

2009-10

## Recreational 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 May 2009, 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.

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## About the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

**T**he 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 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. 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 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](http://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 305-809-4670

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	Closed Season	Daily Bag Limit
<b>Snappers</b>			
Red Snapper	16" total length	Opens 12:01 am June 1 - closes 12:01 am Sept. 30	2 per person Not included in the 20-reef fish aggregate
	<b>**NOTICE**</b> NOAA Fisheries has issued an <a href="#">early closure</a> of August 15, 2009 for red snapper		
Vermilion Lane	10" total length 8" total length	None None	Included in the 20-reef fish aggregate
Gray/Mangrove Mutton	12" total length	None	10 per person within the 10-snapper aggregate  Includes all snappers except red, vermilion, and lane
Yellowtail	16" total length	None	
Schoolmaster	12" total length	None	
Cubera	12" total length	None	
Dog	12" total length	None	
Mahogany	12" total length	None	
Queen	None	None	
Blackfin	None	None	
Silk	None	None	
Wenchman	None	None	
<b>Other Reef fish</b>			
Species	Minimum Size Limit	Closed Season	Daily Bag Limit
Hogfish	12" fork length	None	5 per person
Gray Triggerfish	14" fork length	None	Included in 20-reef fish aggregate
Greater Amberjack	30" fork length	None	1 per person Captain & crew may not retain a bag limit
Lesser Amberjack	14" - 22" fork length slot limit	None	5 fish aggregate, excluded from 20 reef fish aggregate
Banded Rudderfish	14" - 22" fork length slot limit	None	

## 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.

## 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

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"

## Recreational Fishing Regulations *continued*

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Closed Season	Daily Bag Limit
<b>Shallow-water Groupers</b>			
Red Gag	20" total length 22" total length	2/ 1 - 3/31 closed season for shallow-water grouper	2 within the 4-grouper aggregate
Black Yellowfin Scamp Yellowmouth Rock Hind Red Hind	22" total length 20" total length 16" total length None None None	NOTE: 1/1–4/30 closure of "The Edges" 40 fathom contour, a 390 nautical square mile region northwest of Steamboat Lumps.  Boundaries: NE=28° 51'N, 85° 04'W SW=28° 14'N, 84° 54'W SE=28° 14'N, 84° 42'W	4 per person in aggregate of all groupers, shallow-water and deep-water, except goliath grouper & Nassau grouper.
<b>Deep-water Groupers</b>			
Yellowedge Misty Snowy	None None None		
Speckled Hind Warsaw	None None		1 per vessel, included in the 4-fish aggregate

### Protected Groupers

Goliath <small>(Jewfish)</small> Nassau	HARVEST AND POSSESSION PROHIBITED
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### Species included in the 20-reef fish aggregate bag limit

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

20/per person of all listed species in aggregate

NOTE: For-hire captains and crew are prohibited from retaining bag limits of any grouper or red snapper while under charter.

## 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 venting tools and dehooking devices when angling for reef fish, because they reduce mortality on released fish.

### Reef Fish as Bait

Reef fish as bait, except sand perch or dwarf sand perch, is prohibited.

### 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	Closed Season	Daily Bag Limit
Cobia (ling)	33" fork length	None	2 per person
King Mackerel	24" fork length	None	2 per person including captain and crew of for-hire vessels
Spanish Mackerel	12" fork length	None	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.

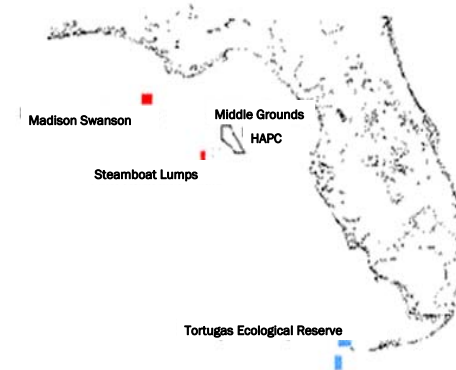
Surface trolling for species other than reef fish is allowed May 1 to October 31.

- **Madison/Swanson Marine Reserve**

NW corner 29° 17' N. lat., 85° 50' W. long.  
NE corner 29° 17' N. lat., 85° 38' W. long.  
SW corner 29° 06' N. lat., 85° 50' W. long.  
SE corner 29° 06' N. lat., 85° 38' W. long.

- **Steamboat Lumps Marine Reserve**

NW corner 28° 14' N. lat., 84° 48' W. long.  
NE corner 28° 14' N. lat., 84° 37' W. long.  
SW corner 28° 03' N. lat., 84° 48' W. long.  
SE corner 28° 03' N. lat., 84° 37' W. long.



### 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.

### 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	Closed Season	Daily Bag Limit
Stone Crab	Minimum 2 ¾" claw	5/16 - 10/14	See additional rules on page 9.
Spiny Lobster	More than 3" carapace. Divers must measure in water.	4/1 - 8/5 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	Closed Season	Daily Bag Limit
Allowable Octocorals	Attached substrate within 1 inch of octocoral is allowed	Fishery season regulated by state of Florida rules	6 colonies per day
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		
<b>Other Species</b>			
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](http://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/](http://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](http://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	Closed Season	Daily Bag Limit
<b>Tuna</b>			
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	None	None
Yellowfin	27" fork length	None	3 per person
Albacore	None	None	None
Skipjack	None	None	None
Blackfin	None	None	None
<b>Billfish</b>			
	Minimum size lower jaw to fork		
Blue Marlin	99" lower jaw	None	None
White Marlin	66" fork length	None	None
Sailfish	63" fork length	None	None
Longbill spearfish	HARVEST PROHIBITED		
Swordfish	Whole fish: 47" lower jaw to tail fork, or 29" carcass length or 33 lbs. dressed weight	None	1 per person up to a maximum of 3 per vessel

## 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](mailto: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	Closed Season	Daily Bag Limit
<b>Sharks</b>			
All sharks*	54" fork length	None	1 per vessel
* Exceptions:			
Atlantic sharpnose	None	None	1 per person
Bonnethead	None	None	1 per person

#### 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	

## 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 <b>does not</b> 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).
Stone Crab	Claws may not be removed from egg-bearing females. Illegal to land whole crab. Florida daily limit of claws is 1 gallon per person, 2 gallons per vessel.
Allowable Octocorals	Allowable octocoral means an erect, nonencrusting species of the subclass Octocorallia, except the seafans <i>Gorgonia flabellum</i> and <i>G. ventalina</i> , plus the attached substrate within 1" of an allowable octocoral. <b>NOTE:</b> An octocoral with attached substrate exceeding 1" is considered to be live rock and not allowable octocoral.

## 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.
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.
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](http://www.nmfspermits.com) or by calling 888-872-8862.

## Measurement Guidelines

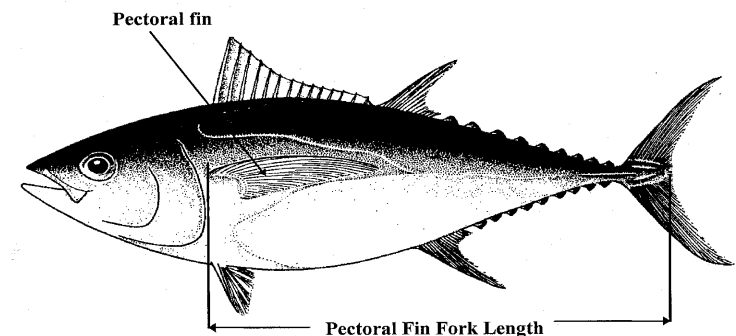
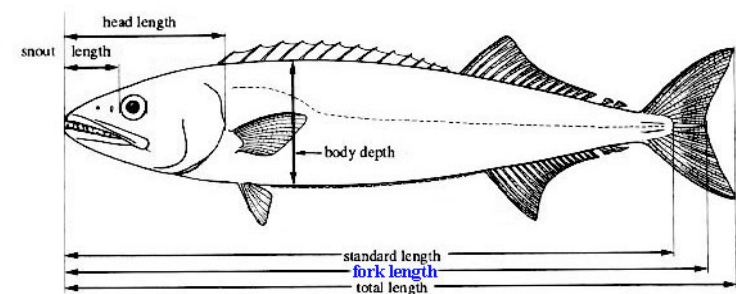
**Fork length:** the straight-line distance from the tip of the head (snout) to the rear center edge of the tail (caudal fin).

**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	

2009-10

Abbreviated Recreational  
Fishing Regulations for Gulf  
of Mexico Federal Waters



Special Pull-Out Section



**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**

2203 N. Lois Avenue  
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Tel: 813-348-1630  
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Web site: [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)

To report federal fishing violations call the

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

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Closed Season	Daily Bag Limit	Remarks
Red Snapper	16" TL	Open June 1–September 30  <b>**NOTICE**</b> NOAA Fisheries has issued an <a href="#">early closure</a> of August 15, 2009 for red snapper	2 per person	For-hire captain & crew prohibited from retaining bag limit while under charter.
Vermilion Snapper	10" TL	None	Included in the 20 reef fish aggregate*	*Also included in the 20 reef fish aggregate are: all tilefish, Almaco Jack, and gray triggerfish.
Lane Snapper	8" TL			
Gray/Mangrove, Cubera, Mahogany, Schoolmaster, Yellowtail Snapper, Dog	12" TL	None	10 per person in Snapper aggregate. Exceptions are red, vermilion, and lane	
Mutton Snapper	16" TL			
Blackfin, Silk, Queen and Wenchman	None			
Gag Grouper (SW)	22" TL	February 1–March 31 for all shallow-water grouper	4 per person in aggregate of all groupers except goliath grouper and Nassau grouper. No more than 2 gag grouper per person (counts as part of the 4 grouper aggregate bag limit), and no more than 2 red grouper per person (counts as part of the 4 grouper aggregate bag limit).	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 with fishing in state waters for red snapper, greater amberjack, gray triggerfish, and gag.
Black Grouper (SW)	22" TL			
Red Grouper (SW)	20" TL	January 1–April 30 closure of "The Edges"		
Yellowfin (SW)	20" TL			
Scamp (SW)	16" TL			
Yellowmouth, Rock Hind, Red Hind (SW)	None			
Misty, Snowy, Yellowedge (DW)	None	None	1 per vessel	
Speckled Hind, Warsaw (DW)				
Goliath, and Nassau	HARVEST PROHIBITED			
Hogfish	12" FL	None	5 per person	
Gray Triggerfish	14" FL		Included in the 20 reef fish aggregate	
Greater Amberjack	30" FL		1 per person. Captain & crew may not retain a bag limit.	
Lesser Amberjack, Banded Rudderfish	14" - 22" FL		5 fish aggregate (excluded from the 20 reef fish aggregate)	
Stone Crab	Min 2 ¾" claw	5/16–10/14	Florida daily limit of claws is 1 gallon per person, 2 gallons per vessel.	
Spiny Lobster	<3" carapace measured in water	4/1–8/5 2-day mini-season–last Wed & Thurs in July	Removal of tail prohibited at sea. No spears, hooks or piercing devices. No taking of egg-bearing females.	
Cobia (ling)	33" FL	None	2 per person	
Spanish Mackerel	12" FL		15 per person	
King Mackerel	24" FL		2 per person including for-hire captain & crew	

SW = Shallow-water

DW = Deep-water