

2010

Commercial Fishing Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters



For Species Managed by the Gulf of Mexico
Fishery Management Council

This publication was prepared for general informational purposes in July, 2010, and has no legal force or effect. Fishing regulations are subject to change. A separate summary of recreational fishing regulations is available from the Gulf Council.

A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NAO5NMF4410011



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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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 200-mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico.

The Council consists of 17 voting members: the Southeast Regional Administrator of NMFS (or his designee), the directors of the five Gulf state marine resource management agencies (or their designees), and 11 members who are nominated by the state governors and appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. Appointments are three-year terms with a maximum of three consecutive terms. In addition, there are four nonvoting members representing the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of State, and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

The Council meets five times a year at various locations around the Gulf coast. When reviewing potential rule changes, the Council draws upon the services of knowledgeable people from other state and federal agencies, universities, and the public, who serve on panels and committees.

Prior to taking final action on any proposed rule change public hearings are held throughout the Gulf. Public testimony is also heard during the meeting at which final action is scheduled. Proposed rule changes are then submitted to NMFS for further review and approval before implementation.

State Agencies:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Alabama Department of Conservation and Marine Resources | 251-861-2882 |
| Information or to report state fishing violations | 251-968-7576 |
| 24-hour voice mail to report state fishing violations | 251-476-1256 |
| Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Regulations Information | 850-487-0544 |
| Commission information | 850-488-4676 |
| To report state fishing violations | 850-488-9924 |
| | 888-404-3922 |
| Cellular phone | *FWC |
| Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries information | 225-765-2800 |
| To report state fishing violations | 800-442-2511 |
| Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Information and to report state fishing violations | 228-374-5000 |
| Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Information | 800-792-1112 |
| To report state fishing violations | 512-389-4848 |
| | 281-842-8100 |
| | 800-792-game |

Errata and Update Sheets

Supplemental "errata and update sheets" will be published periodically to reflect changes in fishing regulations implemented since this pamphlet was published. Contact the Gulf Council to obtain the most recent supplement.

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 www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html).

Important Phone Numbers

NMFS Operations Branch 727-824-5305
 NMFS Permits and Regulations Branch 877-376-4877
 (see below for tuna permit applications)

To apply for permits online: www.nmfspermits.com

NMFS nationwide federal fishing violations hotline 800-853-1964
 NMFS 24-hour tuna information line 888-872-8862
 (also for tuna permit applications) 978-281-9260
 NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division 301-713-2347
 NMFS Swordfish/Billfish Recreational Reporting 800-894-5528

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary 409-621-5151

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary 305-809-4670

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council 843-571-4366

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission 228-875-5912

U.S. Coast Guard, 7th District 305-415-6781
 (Florida east of St. Marks)

U.S. Coast Guard, 8th District 504-671-2245
 (St. Marks, Florida to Texas)

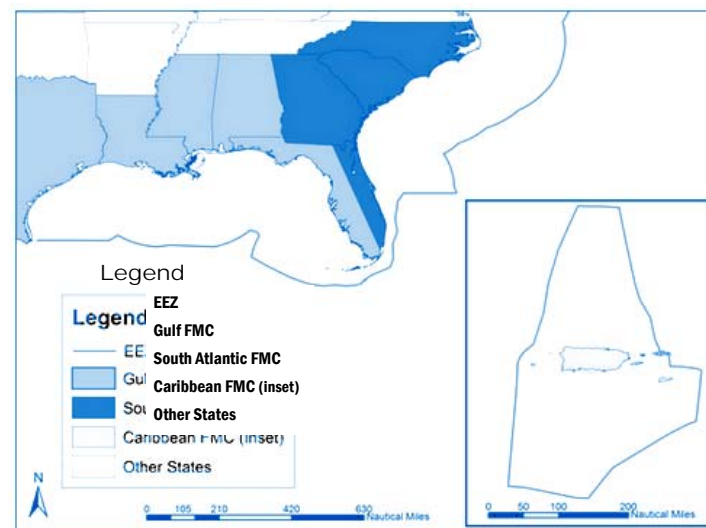
Regional NMFS Office for Law Enforcement 727-824-5344

NMFS Enforcement Field Offices:

St. Petersburg, FL 727-893-3616
 Marathon, FL 305-743-3110
 Niceville, FL 850-729-8628
 Slidell, LA 985-643-6232
 Galveston, TX 409-770-0812
 Harlingen, TX 956-423-3450

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Commercial Fishing Regulations—CMPs

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Trip Limit | Quotas/Closed Seasons |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Coastal Migratory Pelagics | | | |
| Cobia (ling) | 33" fork length | Daily bag and possession limit of 2 per person | NOTE: Drift gill nets are prohibited |
| King Mackerel | Minimum 24" fork length Maximum of 5% by weight may be undersized | <p>Eastern Zone: FL east coast subzone 11/1 to 3/31—50 fish per trip until quota filled. If 75% of quota is not harvested by 2/1, trip limit increases to 75 fish. 4/1 to 10/31—South Atlantic regulations apply, refer to South Atlantic Council regulation pamphlet.</p> <p>FL west coast subzone: Gillnets 6:00 a.m. day after the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal holiday until gear quota reached—25,000 lbs/trip whole weight</p> <p>FL west coast subzone: Hook-and-line 7/1 until 75% gear quota—1,250 lbs/trip then 500 lbs/trip whole weight until gear quota filled</p> <p>Gill net 25,000 lbs/trip whole weight</p> <p>Western Zone: 7/1 - 3,000 lbs/trip until quota filled</p> | <p>Quota (subdivided as shown): 3,264,000 lbs whole weight Gulf group</p> <p>Eastern Zone: 2,252,160 lbs FL-east subzone 1,040,625 lbs whole weight</p> <p>FL-west subzone 1,209,374 lbs whole weight Northern Hook- and-line 168,750 lbs whole weight Southern Gillnets 520,312 lbs whole weight Southern Hook-and-line 520,312 lbs whole weight</p> <p>Western Zone: 1,010,000 lbs whole weight</p> |

Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council manages federal waters of Gulf of Mexico Exclusive Economic Zone. Federal waters begin three to nine nautical miles offshore to 200 mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico. From Texas and Florida federal waters begin nine nautical miles out, and from Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama, federal waters begin three nautical miles out.

Title 50: Wildlife and Fisheries

PART 600—MAGNUSON-STEVENSON 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.

Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

Bottom anchoring, the use of trawling gear, bottom longlines, buoy gear and all traps/pots are prohibited in the Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs) listed below.

| Pulley Ridge | | |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Point | North Latitude | West 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 |
| McGrail Bank | | |
| Point | North Latitude | West 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 |

The following locations are closed to all fishing. Anchoring of fishing vessels is also not allowed. The boundaries of the areas are as follows:

EEZ portion of Tortugas North Ecological Reserve

| Point | North lat. | West long. |
|-------|------------|------------|
| A | 24E40'00" | 83E06'00" |
| B | 24E46'00" | 83E06'00" |
| C | 24E46'00" | 83E00'00" |
| D | 24E06'00" | 83E38'00" |

Tortugas South Ecological Reserve

| Point | North lat. | West long. |
|-------|------------|------------|
| A | 24E33'00" | 83E09'00" |
| B | 24E33'00" | 83E05'00" |
| C | 24E18'00" | 83E05'00" |
| D | 24E18'00" | 83E09'00" |
| A | 24E33'00" | 83E09'00" |

Use of gillnets permitted only in the southern Florida west coast subzone. The gillnet fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in or from the Gulf EEZ is closed each fishing year from July 1 until 6:00 a.m. on the day after the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal holiday. The gillnet fishery also is closed during all subsequent weekends and observed Federal holidays, except for the first weekend following the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, which will remain open to the gillnet fishery provided a notification of closure of that fishery has not been filed. Weekend closures are effective from 6:00 a.m. Saturday to 6:00 a.m. Monday. Holiday closures are effective from 6:00 a.m. on the observed Federal holiday to 6:00 a.m. the following day.

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Trip Limit | Quotas/Closed Seasons |
|------------------|--------------------|------------|---|
| Spanish Mackerel | 12" fork length | None | Quota: 5.187 MP Gulf group. Season from 4/1 through 3/31. |

Commercial Fishing Regulations—Reef Fish

| Reef Fish | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--|--|
| Red Snapper | 13" total length | Red snapper is managed under an IFQ program. Anyone commercially fishing for red snapper must possess IFQ allocation and follow established protocols. | 3.542 MP |
| Vermilion Lane | 10" total length | None | NOTE: The Gulf Council is considering a Catch Share program for the entire commercial reef fish fishery and has set a control date of December 31, 2008 for all reef fish. |
| Gray (Mangrove) | 8" total length | None | |
| Mutton | 12" total length | None | |
| Yellowtail | 16" total length | None | |
| Mahogany | 12" total length | None | |
| Schoolmaster | 12" total length | None | |
| Dog | 12" total length | None | |
| Cubera | 12" total length | None | |
| Blackfin | None | None | |
| Queen | None | None | |
| Silk | None | None | |
| Wenchman | None | None | |
| Tilefish | None | Tilefish is now managed under an IFQ program. Anyone commercially fishing for tilefish must possess IFQ allocation and follow established protocols. | Overall tilefish Quota: 0.44 MP gutted weight |

Reef Fish continued

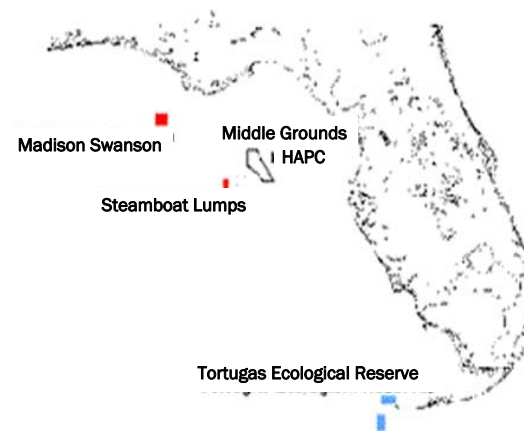
| Species | Size Limit | Trip Limit | Quotas/Closed Seasons |
|--|--|---|---|
| Deep-Water Groupers | | | |
| Misty Snowy Yellowedge Warsaw** Speckled Hind** | None None None None None | Groupers are managed under an IFQ program. Anyone commercially fishing for red snapper must possess IFQ allocation and follow established protocols. | **For purposes of the IFQ, speckled hind and Warsaw grouper are also included as SWG. Overall quota 1.02 MP gutted weight |
| Shallow-Water Groupers | | | |
| Gag Black Red Yellowfin Scamp* Yellowmouth Rock Hind Red Hind | 24" total length 24" total length 18" total length 20" total length 16" total length None None None | *Scamp is considered a SWG species. For purposes of the IFQ, once an IFQ account holder's other SWG allocation has been landed and sold, or transferred, or if the IFQ account holder has no SWG allocation, the DWG allocation may be used to land and sell scamp. | Overall quota 7.57 MP gutted weight Gag: 1.41 MP gutted weight for 2011 Red Grouper: 5.75 MP gutted weight |
| Goliath (Jewfish) Nassau | Harvest Prohibited | | |
| Other Reef Fish | | | |
| Gray Triggerfish | 14" fork length | None | 106,000 lbs for 2010 |
| Hogfish | 12" fork length | None | None |
| Greater Amberjack | 36" fork length | None | 0.503MP * Reduced to 373,072 for 2010 Closed March-May |
| Lesser Amberjack | 14" - 22" fork length slot limit | None | None |
| Banded Rudderfish | 14" - 22" fork length slot limit | None | None |

Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures continued

The following locations off the west-central coast of Florida are closed to all fishing from November 1 to April 30. Surface trolling for species other than reef fish is allowed May 1 to October 31.

| Madison/Swanson Marine Reserve: | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | Latitude | Longitude |
| NW | 29° 17' N. | 85° 50' W. |
| NE | 29° 17' N. | 85° 38' W. |
| SW | 29° 06' N. | 85° 50' W. |
| SE | 29° 06' N. | 85° 38' W. |

| Steamboat Lumps Marine Reserve: | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | Latitude | Longitude |
| NW | 28° 14' N. | 84° 48' W. |
| NE | 28° 14' N. | 84° 37' W. |
| SW | 28° 03' N. | 84° 48' W. |
| SE | 28° 03' N. | 84° 37' W. |



Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures con-

| East Flower Garden Bank Boundary Coordinates: | | |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Position | Latitude | Longitude |
| E-1 | 27° 52' 54.84" N | 93° 37' 41.84" W |
| E-2 | 27° 53' 35.80" N | 93° 38' 23.90" W |
| E-3 | 27° 55' 14.61" N | 93° 38' 40.89" W |
| E-4 | 27° 57' 31.68" N | 93° 38' 33.81" W |
| E-5 | 27° 58' 28.63" N | 93° 37' 46.67" W |
| E-6 | 27° 59' 02.38" N | 93° 35' 32.29" W |
| E-7 | 27° 59' 01.47" N | 93° 35' 10.23" W |
| E-8 | 27° 55' 23.35" N | 93° 34' 15.32" W |
| E-9 | 27° 54' 05.02" N | 93° 34' 19.42" W |
| E-10 | 27° 53' 27.68" N | 93° 35' 05.54" W |
| E-11 | 27° 52' 53.04" N | 93° 36' 57.77" W |

| West Flower Garden Bank Boundary Coordinates: | | |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Position | Latitude | Longitude |
| W-1 | 27° 49' 11.14" N | 93° 50' 45.83" W |
| W-2 | 27° 50' 13.34" N | 93° 52' 11.04" W |
| W-3 | 27° 51' 13.81" N | 93° 52' 52.20" W |
| W-4 | 27° 51' 33.39" N | 93° 52' 51.24" W |
| W-5 | 27° 52' 50.86" N | 93° 52' 25.34" W |
| W-6 | 27° 55' 01.91" N | 93° 49' 44.25" W |
| W-7 | 27° 54' 59.30" N | 93° 48' 38.11" W |
| W-8 | 27° 54' 36.23" N | 93° 47' 10.91" W |
| W-9 | 27° 54' 15.78" N | 93° 46' 49.85" W |
| W-10 | 27° 53' 36.61" N | 93° 46' 51.82" W |
| W-11 | 27° 52' 58.32" N | 93° 47' 15.82" W |
| W-12 | 27° 50' 41.24" N | 93° 47' 22.70" W |
| W-13 | 27° 49' 11.88" N | 93° 48' 43.28" W |

Coral/Shellfish/Other

Corals and Coral Reefs

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Allowable Octocorals | Quota: 50,000 colonies (Gulf and Atlantic) | | |
| Live Rock | Harvest or possession of wild live rock is prohibited. Harvest and possession of aquacultured live rock by permitted individuals. | | |
| 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 Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission for more information 850-488-4676. | | |

| Species | Size Limit | Trip Limit | Quotas/Closed Seasons |
|------------------|---|------------|--|
| Shellfish | | | |
| Stone Crab | Minimum 2 ¾" claw | None | Season closed 5/16–10/14 |
| Spiny Lobster | Carapace more than 3" or tail more than 5 ½". Divers must measure in water | None | Season closed 4/1– 8/5 |
| Shrimp | None, but white shrimp taken in the EEZ and transported to Louisiana must comply with the minimum size limit of that state. | None | Shrimp trawlers must have a BRD installed on each net rigged for fishing. Royal red shrimp is exempt. Royal red quota– 392,000 lbs tail weight. Royal red shrimp season opens 1/1 and closes when quota is filled. |

Other Species

| | |
|----------|--|
| Red Drum | Illegal to harvest or possess in federal waters. |
|----------|--|

Commercial Permit Requirements

Commercial Permit Requirements: (Earned income qualification criteria apply to mackerel, reef fish, and shark permits.) Applications for permits may be obtained from National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue S., St. Petersburg, FL 33701, (telephone 877-376-4877), except for tuna permits, which may be obtained by calling 888-872-8862 or 978-281-9260.

| Permit | Required for: |
|--|---|
| Spiny lobster federal vessel permit or Florida commercial harvester license and certificates | Florida commercial harvester license and certificates required for harvest or possession in excess of the bag limits in the EEZ off Florida or to land or sell in Florida. Federal vessel permit required for harvest or possession in excess of the bag limits in the EEZ other than off Florida or sale other than Florida. |
| Spiny lobster tail separation permit | Possession of a separated spiny lobster tail in or from the EEZ aboard a vessel. Also requires a spiny lobster federal vessel permit or Florida state license and certificates. See additional remarks on page 17. |
| Shrimp | Permit required for all vessels that intend to fish for shrimp in EEZ waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Permit moratorium in effect. Shrimp trawlers must have a BRD installed on each net rigged for fishing. |
| Mackerel vessel permit | Harvest of king or Spanish mackerel under quota and in excess of the bag limits. Issuance of new king mackerel permits is under a moratorium, but existing permits are transferable. There is no moratorium on issuance of Spanish mackerel permits, but these permits are not transferable. |
| King mackerel gillnet endorsement | Harvest of king mackerel in the Florida west coast subzone using a gillnet. Also requires a mackerel vessel permit. Permit moratorium, area restrictions, and restrictions on permit transfer in effect. |
| Reef fish vessel permit | Harvest and sale of all reef fish listed in the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan under quota (where applicable) and in excess of the bag limits (where applicable), except goliath grouper and Nassau grouper (for which all harvest is prohibited). Issuance of new reef fish permits is under a moratorium. Existing permits are transferable. |

water, deck wash down, and gray water), excluding oily wastes from bilge pumping.

Injury to or Possession of Sanctuary Resources

The following activities are 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, caught, harvested or removed), 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).
- Placing or abandoning any structure, material or other matter on the seabed of the Sanctuary.

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Boundary Coordinates (NAD 83) Updated February 8, 2007.

“The Edges” 40 fathom contour is closed January 1–April 30. The Edges is a 390 nautical square mile region northwest of Steamboat Lumps.

| The Edges Coordinates: | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Latitude | Longitude |
| NW | 28° 51" N | 85° 16" W |
| NE | 28° 51" N | 85° 04" W |
| SW | 28° 14" N | 84° 54" W |
| SE | 28° 14" N | 84° 42" W |

| Stetson Bank Boundary Coordinates: | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Position | Latitude | Longitude |
| S-1 | 28° 09'31.03" N | 94° 18'31.98" W |
| S-2 | 28° 10'10.20" N | 94° 18'30.21" W |
| S-3 | 28° 10'07.84" N | 94° 17'23.90" W |
| S-4 | 28° 09'28.66" N | 94° 17'25.68" W |

Marine Sanctuaries & Area Closures

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Phone: (409) 621-5151

Fax: (409) 621-1316

Email: flowergarden@noaa.gov

URL: <http://flowergarden.noaa.gov>

The following is an abbreviated summary of prohibited or otherwise regulated activities within the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary:

For full text of the regulations contact the Sanctuary office, or see: 15 CFR, Pt. 922, Subpart L, §922.122(a); 15 CFR, Pt. 922, Subpart A, §922.3

Fishing and Related Activities

The following activities are prohibited:

- Fishing by any means (e.g. *spear guns, powerheads, traps, longlines, nets*) **except** conventional hook and line gear.
- Possessing, except while passing through the Sanctuary without interruption, any fishing gear, device, or equipment (e.g. *trawl gear, spearguns*) **except** conventional hook and line gear.
- Possessing fish caught by any means **other** than conventional hook and line.
- Feeding fish.

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 boundaries.
- 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.
- Biodegradable effluents incidental to vessel use and generated by an approved marine sanitation device.
- Water generated by routine vessel operations (e.g. *engine exhaust, cooling*)

Commercial Permit Requirements continued

| | |
|---|---|
| Aquacultured live rock permit | Possession or harvest of cultivated live rock. Appropriate Florida state permits are also required to land live rock in Florida. Wild live rock possession or harvest is prohibited. |
| Allowable octocoral permit | Harvest or possession of allowable octocoral, other than allowable octocoral that is landed in Florida. Appropriate Florida state permits are required to land allowable octocoral in Florida |
| Commercial tuna categories: | Vessels must have one of these permits to sell Atlantic bluefin tuna, albacore, Atlantic bonito, bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, or yellowfin tuna. Separate Atlantic bluefin quota and gear restrictions apply to each category. For further information contact the Atlantic tunas information line (888-872-8862) or NMFS HMS Management Division at 978-281-9260. |
| General, Longline, Purse seine, Harpoon, Charter/headboat | |
| Swordfish vessel permit | Vessels must have a directed or incidental limited access permit for commercial harvest and sale of swordfish under quota. |
| Shark vessel permit | Vessels must have a directed or incidental limited access permit for harvest and sale of sharks listed in the management unit of the Atlantic Sharks Fishery management Plan under quota and in excess of bag limits. |
| Dealer Permits | A dealer permit is required for a dealer to receive Gulf reef fish harvested from federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. A Gulf IFQ dealer endorsement is also required. Call 1-866-425-7627 for more information. |

Other Requirements & Restrictions

- January 1–April 30 closure of “The Edges” 40 fathom contour, a 390 nautical square mile region northwest of Steamboat Lumps.

Boundaries:

NW = 28° 51' N, 85° 16' W

NE = 28° 51' N, 85° 04' W

SW = 28° 14' N, 84° 54' W

SE = 28° 14' N, 84° 42' W

- Vessel monitoring systems are required onboard all vessels with federal commercial permits for Gulf reef fish, including charter vessels/headboats that also have a commercial reef fish permit.
- Entangling nets may not be used for directed harvest of reef fish.
- Reef fish taken under the recreational bag limit may not be sold.

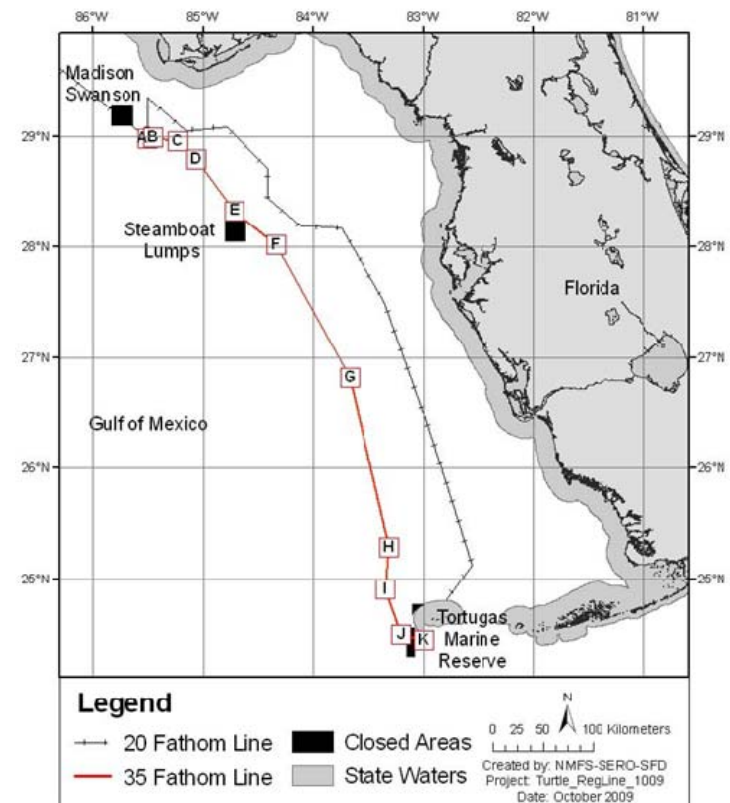
Other Requirements/Restrictions continued

- Vessels with shrimp trawls or entangling net gear aboard may not exceed the recreational reef fish bag limits.
- Venting tools and dehooking devices are required on board all vessels participating in the reef fish fishery.
- The use of non-stainless steel circle hooks is required when using natural baits in the reef fish fishery.
- Commercial vessels are prohibited from retaining reef fish caught under the recreational size and bag/possession limits when commercial quantities of Gulf reef fish are on board.
- Reef fish as bait, except sand perch or dwarf sand perch is prohibited.
- 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. In designated "stressed areas" use of roller trawls, and power heads is prohibited.
- Reef fish gear is limited to no more than 3 hooks in a special management zone off Alabama. Nonconforming gear is restricted to bag limits, or for reef fish without a bag limit to 5% by weight of all fish aboard.
- Operators of vessels with Gulf of Mexico reef fish commercial or charter vessel/headboat permits comply with guidelines for proper care and release of incidentally caught smalltooth sawfish and sea turtles must and possess on board specific gear to ensure proper release of such species.
- A state may regulate vessels that are registered in that state and that are fishing in federal waters for species for which there are no federal fishery management plans or applicable federal regulations.
- All fish except for bait and oceanic migratory species taken from federal waters must have heads and fins intact through landing. Legal size fish within a bag limit may be consumed at sea.
- The use of longlines and buoy gear for reef fish is prohibited inside of 50 fathoms west of Cape San Blas, Florida. Vessels fishing within this zone and possessing longlines or buoy gear may not exceed the recreational bag limits, and for reef fish without a bag limit, 5% by weight of all fish aboard. See page 15 for new buoy gear regulations.
- Pelagic longlining for highly migratory pelagic is prohibited from the DeSoto Canyon area. Contact the National Marine Fisheries Service at 301-713-2347 for detailed coordinates.

New regulations

New reef fish bottom longline rules:

- The use of bottom longline gear in the reef fish fishery east of Cape San Blas, Florida, shoreward of a line approximating the 35-fathom depth contour is prohibited from June through August;
- Reduce the number of bottom longline vessels operating in the fishery through a longline endorsement provided only to federally-permitted vessels with demonstrated average annual landings of 40,000 pounds of fish taken by fish traps or longlines during 1999-2007;
- Maximum number of hooks that may possessed onboard each reef fish bottom longline vessel is 1,000 hooks total, only 750 of which may be fished or rigged for fishing at any time; and
- Longline endorsement required.



























To report federal fishing violations call the

24 hour toll-free hotline: 1-800-853-1964

Identification Chart

Artwork © Diane Rome Peebles

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| Red Snapper |  | Black Grouper |  |
| Vermilion Snapper |  | Gag Grouper |  |
| Lane Snapper |  | Red Grouper |  |
| Gray/Mangrove |  | Yellowmouth |  |
| Cubera |  | Yellowfin |  |
| Mahogany |  | Scamp |  |
| Schoolmaster |  | Greater Amberjack |  |
| Yellowtail Snapper |  | Lesser Amberjack |  |
| Dog Snapper |  | Banded Rudderfish |  |
| Mutton Snapper |  | Cobia (ling) |  |
| Blackfin |  | Spanish Mackerel |  |
| Silk Snapper |  | King Mackerel |  |

2010

Abbreviated Commercial Fishing Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters



Special Pull-Out Section



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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| Species | Size Limit | Trip Limit | Quotas/Closed Seasons | Remarks |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Red Snapper | 13" TL | See remarks | 3.542 MP | Commercial red snapper is managed under an IFQ program. Anyone commercially fishing for red snapper must possess IFQ allocation and follow established protocols. |
| Vermilion Snapper | 10" TL | None | None | NOTE: The Gulf Council is considering a Catch Share program for the entire commercial reef fish fishery and has set a control date of December 31, 2008 for all reef fish. A control date provides notice to affected fishermen that if the Council chooses to further restrict participation in the commercial reef fish fishery, they may use the control date to determine a permit holder's eligibility to participate in a catch share program. |
| Lane Snapper | 8" TL | | | |
| Gray/Mangrove, Cubera, Mahogany, Schoolmaster, Yellowtail Snapper, Dog | 12" TL | | | |
| Mutton Snapper | 16" TL | | | |
| Blackfin, Silk, Queen and Wenchman | None | | | |
| Gag Grouper (SWG) | 24" TL | Grouper are managed under an IFQ program. Anyone commercially fishing for red snapper must possess IFQ allocation and follow established protocols. | None | *Scamp is considered a SWG species. For purposes of the IFQ, once an IFQ account holder's other SWG allocation has been landed and sold, or transferred, or if the IFQ account holder has no SWG allocation, the DWG allocation may be used to land and sell scamp. **For purposes of the IFQ, speckled hind and Warsaw grouper are also included as SWG. |
| Black Grouper (SWG) | 24" TL | | | |
| Red Grouper (SWG) | 18" TL | | | |
| Yellowfin (SWG) | 20" TL | | | |
| Scamp (SWG)* | 16" TL | | | |
| Yellowmouth, Rock Hind, Red Hind (SWG) | None | | | |
| Misty, Snowy, Yellowedge (DWG) | | | | |
| Speckled Hind, Warsaw **(DWG) | | | | |
| Hogfish | 12" FL | None | None | |
| Gray Triggerfish | 14" FL | | 93,000 lbs for 2009 and 106,000 lbs for 2010. | |
| Greater Amberjack | 36" FL | | 0.503 MP quota *reduced to 373,072 pounds for 2010. March - May closure. | |
| Lesser Amberjack, Banded Rudderfish | 14" - 22" FL | | None | |
| Stone Crab | Min 2¾" claw | None | Season closed 5/16–10/14 | |
| Spiny Lobster | Carapace more than 3" or tail more than 5½" | None | Season closed 4/1–8/5 Divers must measure in water. | |
| Cobia (ling) | 33" FL | Daily bag and possession limit of 2 per person | | |
| Spanish Mackerel | 12" FL | None | Quota: 5,187 MP Gulf group. Season opens 4/1 and closes when quota is filled. | |
| King Mackerel | 24" FL | | Managed by zone—see page 4 or check with Council on closures. | |

SWG = Shallow Water Grouper

DWG = Deep Water Grouper