



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Reminder of Seasonal Fishing Restrictions in U.S. Caribbean Federal Waters *Beginning December 1, 2015, at 12:01 a.m., Local Time*

Annual Seasonal Red Hind Closure

NOAA Fisheries reminds fishermen and the public of the annual seasonal closure on fishing for, or possession of, red hind grouper in federal waters west of 67° 10' W longitude. This area is located off the west coast of Puerto Rico. The closure begins at 12:01 a.m., local time, on December 1, 2015, and extends through the last day of February 2016.

Fishing Prohibitions in Red Hind Spawning Areas

From December 1, 2015, through February 28, each year, fishing for any species is prohibited in federal waters of the following red hind spawning aggregation areas:

- The Lang Bank Red Hind Spawning Aggregation area, east of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following coordinates:

A	17°50.2' N	64°27.9' W
B	17°50.1' N	64°26.1' W
C	17°49.2' N	64°25.8' W
D	17°48.6' N	64°25.8' W
E	17°48.1' N	64°26.1' W
F	17°47.5' N	64°26.9' W
A	17°50.2' N	64°27.9' W

- The Tourmaline Bank area closure in western Puerto Rico, bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following coordinates:

A	18°11.2' N	67°22.4' W
B	18°11.2' N	67°19.2' W
C	18°08.2' N	67°19.2' W
D	18°08.2' N	67°22.4' W
A	18°11.2' N	67°22.4' W

Regulations only apply to the portion of Tourmaline Bank in federal waters.

- The Abrir La Sierra Bank area closure in western Puerto Rico, which lies completely within federal waters, and is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following coordinates:

A	18°06.5' N	67°26.9' W
B	18°06.5' N	67°23.9' W
C	18°03.5' N	67°23.9' W
D	18°03.5' N	67°26.9' W
A	18°06.5' N	67°26.9' W

Bajo de Sico Area Closure

Federal waters of the Bajo de Sico area closure in western Puerto Rico continue to be closed to fishing for and possession of reef fish managed by the Caribbean Fishery Management Council until March 31, 2016. Anchoring by fishing vessels is prohibited year-round.

Fishing and Anchoring Prohibitions within Hind Bank

Fishing for any species and anchoring by fishing vessels within the Hind Bank Marine Conservation District, south of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, is prohibited year round. The Hind Bank Marine Conservation District is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following coordinates:

A	18°13.2' N	65°06.0' W
B	18°13.2' N	64°59.0' W
C	18°11.8' N	64°59.0' W
D	18°10.7' N	65°06.0' W
A	18°13.2' N	65°06.0' W

These restrictions were developed to provide further protection for red hind spawning aggregations and large snappers and groupers, and to 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*.