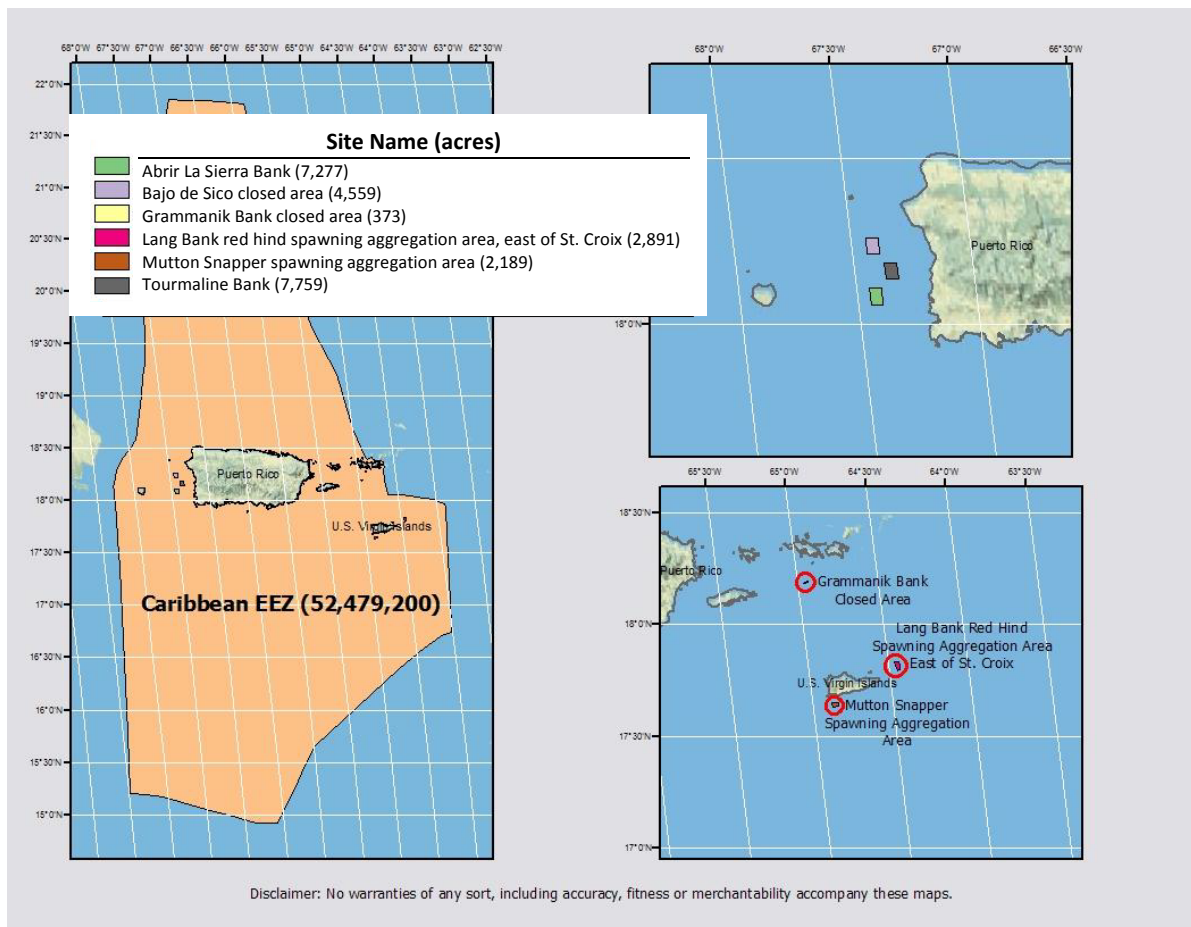


## EFH Areas Protected from Fishing Impacts in the U.S. Caribbean

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 Caribbean Fishery Management Council to protect EFH in support of healthy ecosystems and sustainable fisheries in the U.S. Caribbean.



	Site Name	GIS Area (Acres)	50 CFR	Regs published
1	Caribbean EEZ gear restrictions	52,479,200	CFR 622.6 (b)(1)(ii)(A); 622.41 (b)	<a href="#">10/28/2005</a>
2	Abrir La Sierra Bank	7,277	CFR 622.33 (a)(2)(ii)(C)	<a href="#">10/28/2005</a>
3	Bajo de Sico closed area	4,559	CFR 622.33 (a)(8)	<a href="#">11/02/2010</a>
4	Grammanik Bank closed area	373	CFR 622.33 (a)(3)	<a href="#">10/28/2005</a>
5	Lang Bank Red hind spawning aggregation area, east of St. Croix	2,891	CFR 622.33 (a)(2)(i)	<a href="#">10/28/2005</a>
6	Mutton snapper spawning aggregation area	2,189	CFR 622.33 (a)(1)	<a href="#">10/28/2005</a>
7	Tourmaline Bank	7,759	CFR 622.33 (a)(2)(ii)(B)	<a href="#">10/28/2005</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/habitatconservation/essential-fish-habitat>

## Measures to Protect EFH from Impacts of Fishing in the U.S. Caribbean

Established by the Comprehensive Amendment to the Fishery Management Plans of the U.S. Caribbean to Address Required Provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

### Gear restrictions in the U.S. Caribbean EEZ

#### 50 CFR § 622.6 Vessel and gear identification.

(b)(1)(ii)(A) *Caribbean EEZ*. Traps or pots used in the Caribbean spiny lobster or Caribbean reef fish fisheries that are fished individually, rather than tied together in a trap line, must have at least one buoy attached that floats on the surface. Traps or pots used in the Caribbean spiny lobster or Caribbean reef fish fisheries that are tied together in a trap line must have at least one buoy that floats at the surface attached at each end of the trap line. Each buoy must display the official number and color code assigned to the vessel by Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands, whichever is applicable.

AND

#### 50 CFR § 622.41 Species specific limitations.

(b) *Caribbean reef fish anchoring restriction*. The owner or operator of any fishing vessel, recreational or commercial, that fishes for or possesses Caribbean reef fish in or from the Caribbean EEZ must ensure that the vessel uses only an anchor retrieval system that recovers the anchor by its crown, thereby preventing the anchor from dragging along the bottom during recovery. For a grapnel hook, this could include an incorporated anchor rode reversal bar that runs parallel along the shank, which allows the rode to reverse and slip back toward the crown. For a fluke- or plow-type anchor, a trip line consisting of a line from the crown of the anchor to a surface buoy would be required.

### Additional restrictions in specific areas of the U.S. Caribbean

#### Abrir La Sierra Bank

#### 50 CFR § 622.33 Caribbean EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.

(a) *Seasonal closures*. In addition to the other restrictions specified in this paragraph (a), fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited year-round in the closed areas specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (2), (3), and (8) of this section.

(2) *Red hind spawning aggregation areas*. From December 1 through February 28, each year, fishing is prohibited in those parts of the following areas that are in the EEZ [coordinates listed]

(ii) West of Puerto Rico — (C) Abrir La Sierra Bank.

#### Bajo de Sico closed area

#### 50 CFR § 622.33 Caribbean EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.

(a) *Seasonal closures*. In addition to the other restrictions specified in this paragraph (a), fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited year-round in the closed areas specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (2), (3), and (8) of this section.

(8) *Bajo de Sico closed area*.

(i) The Bajo de Sico closed area is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order the following points [coordinates listed].

(ii) From October 1 through March 31, each year, no person may fish for or possess any Caribbean reef fish, as listed in Table 2 of Appendix A to part 622, in or from those parts of the Bajo de Sico closed area that are

in the EEZ. The prohibition on possession does not apply to such Caribbean reef fish harvested and landed ashore prior to the closure.

(iii) Anchoring, by fishing vessels, is prohibited year-round in those parts of the Bajo de Sico closed area that are in the EEZ.

## **Grammanik Bank closed area**

### **50 CFR § 622.33 Caribbean EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.**

(a) *Seasonal closures.* In addition to the other restrictions specified in this paragraph (a), fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited year-round in the closed areas specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (2), (3), and (8) of this section.

(3) *Grammanik Bank closed area* (i) The Grammanik Bank closed area is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points [coordinates listed]

## **Lang Bank red hind spawning aggregation area, east of St. Croix**

### **50 CFR § 622.33 Caribbean EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.**

(a) *Seasonal closures.* In addition to the other restrictions specified in this paragraph (a), fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited year-round in the closed areas specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (2), (3), and (8) of this section.

(2) *Red hind spawning aggregation areas.* From December 1 through February 28, each year, fishing is prohibited in those parts of the following areas that are in the EEZ [coordinates listed]

(i) East of St. Croix.

## **Mutton snapper spawning aggregation area**

### **50 CFR § 622.33 Caribbean EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.**

(a) *Seasonal closures.* In addition to the other restrictions specified in this paragraph (a), fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited year-round in the closed areas specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (2), (3), and (8) of this section.

(1) *Mutton snapper spawning aggregation area.* From March 1 through June 30, each year, fishing is prohibited in that part of the following area that is in the EEZ [coordinates listed].

## **Tourmaline Bank**

### **50 CFR § 622.33 Caribbean EEZ seasonal and/or area closures.**

(a) *Seasonal closures.* In addition to the other restrictions specified in this paragraph (a), fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited year-round in the closed areas specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (2), (3), and (8) of this section.

(2) *Red hind spawning aggregation areas.* From December 1 through February 28, each year, fishing is prohibited in those parts of the following areas that are in the EEZ [coordinates listed]

(ii) West of Puerto Rico — (B) Tourmaline Bank