

Three Year Summary Report

April 1994 - March 1997

Cooperative Fishery Statistics Program
#SF-42 (NA27FT0301-01)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the period April 1993-March 1994, April 1994-March 1995 and April 1995-March 1996, the Division of Fish and Wildlife maintained computerized commercial fishermen license and landings database files and conducted bioprofile sampling of spiny lobsters and reef fishes in fulfillment of its requirements as participant in the State/Federal Cooperative Statistics Program.

The number of commercial fishermen registered in the U.S. Virgin Islands during the fishing year (July-June) decreased by 24% from 1993-1994 (474) to 1995-1996 (362). A total of 17,554 trips were made in 1993-1994 compared to 12,271 trips in 1995-1996, representing a 30% reduction in fishing effort. In September 1995, the Virgin Islands sustained a direct hit by Hurricane Marilyn which impacted all aspects of the commercial fishing industry. Reported landings and value for the commercial fisheries resources in the U.S. Virgin Islands were 1,409,188 pounds/\$5,647,731 for 1993-1994, 1,361,542 pounds/\$5,377,168 for 1994-1995 and 960,194 pounds/\$3,860,871 for 1995-1996. The price per pound of fisheries resources landed in the territory remained stable for the three-year period with the exception of conch increasing to \$5.00/pound on St. Croix.

Fish pots, line fishing and net fishing were the most popular fishing methods employed representing 43%, 26% and 14%, respectively, of the total landings for the three-year period. Although similar fishing methods are used on both island groups, significant differences exist in the fishery due to habitat type, insular shelf platform size, proximity to deep water, geographical location and ethnic background of the fishermen.

Reporting efficiency by commercial fishermen was improved by increasing communication between data collectors and the fishermen. A New Catch Record Form was introduced in 1994-1995 on St. Croix to increase data collection and fisheries management capability. The New Form provides for the collection of fishing effort data and requires catch to be recorded by individual family group instead of fishing category.

Biostatistical data were obtained on 2,465 lobster from 201 interviews and 24,886 reef fish from 260 interviews during the three-year period.

↑
all from St. Croix
according
to Toby Tobias

INTRODUCTION

The commercial fisheries of the United States Virgin Islands are multi-gear and multi-species in nature. There are presently five major gear types in the commercial fishery, with multiple methods currently in use for some gears. Most fishing gear is used to harvest reef species. Traps (a.k.a. pots) are generally wire mesh with a wooden or metal frame. On St. Thomas, the traps are usually set in strings (multiple traps connected by a single line buoyed on each end), while on St. Croix, traps are most often single and may or may not be buoyed. Methods for harvest with monofilament nets vary the most; nets are used as purse seines, beach seines, gillnets, castnets, and trammel nets. On St. Croix, fishermen using SCUBA gear herd reef fish into gillnets and trammel nets. SCUBA is also used to harvest conch, lobster, and to spearfish. A small number of fishermen harvest conch, lobster, and whelk via free diving. Hook and line gear is the only gear presently in use to harvest both reef and offshore species. The reef fish harvest is composed of more than 12 families and 180 species (Caribbean Fishery Management Council, 1985). As the catch per unit effort of traditional methods of harvest (traps, free diving, and hook and line) have declined, new methods (monofilament nets and SCUBA) have been introduced and are being used with increasing frequency. Due to the narrow island shelf it is common for fishermen to harvest both reef and pelagic fishes during a single trip. The majority of the offshore fisheries are composed of the Scombridae and Coryphaenidae families, with a total of seven species. Long line vessels harvest additional pelagic species.

The collection of adequate data for use in fisheries management of a multi-gear and multi-species fishery in the Caribbean is difficult. In 1974, U.S. Virgin Islands Legislative Act 3330 established a mandatory reporting system for fisheries data. However, the information obtained through this reporting system, total landings by gear type, does not provide the detail necessary to effectively manage this complex fishery. To augment the local landing information, the U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Fisheries (DFW) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) entered into a cooperative agreement to obtain more detailed data on the commercial fisheries of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The objectives of this cooperative program are to estimate the total annual landings and monetary value of the commercial fishery, obtain catch and effort information, and sample commercial catches to obtain biostatistical information of harvested reef species.

The complex multi-species commercial fisheries of the U.S. Virgin Islands are not adequately described by total landings information. All gear types used in the commercial fishery are able to harvest numerous species of fishes. Some species are more susceptible to some gear types. Furthermore, tracking total landings by gear type does not allow management of a species that has been over-fished. For example, total landings of a fishery may remain stable over time, but the dominant species in the harvest may change. This often happens as large piscivorous species are fished to levels too low for commercial harvest at which time herbivorous species are then targeted. In this scenario, the total landings remain relatively stable over time, but the catch composition changes dramatically.

In the 1994 - 1995 fishing year the St. Croix office of the Bureau of Fisheries initiated a new Commercial Fishermen Catch Report form to provide better information on the composition of the commercial harvest. This New Form was designed to provide landings (in pounds) of family or species groups (e.g., groupers, snappers, triggerfish) by gear type to allow managers to examine trends in the composition of the commercial catch. The New Form was tested by small group of fishermen on a volunteer basis in the 1994 - 1995 and 1995 - 1996. The Bureau of Fisheries plans to expand the use of this form to the entire St. Croix commercial fishing community by 1997 - 1998.

METHODS

Study 1:

Job 1 - Maintenance of the computerized Division of Fish and Wildlife license data.

Job 2 - Maintenance of the computerized Division of Fish and Wildlife commercial landings database.

A computer database containing information on licensed commercial fishermen is maintained by the Division of Fish and Wildlife. This information is obtained during the annual registration of commercial fishermen in June through July of each year. This database is used to record compliance with the monthly completion and remittance of the catch reports. There is a separate file kept for each fishing year. A list of active landing sites is maintained to allow site visits, interviews, and biostatistical sampling throughout the year.

Commercial fishermen turn in their catch reports to DFW on a monthly basis. In addition to their name, fisherman ID number, and boat registration number, fishermen record pounds of fish, baitfish, lobster, conch meat, and whelk meat harvested by gear (hook and line, pots, nets, and speargun) (Fig. 1). Trap fishermen also record the number of pots hauled per trip. Each island was divided into areas (Fig. 2) so that fishermen were able to provide information on where their fishing activities occurred.

Fishermen using the New Form on St. Croix recorded the type and number of gear used, and the total pounds landed by family or species group, as well as trip duration (in hours) and fishing area (Fig. 3). A diagram which explained the New Form was printed on the back of each form (Fig. 4). Catch report forms were proofed upon receipt for completeness. Incomplete forms or forms incorrectly filled out were returned to the fisherman for correction. All catch report data were entered into a DFW commercial fisheries database. A separate data file was maintained for each fishing year. Data were summarized by fishing category to determine the total reported landings by year. For St. Croix, data from both the standard catch report form and the New Form were combined to determine the total reported landings. The total reported landings were corrected for the number of fishermen with licenses that did not report, resulting in Projected Total Landings. The projected total landings were calculated by multiplying the total reported landings by the ratio of the number of licensed fishermen to the number of reporting fishermen. This method has been

used in calculating commercial fisheries landings since 1974.

As a comparison, Estimated Landings were calculated based upon the number of monthly reports remitted. The total number of possible monthly reports (12 months multiplied by the number of registered commercial fishermen) was divided by the number of reports actually completed. This total reported landings were then multiplied by this ratio. This method accounts for the numerous fishermen who turn in only a small percentage of the 12 monthly reports, but are nonetheless counted among those that have completed reports.

It is also possible that the Reported Landings (summarized from completed catch reports) are more reliable estimates of total landings than previously believed. This may become increasingly true as DFW-mandated compliance with catch report remittance improves, and as recording of commercial fishermen registration information becomes more reliable. Thus, landings are reported as Reported Landings, Projected Landings, and Estimated Landings.

The price per pound of commercial landings was determined by site interviews conducted by port sampling agents. The total value of the commercial fisheries landings resulted from multiplying the total landings by the price per pound for each category.

Study 2:

Jobs 1 and 2 - Bio-profile sampling: spiny lobster and reef fishes.

Biostatistical data on spiny lobster and reef fish were collected by port sampling agents conducting personal interviews with commercial fishermen at landing sites and sale locations. All sampling was conducted with the voluntary cooperation of the commercial fishermen. Reef fish lengths were measured in millimeters and weights in grams. Lobster measurements were recorded as carapace length to the nearest 1/10 of a millimeter. Whenever possible, biostatistical data were collected on complete catches, otherwise sub-samples of the complete catch were taken. All data were recorded on National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Trip Interview Program (TIP) forms and entered into the TIP database program. All TIP data were forwarded on disk to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, NMFS, on a quarterly basis.

RESULTS

Study 1:

Job 1 - Maintenance of the computerized Division of Fish and Wildlife license data.

Job 2 - Maintenance of the computerized Division of Fish and Wildlife commercial landings database.

St. Croix

The total number of registered commercial fishermen on St. Croix declined from 241 in 1993 - 1994 to 180 in 1995 - 1996. In 1993 - 1994, 188 (78%) of these fishermen turned in at least one catch report during the year, while in 1994 - 1995 and 1995 - 1996, all but five fishermen turned in at least one report in each year (97%, respectively). The number of reported trips also declined (1993-1994/10,209 trips; 1994-1995/9,283 trips and 1995-1996/ 7,362 trips (Table 1).

Total Reported Landings for St. Croix declined from 1993 - 1994 through 1995 - 1996 (Table 1). A total of 666,009 pounds were reported landed in 1993-1994, compared to 585,508 pounds in 1994-1995 and 399,121 pounds in 1995-1996. When calculated as mean catch per trip to account for differences in the number of reporting fishermen, the mean catch per trip also declined (65.24 pounds in 1993-1994, 63.11 pounds in 1994-1995 and 54.21 pounds in 1995-1996), as did the mean annual catch per fisherman (3,542.6 pounds in 1993-1994, 3,116.0 pounds in 1994-1995 and 2,280.7 pounds in 1995-1996). When examined by gear type, landings decreased dramatically for Pots and Hook and Line gear (46%, respectively, from 1993-1994 to 1995-1996). Landings by fishermen using nets increased by 27% from 1993-1994 to 1994-1995 but subsequently dropped by 10% in 1995-1996. Overall, landings of lobster and conch, regardless of fishing method, also declined. A 72% decrease in landings were reported from 1993-1994 to 1995-1996 for lobster caught in fish pots and a 54% decrease in landings reported for lobster caught by diving for the same reporting period. In each year, landings of lobster by SCUBA were higher than lobsters caught by pots. The catch of pelagic fishes also declined over the period. When compared to the hookfish category, which is composed primarily of reef fish, the landings of pelagic fishes decreased from 18.6% of hook and line landings (hookfish and pelagic combined) in 1993 - 1994, to 15.8% and 9.5% in 1994 - 1995 and 1995 - 1996, respectively. In each year, fishermen using pots and hook and line harvested the greatest percentage of the total catch, followed by fishermen using nets and SCUBA (spearfishing, conch, and lobster) (Table 1). In 1994 - 1995 and 1995 - 1996, no gear was defined for a small portion of the harvest.

The trend of a declining harvest was also evident when Projected and Estimated total landings were calculated for St. Croix (Table 2). As expected, the Estimated total landings also reflect a declining harvest trend; however, these values are felt to be inflated since monthly catch record forms with no fishing effort are treated equally as those with fishing effort.

In 1993 - 1994, the majority of fish caught in pots on St. Croix were harvested in waters to the south of the island (Table 3). A small portion of the potfish landings was from St. Thomas, and

there was a significant amount of fish landed with no fishing area defined. Hookfish landings were highest in the EEZ (longline vessel). Fishermen using nets reported highest landings in the southwest portion of the island. Spear fishermen reported highest landings in the eastern half of St. Croix, as did those fishermen harvesting lobster and conch. Pelagic landings were highest to the northeast of St. Croix.

In 1994 - 1995, the number of fishing areas around St. Croix was changed from four to six to provide a more precise estimate of fishing effort and harvest by area. Fishermen used this new area map to record the location of their fishing effort in both 1994 - 1995 and 1995 - 1996. Overall, the majority of landings are from the southern and eastern portions of St. Croix. The highest landings of fish in pots occurred in areas C-2 and C-5, the southwest and northeast portions of St. Croix, respectively, in both 1994 - 1995 (Table 4) and 1995 - 1996 (Table 5). Also, in both years, the highest reported landings of hookfish were in the EEZ. In 1994 - 1995, the highest landings of fish caught with nets were in areas C-2 and C-5, but in 1995 - 1996, landings were higher along the south shore of St. Croix (areas C-2 and C-3). The west end of the island, area C-1, produced the most baitfish. The highest landings of lobster caught by pots were in area C-4, while most lobster harvested by divers came from the areas in the south and east. Conch landings were also highest in the south and east. With the exception of high reported tuna landings in area C-1 in 1994 - 1995, the majority of pelagic fish landings were from the northeast of St. Croix in both years.

In 1994 - 1995, 17.6% of the fishermen that remitted at least one catch report used the New Form (Table 6). In 1995 - 1996, 13.1% of the registered fishermen used the New Form. Sixteen point four percent of the trips reported in 1994 - 1995 and 13.4% of the trips in 1995 - 1996 were from fishermen using the new forms. Tables 7 and 8 provide examples of the landing summaries resulting from the New Form. The successful completion of these forms by commercial fishermen proved that these forms can be used to gather reliable landings data. Even though preliminary, the data from these forms revealed interesting characteristics of the fishery. For example, 84.7% of the netfish catch of 1995 - 1996 was parrotfish (Table 8). Although it was common knowledge that the majority of the netfish harvest was composed of parrotfish, the New Form will provide a quantitative description of this gear. In both years, the majority of the hook and line catch was snapper. The pot fishery harvested the greatest number of family and species groups. Of special note was the 12% drop in relative abundance of parrotfish in the potfish catch from 1994 - 1995 to 1995 - 1996.

St. Thomas-St. John

The total number of registered commercial fishermen on St. Thomas-St. John declined from 233 in 1993 - 1994 to 182 in 1995 - 1996 (Table 9). In 1993 - 1994 and 1995 - 1996, 149 of these fishermen (64% and 82%, respectively) turned in at least one catch report during the year, while in 1994 - 1995 163 fishermen (80%) turned in at least one report. The number of reported trips declined by 33% from 1993 - 1994 (7,345) to 1995 - 1996 (4,909).

Total Reported Landings for St. Thomas-St. John increased by 4% from 1993 - 1994 (743,179) to 1994 - 1995 (775,734), but then decreased in 1995 - 1996 by 28% (561,073) (Table 1). When calculated as mean catch per trip to account for differences in the number of reporting fishermen, the mean catch per trip actually increased (101.2 pounds in 1993-1994; 110.2 pounds in 1994-1995; 114.3 pounds in 1995-1996), while the mean annual catch per fisherman declined over the three-year period (4,987.8 pounds, 4,759.1 pounds and 3,765.6 pounds, respectively). The reason for this discrepancy is unclear. When examined by gear type, landings were much lower in 1995 - 1996 for Pots, Hook and Line, and Nets. Landings of lobster with pots remained relatively stable. Landings of lobster and conch harvested via SCUBA remained low throughout the period. In each year, landings of lobster by pots were higher than lobsters caught by SCUBA. It was not possible to track the pelagic fisheries landings on St. Thomas-St. John. In each year, fishermen using pots and hook and line harvested the greatest percentage of the total catch, followed by fishermen using nets and SCUBA (spearfishing, conch, and lobster). The Projected Landings showed a decline in annual harvest from high of 1,169,033 pounds in 1993 - 1994 to 685,337 pounds in 1995 - 1996 (Table 10).

In 1993 - 1994, the majority of fish caught in pots on St. Thomas-St. John was harvested in waters to the southwest of St. Thomas, or in undefined areas (Table 11). A relatively small portion of the potfish landings was from St. John. Hookfish landings were evenly distributed around St. Thomas, with only a minor amount harvested from St. John waters. The majority of fish caught with nets were harvested to the north of St. Thomas. Fishermen using SCUBA reported low landings in all areas. Most lobster caught in pots were from the waters around St. Thomas. Highest landings of pelagic species were from the area north of St. Thomas.

The distribution of landings for potfish, hookfish, netfish, and SCUBA gear in 1994 - 1995 were similar to the landings of 1993 - 1994 (Table 12). Although higher on St. Thomas, landings of lobsters caught in pots around St. John were higher than in 1993 - 1994. Landings in 1995 - 1996 were similar to those of 1994 - 1995 (Table 13).

U.S. Virgin Islands Commercial Fish Landings Value

The monetary values of commercial fish landings for St. Croix are shown in Table 14. The price per pound values did not change over the three-year period, except for conch. In 1995-1996, the value of conch increased from \$4.00 to \$5.00 per pound. The value of landings decreased over the three-year period by 40% (1993-1994 /\$2,668,818), 1994-1995/\$2,318,704) and 1995-1996/\$1,592,381). By order of relative importance, the monetary value of commercial landings by landing category for 1993-1994, 1994-1995 and 1995-1996 was hookfish (32%, 33% and 29%, respectively), potfish (30%, 28% and 27%), netfish (10%, 14%, and 19%, respectively), lobster-dive (9%, 5%, 7%, respectively) and conch (5%, 6%, and 7%, respectively).

The monetary value of commercial fish landings for St. Thomas-St. John is shown in Table 15. The price per pound values did not change over the three-year period. The value of landings

increased by 2% from 1993-1994 (\$2,983,913) to 1994-1995 (\$3,058,464) and then decreased by 24% in 1995-1996 (\$2,268,490) below the 1993-1994 level. By order of relative importance, the monetary value of commercial landings by landing category for 1993-1994, 1994-1995 and 1995-1996 was potfish (29%) hookfish (25%) netfish (25%) and lobster-pot (15%), respectively.

Study 2:

Jobs 1 and 2 - Bioprofile sampling: spiny lobster and reef fishes.

Bioprofile sampling annual summaries for the U.S. Virgin Islands for the period of April 1993-March 1996 are shown in Tables 16-21. A total of 201 interviews were conducted with fishermen who harvested lobsters and 2,465 individual lobsters were measured, weighed, and sex identified (with condition of females - with or without sperm patch). There were 189 fisherman interviews with 2,247 lobsters sampled on St. Croix and 12 fisherman interviews with 318 lobsters sampled on St. Thomas-St. John. The number of interviews and lobsters sampled in each year are listed in Tables 16-18 for St. Croix and Tables 19-21 for St. Thomas-St. John.

A total of 260 interviews were conducted with fishermen who harvested reef fish. A total of 24,886 individual fish were measured, weighed, and sex identified (if possible). There were 171 fisherman interviews with 20,013 fish sampled on St. Croix and 89 fisherman interviews with 4,873 fish sampled on St. Thomas-St. John. The number of interviews and fish sampled in each year are listed in Tables 16-18 for St. Croix and Tables 19-21 for St. Thomas-St. John.

DISCUSSION

The total number of registered commercial fishermen in the U.S. Virgin Islands decreased over the reporting period by an average of 24%. Although the numbers of commercial fishermen have historically remained relatively stable, fluctuations in the economic condition of the islands are usually reflective in the numbers of part-time commercial fishermen in the fishery. In good economic times, fewer part-time commercial fishermen are active in the fishery. However, in September 1995, the U.S. Virgin Islands sustained a direct hit by Hurricane Marilyn, which impacted all aspects of the commercial fishery, including fishing effort, amount of gear, as well as fisheries habitat. It is assumed that the decrease in number of registered commercial fishermen for 1995-1996 is a direct result of Hurricane Marilyn's impact on the territory.

Fisheries landings on St. Croix had decreased from 1993-1994 to 1994-1995 by 22% and by an additional 32% in 1995-1996. During the same period, landings had increased on St. Thomas by 2% from 1993-1994 and 1994-1995, followed by a 28% decrease in 1995-1996. A decline in fisheries landings for the territory would be anticipated following a major storm event; however, decreases in landings by fishing category were recorded prior to the hurricane in 1994-1995 for St. Croix. Most notably were decreases in potfish and linefish landings, while netfish landings increased. Data collected from New catch record forms, which records catch by family group,

*data from
St Croix
according to
Toby*

indicate that from 1994-1995 and 1995-1996, the catch composition of parrotfish, the major group of fishes caught in fish pots, dropped from 35% to 25%, respectively. The catch composition from nets for the 1995-1996 period indicates that 85% of the netfish caught were parrotfish. The decrease in the amount of parrotfish caught in fish pots may be due to the greater efficiency of nets (gillnets) used in conjunction with SCUBA gear to harvest the resource.

Fish pots, line fishing and net fishing are the most popular fishing methods employed in the U.S. Virgin Islands, representing approximately 33%, 32% and 15%, respectively, of the landings on St. Croix and 53%, 20% and 13%, respectively, of the landings on St. Thomas-St. John. Conch diving (6%), spearfishing (6%) and lobster diving (4%) were secondary in importance on St. Croix compared to lobster pots (10%) on St. Thomas. All other fishing methods each accounted for less than 1% of the total landings. Although the island groups are only 74 km distant and the fishing gear used to harvest the resources are similar, significant differences exist in habitat type, insular shelf platform size, proximity to deep water and geographical location to create differences in catch composition and landings. As an example, pelagic species (tuna, dolphin and wahoo) recorded in St. Croix in 1993-1994 comprised 7% of the commercial landings, compared to <1% of the landings from St. Thomas-St. John. Differences also exist in the ethnic background of the fishers on the two island groups resulting in a preference for the use of certain gear types.

Reported and Projected landings in pounds for the U.S. Virgin Islands were 1,409,188/2,022,800 for 1993-1994, 1,361,542/1,567,486 for 1994-1995 and 960,194/1,095,861 for 1995-1996. The percent of the commercial fishermen reporting for 1993-1994, 1994-1995 and 1995-1996 was 59%, 69% and 68%. The increase in the percentage of commercial fishermen reporting has been due to an increased effort by the Division of Fish and Wildlife to communicate with fishermen and assist them in meeting the monthly requirement of completing their catch records.

The price per pound of resources landed in the Virgin Islands remained, in most cases, the same between island groups. Due to decreasing inshore resources, increasing harvesting expenses and increasing demand, the price of conch sustained a \$1.00/pound increase on St. Croix. The value of the commercial fish landings (Reported) for 1993-1994, 1994-1995 and 1995-1996 was \$5,647,731, \$5,377,168 and \$3,860,871, respectively.

Data collected with the old catch record forms which group landings by fishing category have obvious deficiencies, such as the inability to adequately determine catch per unit effort (CPUE) without effort data and the inability to individually monitor fisheries resources without identifying the groups of fishes that comprise the targeted resource. The New Form introduced on a volunteer basis in 1994-1995 provides the Division with the ability to more adequately monitor the multi-species, multi-method fishery in the U.S. Virgin Islands. This catch record form has become the standard form distributed to commercial fishermen upon annual license renewal in St. Croix in 1997-1998 and has also been introduced to St. Thomas-St. John commercial fishermen on a volunteer basis.

Biostatistical data of reef fish and lobster in the U.S. Virgin Islands have been collected and stored

in NMFS-TIP format. A total of 2,465 lobster were weighed, measured and sexed from 201 commercial fishermen interviews, during the three-year period. A total of 260 reefish interviews were conducted, resulting in the collection of biostatistical data on 24, 886 reefish, during the three-year period. Under the State/Federal Cooperative Statistics Program, the National Marine Fisheries Service has the responsibility to summarize this data. With the assistance of the National Marine Fisheries Service in performing annual summaries on the recent and historical data provided under this program, it may be possible to follow the historical trends in the fishery, to monitor the current status of reefish stocks and to develop a more efficient sampling program.

LITERATURE CITED

Caribbean Fishery Management Council. 1985. Fishery management plan, final environmental impact statement and draft regulatory review for the shallow-water reef fish fishery of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Standard Catch Report Form. This was the only form used on St. Thomas-St. John throughout the reporting period. This was the only form used on St. Croix in 1993 - 1994, and was used by the majority of fishermen in 1994 - 1995 and 1995 - 1996.
2. Maps of St. Thomas-St. John and St. Croix showing the fishing area locations.
3. New Catch Report Form. This form was tested in St. Croix in 1994 - 1995 and 1995 - 1996.
4. New Catch Report Form Diagram. This diagram was printed on the back of each new form. The diagram provides an explanation of each column on the New Form.

COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORT FORM FOR **JULY 1996**

Figure 1.

name _____ boat reg. no. _____ number of helpers used _____
 home port _____ buoy colors _____ Did you fish this month? ____ Yes ____ No

day of month	POT FISH lbs	# Pots Hauled	HOOK FISH lbs	NET FISH lbs	SPEARGUN FISH lbs	POT LOBSTER lbs	# Pots Hauled	LOBSTER by DIVING	CONCH lbs of meat	BAITFISH/ FRY lbs	AREAS FISHED ↓	Did you fish more than 3 miles from shore (Yes/No/Both)
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
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30												
31												

I attest that the information recorded on this form is true and accurate.

(sign & date)

Virgin Islands Fishing Areas

Figure 2.

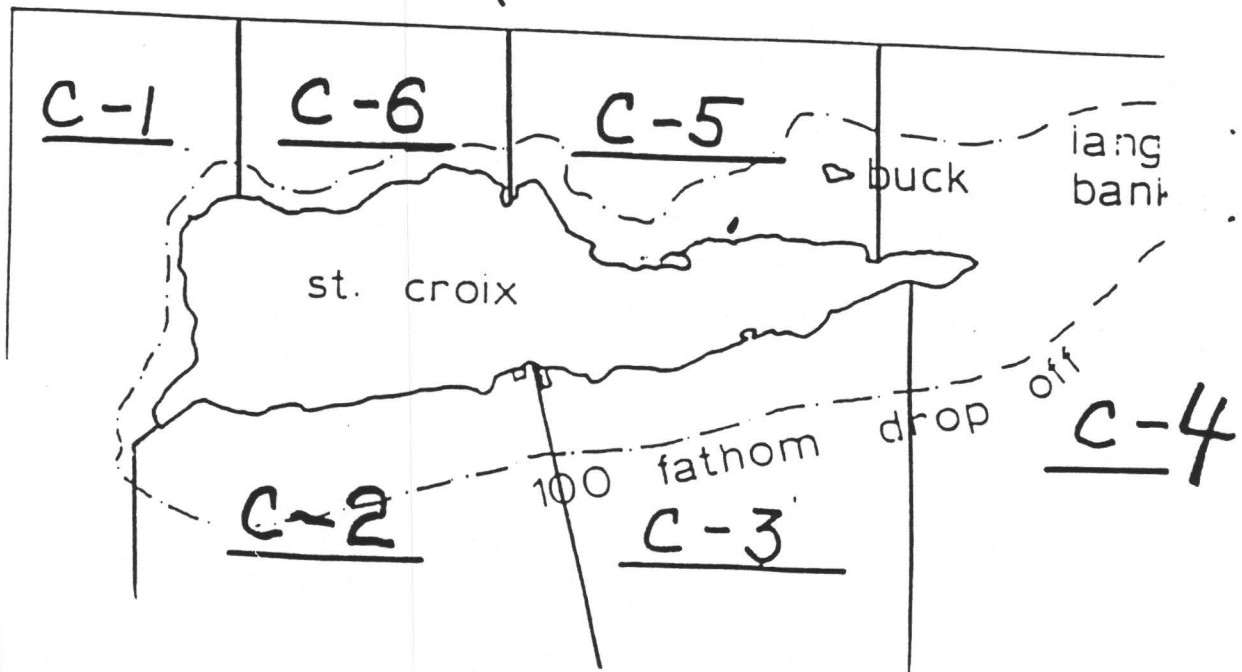
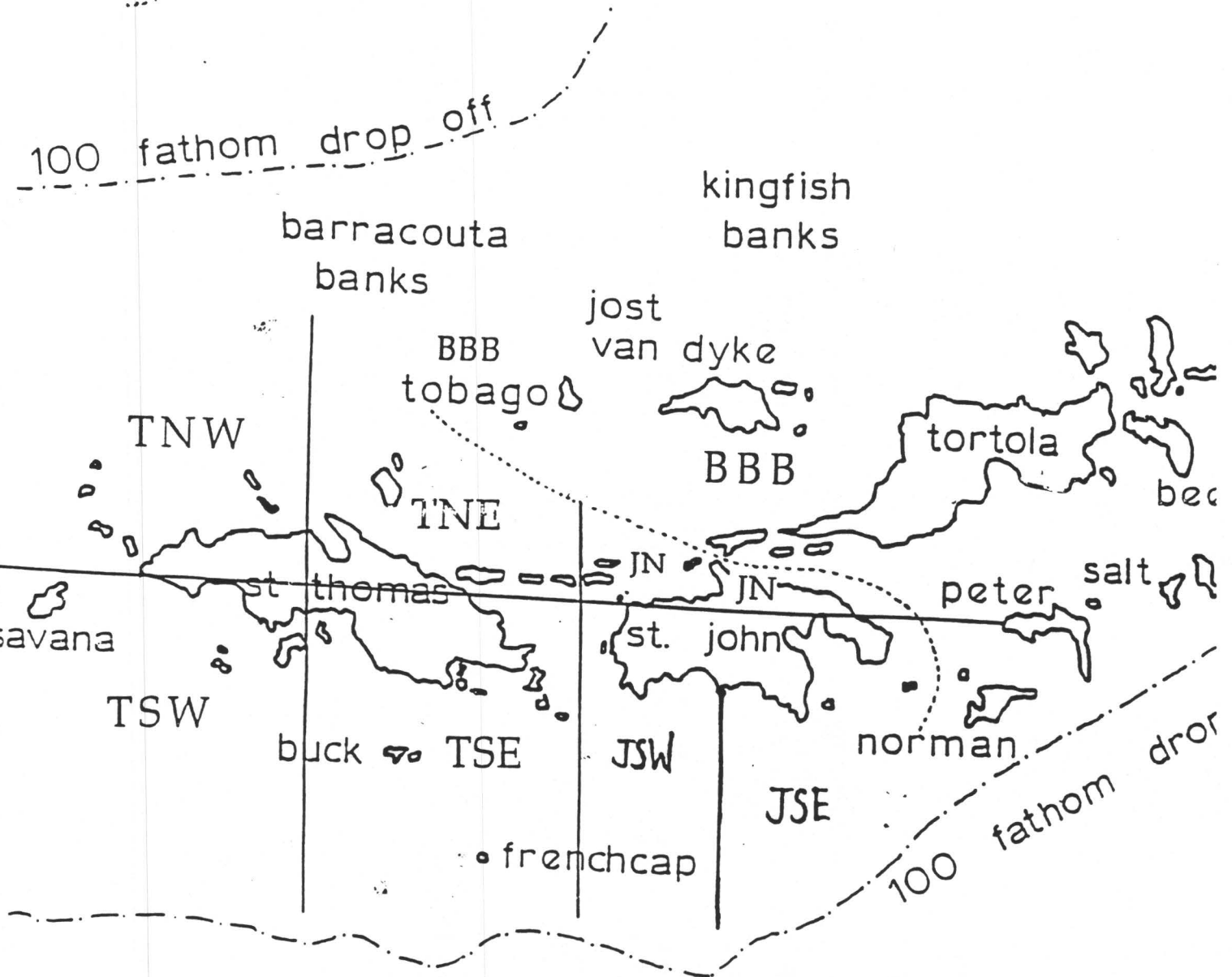


Figure 3.

Commercial Catch Report JULY 1997

Name _____ ID No. _____ Boat Reg. no. VI- _____ Home Port _____ No. Helpers _____
Buoy colors _____

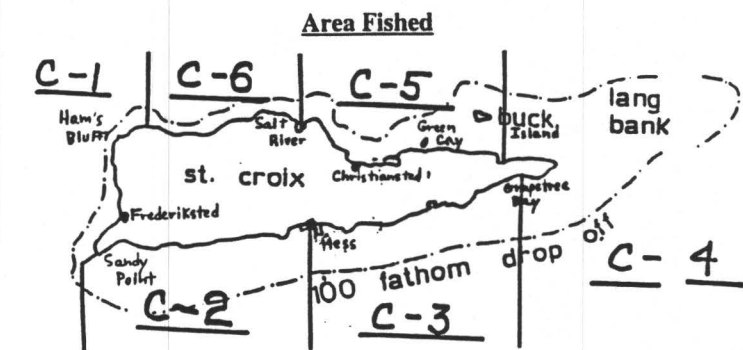
		TYPE OF FISH CAUGHT																			
	Gear	Area	Hours	Grouper	Snapper	Grunt	Jack	Surgeon	Parrot	Shellfish	Trigger	Angel	Barra	Goat	Mackrl	Offshore	FAD	Baitfish	Lobster	Conch	Distance
Day	Type	No.	Fished	Fished	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	lbs	DTW/ lbs		lbs	lbs	lbs	from shore
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31																					

I attest that the information recorded on this form is true and accurate; _____
Please see reverse side of page for explanation of column headings. (sign and date)

Gear Type
Traps = T
Gillnet = G
Castnet = C
Seine Net = N
SCUBA = S
Linefishing = L
FreeDiving (No Scuba) = F

Gear No.
Total number of traps hauled
Total number of nets used
Total number of nets used
Total number of nets used
Total number of SCUBA divers
Total number of lines fished
Total number of freedivers

Figure 4.



Hours Fished = Total hours spent fishing

TYPE OF FISH CAUGHT

Write the total pounds of each fish type caught for each day

Grouper	Snapper	Grunt	Jack
Surgeonfish	Parrotfish	Shellfish	Triggerfish
Angelfish	Barracuda	Goatfish	Mackerel
Offshore D = Dolphin	FAD H = Ham's Bluff B = Buck Island	Baitfish	Fry
T = Tuna			Sprat
W = Wahoo			Ballyhoo
Lobster	Conch		Flying Fish
For fish that are not listed, fill in the fish name and total pounds			

Distance from shore - estimate the distance from shore (in miles) where you fished most for each day
write the distance to the nearest 1/2 mile. If less than 1/2 mile from shore, then write "0".

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Table 1. Summary of reported commercial catch reports by year (the fishing year is June through July) for St. Croix. Values are total reported catch (in pounds).

Fishing Category	Year		
	1993 - 1994	1994 - 1995	1995-1996
Potfish	226728	185581	121986
Hookfish	214904	193909	116846
Netfish	64731	82186	74308
Spearfish	34049	22038	30567
Lobster - pot	5176	6209	1431
Lobster - diving	33324	17786	15249
Conch	35576	37593	21763
Whelk	16	436	0
Baitfish	2450	2911	1301
Tuna	21522	11463	-
Dolphin	17743	11441	-
Wahoo	9790	7023	-
Pelagic - no species defined	0	5448	12267*
Pelagic - multiple species reported	0	927	0
Unknown (no fishing category defined)**	0	7232	3403
Total	666009	585808	399121
Number of Registered Fishermen	241	193	180
Number of Fishermen Reporting ⁺	188	188	175
Mean Catch per Fisherman (pounds)	3542.6	3116.0	2280.7
Number of Reported Trips	10209	9283	7362

Fishing Category	1993 - 1994	1994 - 1995	1995-1996
Mean Catch per Trip (pounds)	65.24	63.11	54.21

* All pelagic fisheries landings were recorded as a single category in 1995 - 1996.

** The new catch report form, initiated in 1994 - 1995 (Fig. 3) has a column for fishermen to list their gear type. Some reports were turned in without the gear type defined.

+ Number of Fishermen Reporting was determined by counting the number of Boat Registration Numbers entered into the computer database.

Table 2. Reported, Projected, and Estimated total landings in pounds for St. Croix by year.

Landings Type	Year		
	1993 - 1994	1994 - 1995	1995 - 1996
Reported	666,009	585,808	399,121
Projected	853,767	601388	410,524
Estimated	1,057,714	824,260	651,134

Table 4. Summary of the reported catch by area and fishing category for St. Croix, 1994 - 1995. Values are total reported catch in pounds.

Area*	Fishing Category												No Gear Listed**
	Potfish	Hook-fish	Netfish	Spear-fish	Baitfish	Pot Lobster	Dive Lobster	Conch	Whelk	Tuna	Dolphin	Wahoo	
C-1	4129	14705	8762	1645	1479	714	1198	2151	0	5230	1640	1037	0
C-2	50061	15295	17265	5089	71	952	3831	4866	0	861	594	285	261
C-3	12272	7082	10335	5516	81	94	2923	9309	0	446	1649	328	336
C-4	11197	9364	6096	2305	116	1908	2596	2539	41	41	764	3063	31
C-5	32597	12712	20305	2418	201	233	1774	10212	0	4355	5070	1692	643
C-6	621	6587	1411	1568	729	77	425	964	0	277	854	590	0
EEZ	600	107687	0	0	0	130	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T-1	0	660	635	0	0	0	0	0	0	165	80	0	585
T-2	670	986	750	0	0	127	0	100	0	32	37	0	510
T-3	788	502	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	24	459	0	0
T-4	0	7	90	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	9	0
XXX	72758	18322	16537	3497	234	1956	5039	7432	395	32	294	19	4866
Total	185581	193909	82186	22038	2911	6209	17786	37593	436	11463	11441	7023	7232

* Fishing areas are shown in Fig. 2.

EEZ = offshore waters more than 20 miles from shore. This area designation was used by a single longline vessel and a single using pots.

XXX = Fishermen did not record the area on the catch report form.

** No Gear Listed. A new catch report form, initiated in 1994 - 1995 (Fig. ?), contains a column for gear type. On some trips fishermen did not list the type of gear used.

Table 5. Summary of the reported catch by area and fishing category for St. Croix, 1995 - 1996. Values are total reported catch in pounds. Pelagic landings were recorded as a single category.

Area*	Fishing Category										No Gear Listed**
	Potfish	Hook-fish	Netfish	Spear-fish	Baitfish	Pot Lobster	Dive Lobster	Conch	Whelk	Pelagic	
C-1	801	16554	4667	856	592	88	351	755	0	1579	788
C-2	48769	9238	20194	5006	162	105	4269	2579	0	2445	18
C-3	18484	3421	26413	8755	65	117	3388	7667	0	1229	279
C-4	19415	11969	5815	5872	218	871	3268	987	0	3599	0
C-5	28340	5285	11864	4619	42	0	1104	6736	0	2634	0
C-6	0	4709	2994	2282	201	0	188	120	0	781	0
EEZ	0	64493	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T-2	86	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T-3	195	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
XXX	5896	1177	2361	3171	21	250	2681	2919	0	0	2318
Total	121986	116846	74308	30567	1301	1431	15249	21763	0	12267	3403

* Fishing areas are shown in Fig. 2.

EEZ = offshore waters more than 20 miles from shore. This area designation was used by a single longline vessel.

XXX = Fishermen did not record the area on the catch report form.

** No Gear Listed. A new catch report form, initiated in 1994 - 1995 (Fig. ?), contains a column for gear type. On some trips fishermen did not list the type of gear used.

Table 6. Distribution of the New Catch Report Form, initiated in 1994 - 1995.

Year	Number of Fishermen with New Forms*	Total Number of Reported Trips**	No Gear: Number of Reported Trips	Pots: Number of Reported Trips	Fishing Mode		
					Hook and Line: Number of Reported Trips	Nets: Number of Reported Trips	SCUBA: Number of Reported Trips
1994-1995	33	1527	309	291	904	3	20
1995-1996	23	985	93	305	507	55	25

* In 1994 - 1995, there were 193 registered commercial fishermen.

In 1995 - 1996, there were 180 registered commercial fishermen.

** In 1994 - 1995, commercial fishermen with Old Forms reported 7756 trips.

In 1995 - 1996, commercial fishermen with Old Forms reported 6377 trips.

Table 7. Estimates of catch composition of reef fish from the New Catch Report Forms for St. Croix, 1994 - 1995. Values are reported landings in pounds.

Catch Category	No Gear Listed	Fishing Mode			
		Pots	Hook and Line	Nets*	SCUBA**
Grouper	108	452	68	0	0
Snapper	3004	2484	2213	0	0
Grunt	74	2485	0	8	0
Jack	3960	29	358	114	0
Surgeonfish	0	1258	0	0	0
Parrotfish	0	5272	0	5	0
Shellfish	0	68	513	0	0
Triggerfish	0	365	10	0	0
Angelfish	0	96	0	0	0
Barracuda	0	0	635	0	0
Goatfish	0	333	0	0	0
Mackerel	21	0	554	0	0
Other	65	1943	1682	10	0
Total	7232	14785	6033	137	0

* Nets = all net types combined.

** SCUBA - all reported SCUBA harvest consisted of conch and lobster.

Table 8. Estimates of catch composition of reef fish from the New Catch Report Forms for St. Croix, 1995 - 1996. Values are reported landings in pounds.

Catch Category	No Gear Listed	Fishing Mode			
		Pots	Hook and Line	Nets*	SCUBA**
Grouper	648	99	175	0	0
Snapper	608	5494	3286	0	0
Grunt	210	3510	23	0	0
Jack	608	0	1669	547	0
Surgeonfish	0	1149	0	0	0
Parrotfish	902	4994	0	3024	0
Shellfish	0	761	219	0	0
Triggerfish	0	1952	12	0	0
Angelfish	95	97	3	0	0
Barracuda	92	528	128	0	0
Goatfish	0	81	42	0	0
Mackerel	185	62	51	0	0
Other	55	1669	1601	0	0
Total	3403	20396	7209	3571	0

* Nets = all net types combined.

** SCUBA - all reported SCUBA harvest consisted of conch and lobster.

Table 9. Summary of reported commercial catch reports by year (the fishing year is June through July) for St. Thomas - St. John. Values are total reported catch (in pounds).

Fishing Category	Year		
	1993 - 1994	1994 - 1995	1995-1996
Potfish	393556	408764	301045
Hookfish	147176	167993	100092
Netfish	103185	101883	67280
Spearfish	3425	4699	6021
Lobster - pot	64560	62119	67325
Lobster - diving	4676	2936	5691
Conch	6919	551	2899
Whelk	5299	4702	0
Baitfish	9928	22087	10720
Tuna	2463	-	-
Dolphin	1359	-	-
Wahoo	633	-	-
Pelagic - no species defined	-	-	-
Pelagic - multiple species reported	-	-	-
Unknown (no fishing category defined)**	-	-	-
Total	743179	775734	561073
Number of Registered Fishermen	233	203	182
Number of Fishermen Reporting ⁺	149	163	149
Mean Catch per Fisherman (pounds)*	4987.8	4759.1	3765.6
Number of Reported Trips	7345	7041	4909

Fishing Category	1993 - 1994	1994 - 1995	1995-1996
Mean Catch per Trip (pounds)	101.2	110.2	114.3

____ * All pelagic fisheries landings were recorded as a single category in 1995 - 1996.

** The new catch report form, initiated in 1994 - 1995 (Fig. 3) has a column for fishermen to list their gear type. Some reports were turned in without the gear type defined.

+ Number of Fishermen Reporting was determined by counting the number of Boat Registration Numbers entered into the computer database.

Table 10. Reported, Projected, and Estimated total landings for St. Thomas-St. John by year.

Landings Type	Year		
	1993 - 1994	1994 - 1995	1995 - 1996
Reported	743,179	775,734	561,073
Projected	1,169,033	966,098	685,337
Estimated	1,370,665	1,183,274	750,848

Table 11. Summary of the reported catch by area and fishing category for St. Thomas-St. John, 1993 - 1994. Values are total reported catch in pounds.

Fishing Area*	Fishing Category											
	Potfish	Hookfish	Netfish	Spear-fish	Bait-fish	Pot Lobster	Dive Lobster	Conch	Whelk	Tuna**	Dolphin	Wahoo
TNE	17264	28818	56913	623	2642	5397	114	721	917	2047	385	288
TNW	36565	35330	27595	170	1287	11799	140	1370	650	137	481	2
TSE	68625	23213	80	529	1839	10326	772	925	814	33	26	76
TSW	113523	23729	2406	442	482	17466	582	1352	602	52	22	75
TTT	104058	20908	15808	602	2790	13286	2498	886	2286	194	445	146
BBB	33237	10683	0	0	0	5473	0	0	5	0	0	36
JN	3065	3864	0	191	888	394	220	1665	25	0	0	0
JSE	4190	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JSW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MLT ⁺	13029	631	383	868	0	419	350	0	0	0	0	10
Total	393556	147176	103185	3425	9928	64560	4676	6919	5299	2463	1359	623

* Fishing areas are shown in Fig. 2.

** St. Thomas-St. John forms did not provide space for recording offshore species landings.

TTT = unknown fishing area. Commercial fishermen did not fill in the Area column of the catch report forms for some trips.

⁺ Some fishermen reported two or more areas fished during one trip.

Table 12. Summary of the reported catch by area and fishing category for St. Thomas-St. John, 1994 - 1995. Values are total reported catch in pounds.

Fishing Area*	Fishing Category											
	Potfish	Hookfish	Netfish	Spear-fish	Bait-fish	Pot Lobster	Dive Lobster	Conch	Whelk	Tuna**	Dolphin	Wahoo
TNE	6931	18981	31830	1586	1344	1835	254	60	66	-	-	-
TNW	28842	23655	30315	1322	1679	11108	367	0	200	-	-	-
TSE	67294	17762	0	221	3018	7542	298	65	105	-	-	-
TSW	111372	20337	6424	156	948	15438	448	66	1388	-	-	-
TTT	131147	63437	26419	1045	9951	17035	1159	200	2936	-	-	-
BBB	21013	6673	0	0	0	2186	0	0	0	-	-	-
JN	7365	2846	0	208	1061	1462	127	0	7	-	-	-
JSE	20088	4620	15	99	2749	995	27	6	0	-	-	-
JSW	1008	1512	30	51	27	1950	40	0	0	-	-	-
MLT ⁺	13704	8170	6850	11	1310	2568	216	154	0	-	-	-
Total	408764	167993	101883	4699	22087	62119	2936	551	4702	-	-	-

* Fishing areas are shown in Fig. 2.

** St. Thomas-St. John forms did not provide space for recording offshore species landings.

TTT = unknown fishing area. Commercial fishermen did not fill in the Area column of the catch report forms for some trips.

⁺ Some fishermen reported two or more areas fished during one trip.

Table 13. Summary of the reported catch by area and fishing category for St. Thomas-St. John, 1995 - 1996. Values are total reported catch in pounds.

Fishing Area*	Fishing Category											
	Potfish	Hookfish	Netfish	Spear-fish	Bait-fish	Pot Lobster	Dive Lobster	Conch	Whelk	Tuna**	Dolphin	Wahoo
TNE	16303	17595	39525	1286	1201	1964	1051	562	0	-	-	-
TNW	20549	27736	23518	952	1423	11570	928	618	0	-	-	-
TSE	28777	12532	0	468	3690	4004	524	287	0	-	-	-
TSW	120048	11582	2772	800	1392	25807	1027	430	0	-	-	-
TTT	11827	1673	1465	199	225	4121	187	180	0	-	-	-
BBB	36609	9305	0	0	0	2995	0	0	0	-	-	-
JN	2436	8391	0	972	1669	1176	1060	527	0	-	-	-
JSE	29862	6856	0	373	682	3335	371	112	0	-	-	-
JSW	1550	1093	0	344	85	413	335	183	0	-	-	-
MLT ⁺	33084	3329	0	627	353	11940	208	0	-	-	-	-
Total	301045	100092	67280	6021	10720	67325	5691	2899	0	-	-	-

* Fishing areas are shown in Fig. 2.

** St. Thomas-St. John forms did not provide space for recording offshore species landings.

TTT = unknown fishing area. Commercial fishermen did not fill in the Area column of the catch report forms for some trips.

⁺ Some fishermen reported two or more areas fished during one trip.

Table 14. Monetary value of commercial fish landings for St. Croix.

Landing Category	Pounds Landed	1993-1994		Pounds Landed	1994-1995		Pounds Landed	1995-1996	
		Price per Pound	Total Value		Price per Pound	Total Value		Price per Pound	Total Value
Potfish	226,728	3.50	793,548	185,581	3.50	649,534	121,986	3.50	426,951
Hookfish	214,904	4.00	859,616	193,909	4.00	775,636	116,846	4.00	467,384
Netfish	64,731	4.00	258,924	82,186	4.00	328,744	74,308	4.00	297,232
Spearfish	34,049	4.00	136,196	22,038	4.00	88,152	30,567	4.00	122,268
Lobster-pot	5,176	7.00	36,232	6,209	7.00	43,463	1,431	7.00	10,017
Lobster-dive	33,324	7.00	233,268	17,786	7.00	124,502	15,249	7.00	106,743
Conch	35,576	4.00	142,304	37,593	4.00	150,372	21,763	5.00	108,815
Whelk	16	10.00	160	436	10.00	4,360	0	10.00	0
Baitfish	2,450	3.00	7,350	2,911	3.00	8,733	1,301	3.00	3,903
Pelagic	49,055	4.00	196,220	36,302	4.00	145,208	12,267	4.00	49,068
No Category	0	-	0	7,232	-	-	3,403	-	-
TOTALS:	666,009		\$2,663,818	585,808		\$2,318,704	399,121		\$1,592,381

Table 15. Monetary value of commercial fish landings for St. Thomas-St. John.

Landing Category	Pounds Landed	1993-1994		Pounds Landed	1994-1995		Pounds Landed	1995-1996	
		Price per Pound	Total Value		Price per Pound	Total Value		Price per Pound	Total Value
Potfish	395,846	3.50	1,385,461	408,764	3.50	1,430,674	301,045	3.50	1,053,658
Hookfish	148,161	4.00	592,644	167,993	4.00	671,972	100,092	4.00	400,368
Netfish	104,185	4.00	416,740	101,883	4.00	407,532	67,280	4.00	269,120
Spearfish	3,425	4.00	13,700	4,699	4.00	18,796	6,021	4.00	24,084
Lobster-pot	64,665	6.50	420,323	62,119	6.50	403,774	67,325	6.50	437,613
Lobster-dive	4,676	6.50	30,394	2,936	6.50	19,084	5,691	6.50	36,992
Conch	6,919	5.00	34,595	551	5.00	2,755	2,899	5.00	14,495
Whelk	5,299	8.00	42,392	4,702	8.00	37,616	0	8.00	0
Baitfish	9,948	3.00	29,844	22,087	3.00	66,261	10,720	3.00	32,160
Pelagic*	4,455	4.00	17,820	-	4.00	-	-	4.00	-
TOTALS:	747,579		\$2,983,913	775,734		\$3,058,464	561,073		\$2,268,490

* Pelagic category dropped from catch record forms in 1994-1995 and 1995-1996.

Table 16. Bioprofile sampling annual summary, St. Croix, April 1993 - March 1994.

Year	Month	Interviews	Lobster Number	Interviews	Reef Fish Number
1993	Apr	3	23	6	675
	May	4	36	2	386
	Jun	4	40	5	332
	Jul	11	82	5	519
	Aug	13	130	5	714
	Sept	8	83	6	898
	Oct	12	129	6	638
	Nov	5	100	6	623
	Dec	2	76	4	535
1994	Jan	1	29	7	739
	Feb	8	81	7	608
	Mar	8	81	7	608
	TOTALS:	79	890	66	7,275

Table 17. Bioprofile sampling annual summary, St. Croix, April 1994 - March 1995.

Year	Month	Interviews	Lobster Number	Interviews	Reef Fish Number
1994					
	Apr	6	80	4	783
	May	7	77	6	617
	Jun	6	79	8	713
	Jul	5	99	5	493
	Aug	6	70	8	739
	Sept	3	62	4	610
	Oct	2	21	5	1,030
	Nov	5	63	5	601
	Dec	8	65	6	586
1995					
	Jan	4	67	4	385
	Feb	1	45	3	359
	Mar	6	37	7	533
	TOTALS:	59	765	65	7,449

Table 18. Bioprofile sampling annual summary, St. Croix, April 1995 - March 1996.

Year	Month	Interviews	Lobster Number	Interviews	Reef Fish Number
1995					
	Apr	6	59	3	300
	May	4	17	7	546
	Jun	9	79	5	690
	Jul	4	26	3	354
	Aug	5	68	6	576
	Sept	2	35	3	455
	Oct	4	52	3	400
	Nov	3	32	3	492
	Dec	3	30	2	440
1996					
	Jan	2	17	2	440
	Feb	5	55	1	160
	Mar	4	22	2	436
	TOTALS:	51	492	40	5,289

Table 19. Bioprofile sampling annual summary, St. Thomas-St. John, April 1993 - March 1994.

Year	Month	Lobster		Reef Fish	
		Interviews	Number	Interviews	Number
1993	Apr	0	0	0	0
	May	0	0	0	0
	Jun	0	0	0	0
	Jul	0	0	0	0
	Aug	0	0	0	0
	Sept	0	0	0	0
	Oct	1	29	1	43
	Nov	0	0	10	289
	Dec	0	0	0	0
1994	Jan	1	36	6	331
	Feb	0	0	7	207
	Mar	0	0	6	232
	TOTALS:	2	65	20	1,102

Table 20. Bioprofile sampling annual summary, St. Thomas-St. John, April 1994 - March 1995.

Year	Month	Lobster		Reef Fish	
		Interviews	Number	Interviews	Number
1994	Apr	0	0	4	145
	May	0	0	2	263
	Jun	1	55	6	189
	Jul	0	0	1	132
	Aug	0	0	6	389
	Sept	0	0	1	60
	Oct	0	0	0	0
	Nov	0	0	0	0
	Dec	1	44	10	422
1995	Jan	0	0	0	0
	Feb	0	0	3	112
	Mar	0	0	0	0
TOTALS:		2	99	33	1,712

Table 21. Bioprofile sampling annual summary, St. Thomas-St. John, April 1995 - March 1996.

Year	Month	Interviews	Lobster	Reef Fish	
			Number	Interviews	Number
1995	Apr	0	0	6	257
	May	0	0	2	136
	Jun	2	8	4	262
	Jul	2	13	3	204
	Aug	0	0	0	0
	Sept	0	0	0	0
	Oct	0	0	0	0
	Nov	0	0	0	0
	Dec	0	0	6	324
1996	Jan	1	16	12	636
	Feb	2	102	1	62
	Mar	1	15	2	178
TOTALS:		8	154	36	2,059