



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Seasonal Prohibition on Fishing for Red, Black, Tiger, Yellowfin, and Yellowedge Grouper in Caribbean Federal Waters and Seasonal Closure of Grammanik Bank off St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

NOAA Fisheries reminds the public there is a seasonal prohibition on fishing for or possession of red, black, tiger, yellowfin, and yellowedge grouper in Caribbean federal waters from 12:01 a.m., local time, February 1 through April 30, 2015. This prohibition on possession does not apply to such grouper harvested and landed on shore prior to the closure.

Also, from February 1 through April 30, each year, no person may fish for or possess any species of fish, **except highly migratory species**, within the Grammanik Bank closed area. The term "fish" means finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animal and plant life other than marine mammals and birds. Highly migratory species includes bluefin, bigeye, yellowfin, albacore, and skipjack tunas; swordfish; sharks; white marlin, blue marlin, sailfish, and longbill spearfish.

The Grammanik Bank closed area is bounded by rhumb lines connecting the following points:

Point	North latitude	West longitude
A	18°11.898' N	64°56.328' W
B	18°11.645' N	64°56.225' W
C	18°11.058' N	64°57.810' W
D	18°11.311' N	64°57.913' W
A	18°11.898' N	64°56.328' W

The closure encompasses the area where a yellowfin grouper spawning aggregation is reported to occur on Grammanik Bank.

This action complies with regulations implemented under Amendment 3 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Fishery of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to address required provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and is necessary to protect these resources. The Caribbean Fishery Management Council, in cooperation with NOAA Fisheries, developed the amendment to regulate fishing mortality.

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

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