



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

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## NOAA Fisheries Service Publishes Final Rule to Change Bottom Longline Regulations Affecting the Eastern Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery

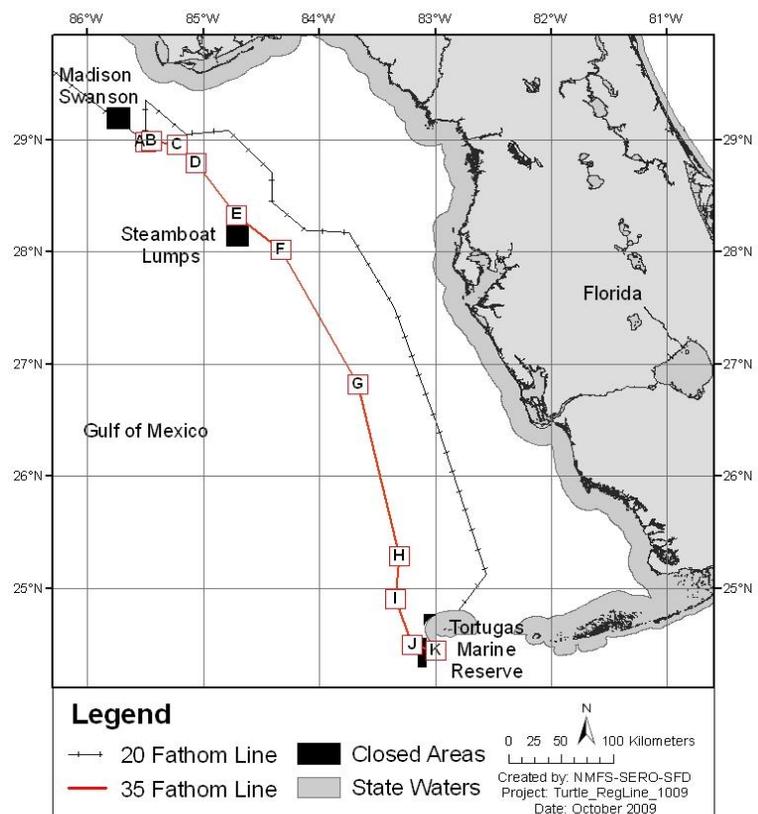
NOAA Fisheries Service published a final rule to implement Amendment 31 to the Fishery Management Plan for Reef Fish Resources in the Gulf of Mexico in the *Federal Register* on April 26, 2010 (75 FR 21512). The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) submitted Amendment 31 and associated Final Environmental Impact Statement for review, approval, and implementation by NOAA Fisheries Service. These provisions are effective May 26, 2010.

The following measures apply to the bottom longline component of the reef fish fishery in the eastern Gulf of Mexico (east of 85° 30' W):

- 1) Prohibit the use of bottom longline gear shoreward of a line approximating the 35-fathom depth contour (see map and table) from June through August;
- 2) require an endorsement to harvest reef fish using bottom longline gear in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. Only federally-permitted vessels with demonstrated average annual landings of 40,000 pounds of reef fish taken by fish traps or longlines during 1999-2007 qualify for an endorsement; and
- 3) restrict the number of hooks that may be possessed onboard each reef fish bottom longline vessel operating in the eastern Gulf of Mexico to 1,000 hooks total, only 750 of which may be fished or rigged for fishing at any given time.

NOAA Fisheries Service will mail each eligible permittee a reef fish bottom longline endorsement via certified mail by May 26, 2010. This endorsement must be renewed annually and may only be renewed if the associated vessel has a valid commercial vessel permit for Gulf reef fish or if the endorsement and associated permit are being concurrently renewed. An eligible permittee who does not receive an endorsement from the Regional Administrator (RA), must contact the RA no later than June 25, 2010, to clarify his/her endorsement status.

The only items subject to appeal are initial eligibility for the reef fish bottom longline endorsement based on ownership of a qualifying reef fish permit, the accuracy of the amount of landings, and correct assignment of landings to the permittee. Appeals based on hardship factors will not be considered. Appeals must be submitted to the RA postmarked no later than August 25, 2010, and must contain documentation supporting the basis for the appeal. The RA will review all appeals, render final decisions on the appeals, and advise the appellant of the final decision.



	<b>Longitude West</b>	<b>Latitude North</b>
<b>Waypoint</b>	<b>Degree Decimal Minute</b>	<b>Degree Decimal Minute</b>
A	85°30.00'	28°58.70'
B	85°26.70'	28°59.25'
C	85°13.80'	28°57.00'
D	85°03.90'	28°47.40'
E	84°43.00'	28°19.50'
F	84°20.00'	28°00.80'
G	83°40.00'	26°48.80'
H	83°19.00'	25°17.00'
I	83°21.00'	24°54.00'
J	83°12.30'	24°29.50'
K	83°00.00'	24°26.50'

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Electronic copies of the rule and Amendment 31 may be obtained from the e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> . Enter the following docket number into the “Search” box: **NOAA-NMFS-2008-0310**. The documents are also available from the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council’s Web site at <http://www.gulfcouncil.org>, or from NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information pertinent to the rule. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the rule as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

**Need more information on these topics?**

Southeast Regional Office’s Web page:  
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

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