

# Recreational Fishing Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters

For Species Managed by the Gulf of Mexico  
Fishery Management Council

January 2019





Photo: Emily Muehlstein



Photo: Dylan Hubbard



Photo: Sea Grant

This publication was prepared for general informational purposes and has no legal force or effect. Fishing regulations are subject to change. Check for updates by visiting [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org), or the **Fish Rules** regulations app.

**Download the Fish Rules regulations app - available for both iPhone and Android.**



**iPhone**

 [Apple App Store](#)

**Android**

 [Google Play Store](#)

A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA15NMF4410011.



## Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

4107 W. Spruce Street

Suite 200

Tampa, Florida 33607

888-833-1844/813-348-1630

### Table of Contents

About Us	2
Recreational Regulations	
Reef Fish - Snappers	3
Reef Fish - Other	5
Hogfish Management Boundary Map	7
Reef Fish - Groupers	8
Shallow-water Grouper Closure Map	10
Shallow-water Grouper Closure Coordinates	11
Coastal Migratory Pelagics	12
Shellfish and Other Species	13
Coral and Other Species	13
Highly Migratory Species	14
Recreational Permit Requirements	15
Additional Rules	16
Measurement Guidelines	17
Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures	18
Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters	34
Important Phone Numbers	35
Regulation Changes and Updates	37

About the

## 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 federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

The Council consists of 17 voting members: the Southeast Regional Administrator of NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, the directors of the five Gulf state marine resource management agencies, and 11 members who are nominated by the state governors and appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. There are also four non-voting members representing the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of State, and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

When reviewing potential rule changes, the Council draws upon the services of knowledgeable people from other state and federal agencies, universities, and the public to balance competing interests and achieve the greatest overall benefit to the nation.










Scoping workshops and public hearings are held throughout the Gulf coast to collect your input. Public comment is considered by the Council before it takes final action on proposed rule changes. The Council also collects comments on proposed changes through virtual meetings and online comment forms. Public testimony is heard during each Council meeting. After the Council takes final action, proposed rule changes are submitted to National Marine Fisheries Service for further review and approval before implementation by the Secretary of Commerce.



# Recreational Fishing Regulations

## Reef Fish - Snappers

2019 Recreational Fishing Season Calendar															
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Minimum Size	Bag Limit	
Snapper															
 Red Snapper ★	Closed				Federally permitted for-hire season: Open 12:01 AM June 1 - Closes 12:01 AM August 2. Private recreational season: Determined by each Gulf state.			Closed				16 inches TL	2/pp		
 Gray (Mangrove) Snapper													12 inches TL		10 Snapper combined total
 Mutton Snapper													18 inches TL	5/pp	
 Yellowtail Snapper													12 inches TL		
 Cubera Snapper													12 inches TL		
 Queen Snapper													none		
 Blackfin Snapper													none		

★ Subject to in-season closure if annual catch limit is projected to be met.







Red Snapper  
Photo: Dylan Hubbard



Mutton Snapper  
Photo: Rosemary White








Red Snapper  
Photo: Scott Hickman

2019 Recreational Fishing Season Calendar														
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Minimum Size	Bag Limit
 Wenchman													none	10 Snapper combined total
 Silk Snapper													none	
 Vermillion Snapper ★													10 inches TL	20 reef fish combined total
 Lane Snapper												Closed at 12:01 am on Dec 13, 2019	8 inches TL	

★ Subject to in-season closure if annual catch limit is projected to be met.

# Reef Fish - Other

2019 Recreational Fishing Season Calendar														
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Minimum Size	Bag Limit
Other Reef Fish														
 Gray Triggerfish ★	Closed			Open through May 10, 2019	Closed - as of 12:01 am, local time, on May 11, 2019						15 inches FL	1/pp	20 reef fish combined total	
 Almaco Jack											none			
 Golden Tilefish											none			
 Goldface Tilefish											none			
 Blueline Tilefish											none			

★ Subject to in-season closure if annual catch limit is projected to be met.



Golden Tilefish  
 Photo: NOAA



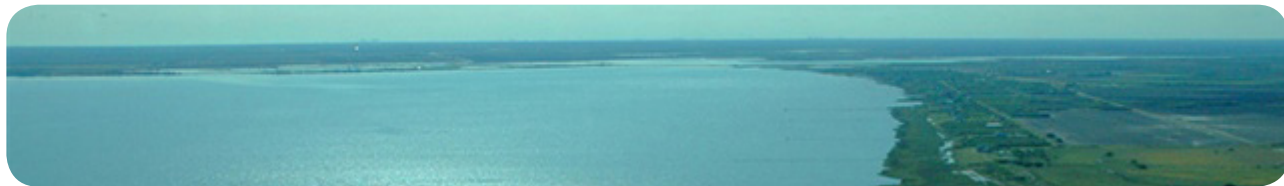
Blueline Tilefish  
 Photo: NOAA, Teacher at Sea



Gray Triggerfish  
 Photo: NOAA, Teacher at Sea

NOTES:





- Pending implementation, for-hire vessel operators will have to make a trip declaration (hail out) prior to departing. Operators will also have to submit electronic fishing reports for each trip before offloading fish. Each vessel will need to be equipped with hardware that, at minimum, archives GPS position.
- For-hire captains and crew are prohibited from retaining bag limits of any grouper, greater amberjack, or red snapper while under charter.
- Federally permitted for-hire reef fish vessels must comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing for reef fish in state waters.
- When fishing in state waters off Monroe County, FL, South Atlantic regulations apply.



Northern Gulf Coast

Photo: NOAA

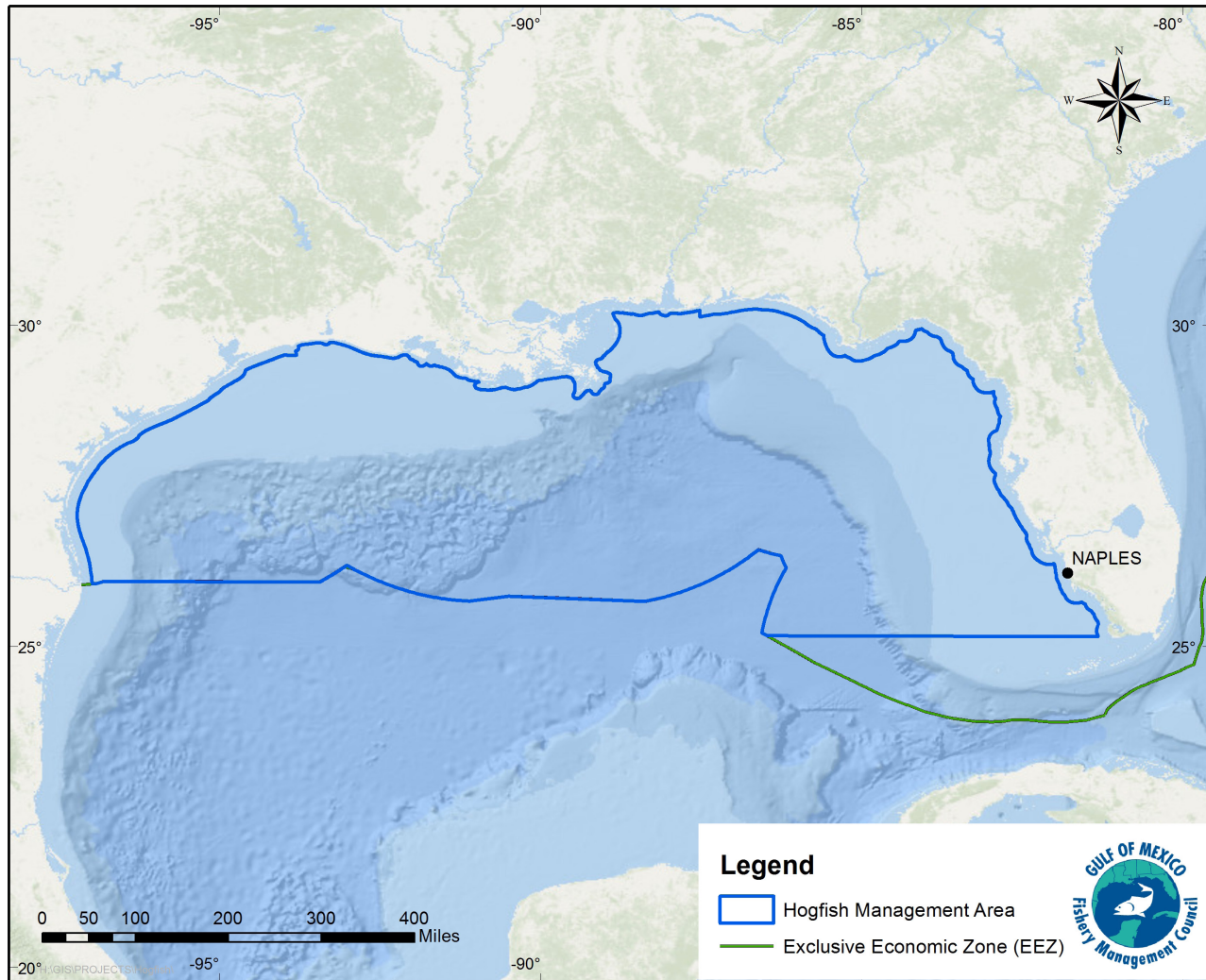
2019 Recreational Fishing Season Calendar

2019 Recreational Fishing Season Calendar															
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Minimum Size	Bag Limit	
 Hogfish													14 inches FL	5/pp	
 Greater Amberjack ★	Closed - ACT was met Aug-Oct, 2018, therefore season did not reopen for May 2019.									Closed	34 inches FL	1/pp			
*The greater amberjack recreational fishing year begins August 1.															
 Lesser Amberjack													14-22 inches FL		5 fish combined total
 Banded Rudderfish													14-22 inches FL		

★ Subject to in-season closure if annual catch limit is projected to be met.









## Hogfish Boundary Map









Note: Hogfish - the Gulf stock is defined as the waters north of the line extending west from Cape Sable, Florida (29° 09' N). South of that demarcation is considered within the South Atlantic jurisdiction and is subject to South Atlantic regulations. Visit <http://www.safmc.net/>

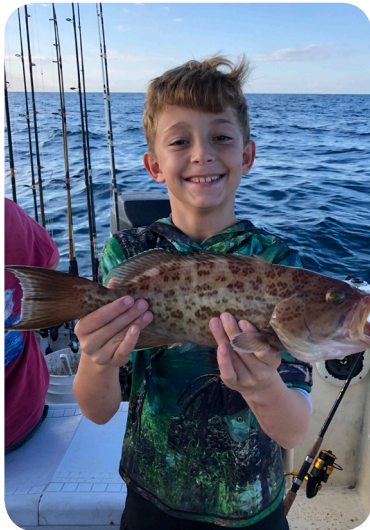
# Reef Fish - Groupers

2019 Recreational Fishing Season Calendar														
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Minimum Size	Bag Limit
Grouper  Gag Grouper★	Closed											24 inches TL	2/pp	4 grouper combined total
 Red Gouper★		Closed when fishing beyond 20 fathom break									20 inches TL	2/pp		
 Black Grouper											24 inches TL			
 Scamp											16 inches TL			
 Yellowfin Grouper											20 inches TL			
 Yellowmouth Grouper											none			
★ Subject to in-season closure if annual catch limit is projected to be met.														



Scamp  
Photo: NOAA

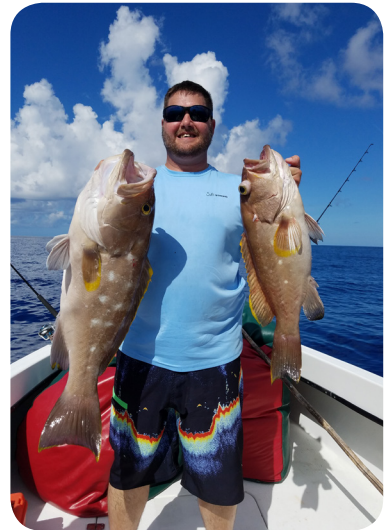
2019 Recreational Fishing Season Calendar														
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Minimum Size	Bag Limit
 Yellowedge Grouper													none	
 Snowy Grouper													none	
 Speckled Hind													none	1 per vessel
 Warsaw Grouper													none	1 per vessel
 Goliath Grouper	Closed												Harvest Prohibited	
 Nassau Grouper	Closed												Harvest Prohibited	



Scamp grouper  
Photo: Gavin Redinger



Snowy grouper  
Photo: Dylan Hubbard



Yellowedge grouper  
Photo: Dylan Hubbard

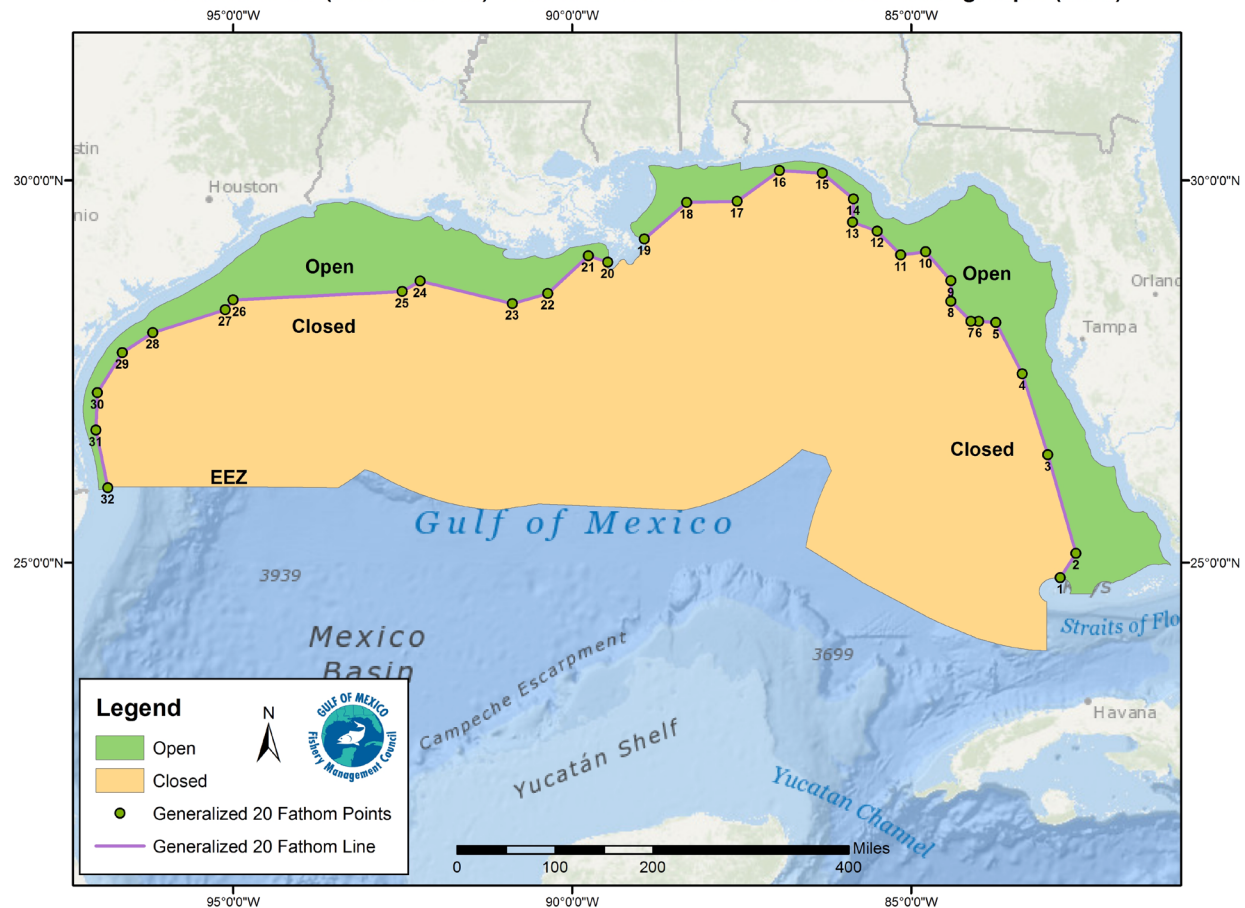
## Shallow-water Grouper Closure (Map of the 20-fathom break)

Title 50 CFR: Wildlife and Fisheries - PART 622 FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF OF MEXICO, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

Subpart B – Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico - §622.34 Seasonal and area closures designed to protect Gulf reef fish

(d) Seasonal closure of the recreational sector for shallow-water grouper (SWG). The recreational sector for SWG, in or from the Gulf EEZ, is closed each year from February 1 through March 31, in the portion of the Gulf EEZ seaward of rhumb lines connecting, in order, the points in the following table. During the closure, the bag and possession limit for SWG in or from the Gulf EEZ seaward of the following rhumb lines is zero.

Seasonal closure (Feb 1 - Mar 31) of the recreational sector for shallow-water grouper (SWG)





## Coordinates for the Shallow-water Grouper Closure (20-fathom break)

Position	Latitude	Longitude
1	24°48'00" N	82°48'00"W
2	25°07'30" N	82°34'00"W
3	26°26'00" N	82°59'00"W
4	27°30' 00"N	83°21'30"W
5	28°10' 00"N	83°45'00"W
6	28°11' 00"N	84°00'00"W
7	28°11' 00"N	84°07'00"W
8	28°26' 36"N	84°24'48"W
9	28°42' 30"N	84°24'48"W
10	29°05' 00"N	84°47'00"W
11	29°02' 30"N	85°09'00"W
12	29°21'00" N	85°30'00"W
13	29°27'54" N	85°51'42"W
14	29°45' 48"N	85°51'00"W
15	30°05' 36"N	86°18'30"W
16	30°07' 30"N	86°56'30"W
17	29°43' 54"N	87°33'48"W
18	29°43' 00"N	88°18'30"W
19	At State/EEZ line, follow State/EEZ line to point 20	88°56'00"W
20	At State/EEZ line	89°28'24"W
21	29°02' 00"N	89°45'30"W
22	28°32' 42"N	90°21'30"W
23	28°24'48" N	90°52'42"W
24	28°42' 18"N	92°14'24"W
25	28°34' 12"N	92°30'24"W
26	28°27'36" N	95°00'00"W
27	28°20' 00"N	95°06'54"W
28	28°02' 12"N	96°11'06"W
29	27°46'30" N	96°38'06"W
30	27°15' 00"N	97°00'00"W
31	26°45'30"N	97°01'24"W
32	At EEZ	96°51'00"W



Cobia  
Photo: Ed Walker






King mackerel  
Photo: Dylan Hubbard



Spanish mackerel  
Photo: Carrie Simmons

## Coastal Migratory Pelagics

2019 Recreational Fishing Season Calendar														
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Minimum Size	Bag Limit

Coastal Migratory Pelagics				
 Cobia		33 inches FL*	2/pp	
*Increase to 36" FL pending.				
 Spanish Mackerel		12 inches FL	15/pp	
 King Mackerel		24 inches FL	3/pp	

Note: The 2-day bag limit allowance for qualified charter vessels and headboats on a trip in excess of 24 hours does not apply to cobia.

# Shellfish and Other Species

2019 Recreational Fishing Season Calendar														
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Minimum Size	Bag Limit
Shellfish														
 Spiny Lobster				Closed April 1 - August 5 with a 2 day mini-season the last consecutive Wednesday and Thursday in July.								3 inches minimum carapace	6/pp	
Other														
 Red Drum	Closed													



Spiny lobster and Red grouper  
Photo: W.T. Pearson



Red Drum  
Photo: Dylan Hubbard



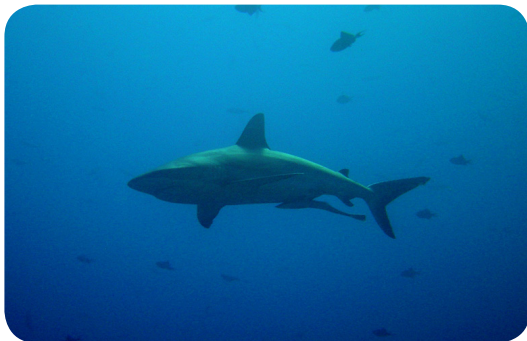
Spiny Lobster  
Photo: Emily Muehlstein

# Coral and Other Species

Species	Notes
Live Rock	Harvest and possession of live rock is prohibited, except for permitted aquaculture operations. Call 727-824-5763.
Other Marine Life Organisms	Marine life organisms from the EEZ harvested or possessed by Florida residents or landed in Florida are subject to Florida's Marine Life Rule. Contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission for more information at 850-487-3122.

## Highly Migratory Species

<b>Tunas</b>	<p>For Highly Migratory Species Compliance Guide Visit:</p> <p><a href="https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-fishery-compliance-guides">https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-fishery-compliance-guides</a></p> <p>Contact the HMS Division of NOAA Fisheries for more information:</p> <p><b>301-427-8503</b></p>
<b>Billfish</b>	
<b>Swordfish</b>	
<b>Sharks</b>	



Shark  
Photo: SERO, NOAA



Blackfin Tuna  
Photo: Glen Balingier



Billfish: Blue Marlin  
Photo: NOAA



Billfish: Sailfish  
Photo: Myron Fischer



# Recreational Permit Requirements

Permit	Required for:
Charter vessel/headboat coastal pelagics permit	Charter vessel and headboats fishing for king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia. NOTE: Issuance of new permits is under a moratorium effective 6/16/2003.
Charter vessel/headboat reef fish permit	Charter vessels and headboats fishing for snappers, groupers, amberjack, tilefish, hogfish, and gray triggerfish. NOTE: Issuance of new permits is under a moratorium effective 6/16/2003.
Highly migratory species (HMS) charter/headboat permit	All charter or headboats that fish for or possess highly migratory species.
HMS recreational angling permit	Owners of vessels used to fish recreationally for Atlantic HMS - Atlantic tunas (other than blackfin), billfish, sharks, and swordfish.
Recreational Anglers	Private Recreational Anglers need a saltwater recreational fishing license or registration from any state or U.S. Territory, except Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands. Visit the <a href="#">National Saltwater Angler Registry</a> to to determine if registration is required.



Photo: NOAA/NMFS/William Folsom



Photo: Emily Muehlstein

## Additional Rules

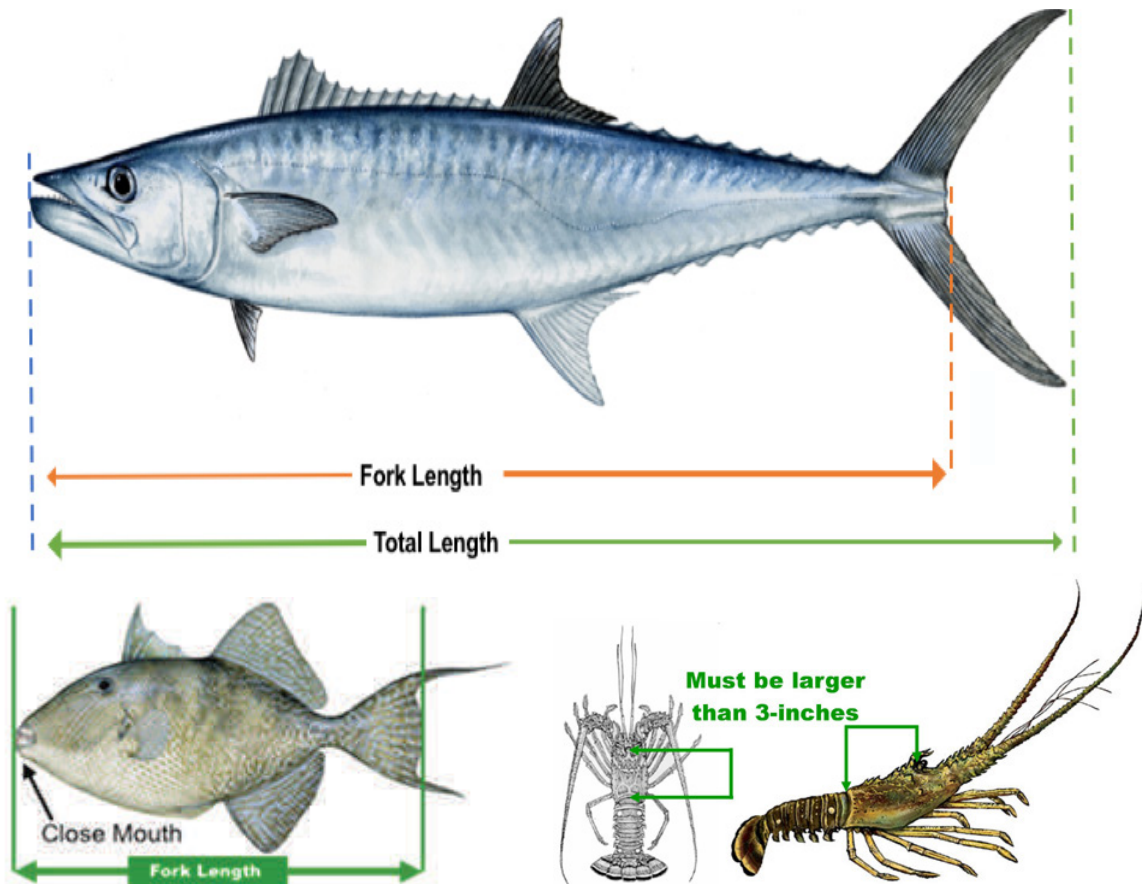
Two-Day Bag Limit	Persons on qualified charter vessels or headboats with two captains for trips in excess of 24 hours may possess a 2-day bag limit of reef fish, king mackerel, and Spanish mackerel. One-day bag limits apply to all other species and trips, regardless of length.
Head & Fins Attached	All fish, except for bait and oceanic migratory species, taken from federal waters must have heads and fins intact through landing. Up to 1.5 pounds of legal finfish per person is exempt from this rule for personal consumption at sea, provided the vessel is equipped to cook such finfish.
For-Hire Captains and Crew	For-hire captains and crew are prohibited from retaining bag limits of any grouper, red snapper, or greater amberjack while under charter.
Federally Permitted For-Hire Reef Fish Vessels	Federally permitted for-hire reef fish vessels must comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing for reef fish in state waters.
Reef Fish as Bait	The use of federally managed reef fish as bait is prohibited.
Non-Stainless Steel Circle Hooks	Vessels participating in the reef fish fishery must possess dehooking devices and use non-stainless steel circle hooks when using natural baits.
Gear	Reef fish gear is limited to no more than 3 hooks in a special management zone off of Alabama. Nonconforming gear is restricted to bag limit. For reef fish without a bag limit, nonconforming gear is restricted to 5% by weight of all fish onboard.
Stressed Areas	Use of roller trawls and power heads for taking reef fish is prohibited in designated stressed areas. Stressed areas for reef fish begin at the shoreward boundary of federal waters and generally follow the 10 fathom contour from the Dry Tortugas to Sanibel Island; the 20 fathom contour to Tarpon Springs; the 10 fathom contour to Cape San Blas; the 25 fathom contour to south of Mobile Bay; the 13 fathom contour to Ship Island, Mississippi; the 10 fathom contour off Louisiana; and the 30 fathom contour off Texas.
Sale of Recreationally Caught Reef Fish	Reef fish taken under the recreational bag limit may not be sold.
Care and Release of Incidental Catch of Smalltooth Sawfish and Sea Turtles	Operators of vessels with Gulf of Mexico reef fish commercial or charter vessel/headboat permits must comply with guidelines for proper care and release of incidentally caught smalltooth sawfish and sea turtles and must possess onboard specific gear to ensure proper release of such species.

## Measurement Guidelines

**Fork length:** the straight-line distance from the tip of the head (snout) to the rear center edge of the tail (caudal fin).

**Total length:** the straight-line distance from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail (caudal fin), excluding any caudal filament, while the fish is lying on its side. The mouth of the fish may be closed and/or the tail may be squeezed together to give the greatest overall measurement.

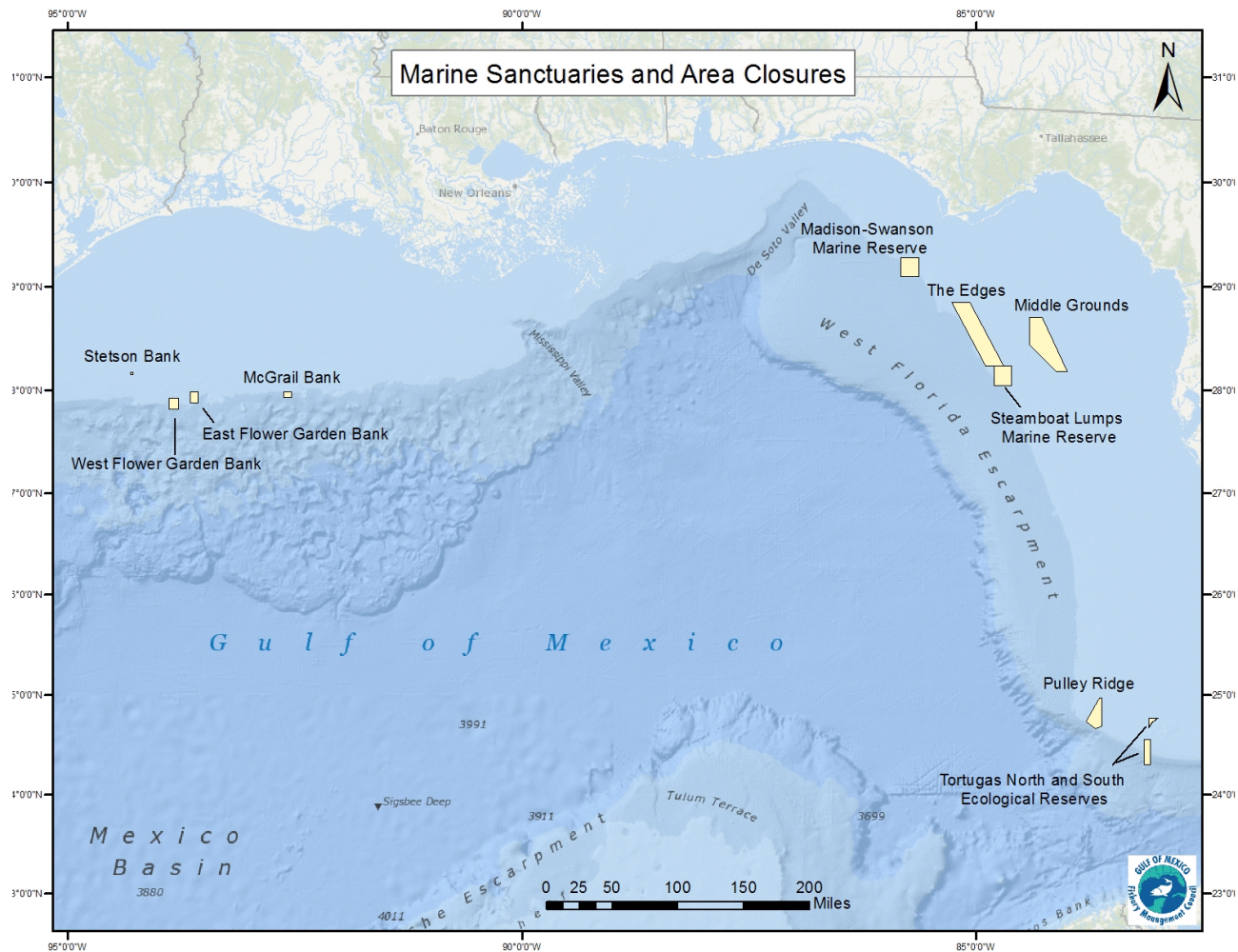
**Carapace length:** The carapace is measured beginning at the forward edge between the rostral horns, excluding and soft tissue, and proceeding along the middle to the rear edge of the carapace.



## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures

Detailed maps, coordinates, and regulations associated with each area can be found on pages 19-32.

**Note:** All coordinates have been converted to degrees, minutes, seconds.





## Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Below is a summary of regulated activity within the FGBNMS. For the full text, contact the Sanctuary office at 409-621-5151 or visit [www.flowergarden.noaa.gov](http://www.flowergarden.noaa.gov).

### Fishing and Related Activities

The following activities are generally prohibited:

- Injuring, catching, harvesting, collecting or feeding, or attempting to injure, catch, harvest, collect or feed, any fish within the sanctuary by use of any gear, device, equipment or means (e.g. spear guns, nets) except by use of conventional hook and line gear.
- Possessing (except while passing through the sanctuary without interruption) any fishing gear, device, equipment, or means except conventional hook and line gear.
- Possessing or using explosives or releasing electrical charges within the sanctuary.

*Conventional hook and line gear means any fishing apparatus operated aboard a vessel and composed of a single line terminated by a combination of sinkers and hooks or lures and spooled upon a reel that may be hand or electrically operated, hand-held or mounted.*

### Anchoring and Mooring

The following activities are prohibited:

- Anchoring any vessel within the Sanctuary.
- Mooring a vessel over 100 feet in registered length on a Sanctuary mooring buoy.

### Discharges

Discharging or depositing any material or other matter within the Sanctuary is prohibited, with the following exceptions:

- Fish, fish parts, chumming materials or bait used in or resulting from fishing with conventional hook and line gear in the sanctuary.
- Clean effluent from an operable Type I or Type II marine sanitation devise (MSD).
- Clean water generated by routine vessel operations (e.g. engine exhaust, cooling water, deck wash down, and gray water), excluding oily wastes from bilge pumping.

### Injury to or Possession of Sanctuary Resources

The following activities are generally prohibited:

- Injuring or removing, or attempting to injure or remove, any coral or other bottom formation, coralline algae or other plant, marine invertebrate (e.g., spiny lobster, queen conch, shell, sea urchin) brine-seep biota or carbonate rock.
- Possessing within the Sanctuary (regardless of where collected), any coral or other bottom formation, coralline algae or other plant, or fish (except for fish caught by use of conventional hook and line gear).
- Drilling into, dredging, or otherwise altering the seabed of the sanctuary; or constructing, placing, or abandoning any structure, material, or other matter on the seabed of the Sanctuary.

## Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

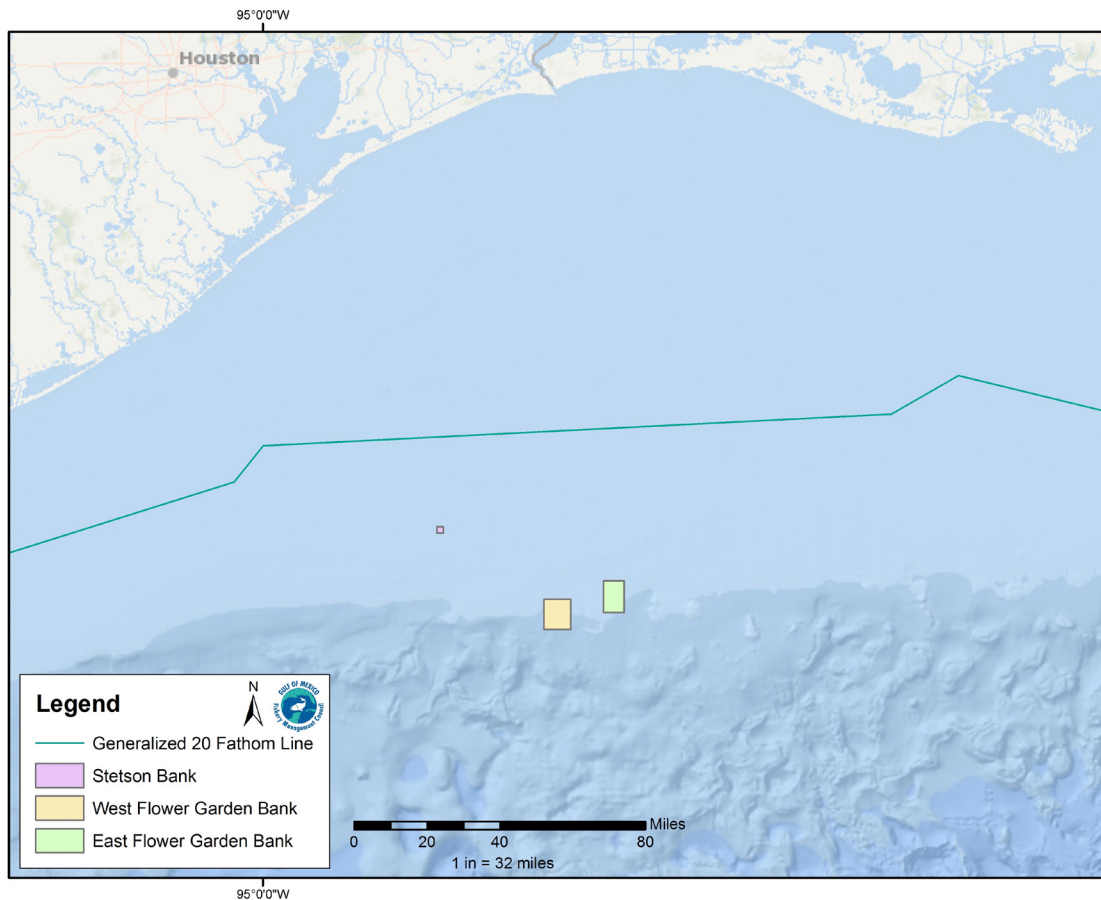
50 CFR: Wildlife and Fisheries - PART 622 FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF OF MEXICO, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

§622.34 - Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.

(j) West and East Flower Garden Banks HAPC. Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, dredge, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited year-round.

(s) Stetson Bank HAPC. Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited year-round.

Stetson, West and East Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary



## Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Stetson Bank		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°10'38.3" N	94°18'36.5" W
B	28°10'38.3" N	94°17'06.3" W
C	28°09'18.6" N	94°17'06.3" W
D	28°09'18.6" N	94°18'36.5" W
A	28°10'38.3" N	94°18'36.5" W

East Flower Garden Bank		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	27°59'14.4" N	93°38'58.2" W
B	27°59'14.4" N	93°34'03.5" W
C	27°52'36.5" N	93°34'03.5" W
D	27°52'36.5" N	93°38'58.2" W
A	27°59'14.4" N	93°38'58.2" W

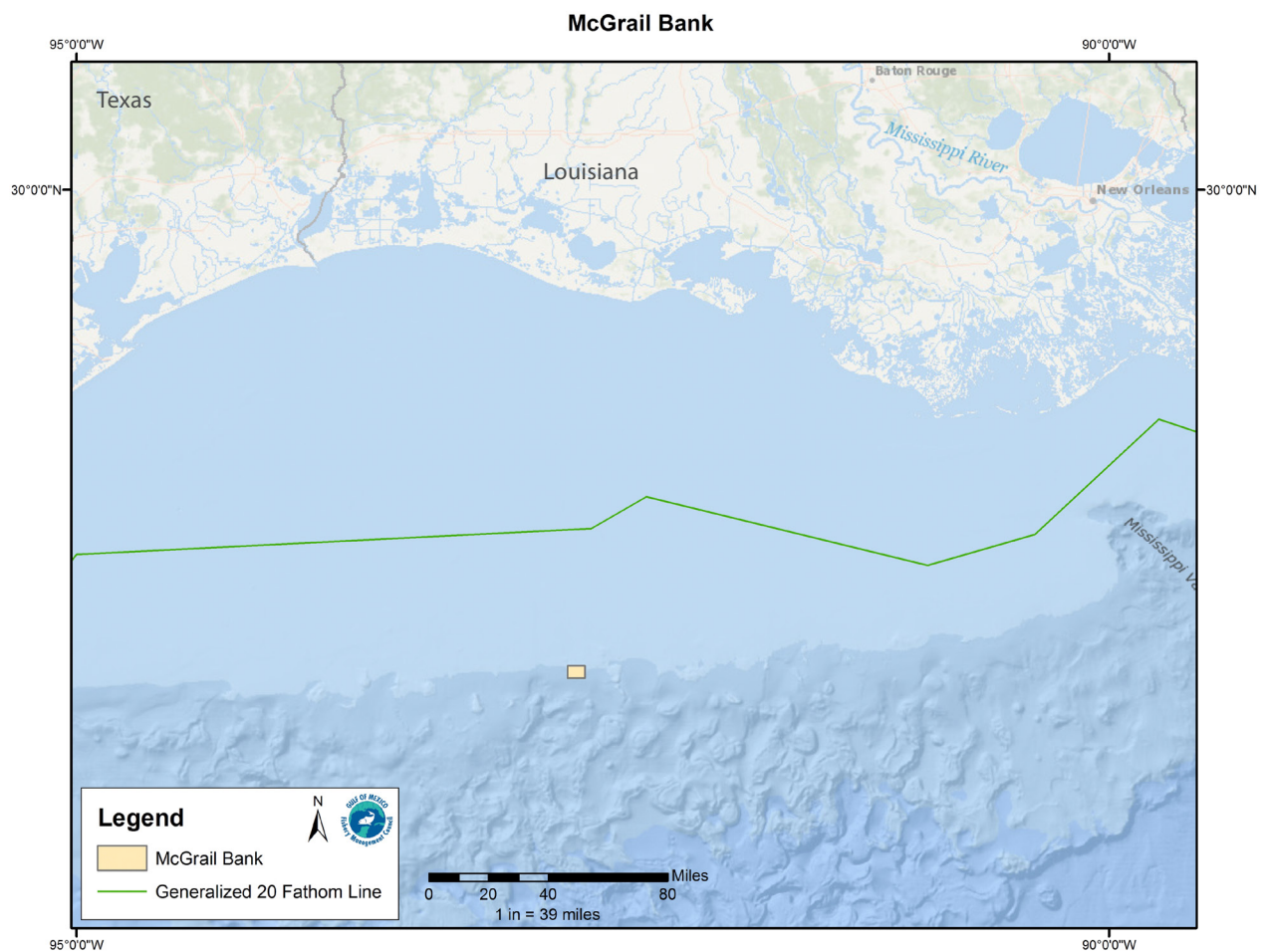
West Flower Garden Bank		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	27°55'22.8" N	93°53'09.6" W
B	27°55'22.8" N	93°46'46.0" W
C	27°49'03.0" N	93°46'46.0" W
D	27°49'03.0" N	93°53'09.6" W
A	27°55'22.8" N	93°53'09.6" W

## McGrail Bank

50 CFR: Wildlife and Fisheries - PART 622 FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF OF MEXICO, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

§622.34 - Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.

(†) McGrail Bank HAPC. Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited year-round.





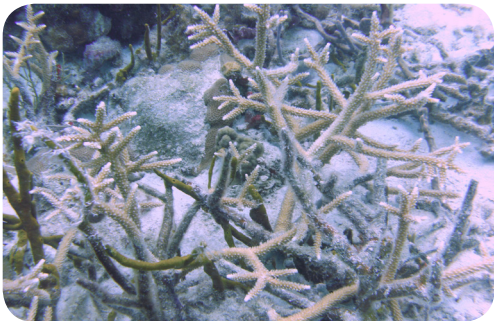
# McGrail Bank

Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited year-round.

McGrail Bank		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	27°59'06.0"N	92°37'19.2" W
B	27°59'06.0" N	92°32'17.4" W
C	27°55'55.5" N	92°32'17.4"W
D	27°55'55.5" N	92°37'19.2" W
A	27°59'06.0" N	92°37'19.2" W



Actinoscyphia  
Photo: NOAA



Staghorn coral  
Photo: Carrie Simmons



Lophelia reef  
Photo: NOAA

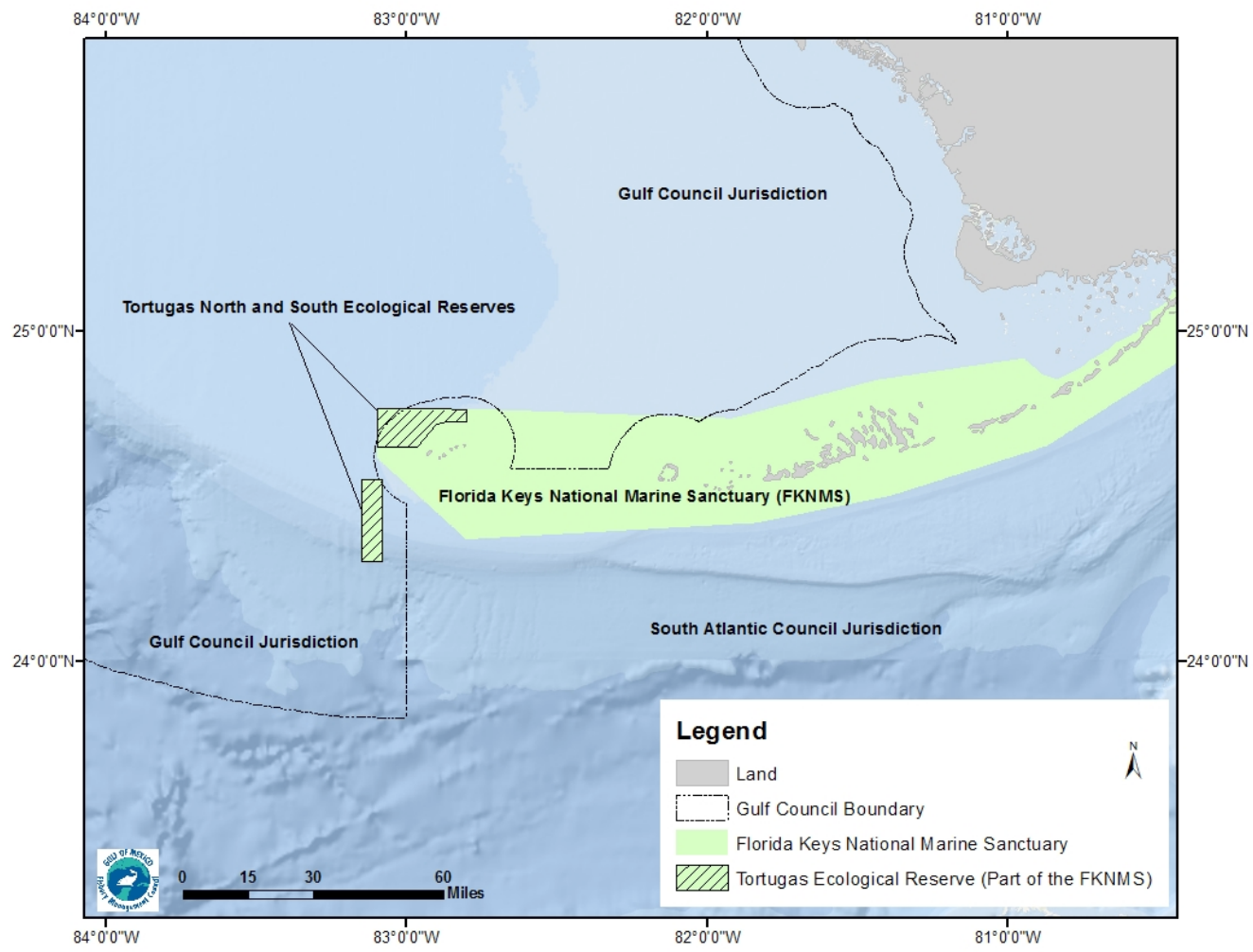


Reef  
Photo: NOAA/FKNMS

# Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS)

Tortugas North and South Ecological Reserves

| 24



## Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS)

Tortugas North and Tortugas South Ecological Reserves are closed to all fishing. Anchoring of fishing vessels is also not allowed. The boundaries of the areas are as follows:

Tortugas North Ecological Reserve		
Point	Latitude	Longitude
A	24°46'00" N	83°06'00" W
B	24°46'00" N	82°54'00" W
C	24°45'48" N	82°48'00" W
D	24°43'31.8" N	82°48'00" W
E	24°43'31.8" N	82°52'00" W
F	24°43'00" N	82°54'00" W
G	24°39'00" N	82°58'00" W
H	24°39'00" N	83°06'00" W
A	24°46'00" N	83°06'00" W

Tortugas South Ecological Reserve		
Point	Latitude	Longitude
A	24°33'00" N	83°09'00 W
B	24°33'00" N	83°05'00" W
C	24°18'00" N	83°05'00" W
D	24°18'00" N	83°09'00" W
A	24°33'00" N	83°09'00" W

## Madison Swanson, Steamboat Lumps, and the Edges

50 CFR: Wildlife and Fisheries - PART 622 FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF OF MEXICO, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

§622.34 - Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.

(k) Closure provisions applicable to the Madison and Swanson sites, Steamboat Lumps, and the Edges.

(2) Within the Madison and Swanson sites and Steamboat Lumps, possession of Gulf reef fish is prohibited, except for such possession aboard a vessel in transit with fishing gear stowed as specified in paragraph (k)(4) of this section.

(3) Within the Madison and Swanson sites and Steamboat Lumps during November through April, and within the Edges during January through April, all fishing is prohibited, and possession of any fish species is prohibited, except for such possession aboard a vessel in transit with fishing gear stowed as specified in paragraph (k)(4) of this section. The provisions of this paragraph, (k)(3), do not apply to highly migratory species.

(4) For the purpose of paragraph (k) of this section, transit means non-stop progression through the area; fishing gear appropriately stowed means -

(i) A longline may be left on the drum if all gangions and hooks are disconnected and stowed below deck. Hooks cannot be baited. All buoys must be disconnected from the gear; however, buoys may remain on deck.

(ii) A trawl net may remain on deck, but trawl doors must be disconnected from the trawl gear and must be secured.

(iii) A gillnet must be left on the drum. Any additional gillnets not attached to the drum must be stowed below deck.

(iv) A rod and reel must be removed from the rod holder and stowed securely on or below deck. Terminal gear (i.e., hook, leader, sinker, flasher, or bait) must be disconnected and stowed separately from the rod and reel. Sinkers must be disconnected from the down rigger and stowed separately.

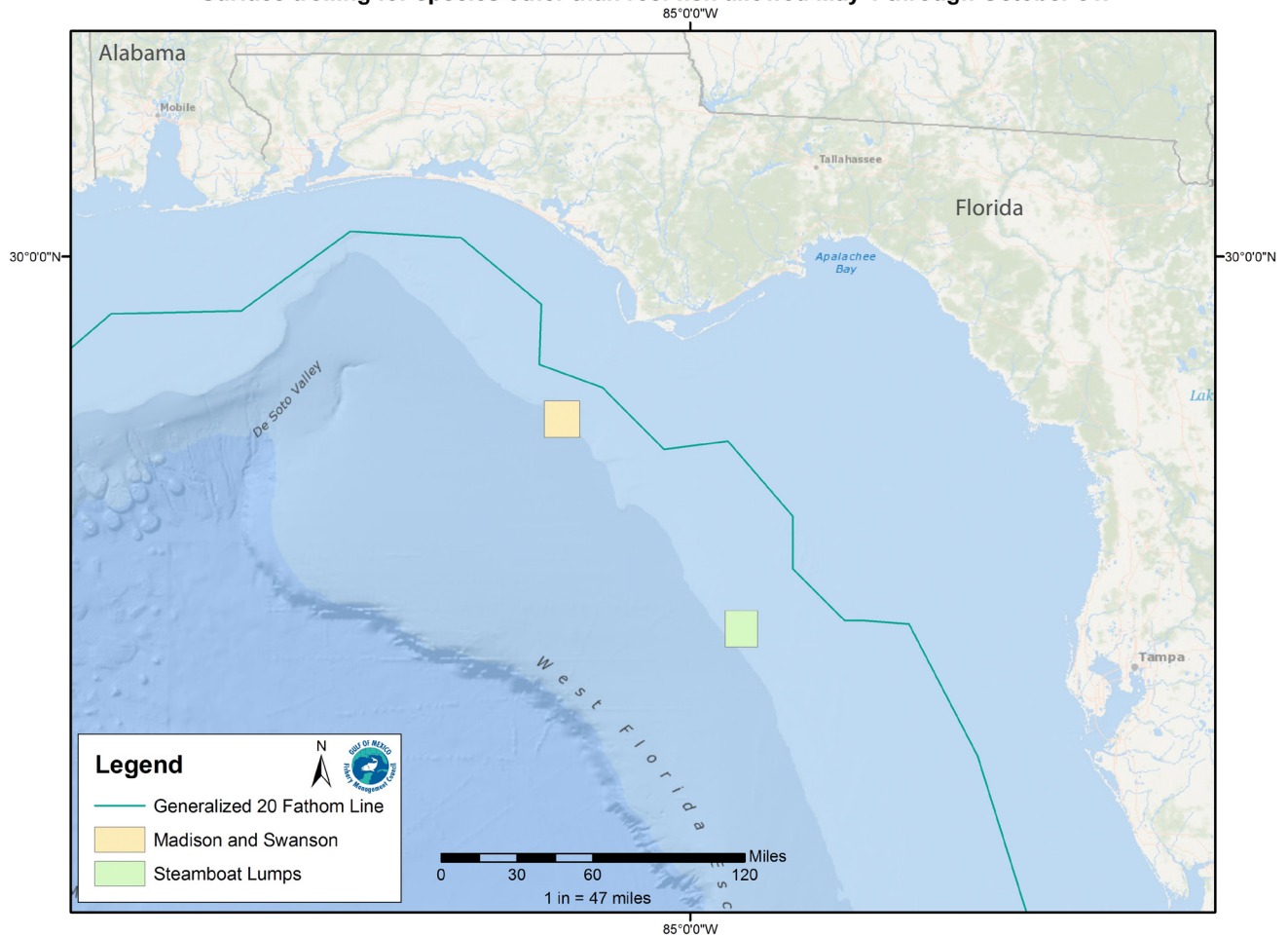
(5) Within the Madison and Swanson sites and Steamboat Lumps, during May through October, surface trolling is the only allowable fishing activity. For the purpose of this paragraph (k)(5), surface trolling is defined as fishing with lines trailing behind a vessel which is in constant motion at speeds in excess of four knots with a visible wake. Such trolling may not involve the use of down riggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices.

(6) For the purpose of paragraph (k) of this section, fish means finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animal and plant life other than marine mammals and birds. Highly migratory species means tuna species, marlin (*Tetrapturus* spp. and *Makaira* spp.), oceanic sharks, sailfishes (*Istiophorus* spp.), and swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*).



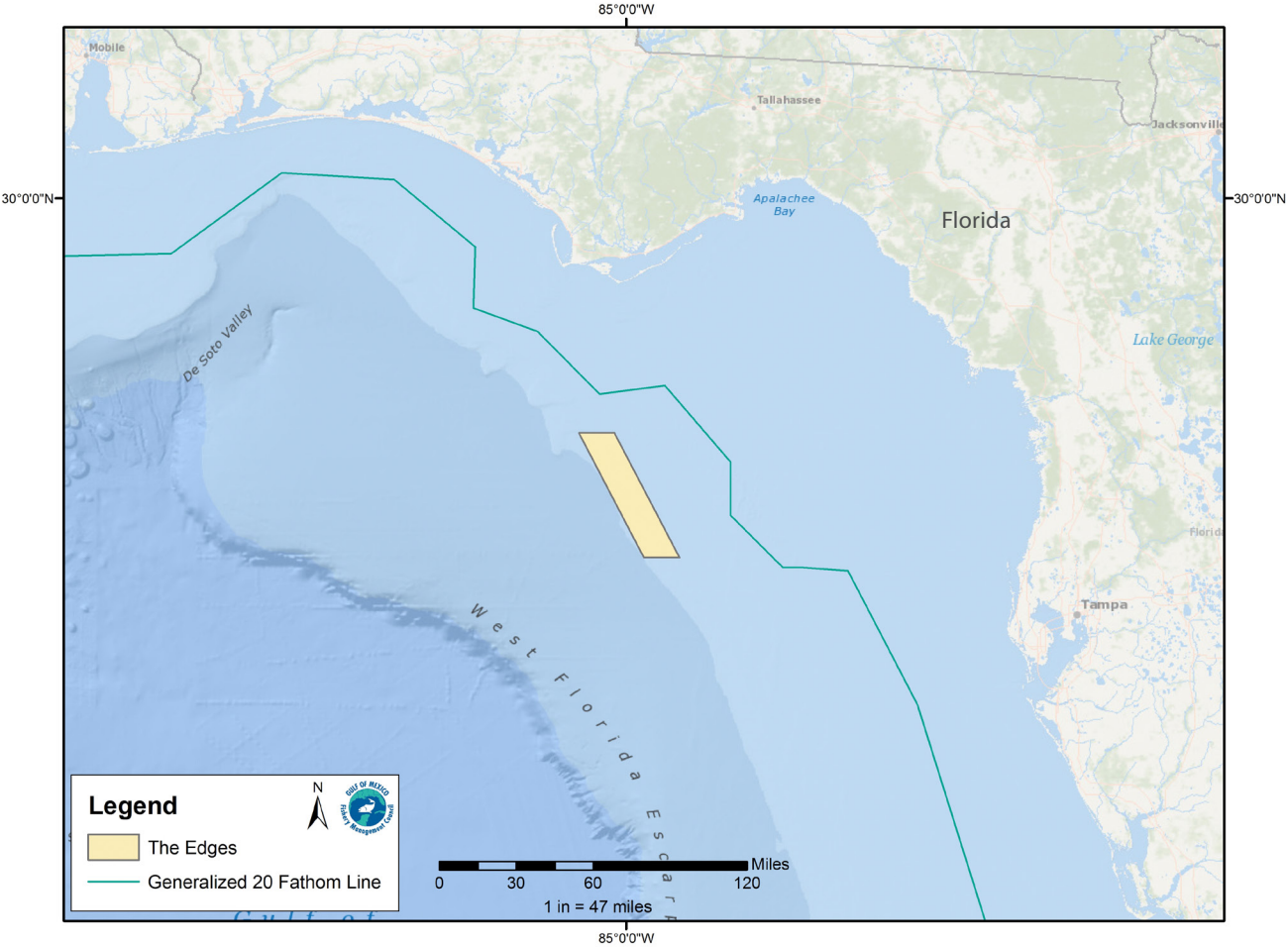
## Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps

**Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps Marine Reserves closed year round to reef-fish fishing.  
Surface trolling for species other than reef fish allowed May 1 through October 31.**



The Edges (40 fathom contour)

The Edges is closed to all fishing January 1 through April 30



**Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps Reserves** are closed to reef-fish fishing year round. Surface trolling for species other than reef fish is allowed May 1 through October 31.

Madison-Swanson Marine Reserve		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	29°17' 00"N	85°50' 00"W
B	29°17' 00"N	85°38' 00"W
C	29°06'00" N	85°38' 00"W
D	29°06'00" N	85°50' 00"W
A	29°17'00" N	85°50' 00"W

Steamboat Lumps Marine Reserve		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°14'00" N	84°48' 00"W
B	28°14'00" N	84°37' 00"W
C	28°03'00" N	84°37' 00"W
D	28°03' 00"N	84°48' 00"W
A	28°14' 00"N	84°48' 00"W

**The Edges (40 fathom contour)** is closed January 1 through April 30 to all fishing. The Edges is a 390 nautical square mile region northwest of Steamboat Lumps.

The Edges		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°51'00" N	85°16'00" W
B	28°51'00" N	85°04'00" W
C	28°14'00" N	84°42'00"W
D	28°14'00" N	84°54'00" W
A	28°51'00" N	85°16'00" W

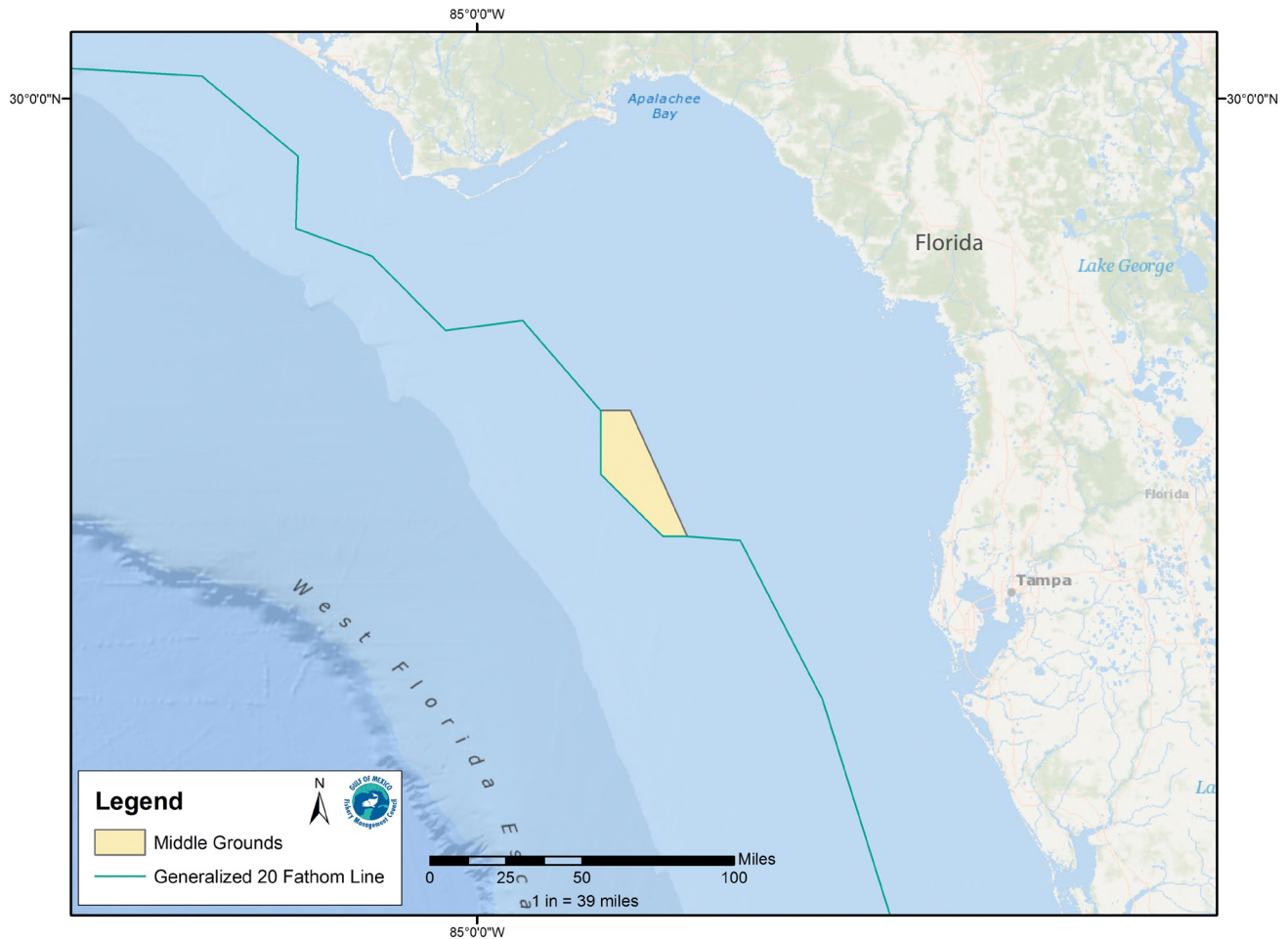
## The Middle Grounds

50 CFR: Wildlife and Fisheries - PART 622 FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF OF MEXICO, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

§622.34 - Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.

(b) Florida middle grounds HAPC. Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, dredge, pot, or trap is prohibited year round.

**Middle Grounds: Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, dredge, pot, or trap is prohibited year-round**





## The Middle Grounds

Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, dredge, pot, or trap is prohibited year-round.

Middle Grounds		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°42'30"N	84°24'48"W
B	28°42'30"N	84°16'18"W
C	28°11'00"N	84°00'00"W
D	28°11'00"N	84°07'00"W
E	28°26'36"N	84°24'48"W
A	28°42'30"N	84°24'48"W



Squat lobster on black coral  
Photo: NOAA/Okeanos Expedition 2014



Red Bream and decadactylus  
Photo: NOAA



Diver at Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary  
Photo: NOAA/FGBNMS/G.P. Schmahl

## Pulley Ridge

50 CFR: Wildlife and Fisheries - PART 622 FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF OF MEXICO, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

§622.34 - Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.

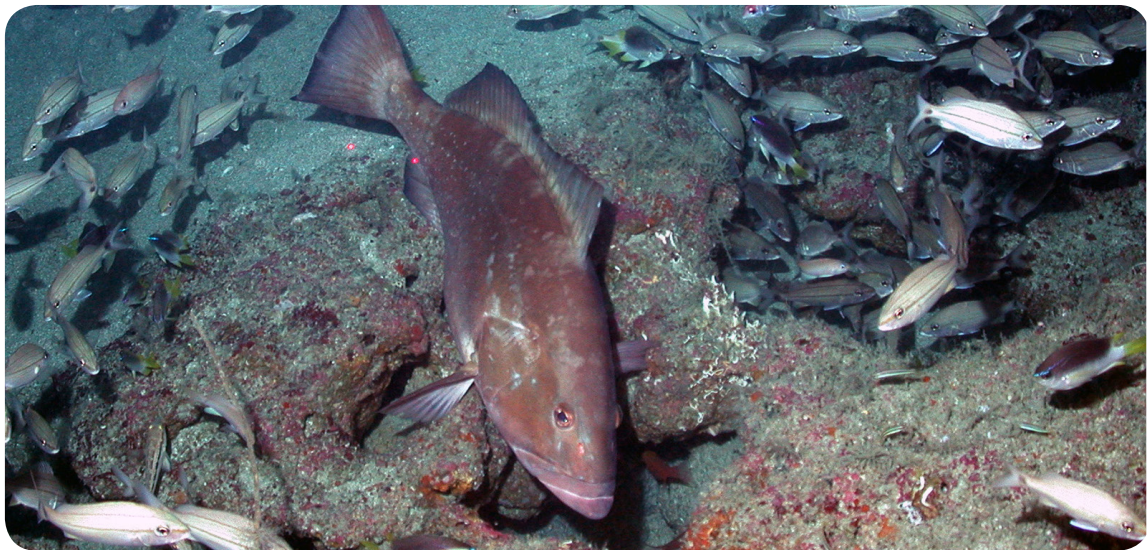
(r) Pulley Ridge HAPC. Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited year-round in the HAPC.



## Pulley Ridge

Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited year-round.

Pulley Ridge		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	24°58'18" N	83°38'33" W
B	24°58'18" N	83°37'00" W
C	24°41'11" N	83°37'00"W
D	24°40'00" N	83°41'22" W
E	24°43'55" N	83°47'15" W
A	24°58'18" N	83°38'33" W



Red Grouper with fish at Pulley Ridge  
Photo: Coral Ecosystem Connectivity 2014, NOAA

## Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council manages fisheries in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico Exclusive Economic Zone. Federal waters begin where state waters end and extend to the 200-mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico.

### Title 50: Wildlife and Fisheries

Part 600 - Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions

Subpart B - Regional Fishery Management Councils

#### § 600.105 Intercouncil boundaries.

(c) South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils. The Boundary coincides with the line of demarcation between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, which begins at the intersection of the outer boundary of the EEZ, as specified in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and 83°00' W long., proceeds northward along that meridian to 24° 35' N lat., (near the Dry Tortugas Islands), thence eastward along that parallel, through Rebecca Shoal and the Quicksand Shoal, to the Marquesas Keys, and then through the Florida Keys to the mainland at the eastern end of Florida Bay, the line so running that the narrow waters within the Dry Tortugas Islands, the Marquesas Keys and the Florida Keys, and between the Florida Keys and the mainland are within the Gulf of Mexico.

## State Authority in Federal Waters

A state may regulate vessels that are registered in that state and fishing in federal waters for species for which there are no federal fishery management plans or applicable federal regulations, or for which the appropriate fishery management plan has delegated management of the state and the state rules are consistent with federal regulations.

**NOTE:** Federally permitted for-hire reef fish vessels must comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing for reef fish in state waters.



## Important Phone Numbers

NOAA Fisheries Operations Branch- Southeast Regional Office	727-824-5301
NOAA Fisheries Permits and Regulations Branch (see below for tuna permit applications)	877-376-4877
To apply for permits online visit <a href="https://fisheriespermits.noaa.gov">https://fisheriespermits.noaa.gov</a>	
NOAA Fisheries nationwide federal fishing violations hotline	800-853-1964
NOAA Fisheries 24-hour Atlantic tuna information line	978-281-9260
NOAA Fisheries Atlantic tuna/Highly Migratory Species vessel permits	888-872-8862
NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species Management Division	727-824-5399
NOAA Fisheries Swordfish/Billfish Recreational Reporting	800-894-5528
Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary	409-621-5151
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary	305-809-4700
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council	843-571-4366
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission	228-875-5912
U.S. Coast Guard, 7th District (Florida east of St. Marks)	305-415-6683
U.S. Coast Guard, 8th District (St. Marks, Florida to Texas)	504-671-2020
Regional NOAA Fisheries Office for Law Enforcement	727-824-5344
NMFS Enforcement Field Offices:	
St. Petersburg, Florida	727-824-5344
Marathon, Florida	305-743-3110
Niceville, Florida	850-729-8628
Slidell, Louisiana	985-643-6232
Galveston, Texas	409-770-0812
Harlingen, Texas	956-423-3450

Important Phone Numbers *continued*

State Agencies	
Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources - Marine Resources Division	
Fisheries Section - Information	251- 861-2882
24-Hour contact line to report state fishing violations	251-476-1256
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission	850-488-4676
Marine Fisheries Management - Infomation	850-487-0554
To report state fishing violations	888-404-3922
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries	800-256-2749
To report state fishing violations	800-442-2511
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources	228-374-5000
To report state fishing violations-DMR Marine Patrol	844-WE-R-MDMR
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	800-792-1112
To report state fishing violations	800-792-4263

## Regulation Changes and Updates

This booklet is updated as changes in fishing regulations are implemented. For up-to-date regulations visit [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org) or download the Fish Rules regulations app. Just visit <http://gulfcouncil.org/fish-rules-mobile-app/>

NOTE: The Official Electronic Code of Federal Regulations for 50 CFR 622 for Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic is available online.

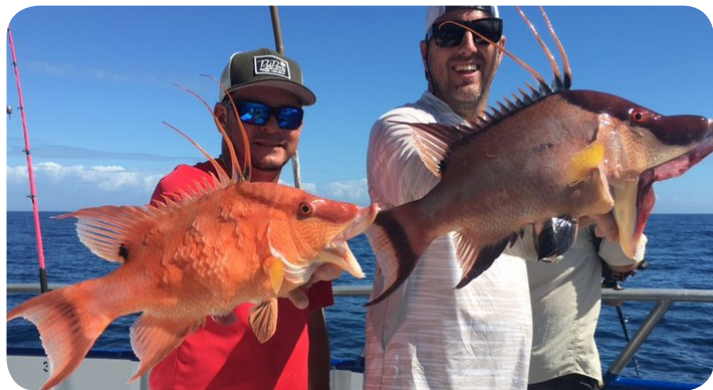
Please visit: <https://gov.ecfr.io/cgi-bin/ECFR>



Greater Amberjack  
Photo: Paul Borowski



Mutton Snapper  
Photo: NOAA, FKNMS



Hogfish  
Photo: Dylan Hubbard

