

## **Environmental Sites of Special Interest**

### **Gulf of Mexico Marine Protected Areas Established by the Council (1979-2002)**

Tortugas Shrimp Sanctuary (1981) - A shrimp nursery ground in the Florida Keys permanently closed to use of trawls and harvest or possession of shrimp. Resulted in shrimp growing to about 47 count/pound before harvest (3,652 square nautical miles).

Cooperative Texas Shrimp Closure (1981) - A shrimp nursery ground off Texas cooperatively closed by the Council and state of Texas for 45 to 60 days out to either 15 or 200 miles. This closure resulted in shrimp growing to about 39 count/pound (5,475 square nautical miles).

Southwest Florida Seasonal Closure (Shrimp/Stone Crab) (1979) - Closure of federal and state waters to shrimping from November 1 through May 20 inshore of the line to protect juvenile stone crab and prevent loss of stone crab traps in trawls (4,051 square nautical miles).

Central Florida Shrimp/Stone Crab Separation Zones (1984) - Closure of state and federal waters to either shrimping or crabbing from October 5 to May 20. Crab or shrimp fishing alternate in zones IV and V. (174 square nautical miles).

Longline/Buoy Gear Area Closure (1989) - Permanent closure to use of these gears for reef fish harvest inshore of 20 fathoms off the Florida shelf and inshore of 50 fathoms for the remainder of the Gulf (72,300 square nautical miles).

Florida Middle Grounds HAPC (1984) - Pristine coral area protected by preventing use of any fishing gear interfacing with bottom (348 square nautical miles).

Madison/Swanson and Steamboat Lumps Marine Reserves (2000) - No-take marine reserves sited on gag spawning aggregation areas where all fishing is prohibited (219 square nautical miles).

Stressed Area (1990) - Permanent closure Gulf-wide of the nearshore waters to use of fish traps, power heads, and roller trawls (i.e., "rock hopper trawls") (48,400 square nautical miles).

Flower Garden Banks HAPC (1984) - Pristine coral area protected by preventing use of gear interfacing with the bottom. Subsequently made a marine sanctuary by NOS (65 square nautical miles).

Tortugas North and South Marine Reserves (2002) - No-take marine reserves cooperatively implemented by the state of Florida, NOS, the Council, and National Park Service (see jurisdiction on chart) (150 square nautical miles).

## **GOM Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs) Established by Council (1/23/2006)**

### Florida Area:

Pulley's Ridge contains a near pristine, deep water reefs characteristic of the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea which are located in the southern quadrant of Pulley's Ridge. These coral reefs occupy an area of about 111 square nautical miles, out of the 2,300 square nautical miles of the entire HAPC.

### Texas/Louisiana Shelf:

Of the 13 banks off the Texas/Louisiana shelf named as HAPCs only four, West Flower Garden Bank, East Flower Garden Bank, Stetson Bank, and McGrail Bank, have relatively large coral reefs. These are the only HAPCs for which fishing restrictions were specified.

## Existing GOM Fishery Management Plan Area Closures

Closure Area	Area (square nautical miles)
<b><u>Gulf Wide Closures</u></b>	
Stressed Area Closure**	48,400
Longline/Buoy Gear Area Closure**	
Eastern Gulf	24,400
Central/Western Gulf	47,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>72,300</b>
<b><u>Florida Closures</u></b>	
Tortugas Shrimp Sanctuary**	3,652
Southwest Florida Seasonal Closure (Shrimp/Stone Crab)**	
State Waters (1 October - 31 May)	2,562
Federal Waters (1 January - 20 May)	1,489
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,051</b>
Central Florida Shrimp/Stone Crab Separation Zones**	174
Florida Middle Grounds HAPC*	348
Tortugas North Marine Reserve*	90
Tortugas South Marine Reserve*	60
Madison/Swanson Marine Reserve*	115
Pulley's Ridge*	2,300
Steamboat Lumps Marine Reserve*	104
<b>Florida Total</b>	<b>11,024</b>
<b><u>Texas/Louisiana Closures</u></b>	
Texas Cooperative Shrimp Closure (15 May - 15 July)	
Initial 15 nautical miles offshore**	5,475
200 miles**	NA
Flower Garden Banks HAPC*	65
Stetson Bank*	2
29 Fathom Bank*	4
MacNeil Bank*	8
Rezak Sidner Bank*	20
Rankin Bright Bank*	81
Geyer Bank*	13
McGrail Bank*	14
Bouma Bank*	11
Sonnier Bank*	4
Alderice Bank*	6
Jakkula Bank*	35
<b>Texas/Louisiana Total</b>	<b>5,738</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>137,462</b>

\* EFH Closures

\*\* Gear Closures

