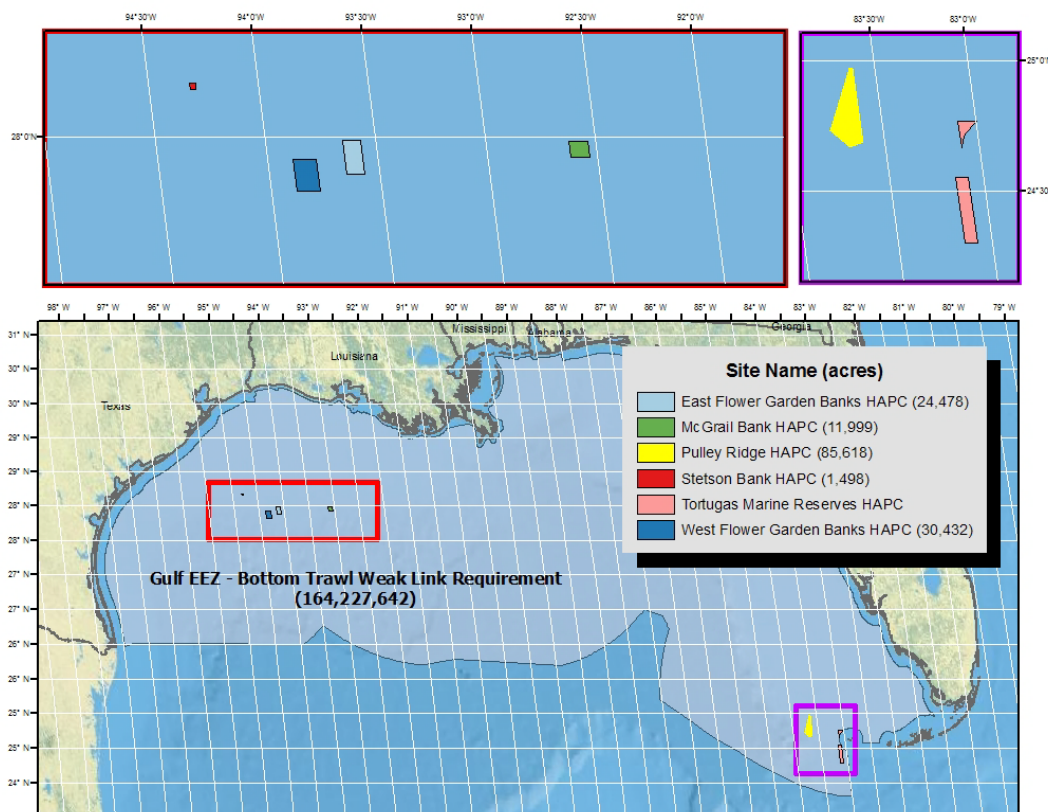


## EFH Areas Protected from Fishing in the Gulf of Mexico

Section 303(a)(7) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires NOAA Fisheries to take steps to minimize to the extent practicable adverse effects of fishing on essential fish habitat (EFH).

Fisheries works with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) to protect EFH in support of healthy ecosystems and sustainable fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. The GMFMC established several EFH fishing protections through Generic Amendment 3 to the Fishery Management Plans of the Gulf of Mexico.



	Site Name	Size (Acres)	Codified at	Regs published
1	Gulf EEZ - Bottom Trawl Weak Link Requirement	155,528,483	50 CFR 622.31 (m)	<a href="#">12/23/2005</a>
2	East Flower Garden Banks HAPC	24,478	50 CFR 622.34 (j)(2)	<a href="#">12/23/2005</a>
3	Tortugas marine reserves HAPC	57,090	50 CFR 622.34 (d)(1)	<a href="#">12/23/2005</a>
4	McGrail Bank HAPC	11,999	50 CFR 622.34 (t)	<a href="#">12/23/2005</a>
5	Pulley Ridge HAPC	85,618	50 CFR 622.34 (r)	<a href="#">12/23/2005</a>
6	Stetson Bank HAPC	1,498	50 CFR 622.34 (s)	<a href="#">12/23/2005</a>
7	West Flower Garden Banks HAPC	30,432	CFR 622.34 (j)(1)	<a href="#">12/23/2005</a>

*Essential fish habitat (EFH) means those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity*

For more information on how NMFS protects essential fish habitat, visit

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/habitat-conservation/essential-fish-habitat>

# Measures to Protect EFH from Fishing Impacts in the Gulf of Mexico

Established in 2005 Generic Amendment 3 to the FMPs of the Gulf of Mexico (EFH Amendment 3)

## Measures in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico EEZ

### Gulf EEZ – Bottom Trawl Weak Link Requirement

**§ 622.31 Prohibited gear and methods.** (m) *Weak link.* A bottom trawl that does not have a weak link in the tickler chain may not be used to fish in the Gulf EEZ. For the purposes of this paragraph, a weak link is defined as a length or section of the tickler chain that has a breaking strength less than the chain itself and is easily seen as such when visually inspected.

## Additional measures in specific areas of the Gulf of Mexico

### EEZ Portion of Tortugas North – Tortugas marine reserves HAPC

**§ 622.34 Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.** (d) *Tortugas marine reserves HAPC.* The following activities are prohibited within the Tortugas marine reserves HAPC: Fishing for any species and anchoring by fishing vessels.

(1) *EEZ portion of Tortugas North*

### West Flower Garden Banks HAPC

**§ 622.34 Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.** (j) *West and East Flower Garden Banks HAPC.* The following activities are prohibited year-round in the HAPC: Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, dredge, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

(1) *West Flower Garden Bank.*

### East Flower Garden Banks HAPC

**§ 622.34 Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.** (j) *West and East Flower Garden Banks HAPC.* The following activities are prohibited year-round in the HAPC: Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, dredge, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

(2) *East Flower Garden Bank.*

### Pulley Ridge HAPC

**§ 622.34 Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.** (r) *Pulley Ridge HAPC.* Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited yearround in the area of the HAPC bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points [coordinates listed].

### Stetson Bank HAPC

**§ 622.34 Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.** (s) *Stetson Bank HAPC.* Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited yearround in the HAPC, which is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points: [coordinates listed].

### McGrail Bank HAPC

**§ 622.34 Gulf EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.** (t) *McGrail Bank HAPC.* Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited yearround in the HAPC, which is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points: [coordinates listed].