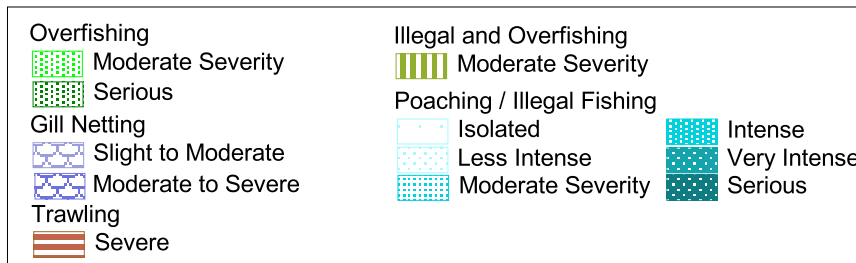
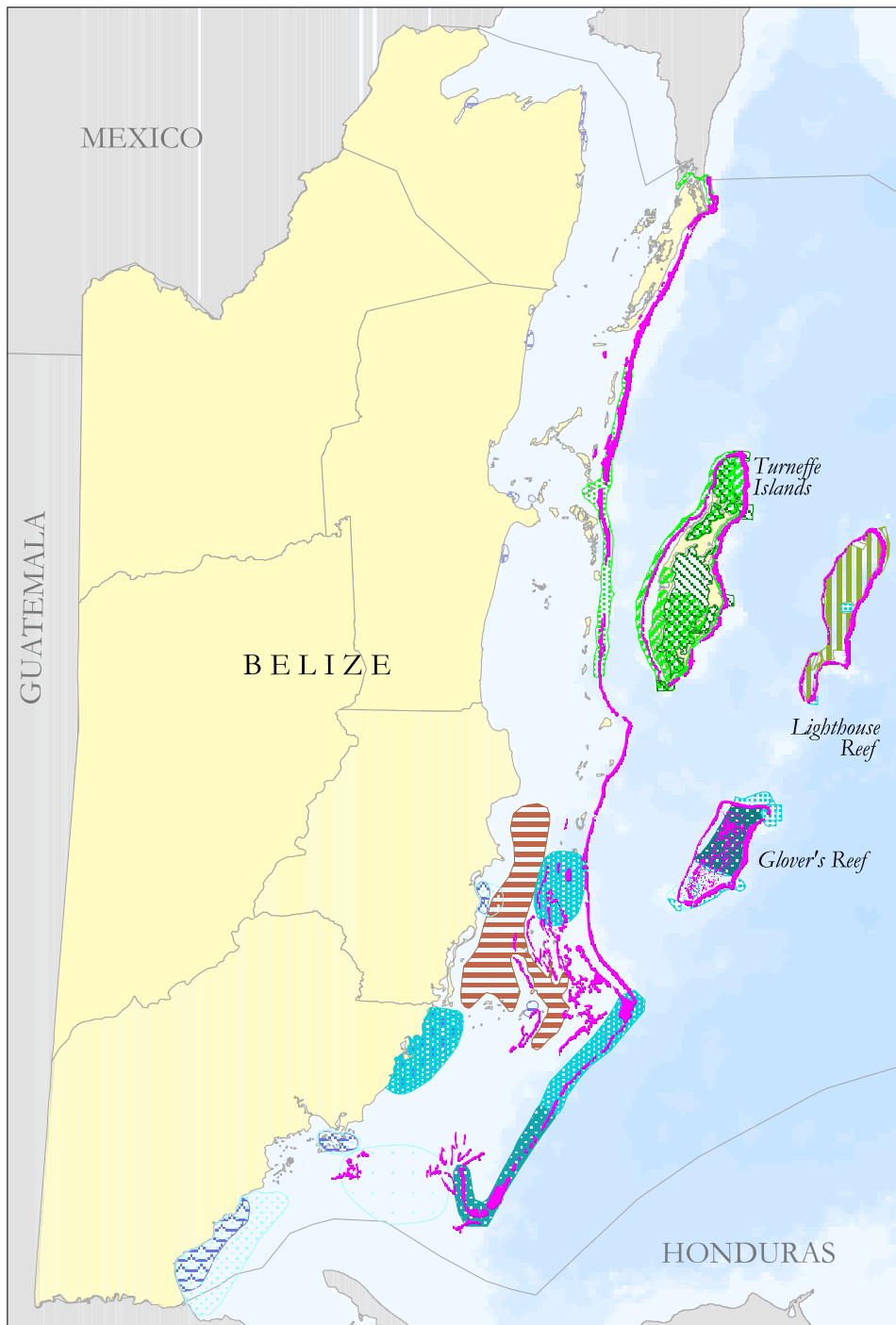


# Fishing Pressure on Coral Reefs in Belize - Expert Mapping

Fishing is a mainstay for many coastal communities in Belize, but overfishing, illegal fishing, and fishing with inappropriate gear (e.g. concern about gill netting at river mouths) threatens the natural resources base that supports near shore fisheries. Fishing in Belize is mainly artisanal and carried out in inshore waters inside the barrier reef and three offshore atolls. Fishing methods include diving for conch and lobster, spearfishing, use of lobster traps and 'shades', fish traps and weirs, hand-lining, gillnetting, and shrimp trawling. Target species are mainly the spiny lobster, queen conch, reef fish, and coastal or inshore pelagics. Several of the larger grouper and snapper species, from areas spanning several hundred square kilometers, congregate at known localities once or twice a year to spawn in vast numbers (known as spawning aggregations or SPAGs).

Local stakeholders and scientists participated in four expert workshops evaluating threats to the four major coral reef systems in Belize. All four workshops identified some type of fishing pressure as one of the most important threats to those reefs. Overfishing (fishing above sustainable levels; at increased effort), illegal fishing (fishing outside of allowed areas and time periods, such as inside Species Aggregation (SPAG) sites or conservation zones), and poaching (unlicensed fishing) were identified as threats to the fishery resources. Along the Southern Barrier Reef, shrimp trawling was also identified as a key threat to benthic habitats that support fisheries, such as coral reefs and seagrass beds.



Data Sources: Fishing pressure maps based on results from four "Belize Threat Assessment and Mapping" workshops. Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) for Glover's Reef; Belize Audubon Society and WCS for Lighthouse Reef; CZMAI, Turneffe Islands Coastal Advisory Committee, and WCS for Turneffe; and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and WCS for the Barrier Reef.

## Reefs at Risk in Belize

A collaboration between the World Resources Institute, Belize Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute, and many other partner organisations in Belize. Datasets available on the Belize Coastal Data CD (email [datacen@coastalzonebelize.org](mailto:datacen@coastalzonebelize.org) for more information).