister may, by Notice published in the Gazette, declare any period or area or both as closed for conch fishing.*

 *(4) No person shall fish for conch during the period of a closed season for conch.*

 *(5) This regulation relates to the Queen Conch Strombus gigas.*

**Enforcement**

The Regulations are enforced by the Police, Customs Officers, The Coast Guard and the Fisheries Enforcement Officer or any person that the Minister with responsibility for fisheries may designate.

**Licensing**

Since 2011, the Department of Marine Resources began licensing conch fishers in order to control the access and improve the management of the conch fishery.

**Marine Management Area**

In 2014, St. Kitts and Nevis is planning on establishing a marine management area (MMA) in a two mile radius around the Federation St. Kitts and Nevis to enhance the supervision of the near shore fish species. The MMA will be guided by a marine zone plan completed in 2010 with the assistance of TNC and USAID. Within the MMA there will be a no take zone covering the expanse of sea water (approximate 4 square miles) between St. Kitts and Nevis which forms the major nursery habitat for juvenile conch.

**Ongoing Sensitization**

Meetings with the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and fishers are held at least once during each quarter of the year. At these meetings, marine resources officers communicate the fisheries regulations with fishers. The conch regulations are always discussed with the stakeholders at these meetings because the conch fishery supports the livelihoods of the many fishers especially those fishers living in the capital city of Basseterre. The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) intends to ensure the sustainable use of the conch for the foreseeable future.

**Trade**

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) adheres to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora in all exports and imports relating to conch and conch products.