

EFH Areas Protected from Fishing in the U.S. South Atlantic Ocean

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 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to protect EFH in support of healthy ecosystems and sustainable fisheries in the South Atlantic region of the United States.

Oculina Bank HAPC and Experimental Closed Area

The EFH protection measures in Oculina Bank were established in the 1998 Comprehensive Amendment Addressing EFH in Fishery Management Plans of the South Atlantic Region and in Amendment 4 to the Coral, Coral Reefs, and Live/Hard Bottom Habitat Fishery Management Plan.

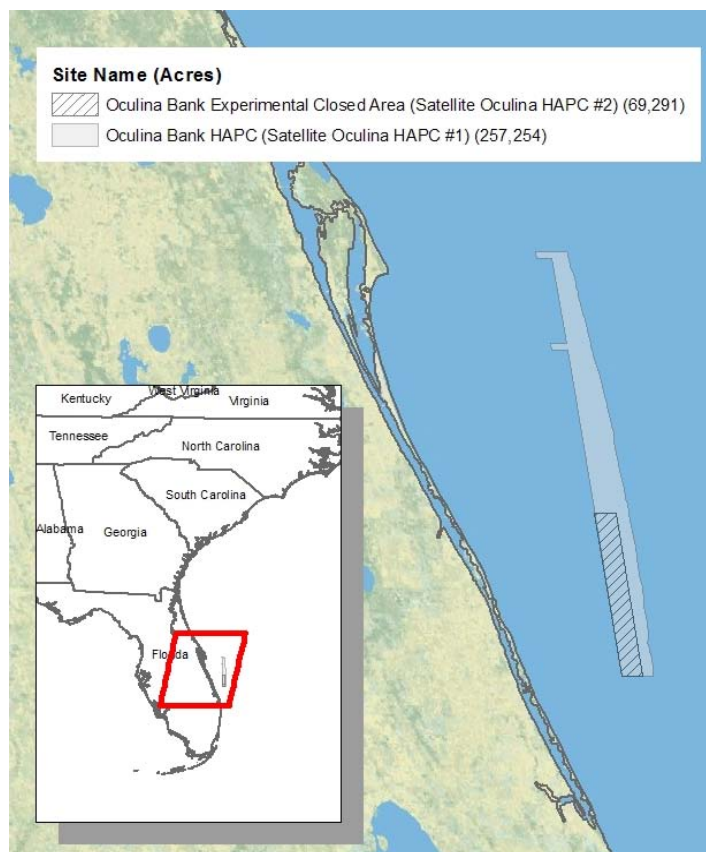
The EFH protection measures were published in the *Federal Register* on [6/14/2000](#), and are described in the Code of Federal Regulations at 50 CFR §622.35 (c).

50 CFR §622.35 South Atlantic EEZ seasonal and/or area closures

(c) Oculina Bank –

(1) **HAPC.** The Oculina Bank HAPC encompasses an area bounded [coordinates listed]. In the Oculina Bank HAPC, no person may: (i) Use a bottom longline, bottom trawl, dredge, pot, or trap. (ii) If aboard a fishing vessel, anchor, use an anchor and chain, or use a grapple and chain. (iii) Fish for rock shrimp or possess rock shrimp in or from the area on board a fishing vessel.

(2) **Experimental closed area.** Within the Oculina Bank HAPC, the experimental closed area is bounded [coordinates listed]. No person may fish for South Atlantic snapper-grouper in the experimental closed area, and no person may retain South Atlantic snapper grouper in or from the area. In the experimental closed area, any South Atlantic snapper-grouper taken incidentally by hook-and-line gear must be released immediately by cutting the line without removing the fish from the water.



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>

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