

Recreational Fishing Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters

Updated 10/8/13



This publication was prepared for general informational purposes and has no legal force or effect. Fishing regulations are subject to change. A separate summary of commercial 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. NA1ONMF4410011

For Species Managed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council



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 the National Marine Fisheries Service (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. Terms are three years 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.

Public hearings are held throughout the Gulf coast before the Council takes final action on proposed rule changes. Public testimony is also heard during the meeting at which final action is scheduled. Proposed rule changes are then submitted to NOAA Fisheries Service 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 Commission information | 850-488-4676 |
| To report state fishing violations | 850-488-9924 |
| Cellular phone | 888-404-3922 *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 Sheet

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 (see below for tuna permit applications) | 877-376-4877 |

To apply for permits online: www.nmfspermits.com

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| NMFS nationwide federal fishing violations hotline | 800-853-1964 |
| NMFS 24-hour tuna information line (also for tuna permit applications) | 888-872-8862 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 305-809-4700

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) 305-415-6781

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

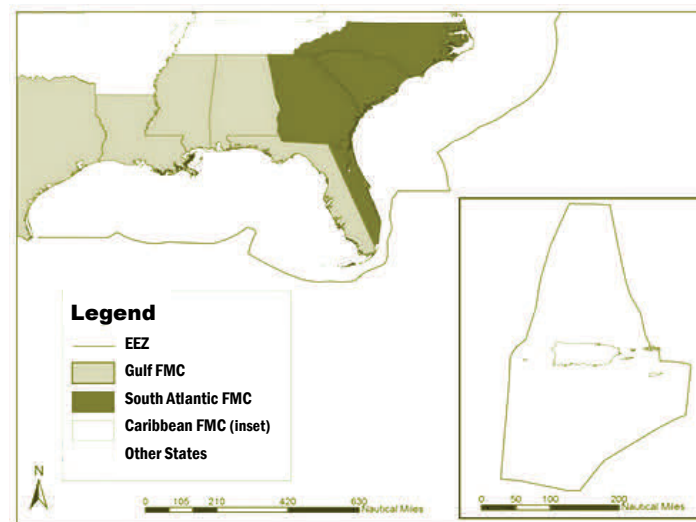
Regional NMFS Office for Law Enforcement 727-824-5344

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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Recreational Fishing Regulations

Reef Fish

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Season | Daily Bag Limit |
|----------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| Snappers | | | |
| Red Snapper | 16" total length | Opens June 1 *Closes June 29, 2013 2013 Fall Season Oct. 1 – Oct. 15 | 2 per person *Note: All closures are 12:01 a.m. local time |
| Vermilion | 10" total length | Year round | 10 per person within the 20-reef combined total |
| Lane | 8" total length | Year round | 20 per person within the 20-reef combined total |
| Gray/Mangrove Mutton | 12" total length | Year round | 10 per person within the |
| Yellowtail | 16" total length | Year round | 10-snapper combined total |
| Cubera | 12" total length | Year round | |
| Queen | None | Year round | |
| Blackfin | None | Year round | Includes all snappers except red, vermilion, and lane |
| Silk | None | Year round | |
| Wenchman | None | Year round | |

Other Reef fish

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Season | Daily Bag Limit |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Hogfish | 12" fork length | Year round | 5 per person |
| Gray Triggerfish | 14" fork length | Closed June 1– July 31 For 2013-closed effective 10/15 | 2 per person within the 20-reef fish combined total |
| Greater Amberjack | 30" fork length | Closed June 1– July 31 | 1 per person Captain & crew may not retain a bag limit |
| Lesser Amberjack | 14" – 22" fork length slot limit | Year round | 5 fish combined total |
| Banded Rud-derfish | 14" – 22" fork length slot limit | Year round | |

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.

Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

"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 |

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 | | |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Position | 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 | | |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Position | 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 |

Recreational Fishing Regulations *continued*

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Season | Daily Bag Limit |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Shallow-water Groupers | | | |
| Red | 20" total length | 2/1 - 3/31 closed season for shallow-water grouper when fishing beyond the 20 fathom break | 4 per person combined grouper total |
| Black | 22" total length | | |
| Yellowfin | 20" total length | | |
| Scamp | 16" total length | | |
| Yellowmouth | None | | |
| Gag | 22" total length | July 1–December 3 | 2 per person within the 4 fish combined grouper total |
| Deep-water Groupers | | | |
| Yellowedge | None | Year round | 1 per vessel, included in the 4-fish combined grouper total |
| Snowy | None | | |
| Speckled Hind | None | | |
| Warsaw | None | | |

Protected Groupers

Goliath (*Jewfish*) HARVEST AND POSSESSION PROHIBITED

Species included in the 20-reef fish aggregate bag limit

Vermilion Snapper
Lane Snapper
Almaco Jack
Gray Triggerfish
Tilefish
Goldface Tilefish
Blueline Tilefish

20 per person combined total

NOTES: For-hire captains and crew are prohibited from retaining bag limits of any grouper 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.

See Pages 16-20 for Marine Protected Areas and other area/seasonal closures.

Recreational Fishing Regulations *continued*

- Reef fish taken under the recreational bag limit may not be sold.
- 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. Use of roller trawls and power heads is prohibited in designated "stressed areas."
- Reef fish gear is limited to no more than 3 hooks in a special management zone off 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 aboard.
- Non-stainless steel circle hooks are required along with dehooking devices when angling for reef fish, because they reduce mortality on released fish.
- 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.

Reef Fish as Bait

Federally managed reef fish are prohibited as bait.

Additional Rules, Regulations and Permit Requirements

Please see pages 8–10 for details on other applicable recreational rules, regulations and permit requirements.

Coastal Migratory Pelagics

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Season | Daily Bag Limit |
|------------------|--------------------|------------|---|
| Cobia (ling) | 33" fork length | Year round | 2 per person |
| King Mackerel | 24" fork length | Year round | 2 per person including captain and crew of for-hire vessels |
| Spanish Mackerel | 12" fork length | Year round | 15 per person |

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. |

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

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" |

Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

| 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 |

| 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 |

Recreational Fishing Regulations *continued*

Shellfish

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Season | Daily Bag Limit |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| Spiny Lobster | More than 3" carapace. Divers must measure in water. | 8/6 – 3/31 There is a special 2 day, non-trap, recreational season, to be the last consecutive Wednesday and Thursday in July. | 6 per person, no transfer at sea between boats (During the 2 day special season, 12 per person off Florida, except 6 per person for Monroe County, Florida Keys.) See additional rules on page 9. |

Coral and Other Species

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Season | Daily Bag Limit |
|-----------------------------|--|--------|-----------------|
| 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 | | |
| Other Species | | | |
| Red Drum | Illegal to harvest or possess in federal waters | | |

Other Federal Regulations

Highly Migratory Species

All HMS species (except blackfin tuna) require an HMS Angling Category permit from NOAA Fisheries. Permits are available by calling 888-872-8862 or visiting www.nmfspermits.com. No sale permitted for HMS species caught under an angling permit. Additional recreational reporting requirements apply for swordfish, billfish, and Atlantic bluefin tuna. For complete HMS regulations, contact the NOAA Fisheries HMS Management Division at 301-713-2347 or visit the web site at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/.

For updates on tuna quota monitoring and tuna retention limit adjustments, anglers may call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at 888-872-8862 or 978-281-9305, or visit www.nmfspermits.com. For further information on tunas, contact the HMS Management Division located in Gloucester, MA at 978-281-9260. Recreational swordfish and billfish landings should be reported to 800-894-5528.

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Season | Daily Bag Limit |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Tuna | | | |
| Bluefin | 27" curved fork length | Bag limits are subject to sub-quotas by size and permit categories, change seasonally, and are reduced to zero when sub-quotas are filled | |
| Bigeye | 27" curved | Year round | None |
| Yellowfin | 27" fork length | Year round | 3 per person |
| Albacore | None | Year round | None |
| Skipjack | None | Year round | None |
| Blackfin | None | Year round | None |
| Billfish | | | |
| Minimum size lower jaw to fork | | | |
| Blue Marlin | 99" lower jaw | Year round | None |
| White Marlin | 66" fork length | Year round | None |
| Sailfish | 63" fork length | Year round | None |
| Longbill spearfish | HARVEST PROHIBITED | | |
| Swordfish | Whole fish: 47" lower jaw to tail fork, or 29" carcass length | Year round | 1 per person; maximum 4 per vessel (6 per vessel for Charter boats; 15 per vessel for Head boats) |

Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

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

| 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 |

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

Other Federal Regulations *continued*

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Season | Daily Bag Limit |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------|--|
| Sharks | | | |
| All regulated sharks* | 54" fork length | Year round | 1 per vessel (any authorized species) |
| * Exceptions: Hammerhead | 78" fork length | Year round | 1 per vessel (any authorized species) |
| Atlantic sharpnose | None | Year round | 1 per person |
| Bonnethead | None | Year round | 1 per person |

For more information, visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Compliance Guide/Rec/Rec Compliance Guide OR Shark.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Compliance%20Guide/Rec/Rec%20Compliance%20Guide%20OR%20Shark.pdf)

Prohibited Sharks-Recreational Harvest

| | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Atlantic angel | Bigeye thresher | Bigeye sand tiger | Caribbean reef | Caribbean sharpnose |
| Bigeye sixgill | Basking | Bignose | Dusky | Sand tiger |
| Galapagos | Longfin mako | Narrowtooth | Night | White |
| Sevengill | Sixgill | Smalltail | Whale | Sandbar |

Additional Rules

| | |
|--|--|
| Charter vessels/headboat two-day bag limit allowance | Persons on qualified charter vessels or headboats with two captains for trips in excess of 24 hours may possess 2 days' bag limits of reef fish species, king mackerel and Spanish mackerel. One-day bag limits apply on all other species and trips regardless of length. |
| Cobia (ling) | The 2-day bag limit allowance for charter vessels and headboats does not apply to cobia. |
| Spiny Lobster | Removal of tail prohibited at sea. See commercial regulations for trap use. No spears, hooks, or piercing devices. No taking of spiny or slipper lobsters that are berried (egg-bearing). |

Head and Fins Attached Rule

All fish except for bait and oceanic migratory species taken from federal waters must have heads and fins intact through landing. Up to 1½ pounds of finfish per person is exempt from the head and fins intact rule for personal consumption provided the vessel is equipped to cook such finfish.

Recreational Permit Requirements

Recreational Requirements

| Permit | Required for: |
|--|--|
| Charter vessel/headboat coastal pelagics permit | Charter vessel and headboats fishing for mackerels, cobia, little tunny, cero, dolphin, bluefish. NOTE: Issuance of new permits is under a moratorium effective June 16, 2003. |
| Charter vessel/headboat reef fish permit | Charter vessels and headboats require a reef fish permit when fishing for snappers, groupers, amberjack, tilefish, hogfish, and gray triggerfish. NOTE: Issuance of new permits is under a moratorium effective June 16, 2003. |
| Highly migratory species (HMS) charter/headboat permit | HMS charter/headboat permit is required for all charter or headboats that fish for or possess an HMS. |
| HMS recreational angling permit | Owners of vessels used to fish recreationally for Atlantic HMS Atlantic tunas (other than blackfin), billfish, sharks and swordfish. |

Applications for permits other than HMS permits may be obtained from National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue S., St. Petersburg, FL 33702 (telephone 877-376-4877). HMS permits can be purchased online at www.nmfspermits.com or by calling 888-872-8862.

Measurement Guidelines

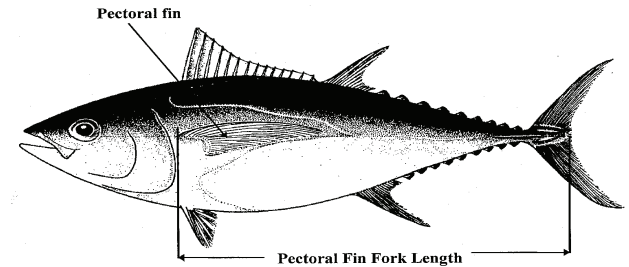
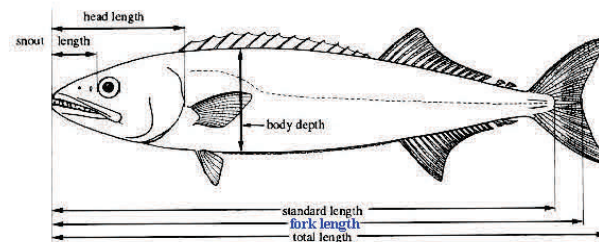
Fork length: the straight-line distance from the tip of the head (snout) to the rear center edge of the tail (caudal fin).

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.

Dressed weight: fish has been gutted and the head and fins removed, but is otherwise in whole condition.

Curved fork length: the tip of the upper jaw to fork of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body.

























Carcass length: the curved measure from posterior edge of gill opening to anterior portion of caudal keel.



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  |

Abbreviated Recreational Fishing Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters

Updated 10/8/13



Special Pull-Out Section



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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To report federal fishing violations call the

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

| Species | Minimum Size Limit | Season | Daily Bag Limit | Remarks |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Red Snapper | 16" TL | Opens June 1 *Closes June 29, 2013 2013 Fall Season to open Oct. 1 – Oct. 15 | 2 per person | For-hire captain & crew prohibited from retaining bag limit while under charter. *Note: All closures are 12:01 a.m. local time |
| Vermilion Snapper | 10" TL | Year round | 10 per person within the 20-reef fish combined total | Also included in the 20 reef fish combined total are: all tilefish, Almaco Jack, and gray triggerfish. |
| Lane Snapper | 8" TL | | 20 per person within the 20-reef fish combined total | |
| Gray/Mangrove, Cubera, Yellowtail Snapper | 12" TL | Year round | 10 per person within the 10-snapper combined total. Includes all snappers except red, vermilion, and lane. | |
| Mutton Snapper | 16" TL | | | |
| Blackfin, Silk, Queen and Wenchman (SW) | None | | | |
| Black Grouper (SW) | 22" TL | | | |
| Red Grouper (SW) | 20" TL | Feb. 1–March 31 closure for all shallow-water grouper when fishing beyond the 20 fathom break | 4 per person combined total | For-hire captain & crew prohibited from retaining bag limits of any grouper 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. SW = Shallow-water DW = Deep-water |
| Yellowfin (SW) | 20" TL | | | |
| Scamp (SW) | 16" TL | | | |
| Yellowmouth (SW) | None | | | |
| Gag (DW) | 22" TL | | | |
| Snowy, Yellowedge (DW) | None | July 1-December 3 | 2 per person within 4 fish combined grouper total | |
| Speckled Hind, Warsaw | | | | |
| Hogfish | 12" FL | Year round | 5 per person | |
| Gray Triggerfish | 14" FL | Closed June 1–July 31 For 2013-closed effective 10/15 | 2 per person within the 20-reef fish combined total | |
| Greater Amberjack | 30" FL | Closed June 1–July 31 | 1 per person. Captain & crew may not retain a bag limit. | |
| Lesser Amberjack, Banded Rudderfish | 14" - 22" FL | | 5 fish combined total | |
| Spiny Lobster | 3" carapace measured in water | 8/6–3/31 2-day mini-season–last Wed & Thurs in July | 6 per person per day (12 per day during mini-season, except 6 in Monroe County). Removal of tail prohibited at sea. No spears, hooks, or piercing devices. No taking of egg-bearing females. | |
| Cobia (ling) | 33" FL | Year round | 2 per person | |
| Spanish Mackerel | 12" FL | | 15 per person | |
| King Mackerel | 24" FL | | 2 per person including for-hire captain & crew | |