

## FGBNMS Bank Detail

- (1) West Flower Garden Bank - Depth Range 59ft–545ft, 37.2 square miles in size. The amazing biodiversity and beauty of the East and West Flower Garden Banks serves as a regional reservoir of shallow water Caribbean reef fishes and invertebrates. The West Flower Garden has been expanded to encompasses mesophotic coral patch reefs to the north, southwest, and east of the existing sanctuary. These reefs provide coralline algae reef habitat for black corals, gorgonians, stony branching corals, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates. This bank supports a coral reef, mesophotic coral habitats, soft bottom communities. It has 100 acres of coral reef cap area rising to within 60 feet of the water surface with a highly developed coral reef in excellent health with the coral cap dominated by brain and star corals. Reefs show some of highest coral percent cover for the region, with at least 24 species of coral on the coral cap, covering over 50% of the bottom to depths of 100 feet, and exceeding 70% coral cover in places to at least 130 feet.
- (2) East Flower Garden Bank - Depth Range 52ft–446ft, 27.8 square miles in size. The East Flower Garden Bank is the northernmost coral reefs in the continental United States. It has been expanded to encompass mesophotic coral patch reefs to the north and southeast of the existing sanctuary. These reefs provide deep coral habitat for dense populations of black corals, gorgonians, stony branching corals, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates. This bank includes a coral reef zone, coral community zone, mesophotic coral habitats and soft bottom communities. It has a highly developed coral reef in excellent health and is the northernmost coral reef in the continental United States. Capped by 250 acres (1 square km) of coral reef that rise to within 55 feet (17 m) of the surface the coral cap dominated by brain and star with the reefs having some of highest coral percent cover for the region. At least 24 species of coral on the coral cap, covering over 50% of the bottom to depths of 100 feet, and exceeding 70% coral cover in places to at least 130 feet. This bank is also unique in the NMS system in that it contains a rigs-to-reef artificial reef (AR) created from the decommissioning of High Island A-389-A oil and gas platform by W&T Offshore, Inc. This AR benefits fishermen, divers, educators and researchers and stands in 410 feet of water. It is cut about 65 feet below sea level. This AR is the responsibility of Texas Parks and Wildlife.
- (3) Stetson Bank - Depth Range 56ft–194ft, 1.4 square miles in size. Stetson encompasses a claystone/ siltstone ring feature of mesophotic coral habitat revealed by high resolution multibeam bathymetric surveys, and subsequently ground-truthed by remotely operated vehicle surveys. These features are surface expressions of the salt dome associated with the feature, and provide habitat for sponges, gorgonians, stony branching corals, black corals, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates. The upper portion of Stetson has a "moonscape" appearance, with distinct uplifted siltstone and claystone pinnacles that push out of the seafloor for ~1,500 feet along the northwest face of the bank; pinnacles dominated by fire coral and sponges, with at least nine coral species present; algae, sponges and rubble dominate the flats.
- (4) Horseshoe Bank - Depth Range 243ft– 614ft, 28.7 square miles in size. Extensive deepwater habitat and coralline algae reefs in the form of hundreds of patchy outcroppings

covering an area of approximately 1.9 miles (3 km) wide and having 16.4– 49.2 ft (5–15 m) of relief above the seafloor, with dense assemblages of mesophotic black coral, gorgonians, stony branching corals, sponges, algae invertebrates, and fish; several conical-shaped mud volcanoes clustered near the center of the feature, with one rising 328 ft (100 m) above the sea floor.

- (5) MacNeil Bank - Depth Range 210 ft– 315 ft, 2.7 square miles in size. Deep reef bedrock outcrops and coralline algae patch reefs harboring populations of black corals and gorgonians, sponges, fish, and mobile invertebrates.
- (6) & (6b) Rankin/28 Fathom Banks - Depth Range 164 ft–571 ft, 5.6 square miles in size. Rankin Bank is just north of 28 Fathom Bank, and separated from it by a long trough, approximately 1,640-foot (500 m) wide, approximately 6,070-foot (1,850 m) which extends to a depth of approximately 570 ft (174 m). The boundaries encompass the shallowest portions of Rankin and 28 Fathom Banks, which harbor coral algae reefs and deep coral reefs with populations of gorgonians, black corals, sponges, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates.
- (7) Bright Bank - Depth Range 112 ft–384 ft, 7.7 square miles in size. Bright Bank previously harbored a coral reef on the very shallowest portions of the bank, which sustained extensive damage from salvage and mining activities employing dynamite for excavation activities. The cap is now considered a coral community, and in spite of these impacts, nine species of shallow water scleractinian corals survive, along with two deeper water species. The feature also harbors extensive coralline algae reefs, providing habitat for populations of gorgonians, black corals, sponges, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates.
- (8) Geyer Bank - Depth Range 128 ft–722 ft, 11.5 square miles in size. Geyer Bank is a broad, relatively flat fault-bounded structure situated on an active salt diapir. This feature supports a coral community, as well as extensive coralline algae reefs and fields of algal nodules including dense fields of macro-algae, black corals, gorgonians, sponges, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates. Seasonal spawning aggregations of fish are associated with this bank, including enormous numbers of reef butterflyfish.
- (9) Elvers Bank - Depth Range 213 ft–686 ft, 4.6 square miles in size. The shallow areas of the bank feature coralline algae reefs and algal nodule fields, and the deeper areas harbor large deep reef outcroppings, both providing habitat for black corals, gorgonians, sponges, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates. The deep reefs also harbor glass sponge fields, a feature not documented in any other areas of the sanctuary, as well as a previously undescribed species of black coral.
- (10) McGrail Bank - Depth Range 144 ft– 512 ft, 4.7 square miles in size. This bank features unique areas of coral reefs dominated by large colonies of the blushing star coral, *Stephanocoenia intersepta*, with 28% live coral cover in discrete areas (no other known coral reef is dominated by this species). Pinnacles varying in diameter from ~80 to 395 feet (24–120 m) and as tall as ~25 feet (8 m) are found on the southwest rim of the main feature, along east- and southeast- trending scarps leading away from the bank and in concentric fields to the south and southeast of the bank. A significant portion of the depth zone between 145 and 170 feet is dominated by coral colonies up to 5 feet tall, covering an area of approximately 37 acres. At least 14 species of stony corals have been recorded. Deeper

portions of this site harbor mesophotic coral habitat for deep coral, coralline algae reefs, and fields of algal nodules. Dense populations of black corals, gorgonians, macro-algae fields, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates are present.

- (11) Sonnier Bank - Depth Range 62ft–210ft, 3.1 square miles in size. Sonnier Bank consists of a series of isolated clusters of pinnacles comprised of uplifted siltstone and claystone, that rise mostly around the perimeter of a single, roughly circular ring 1.9miles (3.2km) in diameter. Two peaks are accessible and popular with recreational scuba divers. The peaks are dominated by coral communities featuring fire coral, sponges, and algae. The deeper portions of the feature are fairly heavily silted, but provide habitat for black corals, gorgonians, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates.
  - (12) Bouma Bank - Depth Range 187ft–322ft, 7.7 square miles in size. Bouma Bank is dominated by coralline algae reefs and algal nodule fields, providing habitat for populations of black corals, gorgonians, algae, branching stony coral, clusters of cup coral, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates.
  - (13) Rezak Bank - Depth Range 197ft–430ft, 3.7 square miles in size. Rezak Bank is dominated by coralline algae reefs and extensive algal nodule fields, providing habitat for populations of black corals, gorgonians, algae, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates.
  - (14) Sidner Bank - Depth Range 190ft– 420ft, 2.0 square miles in size. Sidner Bank is dominated by coralline algae reefs and extensive algal nodule fields providing habitat for populations of black corals, gorgonians, algae, sponges, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates.
  - (15) Alderdice Bank - Depth Range 200ft– 322ft, 5.0 square miles in size. This feature includes spectacular basalt outcrops of Late Cretaceous origin (approximately 77 million years old) representing the oldest rock exposed on the continental shelf offshore of Louisiana and Texas. The outcrops at Alderdice Bank bear diverse, extremely dense assemblages of gorgonians and black corals, sponges, and swarms of reef fish. Mesophotic coralline algae reef habitats below the spires, silted over in areas, provide habitat for dense populations of black corals, gorgonians, sponges, branching stony corals, fields of macro-algae, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates.
  - (16) Parker Bank - Depth Range 187ft–387ft, 7.0 square miles in size. The shallowest portions of Parker Bank harbor coralline algae reefs and algal nodule fields and support populations of plating stony corals, black corals, gorgonians, sponges, macro-algae, and associated fish and mobile invertebrates.
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