

Regulations Summary

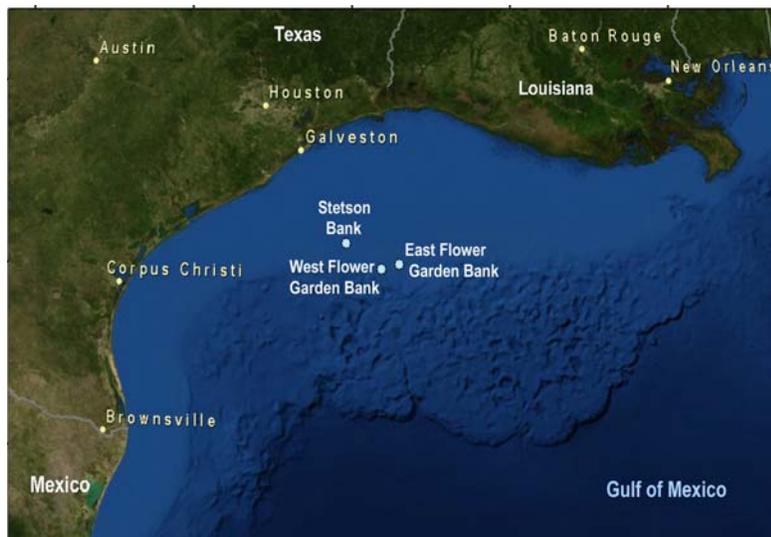
Following is a summary of prohibited or otherwise regulated activities within all three areas of Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary--East Flower Garden Bank, West Flower Garden Bank, and Stetson Bank.



Anchoring and Mooring

The following activities are prohibited:

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



Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary is located in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico, about 70-115 miles south of the Texas/Louisiana border

Discharges

Regulations prohibit discharging or depositing any material or other matter in or into the sanctuary, with a few exceptions including:

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

In addition, it is required that vessel operators lock all MSDs in a manner that prevents discharge or deposit of untreated sewage.

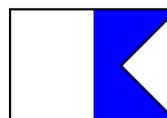
"Clean" means not containing detectable levels of harmful matter; and "harmful matter" means any substance, or combination of substances, that because of quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics may pose a present or potential threat to sanctuary resources or qualities, including but not limited to: fishing nets, fishing line, hooks, fuel, oil, and those contaminants (regardless of quantity) listed at 40 CFR 302.4 (§ 922.131).

Diver Safety

All moored vessels engaged in diving activities at FGBNMS must clearly exhibit the blue and white International Code flag "A" ("alpha" dive flag) or red and white "sports diver" flag when divers are in the water and remove it once all divers exit the water.



Divers Down flag



Alpha Dive flag

For full text of the regulations contact the sanctuary or see 15 CFR, Subpart L, 922.122(a); 15 CFR, Subpart A, 922.3

Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles

Regulations prohibit taking any marine mammal or turtle within the sanctuary.

"Take or taking" includes, but is not limited to, to harass (e.g. to touch, ride, or shine bright lights into an animal's eyes), harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect or injure, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. This includes, but is not limited to, the collection of any dead or injured marine mammal, sea turtle or seabird, or any part thereof, no matter how temporarily; to operate a vessel or aircraft or to do any other act that results in the disturbance or molestation of any marine mammal, sea turtle or seabird.



Rays and Whale Sharks

Regulations prohibit killing, injuring, attracting, touching, or disturbing rays or whale sharks, except for incidental catch by conventional hook and line gear.



"Attract or attracting" means the conduct of any activity that lures or may lure any animal in the sanctuary by using food, bait, chum, dyes, decoys (e.g. surfboards or body boards used as decoys), acoustics or any other means. "Disturb or disturbing" a ray or whale shark means to, or attempt to, touch, handle, ride, pursue, chase away, hunt, restrain, detain (no matter how temporarily), capture, collect, or conduct any other activity that disrupts or has potential to disrupt any ray or whale shark in the sanctuary by any means. Notwithstanding the above, the mere presence of human beings (e.g. swimmers, divers, boaters, kayakers, surfers) is exempted from this definition.

Injury to or Possession of Sanctuary Resources

The following activities are generally prohibited:

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

"Injure" means to change adversely, either in the short or long term, a chemical, biological or physical attribute of, or the viability of. This includes, but is not limited to, to cause the loss of or destroy.

Fishing and Related Activities

The following activities are generally prohibited:

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

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

