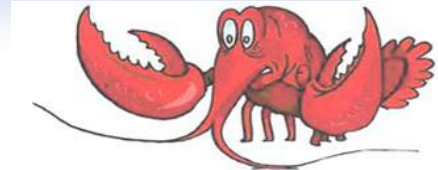


# Jupiter Drift Divers Education Newsletter

July 2, 2009

## Lobster, Lobster ....Where art thou?

June 15, 2009 Michele Bellanca



The season for lobsters is fast approaching. The 2009 Lobster Mini-Season begins at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday, July 30th and ends 11:59 p.m. Thursday, July 31st. This event brings divers and boaters out with a vengeance. Everyone wants to collect their share and with the word 'mini' in the event title, no need for that silly gauge when finding one. Just tickle him out of his little resting place and with the help of a snare or net, capture that little bug and simply toss in your lobster bag. Sound easy?

We all have the love of the lobster. It impresses friends, family, and fellow dive buddies. I do get this. In fact, I live for it! There is nothing like the feeling of climbing the dive ladder while everyone is hanging over the boat to see what you have in your bag. When your bag is at its limit....it is a climb up with pride. However, if you were not successful....it's like climbing the ladder of shame! What is interesting to me are the excuses of how and why one comes up empty handed. I have heard...."The boat captain gave me a bad drop!" "The current was ripping" "Couldn't see a thing...the vis was so poor" And my personal favorite...."I had a hold of him...and he got away!"

There are several very important things to keep in mind if you dive for lobsters. You will need to know the season dates and licensing requirements. You will also have to plan in advance and reserve your spot on the boat with your favorite dive shop. Even when going out on a friend's boat, you will need to have the proper gear and licensing.

Let's review:

- **Gear Checkup!** Be sure your dive gear has been serviced and in proper working order.  
Mini – Season is a good yearly reminder.
- **Safety FIRST!!** Safety equipment is tops in my book! Remember to always carry a surface marker! It's easy to get away from the group when lobstering.
- When lobstering **check your gauges OFTEN!!** The thrill of the catch can see your air consumption increase rapidly!
- **Know your LIMITS!** Dive limits that is! Don't over exert yourself. If you find yourself breathing heavy....STOP....REST...then proceed! It's a good idea to review your PADI material on dive limits.
- **Buddy LOVE!** Not sure you want Buddy Love? My guess is if you ever needed it....you would want it. So show some buddy love and always dive with a dive buddy!
- **Know your BUG limit!** - State and Federal waters allow a bag limit of (6) per licensed harvester (you must have a saltwater fishing license with a lobster stamp) Diving in a protected park area like the Florida Keys? Check with a local dive shop for the rules of lobstering!

- **No SHARP Objects!!** No gear that could puncture the shell of lobster is allowed in your possession, including (but not limited to) spears, hooks, or wire snares.
- **Don't HARM the left behinds! Although you won't want to.....there will be times when you have to leave a bug behind...so be kind!** You can be prosecuted for injuring any lobster while you are underwater. This means no pulling of antennae allowed. (Use the proper tools for catching your lobster) Until you are sure they are of legal size, it is best to make a clean catch. Remember....measure smartly and don't let the nitrogen convince you differently.
- **Leave the children for another day!** Egg-bearing lobster **must** be released unharmed. You can tell a lobster is with children when she has an orange, yellow, brown, or red mass found covering the bottom of her tail.

**When Out of Mini Season:**

- **Lobsters must be of legal size before they are in possession. Remember: any lobsters in your catch bag in the water are considered in possession. For this reason, measure them before you place them in your bag.**
- **Measure...Measure... Measure!** You must have a measuring gauge on you at all times when you are hunting for lobster. The carapace (the main body) must be at least 3 inches in length to stay within legal size limits. Lobsters with a carapace under 3 inches must be freed unharmed.

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## Safety tip of the month

*What acronym is used for Pre-Dive Safety Check?*

*What do the letters stand for?*

*How often should you do it?*

**BWRAF**

*Begin With Review and Friend*

*BCD*

*Weights*

*Releases*

*Air*

*Final Okay*

*A Pre-dive Safety Check should be completed before each dive.*