

MARINE RESERVES

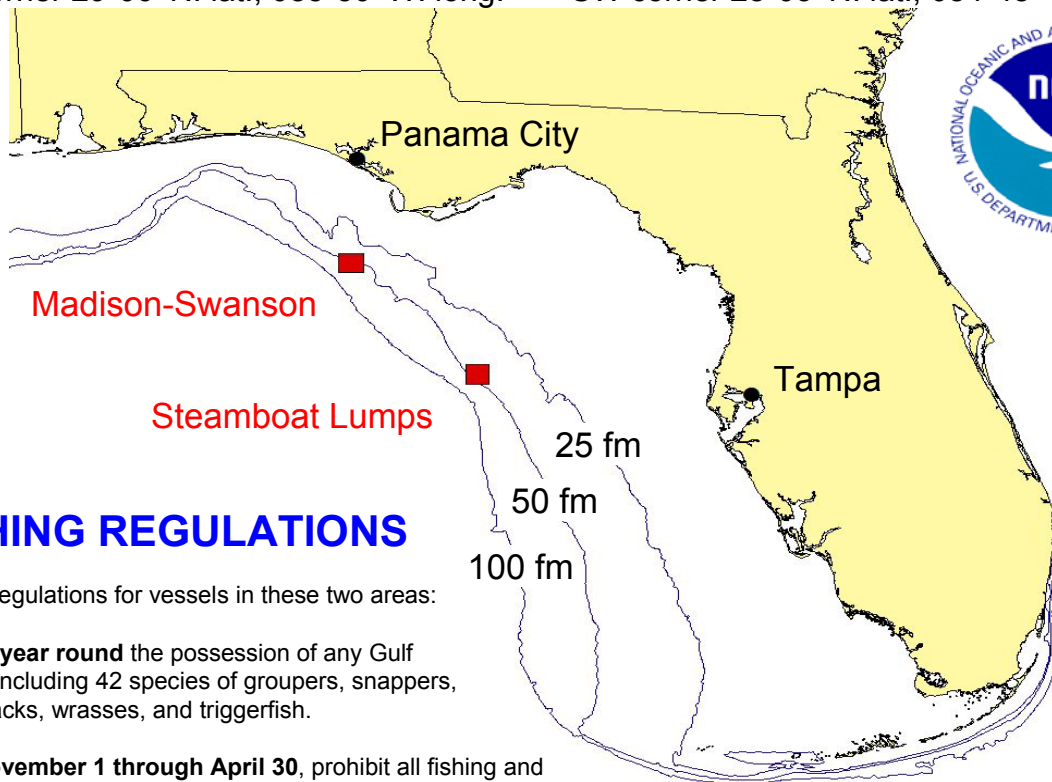
NOAA Fisheries has implemented regulations which prohibit most fishing at two sites in the northeastern Gulf of Mexico: Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps. The regulations for these approximate 219 nautical square miles of marine reserve will remain in effect through June 16, 2010, if not revised or renewed. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council proposed these regulations in part to protect reef fish at these sites and to study the potential effects of such closed areas on populations in the Gulf. The more restrictive fishing regulations between November and April provide additional protection to grouper during the spawning season.

Madison-Swanson

NW corner 29°17' N. lat., 085°50' W. long.
NE corner 29°17' N. lat., 085°38' W. long.
SE corner 29°06' N. lat., 085°38' W. long.
SW corner 29°06' N. lat., 085°50' W. long.

Steamboat Lumps

NW corner 28°14' N. lat., 084°48' W. long.
NE corner 28°14' N. lat., 084°37' W. long.
SE corner 28°03' N. lat., 084°37' W. long.
SW corner 28°03' N. lat., 084°48' W. long.



FISHING REGULATIONS

Federal regulations for vessels in these two areas:

Prohibit year round the possession of any Gulf reef fish including 42 species of groupers, snappers, tilefish, jacks, wrasses, and triggerfish.

From November 1 through April 30, prohibit all fishing and the possession of any fish species including finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animals and plant life.

From May 1 through October 31, restrict fishing only to surface trolling at constant speeds exceeding four knots and creating a visible wake, and trailing lines behind with no down riggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices attached.

Exceptions: (1) Possession of prohibited fish is allowed aboard a vessel in non-stop transit through these areas with fishing gear (longline, trawl, gillnet, hook-and-line, etc.) appropriately stowed and put out of action.
(2) Persons aboard validly permitted vessels fishing for and possessing highly migratory species (billfish, sharks, swordfish and tunas other than blackfin tuna).

Contact NOAA Fisheries for more information at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/> or (727) 570-5305.