



Below is a recent Southeast Fishery Bulletin announcing the gag recreational season and changes to the recreational shallow-water-grouper closure.

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NOAA Fisheries Announces the Gulf of Mexico Gag Recreational Season and Modification to the Recreational Shallow-Water Grouper Closure Small Entity Compliance Guide

NOAA Fisheries announces a final rule establishing the 2013 gag recreational fishing season that opens on July 1 and closes on December 3, 2013. The rule also limits the geographical extent of the February 1 through March 31 shallow-water grouper closure to waters seaward of a line approximating 20 fathoms. The final rule will be effective July 5, 2013.

Gag Recreational Season

The recreational gag season opens on July 1, 2013, and the rule closes the season on December 3, 2013. December 3, 2013, is when the annual catch target of 1.287 million pounds is projected to be caught. However, if at any time landings are projected to exceed the 2013 annual catch limit of 1.495 million pounds during the federal season, gag accountability measures would close fishing for gag. The December 3, 2013, closure date does factor in the effect of incompatible state regulations by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission that open state waters off four counties from April 1 through June 30.

Recreational Shallow-Water Grouper Closure

The rule restricts the geographical extent of the fixed February 1 through March 31 shallow-water grouper closed season to apply only to waters seaward of the 20-fathom boundary. This allows grouper fishing to occur year-round while providing some protection to species that spawn during February and March. Figure 1 displays the boundaries.

Other information

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. This bulletin provides only a summary of the information about the rule. Discrepancies between this bulletin and the rule as published in the Federal Register will be resolved in favor of the Federal Register.

Copies of the final rule are available by contacting NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Regional Office at:
263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
or by downloading it off the Southeast Regional Office's Web site for reef fish
at http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/reef_fish/2013/swg_framework/index.html once it has published.

Need more information on these topics? Southeast Regional Office's Web page: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.
This announcement is forwarded as a courtesy of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.



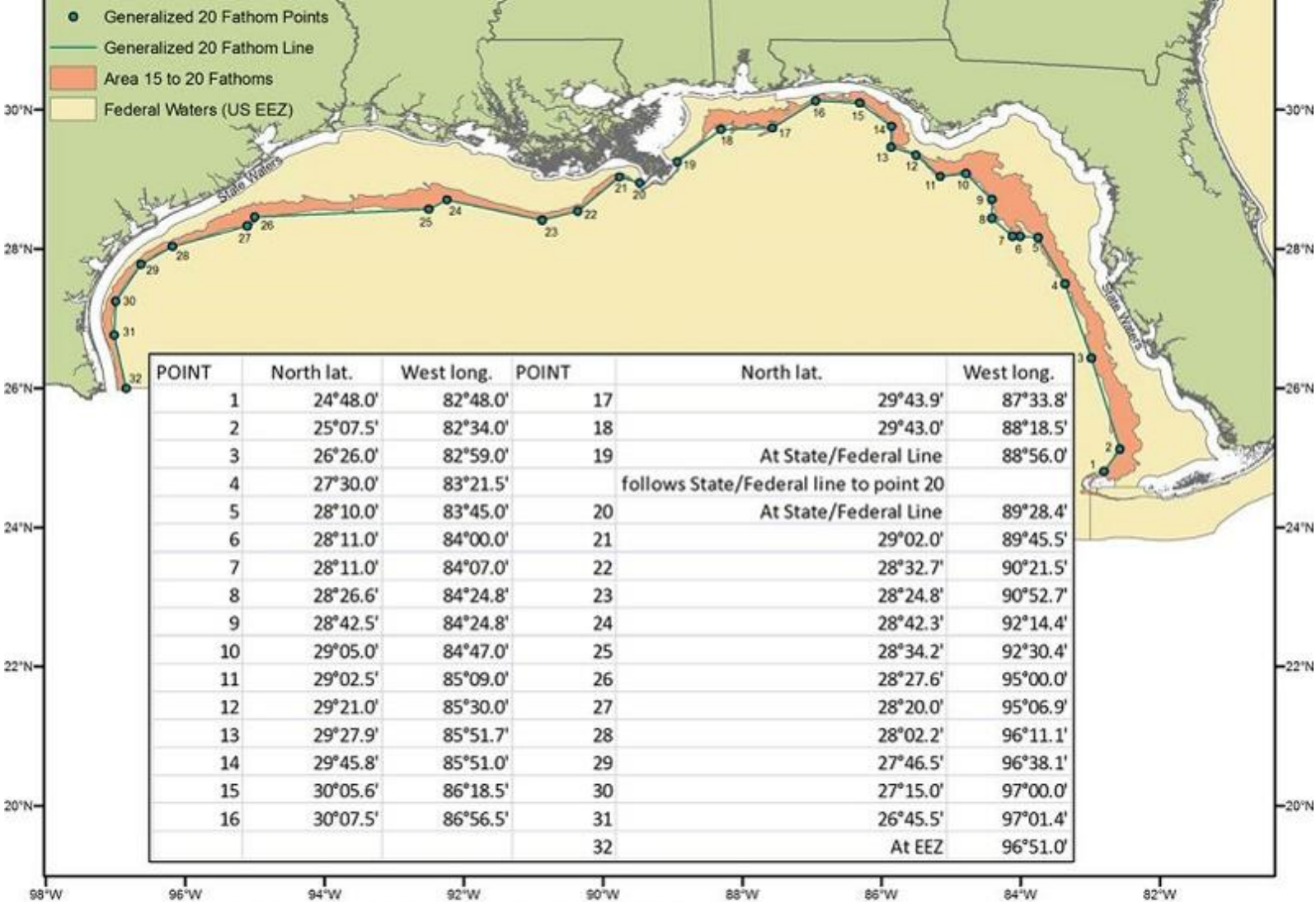


Figure 1. Map showing the 20-fathom boundary for the shallow-water grouper time area closure.

About Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional Fishery Management Councils established by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans, which are designed to manage fishery resources within the 200-mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico.



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