

# Recreational Fishing

Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis,  
and St. Vincent & the Grenadines

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mapping Ocean Wealth (MOW) and Caribbean  
Regional Oceanscape Project (CROP)



**CROP Project Overview:**

<https://oecs.org/en/crop>

**Map Viewer:**

[maps.oceanwealth.org/oecs](https://maps.oceanwealth.org/oecs)

## ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, in partnership with the World Bank, is implementing the Caribbean Regional Oceanscape Project (CROP) to improve systems and put relevant structures in place in an effort to foster a Blue Economy and to promote greater consideration of the ecosystem functions and services which the ocean provides for member states. The project timeline was October 2017 - December 2021. Under this project, The Nature Conservancy used the Mapping Ocean Wealth approach to develop ecosystem service models and maps for the five CROP countries in the Eastern Caribbean.



# Introduction

The Mapping Ocean Wealth (MOW) project aims to develop ecosystem service models and maps at the scale of the Eastern Caribbean in support of the Caribbean Regional Oceanscape Project (CROP). The theory of change behind the MOW approach is that developing and improving access to accurate and spatially explicit metrics of the value of natural ecosystems could provide a critical tool in encouraging efforts to use nature sustainably, and work towards its protection, maintenance or restoration. **The Caribbean region has been at the forefront of a movement towards the development of the blue economy.** The CROP countries (Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines) in particular have made strong commitments to developing and enhancing their blue economies and are in the process of developing strategies and governance approaches, including marine spatial plans, to build a sustainable future centred on their marine and coastal resources.

One key activity which already makes a significant economic contribution, and that may have the potential for growth under improving and growing the blue economy activities is recreational fishing. In order to implement activities and measure impact, we must understand the current value and economic contribution of the industry.

Recreational fishing is a popular activity for tourists visiting coastal destinations in the Caribbean. Generally, recreational fishing is defined as fishing activity where the sale or consumption of the catch itself is not a primary objective.

**Most recreational fishing in the region takes place from private or chartered vessels, rather than from on-shore locations, and is frequently termed deep sea, sport, or game fishing.** Vessels typically take fishers to deeper waters where target species are pelagic fish, such as dolphinfish, wahoo, king mackerel, serra Spanish mackerel, yellowfin tuna, sailfish, blue marlin, white marlin and blackfin tuna, with other species, such as a barracuda, caught incidentally. Many sportfishing charter operators diversify their services, offering other vessel-based activities such as diving or sightseeing in addition to fishing charters.

Fishing tournaments also play a role in the sector. The Spice Isle Billfish Tournament, operated by the Grenada Yacht Club, is the largest billfish tournament in the southern Caribbean, and in 2012, generated over EC\$ 2.3 million (US\$ 863,000.00) in economic activity. Saint Lucia also hosts a yearly tournament out of Rodney Bay, and historically the Nevis Sportfishing Tournament has taken place at Oualie Beach. Overall, the sector has benefited local economies, however, more information is needed to ensure that the sector can continue to operate sustainably.

Maps were created using a combination of image recognition analysis applied to crowd-sourced data from Flickr and TripAdvisor, complemented by participatory mapping and survey data from charter vessel operators, as well as other stakeholder-provided information and guidance.

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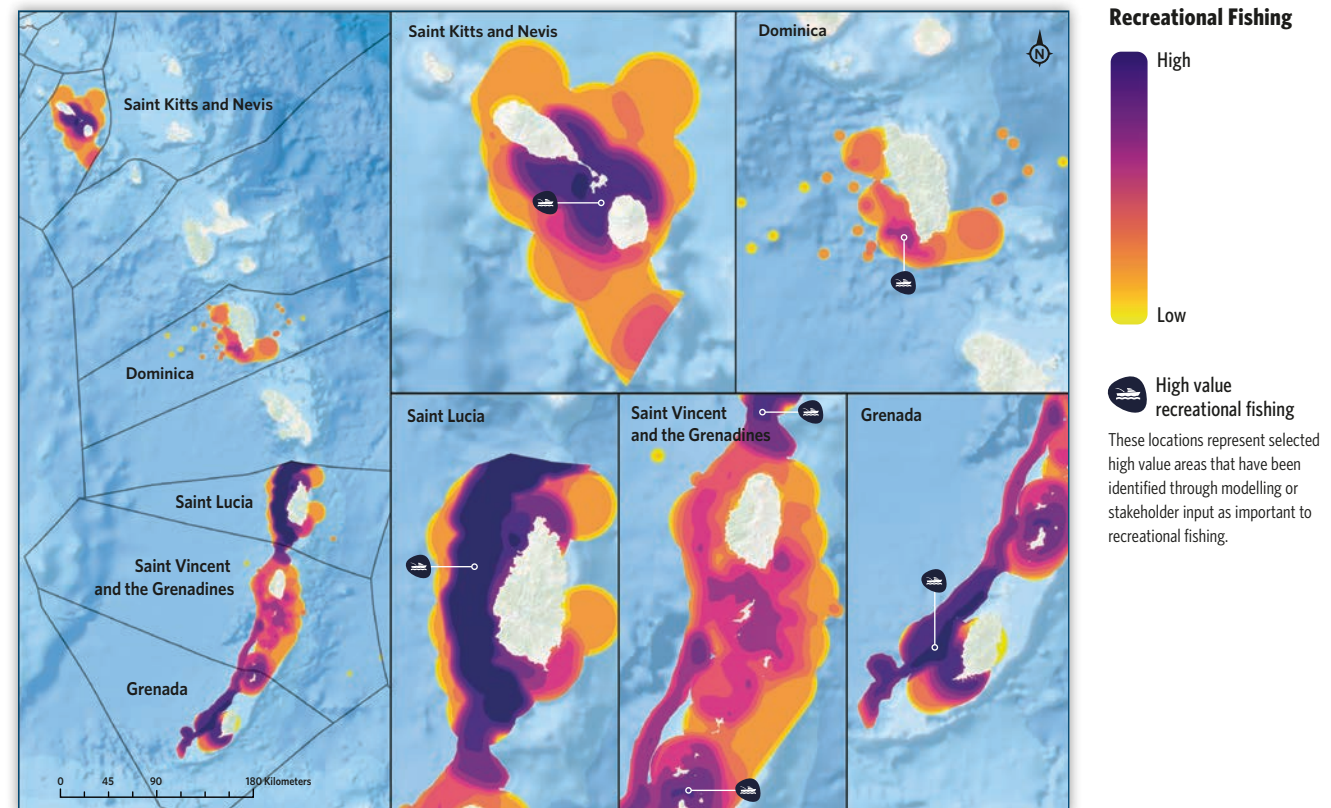
**This work presents the first ever map of recreational fishing intensity in the region, primarily focusing on tourist charter vessels, while also accounting for fishing activity taking place during major tournaments.**

It is estimated that the operators included in this study may be generating over 9000 fishing trips per year across all five countries.

# Main Findings

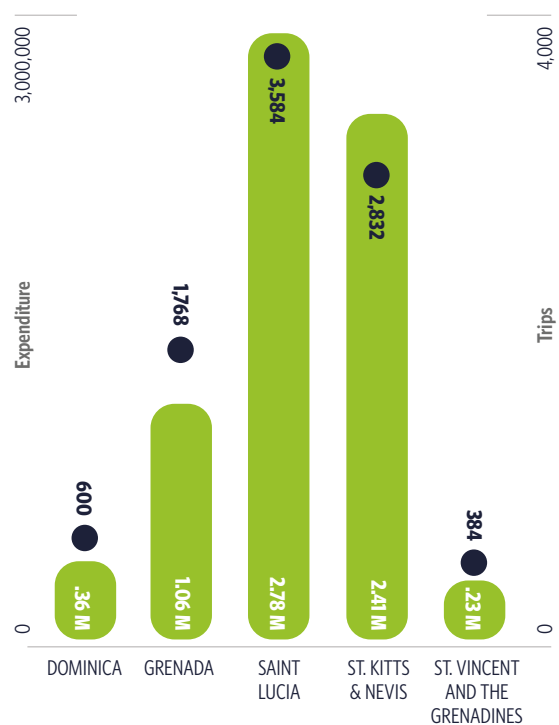
## Recreational Fishing

The recreational fishery in the CROP countries is both widespread and important. In the north, these activities are more concentrated in nearshore waters, around both St. Kitts and Nevis and Dominica. Further south the highest intensity fishing is in offshore waters on the leeward side of the islands where mostly pelagic species are caught. Fishing is absent on the exposed windward sides of each island due to rougher conditions. It is estimated that the operators included in this study may be generating over 9000 fishing trips per year across all five countries, likely including a mix of both opportunistic and one-off trips for inexperienced fishers and many that are keen recreational fishers for



whom the experience is a core element of a vacation. In all cases positive experiences of recreational fishing a critical component of developing return visits and improving destination profiles to attract other visitors.

Results indicate a **direct expenditure of over US\$6.8 million per year, but these represent only the payments to the operators themselves**, while there are likely to be many associated expenditures, with some tourists even selecting destinations based on fishing opportunities. Our earlier reviews of exit polls and motivation surveys regularly show fishing to be an activity highlighted as a key or prime motivator for destination choice, for between one and six percent of tourist arrivals in the small island states of the Caribbean and it is reasonable to conjecture that such visitors might move elsewhere if the quality of fishing was diminished.



● ESTIMATED TOURISM EXPENDITURE (USD)

● TRIPS PER YEAR

## RECREATIONAL FISHING

is a major sector of Eastern Caribbean tourism

● **\$6.8 MILLION** in expenditures in CROP countries per year.



There is good evidence that fishers are willing to comply with a system of licensing, which will support the growth of this sector.

## Conclusions

Further thought could usefully be given to how to strengthen recreational fisheries as a sector in the region. This is a very high-value activity, and most participants, particularly the more regular fishers are generating high expenditure overall on their visits. Any attempts to expand or enhance the sector would require consideration of how to build or enhance sustainability—in this regard well managed conservation efforts can actually promote recreational fishing and enhance catches. There is good evidence that fishers are willing to comply with a system of licensing, which will support the growth of this sector. **Other management efforts, such as catch and release or other catch restrictions, combined with appropriate management of commercial fisheries might be considered to enhance recreational fisheries if this was considered a key sector for development.**

Given the diffuse nature of this activity, and its lack of a direct link to any physical habitat, the decision was made to not spread economic value to the fishing areas. Future maps might, however attempt to show these values at the points of departure/landing.

### You can use this data to:

- Improve accuracy of input data for planning for marine zoning across the OECS and locally, in nearshore and offshore environs, ensuring that this sector is factored into marine spatial planning as a key economic activity alongside other potential activities that may be compatible or challenging.
- Support cross-border collaboration for the development of the blue economy and fisheries management across the region. Incentivize and inform the sustainable growth of this sector.
- Support the improved monitoring and development of the recreational fisheries sector.



### FIND OUT MORE HERE

For access to the high-quality maps and the full technical report, please visit the Mapping Ocean Wealth platform <https://oceanwealth.org/project-areas/caribbean/crop/recreational-fishing/>.



Map viewer on Mapping Ocean Wealth Platform



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Given the current impact of Covid-19 on tourism in the Caribbean, and especially the likely changes in demands coming from a recovering tourism sector it is highly likely that future tourism will have, if anything, a greater dependency on natural values and lower density locations and so our sites of high natural value will likely show an increasing proportional relevance for the recovering sector.







Organisation of  
Eastern Caribbean States



WORLD BANK GROUP



The Nature  
Conservancy



MAPPING  
OCEAN WEALTH

**The Nature Conservancy**

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