

**Caribbean  
Management of Queen Conch in Federal Waters  
Frequently Asked Questions  
April 2011**

What changes are being made to federal queen conch regulations in the U.S. Caribbean?

- Prior to the new regulation, when the territorial waters of St. Croix reach their 50,000 pound quota for queen conch, an area of federal waters known as Lang Bank would remain open to queen conch harvest through the end of the fishing season.
- With the implementation of the new rule, when the territorial waters of St. Croix reach their 50,000 pound quota for queen conch, it will trigger the closure of Lang Bank to queen conch until the start of the next fishing season.
- Additionally, the Lang Bank seasonal closure is being changed from the previous closure of July 1 through September 30, to the new closure of June 1 through October 31, each year.

What is the purpose of this rule?

- To enact compatible regulations for the territorial waters of St Croix and the adjacent federal waters.
- To provide further protection for queen conch.

Where is Lang Bank?

- For the purposes of the regulations, Lang Bank is defined as the area east of 64°34'W bound within the 100 fathom curve (Figure 1).
- Lang Bank lies within both federal and territorial waters, therefore federal regulations apply to the portions of Lang Bank within the Caribbean exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

What are the federal regulations for queen conch?

- Fishing for or possession of queen conch is prohibited in the U.S. Caribbean EEZ, with the exception of the federal waters of Lang Bank near St Croix. The federal waters of Lang Bank are open for queen conch harvest from November 1 through May 31, or until the quota is reached in territorial waters.
- Minimum size limit of nine inches total length and 3/8 inch lip thickness measured at the thickest point of the lip.
- Queen conch in or from the EEZ must also be landed with meat and shell intact.
- Harvest of queen conch while diving while using a device that provides a continuous air supply from the surface (e.g., "hookah" gear) is prohibited.
- For non-commercial fishers, the daily limit is three queen conch per person per day, not to exceed twelve (12) per boat per day.
- For commercial fishers, the daily limit 150 queen conch per person per day.

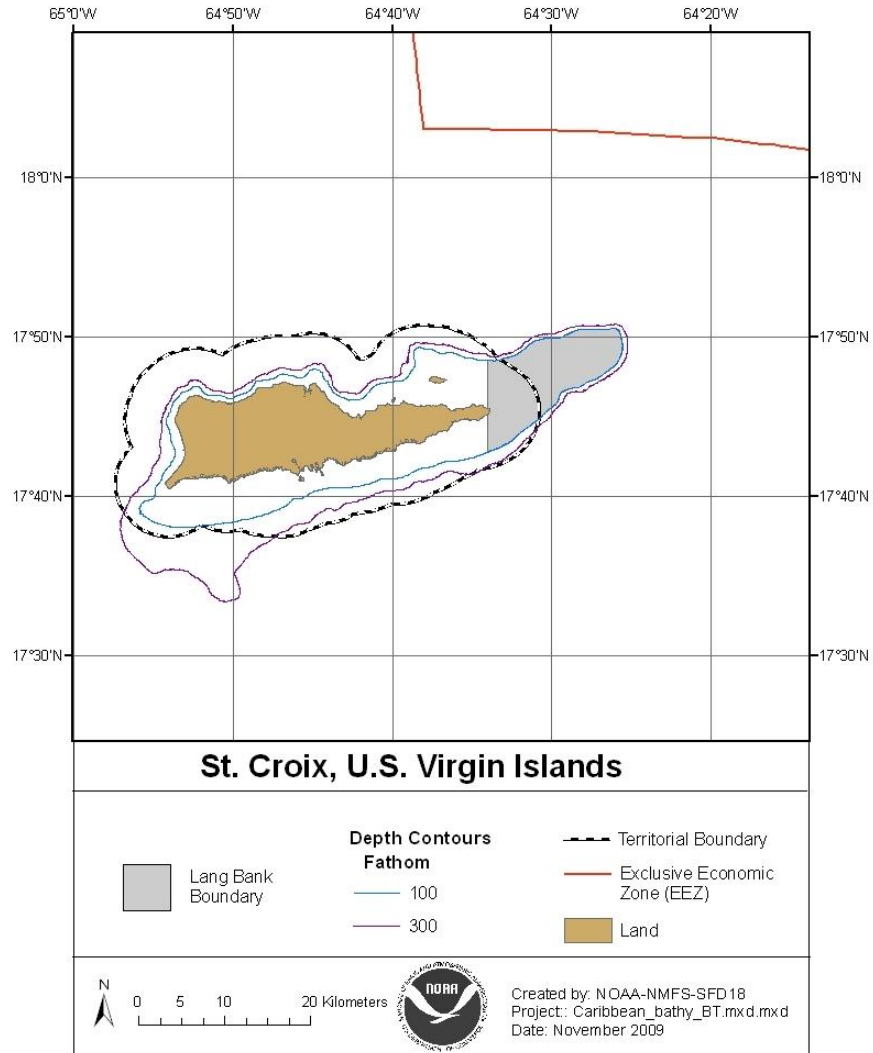


Figure 1: Map of St. Croix, U.S.V.I., including the Lang Bank