

III. CLOSED AREAS

An angler on an Atlantic HMS-permitted vessel may fish recreationally for Atlantic HMS in federal waters, except in areas closed to fishing. A description of these areas is below, followed by a map.

The Tortugas Marine Reserves¹³

Fishing for any species and anchoring by fishing in vessels is prohibited year-round in the EEZ portions of Tortugas North and Tortugas South.

The Tortugas North area is bounded by 24°40'00" N. lat., 83°06'00" W. long.; 24°46'00" N. lat., 83°06'00" W. long.; 24°46'00" N. lat., 83°00'00" W. long.; thence along the line denoting the seaward limit of Florida's waters, as shown on the current edition of NOAA chart 11438 to 24°40'00" N. lat., 83°06'00" W. long. Tortugas South is bounded by 24°33'00" N. lat., 83°09'00" W. long.; 24°33'00" N. lat., 83°05'00" W. long.; 24°18'00" N. lat., 83°05'00" W. long.; 24°18'00" N. lat., 83°09'00" W. long.; 24°33'00" N. lat., 83°09'00" W. long.

Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps Closed Areas¹⁴

Surface trolling is allowed from May-October, but fishing by any other method is prohibited year-round.

The coordinates for the Madison-Swanson closed area are: 29°17' N. lat., 85°50' W. long.; 29°17' N. lat., 85°38' W. long.; 29°06' N. lat., 85°38' W. long.; 29°06' N. lat., 85°50' W. long. The coordinates for the Steamboat Lumps closed area are: 28°14' N. lat., 84°48' W. long.; 28°14' N. lat., 84°37' W. long.; 28°03' N. lat., 84°37' W. long.; 28°03' N. lat., 84°48' W. long.

Edges 40 Fathom Contour Closed Area¹⁵

This area is closed to all HMS fishing gears from January- April. Open to

The Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area is bounded by straight lines connecting the following coordinates: 28°51' N. lat., 85°16' W. long.; to 28°51' N. lat., 85°04' W. long.; to 28°14' N. lat., 84°42' W. long.; to 28°14' N. lat., 84°54' W. long.

HMS fishing May-December.

Gulf of Mexico Bluefin Tuna¹⁶

Anglers may not target bluefin tuna at any time in the Gulf of Mexico. This area is bluefin tuna spawning grounds. However, due to the recent allocation of a portion of the Angling category “trophy” south sub-quota to the Gulf of Mexico (see following map), HMS Angling or HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders may retain one “trophy” bluefin tuna (>73”) per vessel per year from the Gulf of Mexico, if it is caught incidentally while targeting other species, and provided the “trophy” category subquota in the Gulf of Mexico is available at the time of harvest (see Section VII).¹⁷

South Atlantic Swordfish (South of 5° N latitude)

Recreational anglers may not fish for or land swordfish south of 5° N. latitude.¹⁸

Other Marine Protected Areas

There are a number of marine protected areas (MPAs) throughout U.S. waters that may restrict recreational fishing activities. For more information, please visit

<http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/>.

