



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

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Reminder of Areas in the Gulf of Mexico Closed to Fishing Due to the BP Oil Spill *More than 95 Percent of Gulf Federal Waters Remain Open*

NOAA Fisheries Service reminds fishermen of the current closed area between the Southwest Pass of Louisiana and the eastern edge of Pensacola Bay, Florida. Modeling and mapping the actual and projected spill area is not an exact science. NOAA Fisheries Service is closely monitoring the movement of the spill and working to develop a protocol that will support swift agency action in response to new information on the location and extent of the spill hazard and expected fishery impacts. Our goal is to update the dimensions of the closed area as necessary to ensure fisher and consumer safety without needlessly restricting productive fisheries in areas that are not affected by the spill.

NOAA Fisheries Service strongly advises fishermen not to fish in areas where oil or oil sheens (very thin layers of floating oil) are present, even if those areas are not currently closed to fishing. Fish and shellfish in oil affected waters may be contaminated with hydrocarbons above baseline levels. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration considers such seafood to be adulterated.

The vast majority of Gulf waters have not been affected by the oil spill and continue to support productive fisheries and tourism activities. NOAA Fisheries Service is working to collect and evaluate seafood samples to assess the extent of any potential contamination both within the immediate area of the spill and throughout the Gulf. The results will be reviewed as soon as possible after sampling. Pending the results, NOAA Fisheries Service will reassess the closed area and will take appropriate action to extend or reduce the closed area.

Need more information on these topics?

Southeast Regional Office's Web page:

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

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Fishermen who wish to contact BP about a claim should call 1-800-440-0858.