



Bonefish have been an important natural resource in The Bahamas for as long as there have been people on the islands. The Lucayans relied on bonefish as part of their diet and more recently, bonefish were the focus of a subsistence and artisanal fishery. Harvest of bonefish was done by handline or by "hauling" seine nets through the shallow waters and fish were sold to individuals or local restaurants. Bonefish are still consumed throughout the Bahamian archipelago but rarely.

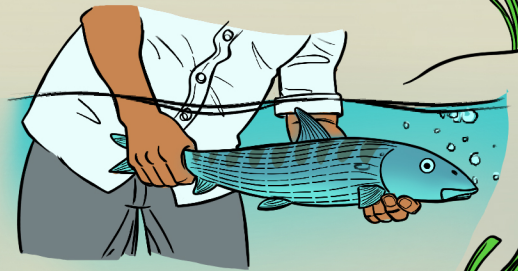
Today, bonefishing in The Bahamas is a \$130 million industry nationally and a major economic driver on some of the out islands such as Andros. Conservation efforts for bonefish in The Bahamas have centered around catch-and-release, and the protection of mangroves and spawning aggregations. For catch-and-release, scientific research shows that how bonefish are caught and handled can impact their fate once released. Changes in angler behavior and the choices they make when targeting bonefish can reduce post-release predation (usually by small sharks and barracuda), which can be as high as 40%. Using science-based best practices for capture and handling bonefish will ensure each fish you release has the best chance of survival so that they can contribute to a more resilient fishery.



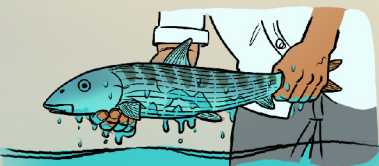
Use barbless hooks
cut the line if a fish is
deeply hooked



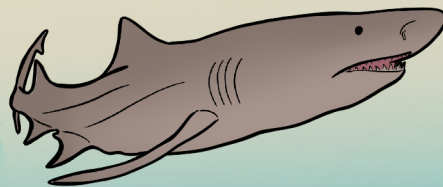
Limit fight time



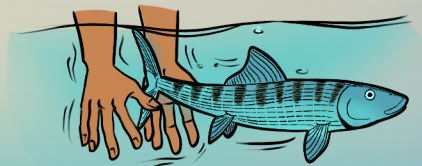
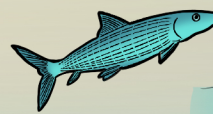
Hold fish with clean, wet,
bare hands and avoid lip
gripping devices



Minimize air exposure to
10 seconds or less, especially
for bigger fish, and at higher
water temps



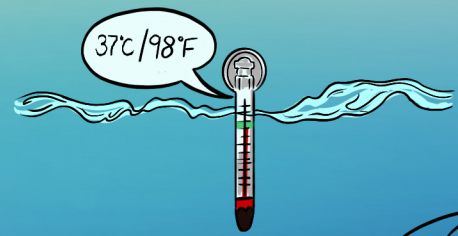
Bonefish that lose equilibrium prior to
release (nose dive or roll belly up) are six
times more likely to suffer post-release
predation (even if they regain equilibrium at
release)



Reduce handling time



Avoid release locations with lots of
predators. Post-release predation
rates can be as high as 40%



Bonefish are less likely to survive
angling in water temps approaching
37°C/98°F

Each time you release a bonefish is an opportunity to put conservation into action. Help support Bahamian bonefish and advocate for healthy fisheries.

For more information on science-based best practices
for catch and release visit: keepfishwet.org

