

FEDERAL AND LOCAL REGULATIONS FOR DEEP-WATER SNAPPER/GROUPER FISHING IN THE U.S. CARIBBEAN

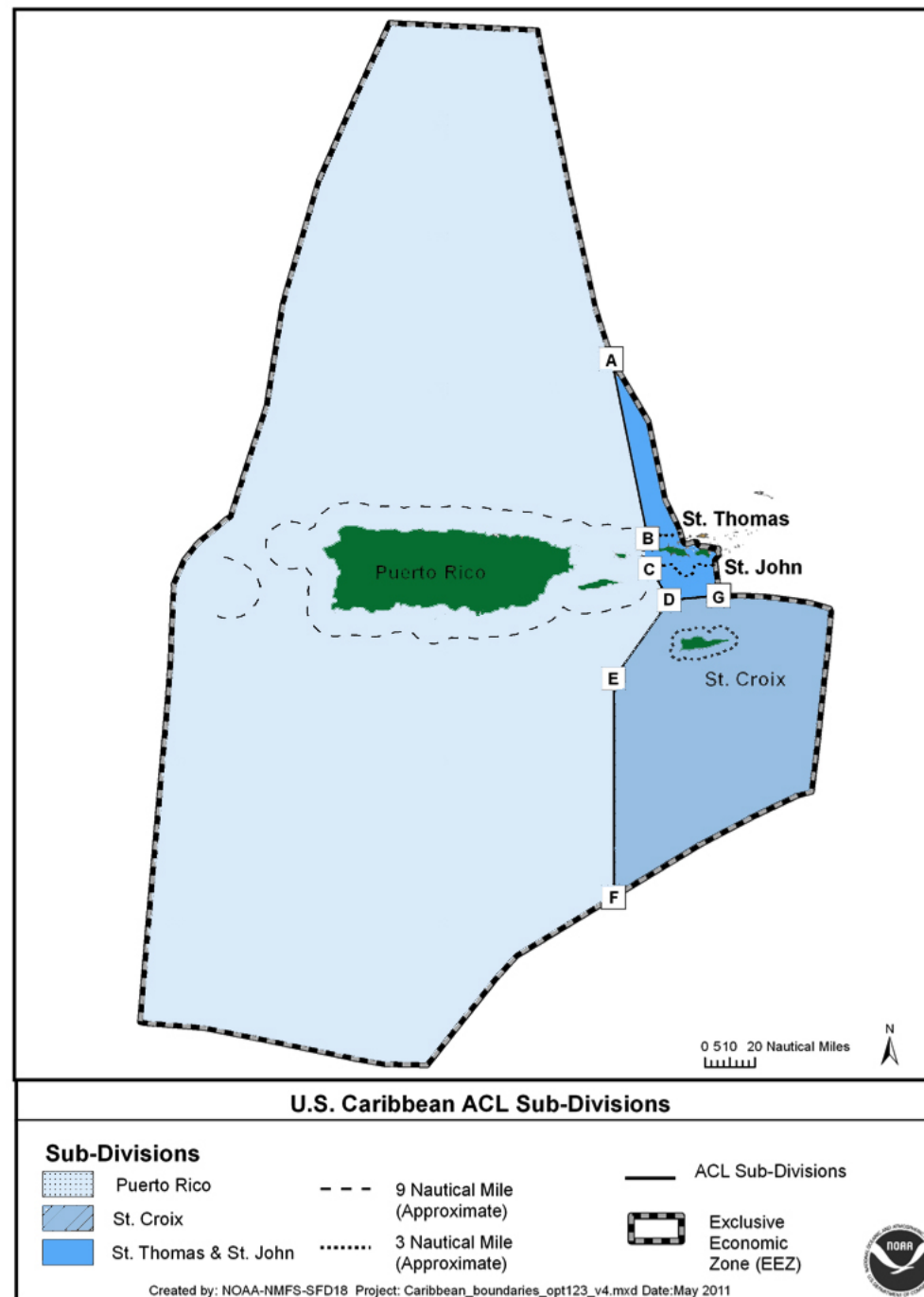


District Advisory Panels (DAPs)- Puerto Rico, St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix

July 20 2022

Courtyard by Marriott Isla Verde Resort, Carolina, Puerto Rico





ETELIS OCULATUS
(CARTUCHO, QUEEN SNAPPER)



DEFINE SPECIES BY DEPTH WITHIN THE DEEP-WATER SNAPPER-GROUPER FISHERY

Species	Puerto Rico	St. Thomas/St. John	St. Croix	EEZ
DWS			600'	
Queen/cardinal	Avg 1,200'			
Silks/black/blackfin		300'-600'		
Vermillion/wenchman				
DWG				
Yellowmouth	768'			
Black				
Yellowfin				
Tiger				
Red				
Yellowedge				
Misty				

WHAT ARE THE REGULATIONS IN PLACE?

License and Permit requirements and year of implementation in the US Caribbean Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the District of St. Thomas/St. John for reef fish, queen conch and spiny lobster.

	EEZ	(USVISTT/STJ/STX
Commercial Fishing License Required	NO	YES
Implementation Year		1972
Changes in requirements		2008
Moratoria		1988-1992;2002 {2021 OPEN?} https://dpr.vi.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Pre-Registration-Press-Release-2022-1.pdf
Recreational Fishing License Required	NO*	https://www.usvifishinglicense.org/
Implementation Year		2017
Changes in requirements	https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/nnri/	http://usvifishinglicense.org/register
Moratoria		
Species Permits		
Queen Conch (<i>S. gigas</i>)	None (closed fishery)	None
Year implemented		
Spiny lobster (<i>P. argus</i>)	None	None
Year implemented		
SU2 (Queen and cardinal snappers)	None	None
Year implemented		

* If you will be fishing on a private boat in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, you will probably need to register with NMFS.

License and Permit requirements and year of implementation in the US Caribbean Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Puerto Rico for reef fish, queen conch and spiny lobster.

	EEZ	PR
Commercial Fishing License Required	NO	YES
Implementation Year		1936
Changes in requirements		1998/2004
Moratoria		
Recreational Fishing License Required	NO*	YES
Implementation Year		Not Yet (2017)
Changes in requirements	https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/nnri/	1997/1998/2004
Moratoria		
Species Permits		
Queen Conch (<i>S. gigas</i>)	None	Permit C/R
Year implemented		C 2004
Spiny lobster (<i>P. argus</i>)	None	Permit C/R
Year implemented		C 2004
SU2 (Queen and cardinal snappers)	None	Permit C
Year implemented		2013
		Number of trips/year=120
		Registered vessel in PR

Legend: C=Commercial; R=Recreational; PR=Puerto Rico

* If you will be fishing on a private boat in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, you will probably need to register with NMFS



is a recreational fishing license required in the US Caribbean



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No permit or license is required for recreational fishing in federal waters. Anglers are responsible for abiding by all federal and state fishing regulations and obtaining any state license required. Jan 4, 2022

[https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/rules-and-regulations) › rules-and-regulations › c... 

Current Fishing Regulations - US Caribbean - NOAA Fisheries 

RESTRICTIONS TO DWSG FISHERY (EEZ ONLY)

Recreational Bag Limits for Federal Waters			
FMU Group	Max/Fisher	Max/Boat	Any Trip max
Snappers	5	15	15
Grouper*			
Parrotfish*			
	2 (only 2 as part of the 5)	6 (total of 15)	6 (total of 15)
*Midnight, blue and rainbow parrotfish; Nassau and Goliath grouper	0	0	0

Table 5.6.1. Bag and possession limits for the recreational harvest of Puerto Rico Reef Fish.

Aggregate bag limit for:	Allowed quantity:
Snapper grouper parrotfish, combined	5 fish per person/day, of which no more than 2 may be parrotfish, or if 3 or more persons are aboard, 15 fish total per vessel/day, of which no more than 6 may be parrotfish.

ANNUAL CATCH LIMITS (EEZ ONLY)

List of Species/Lista de especies	Snappers	Pargos	Lutjanidae	2022 Proposed species in FMU			2022 Proposed ACLs (pounds)			
FMU/Unidad de Manejo				PR	STT/S TJ	STX	PR C	STT/STJ	STX	PR R
Snapper Unit 1	Silk	Chillo	Lutjanus vivanus	√√	√	√√	424,009	20,090	61,455	111,943
Unidad de pargos 1	Blackfin	Alinegra, Negrita	Lutjanus buccanella	√	√√	√√				
	Vermillion	Besugo	Rhomboplites aurorubens	√	√	√				
	Black	Chopa negra	Apsilus dentatus	√	√	√				
	Wenchman	Limosnera, muniama	Pristipomoides aquilonaris	√	N/A	N/A				
Snapper Unit 2	Queen	Cartucho	Etelis oculatus	√	√	√	257,236	568	7,911	24,974
Unidad de pargos 2	Cardinal	Muniama de afuera	P. macrophthalmus	√	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A	

ANNUAL CATCH LIMITS (EEZ ONLY)

2022 Proposed Annual Catch Limits	ACL (pounds) Commercial and Recreational	ACL (pounds)	
USVI		Commercial	Recreational
St. Croix			
Grouper 5 (black, red, tiger, yellowfin)	701		
Grouper 6 (misty)	77		
St. Thomas/St. John			
Grouper 4 (black, red, tiger, yellowfin)	2,254		
Grouper 5 (yellowmouth, yellowedge, misty)	390		
Puerto Rico			
Grouper 4 (black, red, tiger, yellowfin, yellowmouth)		2,492	5,867
Grouper 5 (misty, yellowedge)		15,327	4,225

SEASONAL CLOSURES US VIRGIN ISLANDS

[illegible]

SEASONAL CLOSURES/VEDAS PUERTO RICO

Legend			FEDERAL AND STATE WATERS - Puerto Rico										
GREEN	Fishing allowed												
RED	NO FISHING												
All fish have to be landed intact			Commercial and Recreational Regulations										
			FISHING CALENDAR										
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
Grouper Unit 4													
Federal Waters													
Red grouper		Federal waters only except yellow fin in both											
Black grouper													
Tiger grouper													
Yellowedge grouper													
Yellowfin grouper													
PR State Waters													
Yellowfin grouper		Yellowfin only in PR waters											
Snapper Unit 1													
Federal Waters													
Black snapper										Federal Waters			
Vermillion													
Blackfin snapper													
Silk snapper													
PR State Waters													
Blackfin snapper										PR State Waters			
Silk snapper													



SEASONAL CLOSURES/VEDAS

SNAPPERS		
Snapper Unit 1: (1) silk, (2) black, (3) blackfin, (4) vermillion, (5) wenchman*		
	Closed	Open
Federal	Oct 1 – Dec 31	Jan 1 – Sept 30
Puerto Rico (only applies to silk and blackfin)	Oct 1 – Dec 31	Jan 1 – Sept 30
USVI (only applies to STT/STJ)	Oct 1 – Dec 31	Jan 1 – Sept 30
*Wenchman was transferred from Snapper Unit 2 to Snapper Unit 1 (Effective January 30, 2012. Seasonal closure does not apply to wenchman).		
Snapper Unit 2: (1) queen , (2) cardinal ^{*new}		
Federal	No restrictions	
Puerto Rico		
USVI		
*Cardinal was added to Snapper Unit 2 (Effective January 30, 2012)		

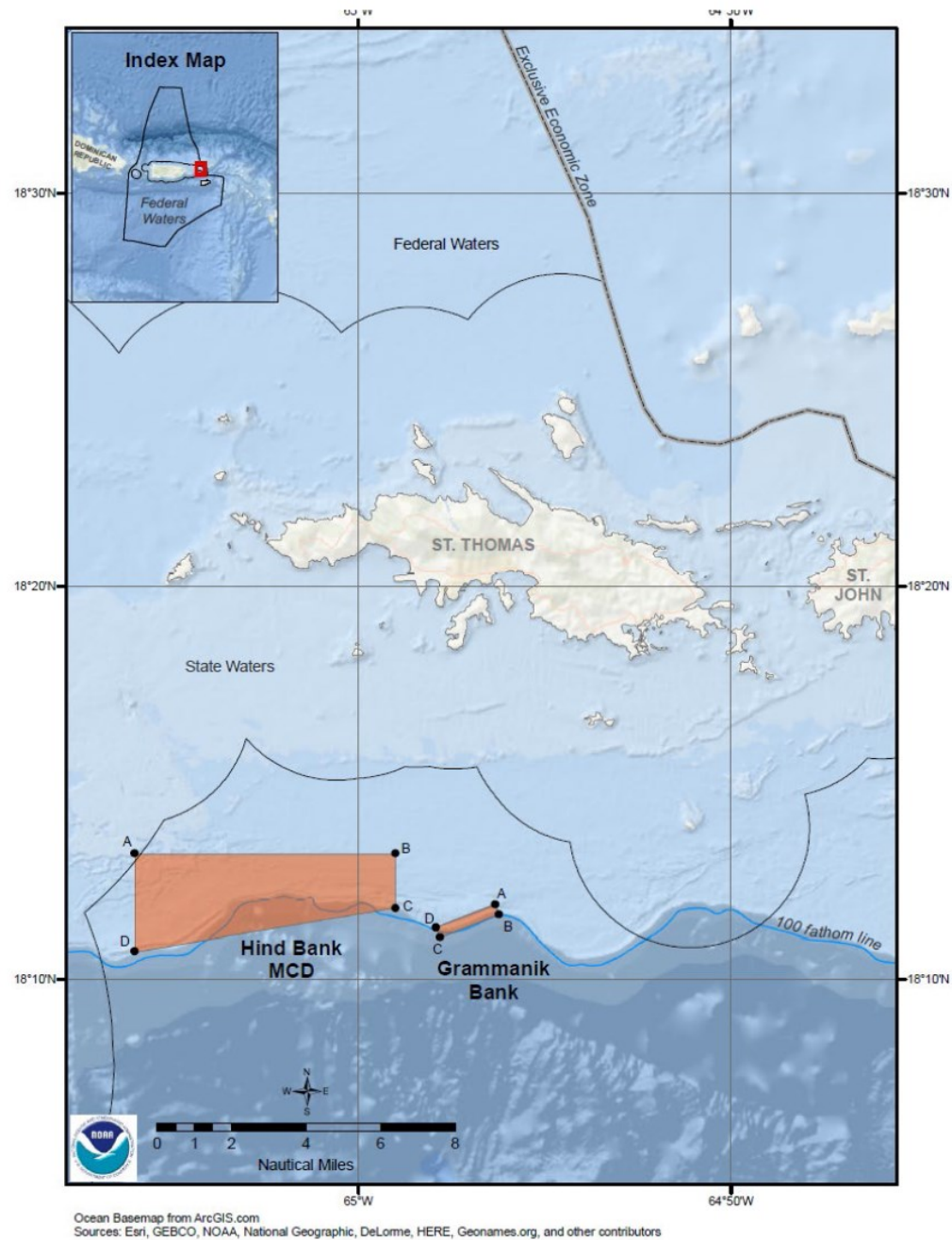


Figure 5.10.1. Map of the seasonally closed areas off the south coast of St. Thomas/St. John.

Table 5.10.1. Areas in the St. Thomas/St. John EEZ with seasonal area closures and dates when the area is closed and open for specific fishing activities.

Area	Open	Closed
Grammanik Bank		
No fishing for or possession of any species of fish ² during the closure. The prohibition does not apply to highly migratory species ³ .	May 1 – January 31	February 1 – April 30
Fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gill or trammel nets is prohibited year-round.	Year-round prohibition	
Hind Bank Marine Conservation District	Open	Closed
All fishing is prohibited	Year-round Prohibition	

²Fish means finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animal and plant life other than marine mammals and birds.

³Highly migratory species means bluefin, bigeye, yellowfin, albacore, and skipjack tunas; swordfish; sharks (listed in Appendix A to part 635 of this title); and white marlin, blue marlin, sailfish, and longbill spearfish.

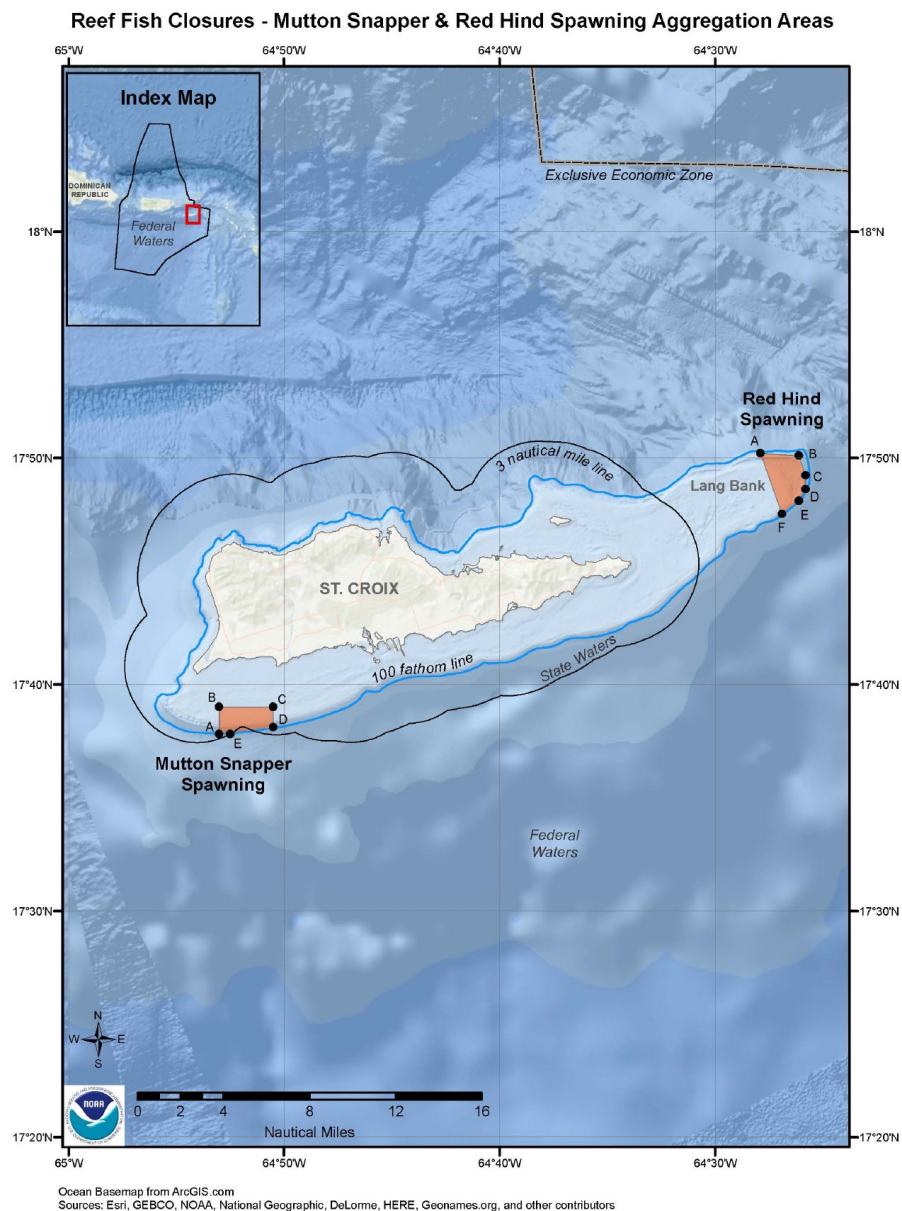


Table 5.10.1. Areas in the St. Croix EEZ with seasonal area closures and dates when the area is closed and open for specific fishing activities.

Area	Open	Closed
Red Hind Spawning Aggregation Area (Lang Bank)		
All fishing is prohibited during the closure.	March 1 – November 30	December 1 – last day of February
Fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gill or trammel nets is prohibited year-round.	Year-round Prohibition	
Mutton Snapper Spawning Aggregation Area		
All fishing is prohibited during the closure.	July 1 – last day of February	March 1 – June 30
Fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gill or trammel nets is prohibited year-round.	Year-round Prohibition	

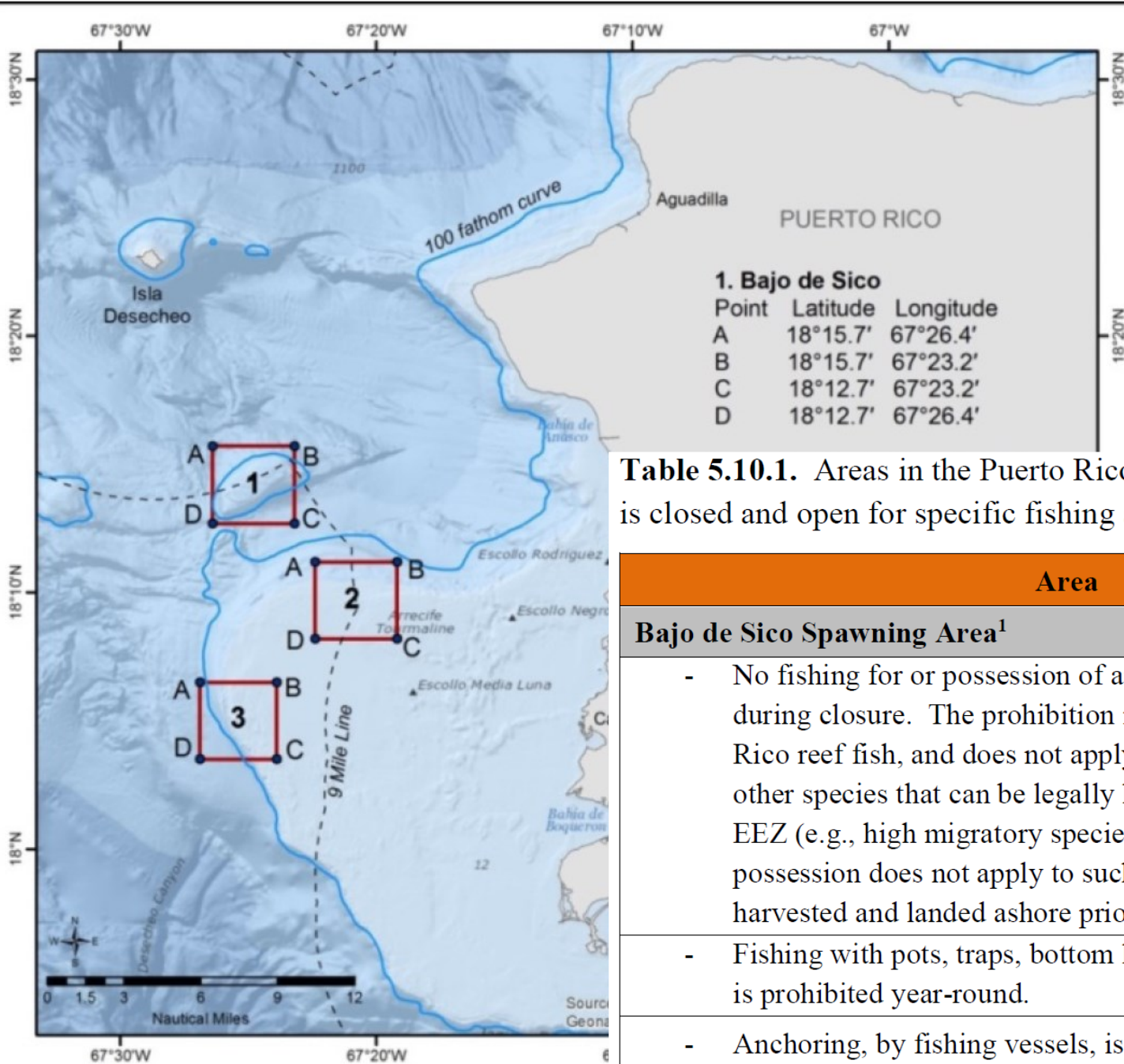
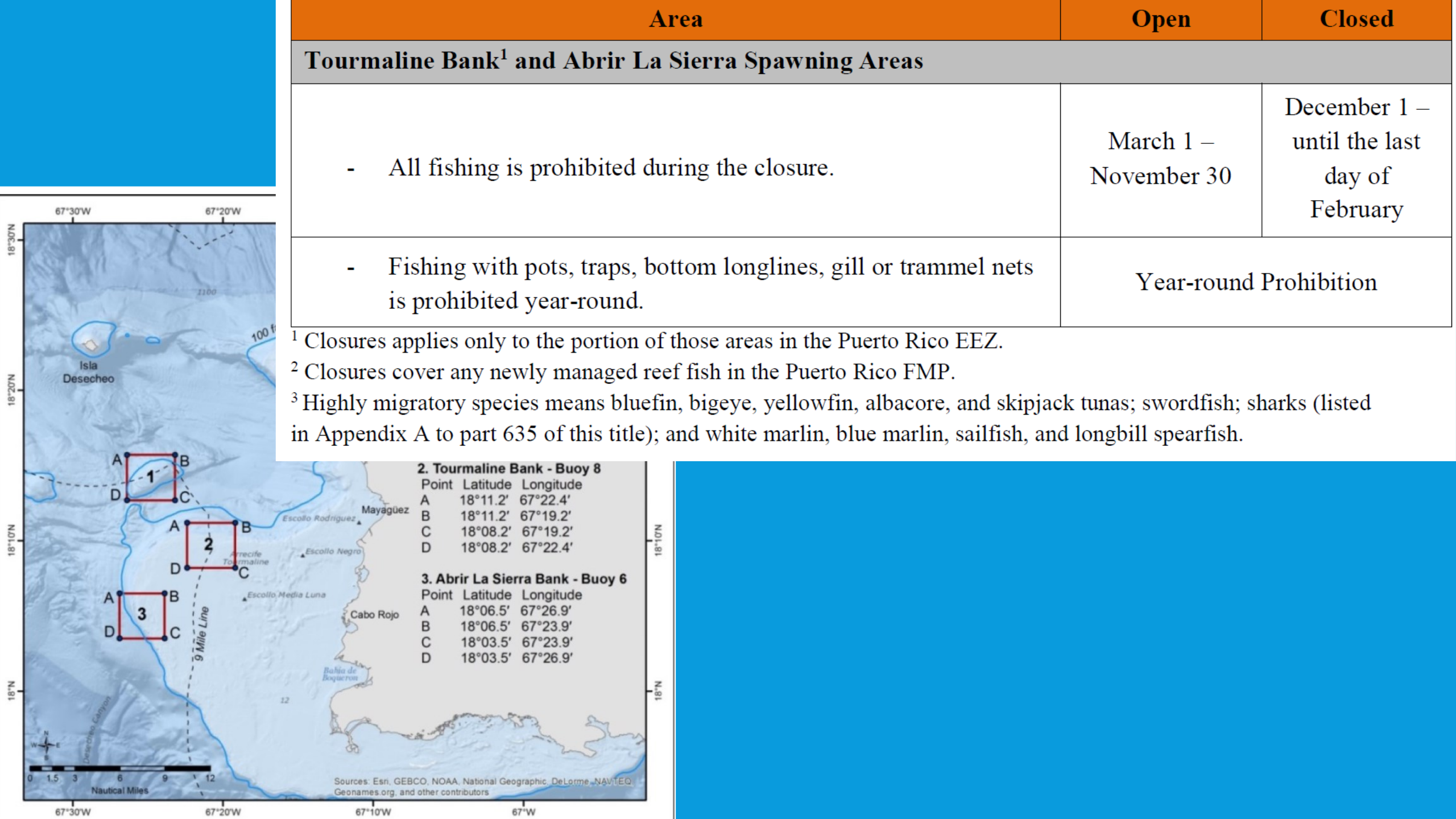


Table 5.10.1. Areas in the Puerto Rico EEZ with seasonal area closures and dates when the area is closed and open for specific fishing activities.

Area	Open	Closed
Bajo de Sico Spawning Area¹		
No fishing for or possession of any Puerto Rico reef fish² during closure. The prohibition is limited to managed Puerto Rico reef fish, and does not apply to Caribbean spiny lobster or other species that can be legally harvested from the Puerto Rico EEZ (e.g., high migratory species [HMS]³). The prohibition on possession does not apply to such Puerto Rico reef fish harvested and landed ashore prior to the closure.	April 1 – September 30	October 1 – March 31
Fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gill or trammel nets is prohibited year-round.	Year-round Prohibition	
Anchoring, by fishing vessels, is prohibited year-round.	Year-round Prohibition	



Authorized gears for the reef fish fishery for the recreational and commercial sectors in each IBFMP:

Reef Fish Fishery	Gear Type
Recreational Fishery	Dip net, handline, rod and reel, slurp gun, spear, trap, pot

Reef Fish Fishery	Gear Type
Commercial Longline/hook and line fishery	Longline, hook and line
Commercial Trap/pot fishery	Trap, pot
Other commercial fishery	Spear

- Managed Reef Fish are included in Appendix A of each IBFMP (includes deep water snapper)

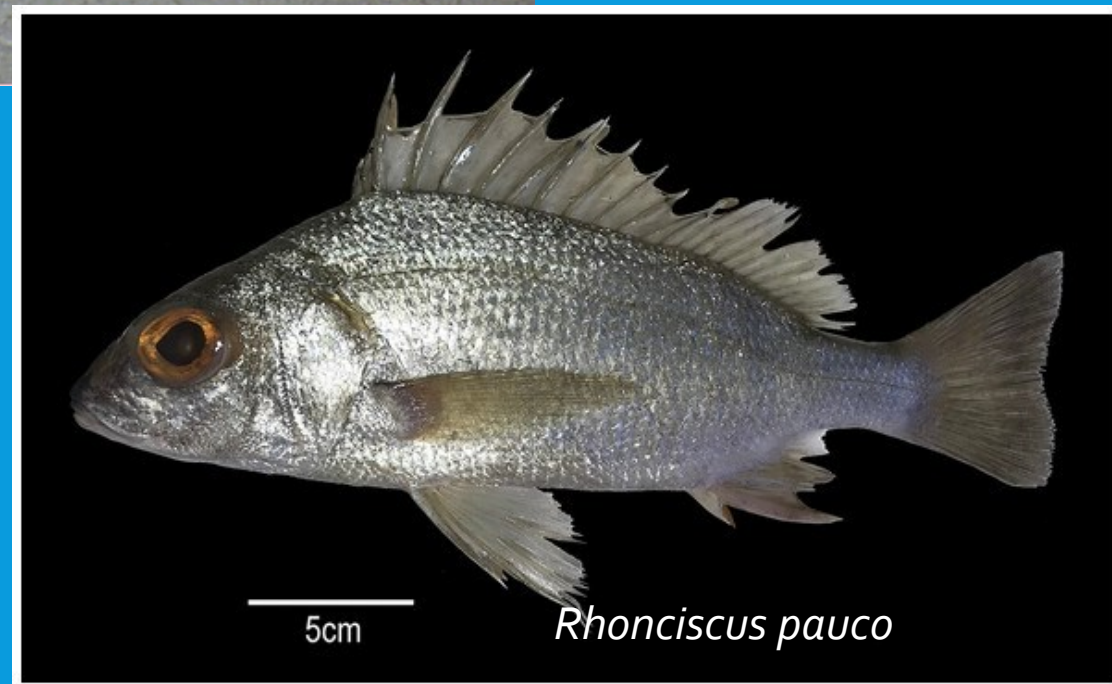
Item	Federal Regulations	Gear used in PR & USVI
Number of Hooks	10	PR: 15-25; USVI: 20-22
Drop line #	Single drop line suspended from float	Similar
Weight on terminal end	No more than 10 pounds	Commonly 8-10 pounds
Drop line Construction	Rope (hemp, manila, cotton, natural fibers, nylon, polypropylene, spectra, other synthetic material) or monofilament, but must not be cable or wire	Similar
Length of Drop Line (limit)	Cannot be greater than 2 times the depth of the water being fished	Similar
Hook Placement	All hooks must be attached to the drop line no more than 30 ft from weighted terminal end	Similar, within range
Hook connection to drop line	Hooks may be attached directly to the drop line; attached as snoods (defined as an offshoot line that is directly spliced, tied or otherwise connected to the drop line), where each snood has a single terminal hook; or as gangions (defined as an offshoot line connected to the drop line with some type of detachable clip), where each gangion has a single terminal hook.	Similar
Gear connection	Not connected to other gear or to the vessel	Similar. Gear designed to be released in the water and detached from the boat

REFERENCES:

- [Comprehensive Fishery Management Plan for the Puerto Rico Exclusive Economic Zone \(caribbeanfmc.com\)](#)
- [Comprehensive Fishery Management Plan for the St. Croix Exclusive Economic Zone \(caribbeanfmc.com\)](#)
- [Comprehensive Fishery Management Plan for the St. Thomas/St. John Exclusive Economic Zone \(caribbeanfmc.com\)](#)



Anthias hensleyi



Rhonciscus pauco

