

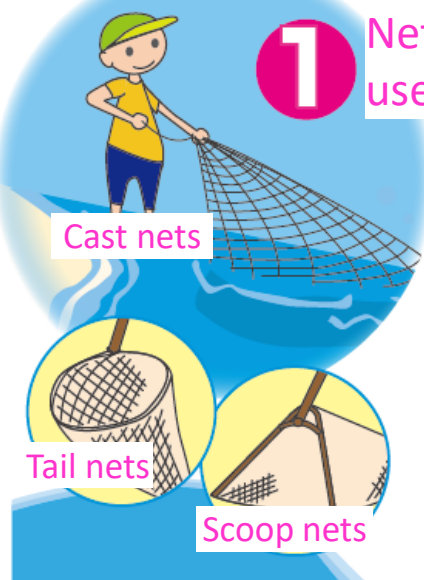
Fishing regulations for marine animals and plants in Okinawa



In the Okinawa Prefecture, various rules are in place for the protection and sustainable use of marine resources. This pamphlet explains the rules regarding the collection of aquatic animals and plants to the general public. These rules are based on the Fisheries Act, the Okinawa Prefecture Fisheries Coordination Ordinance (hereinafter referred to as the "Rules"), and the Instructions of Okinawa Sea area Fisheries Adjustment Commissions. (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee Instructions").

1. Fishing gear and fishing methods permitted for recreational fishermen

Article 37 of the Regulations stipulates the fishing gear and fishing methods that are permitted for use by recreational fishermen. Please note that collecting aquatic animals and plants using fishing gear and fishing methods other than those listed here is a violation of regulations [penalty: fine].



1 Nets that do not use boats

3 Hook and line or trolling without using Fishing nets

2 Capturing it using your hands or a simple tool (a shovel or rake that can be used with one hand).



The definition of "pole spear"

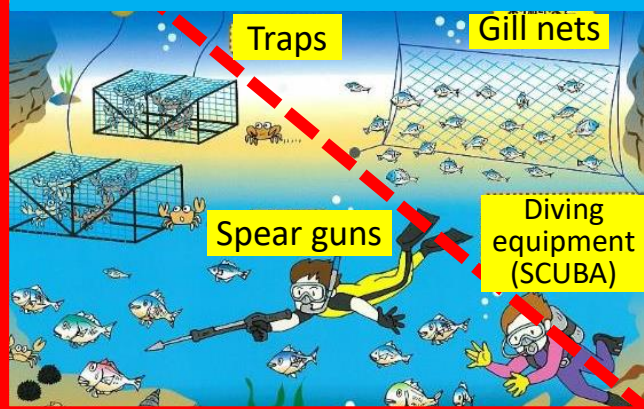
Which is permitted for recreational use. It is a fishing gear used to catch fish by piercing it. The tip and handle are fixed together. You can also attach a rubber to the end of the handle. However, recreational fishermen are only permitted to use a rubber with restricted power to keep the handle in the user's hands when releasing it.

4

Pole spear without launcher



Fishing gear prohibited for recreational use



Recreational fishermen are prohibited from using spear guns ! (permitted only in commercial fishery). Furthermore, commercial fishing by foreigners is prohibited by the Act on the Regulation of Fishing Operations by Foreign Nationals.

2. Prohibition of Gathering or Catching of Aquatic Animals and Plants

(1) Specified Aquatic Animals and Plants Banned !

According to Article 132 of the Fisheries Act, harvesting of the following specific aquatic animals and plants is prohibited. In addition, transporting and storing aquatic animals and plants in violation of this Act is prohibited [up to 3 years of imprisonment/fine of up to 30 million yen].



① Sea cucumbers

② Juveniles of eels (Genus *Anguilla*)

(2) Reef-building corals Banned !

According to Article 34 of the Regulations, harvesting of "**reef-building corals (hermatypic corals)**" is prohibited. Moreover, the possession and sale of aquatic animals and plants in violation of this regulation is prohibited [imprisonment for up to 6 months/fine of up to 100,000 yen].

Corals that prohibited of catching

- ① Order Scleractinia
- ② Family Milleporidae
- ③ Order Alcyonacea (suborder Calaxonia, Holaxonia and Scleraxonia excluding *Briareum violaceum* and Family Coralliidae)
- ④ Family Tubipora
- ⑤ Order Helioporacea (Coenothecalia)

Examples of Corals



① Order Scleractinia

② Family Milleporidae

③ Order Alcyonacea

④ Family Tubipora

⑤ Order Helioporacea (Coenothecalia)

"Coral fishing (fishing for the purpose of collecting corals)" is a governor-licensed fishery according to Article 57 of the Fisheries Act and Article 5 of the Regulations. Collection of **deep-sea (Coralidae)** and **soft corals** (Order Coralidae, Suborder Cylindrica, Suborder Cylindrica [excluding Coralidae], and *Briareum violaceum*) for the purpose of **selling without obtaining a fishing license is prohibited** [up to 3 years of imprisonment/fine of up to 3 million yen].

(3) Sea turtles (including eggs) Banned !

As per the committee's instructions, the harvesting of sea turtles is prohibited (up to 1 year of imprisonment/fine of up to 500,000 yen). In addition, according to Article 34 of the Regulations, collecting eggs of sea turtles is prohibited. Possession and sale of an individual, or body part thereof, in violation of this Regulation is also prohibited [up to 6 months of imprisonment/fine of up to 100,000 yen].



(1)-(3): For collecting aquatic animals and plants for the purpose of testing and research, a special collection permit or committee approval is required.

(4) Species subject to fishing rights

(Foreigners are not permitted to catch the species subject to fishing rights even if accompanied by Japanese fishermen)

In the Okinawa Prefecture, the following aquatic animals and plants are subject to fishing based on common fishing rights. Members of licensed fishing cooperatives possess priority rights to harvest these target species. According to Article 195 of the Fisheries Act, if someone other than a member of the association catches these species, they may be **prosecuted for violation of fishing rights** (fine of up to 1 million yen)



Collector urchins
(*Tripneustes gratilla*)



Spiny lobsters
(Family Palinuridae)



Slipper lobsters
(Family Scyllaridae)



Sea cucumbers

Octopuses



Big blue octopus
(*Octopus cyanea*)



Ornate octopus
(*Callistoctopus ornatus*)



Long-armed octopus
(*C. luteus*)

Not subject to regulation

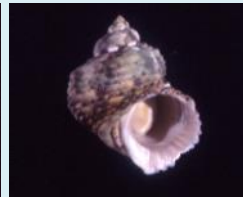


Algae octopus
(*Abdopus aculeatus*)

Shellfishes



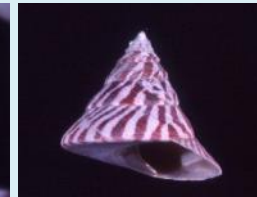
Giant clams



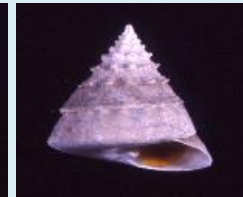
Silver Mouth Turban
(*Turbo argyrostomus*)



Green Turban
(*T. marmoratus*)



Commercial top
(*Tectus niloticus*)



Turban snail
(*T. pyramis*)



Strawberry
Lipped Conch
(*Strombus luhuanus*)

***In certain areas, the following shellfishes are also subject to common fishing rights**

Babylon Shells (*Babylonia kirana*), Ark shells (*Anadara scapha*), Manila clams (*Ruditapes*), (*Gafrarium pectinatum*)

Seaweeds



Green laver
(*Monostroma nitidum*)



Mozuku
(*Cladosiphon okamuranus*)



Hijiki
(*Sargassum fusiforme*)

***In certain areas, the following seaweeds are also subject to common fishing rights.**

Sea grape (*Caulerpa lentillifera*)

Worm Wart Weeds (*Gracilaria*)

Species covered by fishing rights vary depending on the area of common fishing rights. For more information, please contact your local fisheries cooperative or check the Okinawa Prefecture Fisheries Division website.

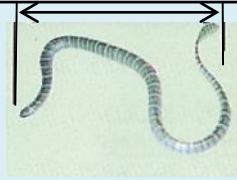
<https://www.pref.okinawa.lg.jp/shigoto/suisangyo/1010995/1011045.html>

3. Restrictions on the fishing period and the size of aquatic animals and plants

these rules are applicable to fishermen in Okinawa; regardless of the restrictions, foreigners cannot harvest the following aquatic animals and plants. Even if you are a member of a fishing cooperative that holds fishing rights, there are certain prohibitions regarding the fishing period and the size limit for aquatic animals and plants according to Article 34 of the Regulations. Possession and sale of aquatic animals and plants in violation of this law is also prohibited [up to 6 months of imprisonment/fine up to 100,000 yen fine].

(1) Restrictions on the fishing period

Groups of aquatic animals	Restrictions on the fishing period
Sea turtles	June 1st to July 31st
Giant clams	June 1st to August 31st
Spiny lobsters	April 1st to July 31st
Slipper lobsters	April 1st to July 31st <i>Individuals bearing eggs are banned throughout the year.</i>

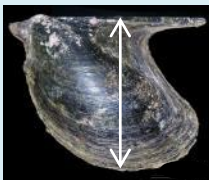
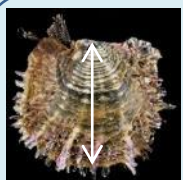


Hawksbill sea turtle
[plastron length ≤ 25 cm]

Juveniles of eels
[≤ 13 cm]

Sea snakes
[≤ 60 cm]

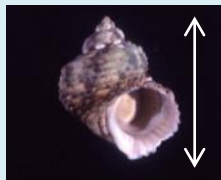
Spiny lobsters slipper lobsters
[≤ 20 cm]



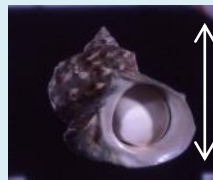
black-lip pearl oyster

[≤ 10 cm]

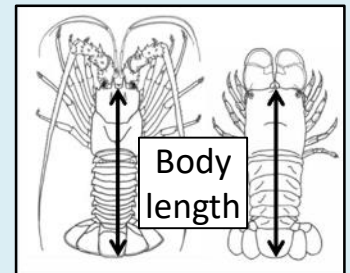
penguin's wing oyster



Silver Mouth Turban
[≤ 6 cm]



Green Turban
[≤ 13 cm]



Boring clam
[≤ 8 cm]



Bear paw clam

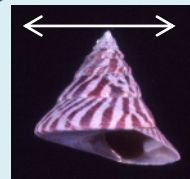


Small Giant Clam

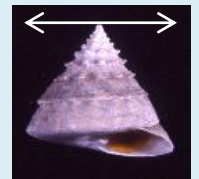


Noah's giant clam

[≤ 15 cm]

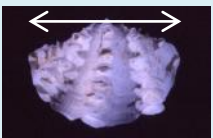


Commercial top

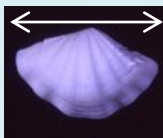


Turban snail

[≤ 6 cm]



Fluted Giant Clam
[≤ 20 cm]



Giant clam
[≤ 30 cm]

4. Areas with restrictions on the collection of aquatic animals and plants

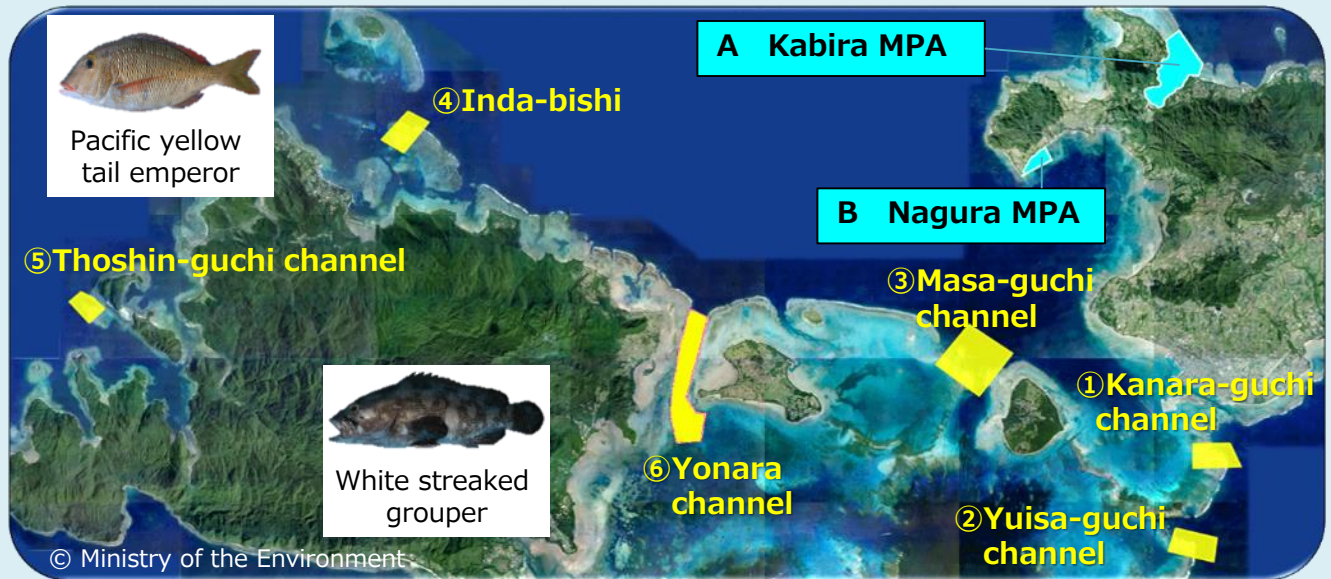
(1) Marine protected area (MPA)

Ishigaki Island has two MPAs based on the Fisheries Resources Protection Act. According to Article 33 of the regulations, the following fishing activities are prohibited [imprisonment for up to 6 months/fine of up to 100,000 yen].

- **Kabira MPA (Figure A below):** Aquatic animals and plants other than fish, octopus, squid, and Green laver
- **Nagura MPA (Figure B below):** All aquatic animals and plants

(2) Spawning ground MPA

To protect the spawning grounds of fishery-important coral reef fishes such as groupers, snappers, and emperors, none of the aquatic flora and fauna are collected in the MPAs of the Yaeyama Islands from **March to April according to the lunar calendar** (imprisonment of up to 1 year/fine of up to 500,000 yen).



(3) Size restrictions for coral trout (*Plectropomus* spp.) and Blackspot tuskfish (*Choerodon schoenleinii*)

According to the instructions of the committee, **the collection, possession and sale** of Coral trout (*Plectropomus* spp.) and Blackspot tuskfish (*Choerodon schoenleinii*) that are smaller than the size limit is prohibited throughout the Okinawa prefecture (imprisonment of up to 1 year /fine of up to 500,000 yen).

- Common coral trout



- Footballer coral trout



- Squaretail coral trout



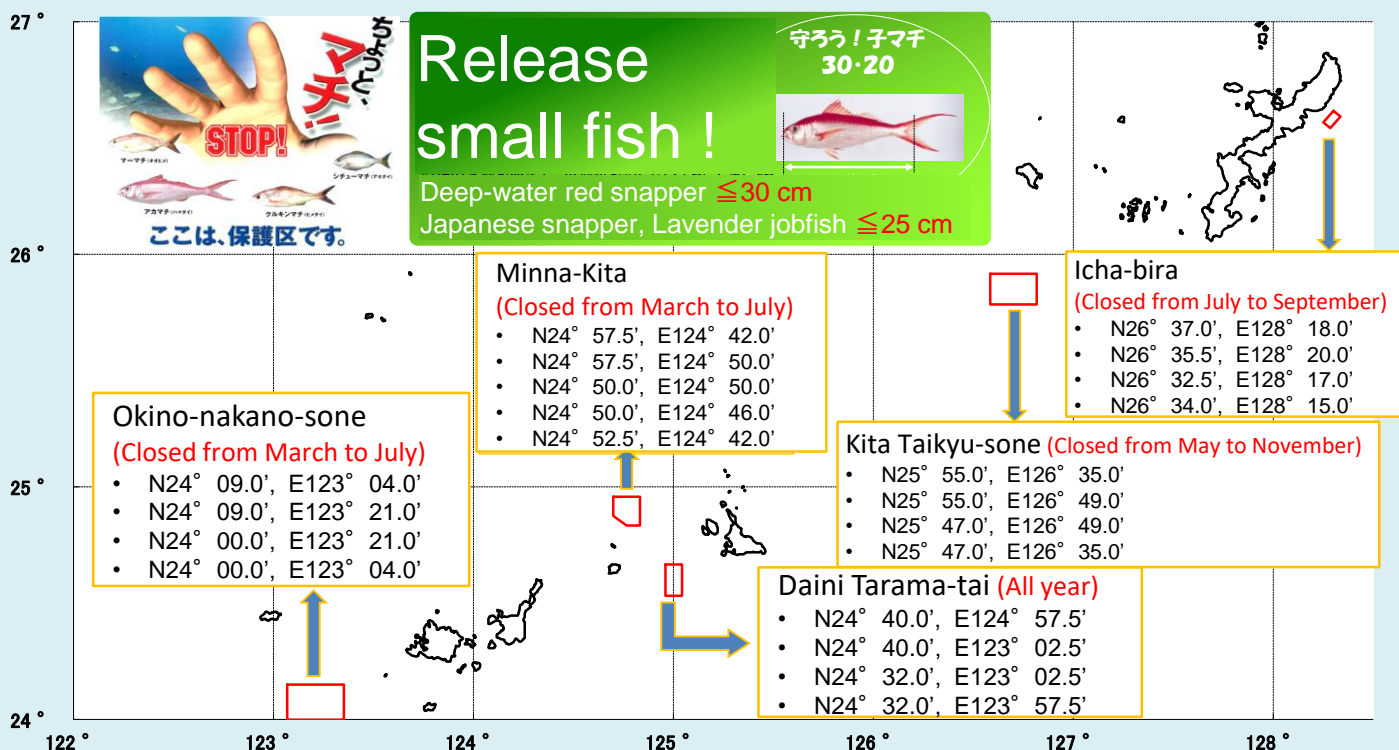
- Blackspot tuskfish



As the effects of resource recovery have been witnessed via resource management efforts to date, the target sea area has been expanded to cover the entire Okinawa prefecture in April 2023, and this regulation has also been applied to recreational fisherman.

4. MPAs for deep-sea snappers

To protect the resources of deep-sea snappers, fishing other than trolling is prohibited in the following areas and periods according to the instructions of the committee [imprisonment of up to 1 year/fine of up to 500,000 yen].



5. Prohibition of collecting samples other “underwater” sand, live rock, coral rubbles, etc

According to Article 39 of the Regulations, the act of reef fracturing (within fishing grounds where fishing rights exist) and the act of collecting soil and rocks (including sand, live rock, and coral rubbles) are prohibited [imprisonment of up to 1 month/fine of up to 100,000 yen].



Live rocks



Coral rubbles

Furthermore, restrictions are in place for collecting soil and rocks (including sand and coral rubbles) from the “coast,” so please contact the coast administrator listed below for details.

Okinawa prefecture, Department of Civil Engineering and Construction Seashore Disaster Prevention Division

<https://www.pref.okinawa.lg.jp/kensei/kencho/1000011/1017742/1017755.html>

***Rules may revised. Please check for latest information**

○Okinawa prefecture, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Fisheries Division

<https://www.pref.okinawa.lg.jp/kensei/kencho/1000011/1017655/1017687.html>