



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Seasonal Prohibition on Fishing for or Possession of Queen Conch in Federal Waters off St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands Begins on June 1, 2015, at 12:01 a.m., Local Time

NOAA Fisheries reminds the public of the upcoming seasonal prohibition on fishing for, or possession on board a fishing vessel, of queen conch. This annually recurring prohibition will take effect at 12:01 a.m., local time, June 1, and continue through October 31, 2015, in federal waters east of 64°34' W longitude, which includes Lang Bank east of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. The queen conch fishing season is scheduled to reopen at 12:01 am, local time, on November 1, 2015.

The only area in the U.S. Caribbean exclusive economic zone where fishing for queen conch is allowed during the open season is those waters east of 64°34' W longitude. Federal waters surrounding the remainder of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and around Puerto Rico, remain closed year-round to all fishing for queen conch. U.S. Caribbean federal waters consist of those waters extending from the three-nautical mile seaward boundary of the Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the nine-nautical mile seaward boundary of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, out to 200 nautical miles offshore.

This action complies with regulations implemented under Regulatory Amendment 1 to the Fishery

Management Plan for the Queen Conch Resources of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to protect the queen conch resource. The Caribbean Fishery Management Council, in cooperation with NOAA Fisheries, developed Regulatory Amendment 1 to regulate fishing mortality and ensure the long-term health of the resource.

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*.

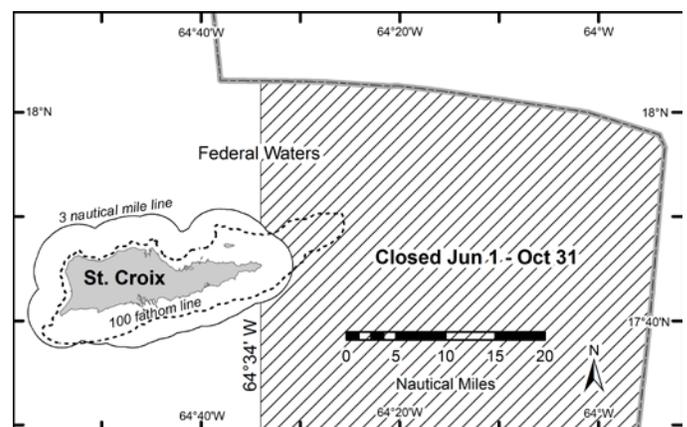


Figure 1. Map showing the queen conch seasonal closure area in federal waters east of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.