



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Seasonal Prohibition on Fishing for and Possession of Council Managed Reef Fish in the Caribbean Federal Waters of Bajo de Sico Begins at 12:01 a.m., Local Time, October 1, 2012

NOAA Fisheries Service reminds fishers that from October 1 through March 31, each year, no person may fish for or possess any Caribbean reef fish, in or from those parts of the Bajo de Sico closed area that are in the exclusive economic zone. The U.S. Caribbean exclusive economic zone consists of those waters extending from the nine nautical mile seaward boundary of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the three nautical mile seaward boundary of the territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands out to 200 nautical miles offshore.

The Bajo de Sico closed area is bound by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points:

Point	North lat.	West long.
A	18° 15.7'	67° 26.4'
B	18° 15.7'	67° 23.2'
C	18° 12.7'	67° 23.2'
D	18° 12.7'	67° 26.4'
A	18° 15.7'	67° 26.4'

In addition, anchoring and fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited within the EEZ portion of Bajo de Sico year-round. During the closure, however, fishers are permitted to harvest species not managed by the Council, including highly migratory species (HMS) or other non-HMS coastal migratory pelagics.

This action complies with regulations implemented under the Regulatory Amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Fishery of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands modifying the Bajo de Sico seasonal closure. The Caribbean Fishery Management Council, in cooperation with NOAA Fisheries Service, developed the amendment to provide further protection for red hind spawning aggregations and large snappers and groupers, and better protect the essential fish habitat where these species reside.

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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