

United States Virgin Islands

**COMMERCIAL &
RECREATIONAL FISHERS'
INFORMATION HANDBOOK**



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

2019

Note

This booklet summarizes the rules and regulations for recreational and commercial fishing in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) and some of the federal regulations that apply in adjacent Federal waters.

This publication was prepared for general informational purposes only and has no legal force or effect. Fishing regulations are subject to change. **It is your responsibility to become familiar with the latest territorial and federal regulatory updates and to comply with the current official regulations.** Previous editions of this handbook represent outdated information and should not be used. For additional and updated regulations concerning USVI Territorial waters (0 to 3 nautical miles offshore), please contact the USVI Division of Environmental Enforcement at 340-774-3320 (St. Thomas) or 340-773-5774 (St. Croix).

For current and specific regulations for fishing in Federal waters (3 – 200 nautical miles offshore), fishers should contact the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) Southeast Regional Office at 727-824-5305 or consult official sources of information, such as the Federal Register. Fishers with questions about Atlantic Highly Migratory Species should call the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Management Division at 727-824-5399 (Spanish or English) or 301-427-8503 (English only). **If there is a discrepancy between this document and the regulations in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (<https://gov.ecfr.io/cgi-bin/ECFR>) or the Virgin Islands Code (<http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/vicode/>), the regulations take precedence.**

If you have any questions concerning fishery matters other than regulations, please contact the USVI Division of Fish and Wildlife (see back cover).

We would like to thank the following agencies for assisting in the preparation and review of this handbook: NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office – Sustainable Fisheries Division, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service – Habitat Conservation Division, NOAA Fisheries Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Management Division, the Caribbean Fishery Management Council, the National Park Service, the St. Croix Fishery Advisory Committee, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources.



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Charles W. Turnbull Regional Public Library
4607 Tutu Park Mall
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00802

Office of the Commissioner

Telephone: (340) 774-3320

Fax: (340) 775-5706

To the Fishing Community of the US Virgin Islands:

Fishing is strong part of our island way of life, whether you're a commercial fisher providing fresh catch to residents or restaurants, a charter providing recreational opportunities for our visitors and residents looking to spend the day out at sea, or an individual tossing a hand-line out to relax. The Department encourages all to enjoy our fisheries resources in the manner that suits them; however, to ensure the longevity of these resources, certain guidelines apply.

This handbook provides the rules and regulations for commercial and recreational fishing in the US Virgin Islands and in our adjacent federal waters. These include catch limitations, seasonal closures, and harvest restrictions. Regulations may vary depending on which district you are in (St. Thomas/St. John or St. Croix), so please be mindful of your geographic location.

Only with your participation in responsible resource usage will we ensure the sustainability of our great fishery. The Department looks forward to continued collaboration and active participation with the fishing community on the sustainability of our fishery now and for generations to come.

Should you have any questions regarding any of the regulations within this handbook, please contact DPNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife at (340)775-6762 in St. Thomas, or (340)773-1082 in St. Croix.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JP Oriol".

Jean-Pierre L. Oriol
Commissioner

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TO ALL FISHERS OF THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

The U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) is responsible for the conservation and management of our fisheries and enforcement of boating and fishing regulations (*V.I. Code Title 12 Conservation, Title 25 Navigation, and the Boating Safety Act of 1972*).

The Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) monitors the commercial and recreational fisheries of the USVI and provides recommendations to the Commissioner of DPNR on matters relating to fisheries management. Working with fishers to obtain accurate information is a vital component of DFW's work and will help to ensure that the fishery resources of the USVI remain sustainable for future generations.

The Division of Environmental Enforcement is responsible for the explanation and enforcement of regulations in matters pertaining to boating, fishing, and the environment.

We hope that you find this handbook useful as you engage in your fishing activities. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us (see back cover for contact information).

LINKS TO RELEVANT WEBSITES

Recreational and commercial fishers may find the following links to relevant agencies and resources helpful.

USVI Department of Planning & Natural Resources – <https://dpr.vi.gov/>

USVI Recreational Fishing Licenses & Information – <http://usvifishinglicense.org/>

Virgin Islands Fishing Information Network – <https://www.facebook.com/usvifish/>

Virgin Islands Code – <http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/vicode/>

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – <https://gov.ecfr.io/cgi-bin/ECFR>

Caribbean Fisheries Management Council – <http://www.caribbeanfmc.com/>

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service – <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/>

NOAA NMFS Southeast Regional Office – <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

NOAA Southeast Regional Office Permit Shop – <https://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/permits>

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (NMFS) – <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species> and <https://hmspermits.noaa.gov/>

RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSES FOR TERRITORIAL WATERS

The U.S. Virgin Islands has an extremely active recreational fishery, known for its access to coastal as well as offshore fishing. Targeted species range from large pelagics and billfish (Wahoo, Dolphinfish, tunas, and marlins) to coastal pelagics (mackerels, barracudas, and jacks) and reef fish (snappers, groupers, triggerfish, and more). The USVI recreational fishery consists of shoreline fishers, private use vessels, charter fishing operations, and fishing tournaments.

“Recreational fishing” is defined as “fishing or fishing activities which result in the harvest of fish, none of which (or parts thereof) is sold, traded, or bartered” (50 CFR 622.2). **Sale, barter, or trade of catch by recreational fishers is prohibited.** Traps (pots) and seine nets are gear types that are considered commercial gear and may **not** be used by recreational fishers.

Information about recreational fisheries may be found on the U.S. Virgin Islands Recreational Fishing Licenses & Information website at: usvifishinglicense.org. Anglers may register for recreational fishing licenses online at this website. USVI residents and visitors alike may apply for a USVI recreational fishing license. There are four (4) types of recreational licenses available:

1. Individual Recreational Angler license: apply for this license if you are a resident or visitor going on a charter fishing trip, fishing on a privately owned vessel, or fishing from shore.
2. Recreational Fishing Charter Vessel license: apply for this license if you own a USVI-based charter fishing business or take paying customers on fishing trips aboard your vessel.
3. Private Recreational Vessel license: apply for this license if you own a private vessel that you fish on by yourself or with friends, family, or other non-paying individuals.
4. Fishing Tournament license: apply for this license to participate in recreational fishing tournaments in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

To apply for a license, you will need to create a free account online at <http://usvifishinglicense.org/register>. After verifying your email address by clicking on the link that you receive, you will be able to apply for a recreational fishing license by filling out the form corresponding to the license you need. You may print and sign the certificate that is generated and keep it with you during your fishing activities. If you are a USVI resident, your license will be valid for a period of one year (365 days) from the date you submit your application. If you are a visitor to the USVI, your license will be valid for a period of three (3) months (90 days).

It is your responsibility as a recreational fishing license holder to become familiar with the latest territorial and federal regulatory updates and to comply with the current regulations, including gear and size restrictions and seasonal closures. Possession of a USVI recreational fishing license:

1. does **not** exempt you from any federal permit requirements for fishing in Federal waters such as Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Permits (<https://hmspermits.noaa.gov>).
2. does **not** permit you to sell, trade, or barter the fish that you catch (50 CFR 622.2). Only licensed USVI commercial fishers may sell their fish in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

RECREATIONAL FISHING: REPORTING YOUR CATCH

DFW monitors the health of fishery resources in the U.S. Virgin Islands using reports submitted by recreational and commercial fishers. Whether you are a shoreline-based fisher, private vessel owner, vessel for hire, or charter guest, and whether you fish daily or only occasionally, we need your help to preserve and maintain our fishery resources!

DFW requests that all recreational fishers report your catch each time you go fishing. The reports are voluntary and request information about your fishing activity and landings. Your data will remain confidential and will contribute to better understanding of our fisheries, allowing managers to make more informed decisions to ensure our fisheries are kept sustainable for generations to come. To assist you in properly identifying the fish you catch, DFW has many resources including brochures, posters, and guides (see page 7). Some of these materials are available online at DFW's website: <https://dpr.vi.gov/fish-and-wildlife>. Please contact us for hard copies of these reference materials or if you are looking for something in particular that you don't see on the website.

How Can I submit My Report?

There are various methods that you may use to report your recreational fishing activity. Fishing charter companies or those who go fishing often are encouraged to utilize the **sportfishing logbook**, which is available at the Division of Fish and Wildlife offices in Red Hook, St. Thomas, and Mars Hill, Frederiksted, St. Croix. These logbooks contain multiple pages where you can log your fishing activity and landings. You are requested to bring your logbook to DFW at least monthly so that we can photocopy your logbook pages and enter your information into our database. For those who fish infrequently, one-page **physical catch report forms** are also available at the DFW offices. These forms can be submitted at the DFW offices, at the catch report drop boxes (see Page 14 for locations) or emailed to dfw.fish@dpr.vi.gov. There is also a **digital reporting form** available at:

<http://tinyurl.com/usvifish>

The Digital Reporting form can be accessed by scanning the QR code below. Stickers featuring the QR code are available from DFW for your convenience. We thank you for your cooperation and participation in this important data collection program!



QR Code Instructions:

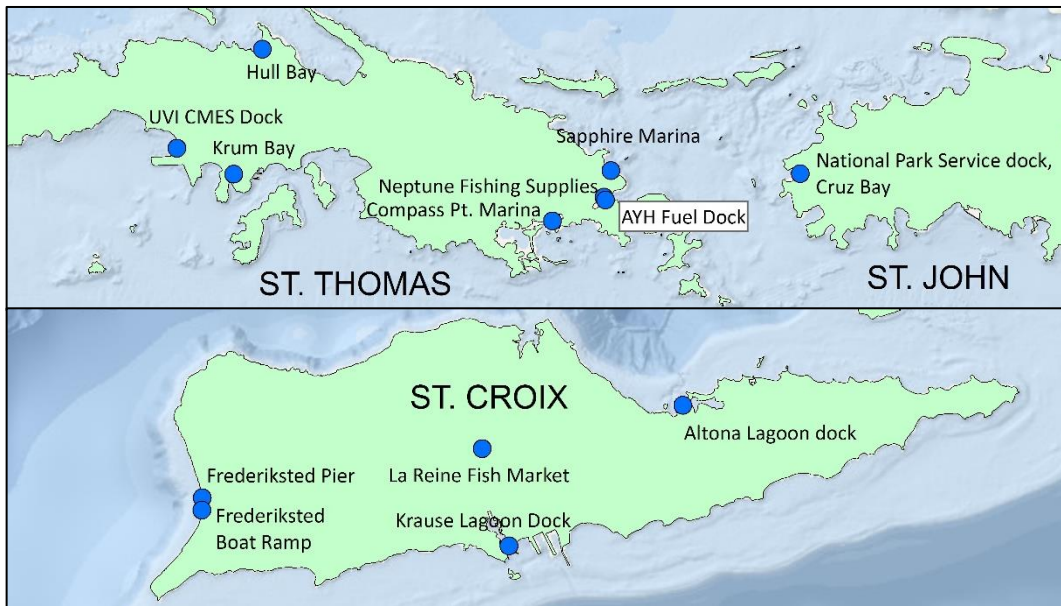
1. Using your smartphone, open the camera or a QR code reader application and point it at the QR code.
2. Click the link that appears to open the Recreational Fishing Report Form.
3. Enter your fishing trip information.
4. Click "Submit" at the bottom of the form to send your data to the Division of Fish and Wildlife!

MONOFILAMENT RECYCLING PROGRAM

DFW has implemented a monofilament recycling program throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands. This program encourages anglers to be responsible resource users and promotes proper disposal of fishing line to preserve our natural resources.

Monofilament collectors made of PVC pipe are located around St. Thomas and St. Croix. Anglers are encouraged to dispose of their monofilament line in these bins to prevent impacting natural resources and wildlife such as coral reefs and sea birds. The collectors are emptied regularly and the collected monofilament line is shipped out of the territory to a monofilament recycling plant.

Monofilament collectors are present at the following locations:



Monofilament collectors installed at Brewers Bay (UVI Center for Marine and Environmental Studies dock), St. Thomas, and Frederiksted boat ramp, St. Croix.

St. Thomas Shoreline Fishing Locations



1 WATER FRONT

2 FRENCHTOWN

3 BREWERS BAY

4 FORTUNA BAY

5 STUMPY BAY

6 NELTJIBERG BAY

7 DOROTHEA BAY

8 HULL BAY

9 MANDAHL BAY

10 WATER BAY

11 LONG POINT

12 MANGROVE LAGOON

13 NAZARETH BAY

14 COWPET BAY

15 GREAT BAY



Items in **RED** are within the Cas

Cay/Mangrove Lagoon Marine

Reserves and Wildlife Sanctuaries.

Only handline fishing is allowed by

permit from shore. Excludes the

use of nets, traps, or pots. See

Environmental Enforcement for

further guidance.

Report your recreational catch today! Open the camera app on your phone or the QR scanner app and just point to scan!

St. Croix Shoreline Fishing Locations



- ① WEST END
- ② LONG POINT
- ③ MOLASSES PIER/
KRAUSE LAGOON
- ④ HA' PENNY BAY/
MANCHENIL BAY
- ⑤ CASTLE NUGENT
- ⑥ GREAT POND BAY
- ⑦ GRASSY POINT
- ⑧ TURNER HOLE
- ⑨ COTTON GARDEN BAY/
CRAMER'S PARK
- ⑩ TEAGUE BAY
- ⑪ COAKLEY BAY
- ⑫ CHENAY BAY
- ⑬ ALTONA LAGOON
- ⑭ RICHMOND/
WATER GUT
- ⑮ CANE BAY

Items in **RED** are within the St. Croix East End Marine Park (STXEEMP). Shoreline fishing is permitted at the sites featured in the map above. For specific regulations and hours of operation, contact the St. Croix East End Marine Park (340) 718-3367.



Report your recreational catch today! Open the camera app on your phone or the QR scanner app and just point to scan!

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR FISHERS

Resources are available to enhance fishing competencies and knowledge of the habitats and natural resources of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The following materials are available at the DFW offices.

Brochures	Posters	Books
Aquatic Education Program	Mammals of the VI	Invasive Species Action Plan
Shallow Water Reef Fishing Guide	Summer Migrant Sea Birds	Fish Activity Book (grades 4-6)
Shallow Water Game Fishing Guide	Winter Resident Sea Birds	Fishing in the VI (grades 4-6)
Deep Water Game Fishing Guide	Doves and Columbids	Where I Live Coloring Book
A Walk Along the Coastline	Salt Pond Habitats	Animals of the VI Coloring Book
Shoreline Fishing Guide	Freshwater Habitats	Composition Book (grades K-3)
Invasive Species	Seagrass Habitats	Aquatic Fact Sheet Book
Salt Ponds	Coral Reef Habitats	Fishing VI Style
Regulations of Managed Areas	Mangrove Habitats	Fishing Tools
Christmas Cove Moorings	Shallow Water Reef Fish	Queen Conch and Whelk measuring gauges
Marine Mammal / Sea Turtle Viewing Guide	Shallow Water Game Fish	Lobster measuring gauges
Mariner's Resource Protection Guide	Mid-Water Game Fish	Common USVI Snappers & Groupers ruler
Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)	Deep Water Game Fish	A quick reference guide to USVI fishing regulations
Prevent Entanglement	Fish Facts	USVI fishing emergency contact magnets
Doves and Columbids of the VI	Be a Responsible Resource User	Commercial & recreational logbooks

USVI FISHING RULES AND REGULATIONS

The remainder of this booklet summarizes the rules and regulations for fishing in the U.S. Virgin Islands and adjacent Federal waters. As fishing regulations can change, fishers are responsible for remaining up to date with regulations. For current and specific regulations for fishing in Territorial waters, fishers may contact the USVI Division of Environmental Enforcement. Regulations pertaining to adjacent Federal waters are presented on Page 27. For current and specific regulations for fishing in Federal waters, fishers should contact the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) Southeast Regional Office at 727-824-5305.

GENERAL RULES FOR FISHERS

1. **No explosives, poisons, drugs, or other chemicals may be used to fish in Territorial or Federal waters.**
2. **Fishing Vessel Registration** (*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A, § 311 & 312(a)*) – No person may engage in fishing and no vessel or other fishing device may be used in fishing in the territory unless registered, certified or licensed. Any and all vessels used for or engaged in commercial fishing or the hauling of traps, pots, nets or seines in the territory shall conform to the requirements for displaying numbers and colors. Annual boat registration is conducted by the Division of Environmental Enforcement during the month of June. Commercial fishers may register their boats while renewing their commercial fishing licenses in July.
3. **Boat Safety Standards** – All motorboats must meet the safety standards of the Virgin Islands Code and the Federal Boating Safety Act of 1972.
4. **Fishing in waters outside of the USVI** – The British Virgin Islands (BVI) and Puerto Rico each have their own fishing laws and regulations. Your USVI fishing license does not permit you to fish in the Territorial waters of the BVI or Puerto Rico, nor does it permit you to fish in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of other countries.
5. **Fishing in Altona Lagoon and Great Pond, St. Croix** – No commercial fishing is permitted in Altona Lagoon or Great Pond, St. Croix.

A recreational shrimp fishing permit is required for the harvesting of shrimp (see page 26). A one-year permit for \$10 is available at the Division of Environmental Enforcement's St. Croix office (contact information on back cover).

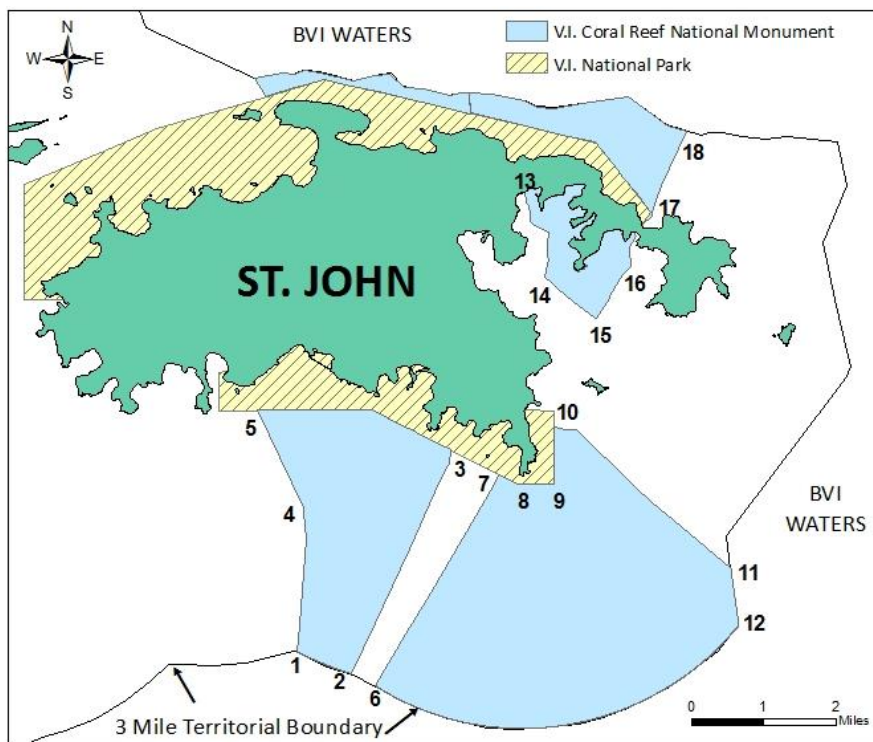
6. **St. James Marine Reserve & Wildlife Sanctuary** – A permit is required to collect baitfish with a cast net within 50 feet of the shoreline or to fish with a hook and line. The line fishing permit costs \$2.00 per month. The bait fishing permit costs \$5.00 per month. Both permits may be purchased for a maximum of two months from the Division of Environmental Enforcement. The permits may be renewed at the end of the two months.

7. **Cas Cay/Mangrove Lagoon Marine Reserve & Wildlife Sanctuary** – A permit is required to collect baitfish using a cast net within 50 feet of the north and west shorelines of Cas Cay, St. Thomas. The bait fishing permit is \$5.00 per month and may be purchased for a maximum of two months from the Division of Environmental Enforcement.

All other fishing and harvest of other animals and plants is prohibited in this area (see page 25). All fishing is prohibited in the **Inner Mangrove Lagoon** (see pages 25 and 37).

8. **USVI Marine Reserve System** – For information on the rules and regulations of other areas within the Virgin Islands Marine Reserve System, contact the Division of Environmental Enforcement at (340) 774-3320 (St. Thomas) or (340) 773-5774 (St. Croix). For information on the St. Croix East End Marine Park, contact the Marine Park Coordinator at (340) 718-3367.

9. **Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument (VICRNM) (36 CFR 7.46)** – Anchoring is prohibited and all fishing is prohibited in VICRNM, with the following exceptions: 1) Bait fishing is permitted in Hurricane Hole and 2) fishing for Blue Runner (Hardnose) is only permitted at designated mooring locations near Cabritte Horn Point. Both activities require a permit from the National Park Service (NPS). For information and regulations regarding the V.I. Coral Reef National Monument (south and northeast sides of St. John), contact NPS at (340) 776-6201. **The rules and regulations for the V.I. Coral Reef National Monument are different from those of the VI National Park waters (see #7 below).**



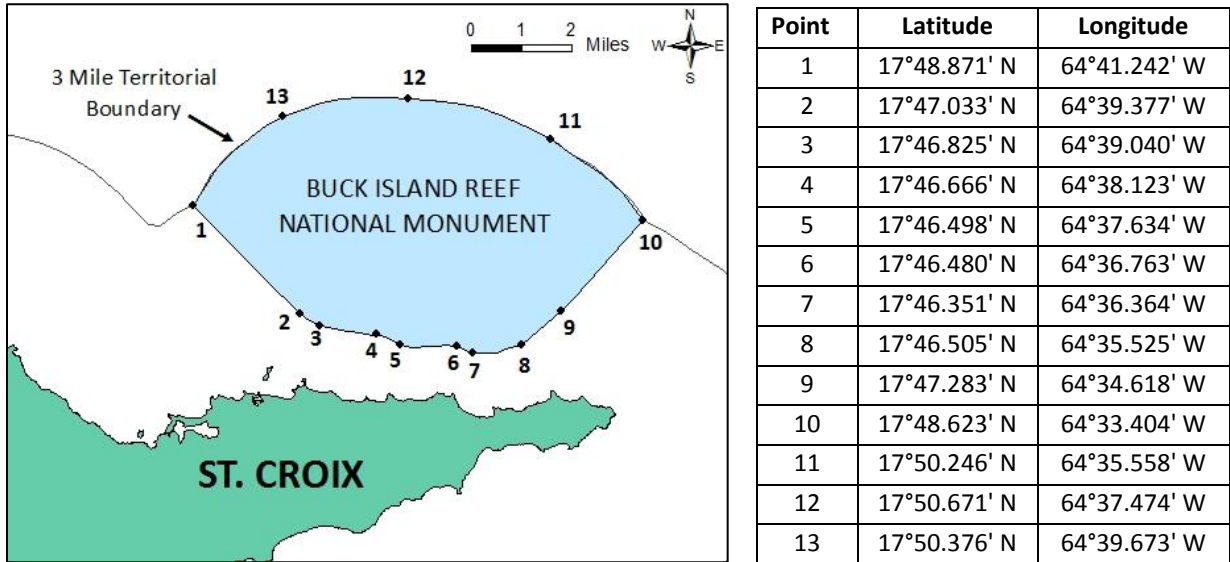
Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	18°15.799'N	64°44.878'W
2	18°15.532'N	64°44.235'W
3	18°18.178'N	64°43.036'W
4	18°17.504'N	64°44.819'W
5	18°18.692'N	64°45.354'W
6	18°15.413'N	64°43.947'W
7	18°17.899'N	64°42.451'W
8	18°17.781'N	64°42.243'W
9	18°17.791'N	64°41.808'W
10	18°18.474'N	64°41.540'W
11	18°16.790'N	64°39.678'W
12	18°16.097'N	64°39.579'W
13	18°20.772'N	64°41.877'W
14	18°20.287'N	64°41.916'W
15	18°19.762'N	64°41.292'W
16	18°20.386'N	64°40.876'W
17	18°21.070'N	64°40.629'W
18	18°21.961'N	64°40.242'W

Map and table showing locations of marker buoys delineating the VI Coral Reef National Monument, St. John.

10. **Virgin Islands National Park** (36 CFR 7.74) – Anchoring is prohibited except in designated areas. The Virgin Islands National Park (see figure above) has separate and specific regulations on fishing. Commercial fishing is prohibited. Fishing using rod and reel or handline is permitted. Fishing with traps of conventional Virgin Islands design and not larger than five feet at the greatest dimension is permitted. Baitfish may be taken by nets of no greater overall length than 20 feet and of mesh not larger than 1 inch stretched. The possession of or use of spearfishing equipment within park boundaries is prohibited. All fishing is prohibited: in swim zones (designated by white cylindrical boat exclusion buoys), when tied to a mooring ball, and from the following areas 1) NPS Red Hook Dock, and 2) Cruz Bay Finger Pier & Bulkhead.

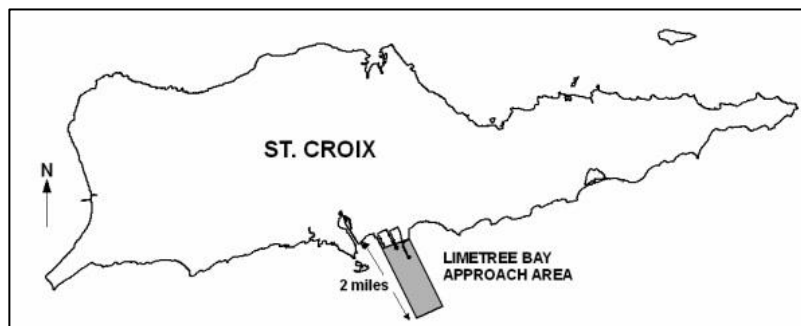
The species of crustaceans known as Caribbean Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*) may be taken by hand. No person shall take female lobsters with eggs; or take more than two lobsters per person per day; or have in possession more than two days' limit. Species of mollusks commonly known as whelks (West Indian Top Snail) and conchs (Queen Conch) may be taken by hand. No person shall take more than two conchs or one gallon of whelks, or both, per day, or have in possession more than two days' limit. For information on fishing regulations within the Virgin Islands National Park, contact the National Park Service at (340) 776-6201, or visit their website at: <https://www.nps.gov/viis/planyourvisit/index.htm>.

11. **Buck Island Reef National Monument** (36 CFR 7.73) – All fishing and fishing equipment is prohibited throughout Buck Island Reef National Monument. All anchoring is prohibited except in areas designated by the National Park Service. For current information regarding rules and regulations for Buck Island Reef National Monument, St. Croix, contact the Visitor and Resource Protection Division at Christiansted National Historic Site, Christiansted Headquarters office at (340) 773-1460. NPS boundary buoys are located at points 2-9 on the figure below. NPS boundary buoys, letter designation I, J, K, L, M, N, O are yellow in color, unlighted with reflective tape.



Map and table showing locations of marker buoys delineating Buck Island Reef National Monument, St. Croix.

12. **Limetree Bay Restricted Area, St. Croix** – Limetree Bay remains a Restricted Area. No vessels may enter the restricted area or cross channels or pass inside the fringing reef upon entering or leaving Alucroix Channel (see figure below). This area includes all waters two miles seaward of the Limetree Bay facility waterfront. Anchoring, mooring, or transiting this area is not permitted. For current information on restrictions, during normal working hours (Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm) contact the Marine Pilot at (340) 692-3489 or VHF Radio channel 11 or Command Center at (340) 692-3000. After normal working hours, please contact the 24-hour line at (340) 692-3518. You may also contact the U.S. Coast Guard in St. Croix at (340) 772-5557 ext. 209 for Boat Forces, or sector San Juan at (787) 289-2041.



Map showing the location of Limetree Bay restricted area in St. Croix.

COMMERCIAL FISHING IN TERRITORIAL WATERS

On August 24, 2001, the USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources implemented a moratorium on issuance of new commercial fishing licenses. License renewals may only be issued to fishers who have held a commercial fishing license for at least one year within three years of June 2001 and have complied with reporting requirements. Existing licenses must be renewed annually. Fishing licenses may be transferred (see below).

WHO NEEDS A COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE TO FISH IN TERRITORIAL WATERS?

1. All commercial fishers.
2. Any person who uses a pot, trap, set-net, or haul seine, even for personal consumption.
3. Any person who sells, trades, or barter any part of their catch, **including charter boat operators who sell or trade their catch.**
4. Commercial fishing “helpers” must obtain a helper’s permit from the Division of Environmental Enforcement (\$25.00) to assist a licensed commercial fisher. The licensed commercial fisher **must be onboard** when the helper is fishing. Helpers may not undertake commercial fishing operations on a vessel in the absence of the licensed commercial fisher.
5. Additionally, any person fishing for or possessing Bigeye, Albacore, Skipjack, Yellowfin, and Bluefin Tunas is required to have a federal fishing permit (see Atlantic Highly Migratory Species information on pages 32 – 34).

All vessels that are owned in whole or in part by a resident of the Territory, shall pay an annual registration fee of \$25 to \$200, depending on the length of boat. Commercial fishers are exempt from these boat registration fees, provided they possess a valid business license from the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) (\$1.00 license). The valid business license also makes fishers eligible for certain tax benefits (see page 16 for more information). The Division of Environmental Enforcement provides photo ID cards for commercial fishers and helpers.

TRANSFER OF USVI COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSES

Commercial fishing licenses are transferable. *V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §312(c)* as amended by Bill number 29-0329 allows the transfer of fishing licenses to family members and fishers’ helpers. License transfer requests are submitted to the Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife, are reviewed by the Fisheries Advisory Committees (FAC), and are approved or denied by the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources. To apply to have your

fishing license transferred, pick up the required form from the DFW offices. The completed form needs to be signed by both the original license holder and the transferee (license recipient) and must be notarized.

Commercial fishing licenses may only be issued to U.S. citizens who are permanent residents of the USVI for at least one year. No license shall be issued to a minor under 17 years old, except with the written consent of his or her parent or guardian.

STEPS TO RENEWING A USVI COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE

1. Commercial fishers must first complete a Fishermen's Certificate of Eligibility form. The applications for these certificates can be obtained at the DFW offices (contact information on back cover). Return the completed and notarized application to DFW for signature. The completed form then needs to be signed by the Department of Agriculture and Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA). Upon submission of the completed signed form to DLCA, fishers receive their valid business license (dollar license). This license is required for the maintenance and renewal of a commercial fishing license (Step 2, below).
2. Commercial fishing licenses are renewed in person at the Department of Planning and Natural Resources offices at an annual registration event conducted by DFW and the Division of Environmental Enforcement. At this event, fishers are required to bring their valid business license from DLCA to renew their fishing licenses. During registration, fishers will receive a copy of this handbook, commercial catch report forms (see Commercial Catch Reporting Requirements, page 14), a variety of educational and outreach materials, and any updates pertaining to fishing regulations or policies.
3. Commercial fishers who are authorized to use fish traps pursuant to the U.S. Virgin Islands Fish Trap Reduction Program, signed by the USVI Government in August 2017, shall pay an annual fee of one dollar (\$1.00) per fish trap to the Division of Environmental Enforcement for each fish trap authorized (see pages 22 – 23). The annual license fee shall commence for the registration period starting July 1, 2018 and shall be paid on or before June 30, 2018, and each calendar year thereafter. A onetime total late fee of \$25.00 shall be assessed if payment is received after July 1st. A \$5.00 monthly fee will be assessed after August 1st and for every month for which the annual fish trap license fee is due and owing.

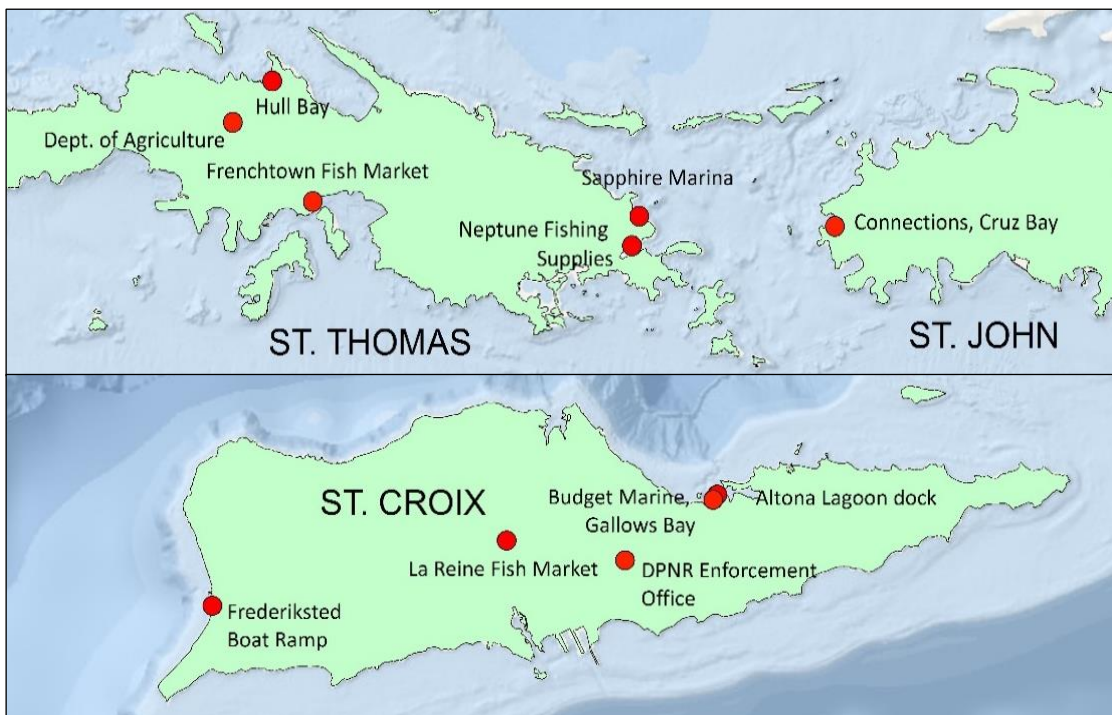
LOST OR DESTROYED LICENSES AND ID CARDS

If a USVI commercial fishing license or ID card is lost, misplaced, or destroyed, the licensed fisher or helper may apply to the Division of Environmental Enforcement to receive a replacement. There is a \$2.00 fee for replacing a lost license and a \$25.00 fee for replacing a fisher or helper ID card. The ID card must be renewed yearly.

TERRITORIAL COMMERCIAL CATCH REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

DFW monitors fishery resources in the U.S. Virgin Islands using commercial catch reports (CCRs) submitted by fishers. These forms collect information about fishing activity. All information is maintained in a confidential database. Accurate data is essential to fisheries management, as the information you provide contributes to a better understanding of our fishery. This allows environmental managers to make more informed decisions about our fisheries, fishing industry, and related issues, ensuring that the fisheries are kept sustainable for you as well as future generations. It is in your best interests to fill out your reports as truthfully and completely as possible. Inaccurate or incomplete CCRs provide misleading data that may generate undue concern over a fishery resource.

During fishing registration, commercial fishers will receive a stack of catch report forms with instructions on how to fill them out. During registration, DFW will inform you if any changes have been made to the forms and will provide updated instructions on how to best fill the forms out. If you have any questions about completing the CCRs or need additional forms contact DFW. The CCRs must be submitted within two weeks after every fishing trip or within two weeks after the close of the month if no fishing took place. CCRs must be submitted in person or dropped in one of the drop boxes around each island. Current locations of drop boxes are shown on the maps below.



Maps showing current locations of drop boxes where fishers may submit their catch reports.

All USVI commercial catch report forms must be completely filled out. Even if you do not catch anything on a fishing trip, your trip information must still be reported. CCRs submitted in person will immediately be reviewed for completeness and a receipt will be given to you to keep for your records. All CCRs are stamped with the date received.

If you do not fish during a calendar month, a CCR must still be submitted for each month that you did not fish. Record your name, fishing license #, and month you did not fish on the top of the form. **If all required CCRs are not submitted to DFW, you will not be able to renew your fishing license until the missing forms are submitted, and you may be subject to penalties.**

Any fisher may request a summary of their own catch records on file. Requests must be made in person as catch records are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone other than the person reporting them. If anyone other than the fisher requests information, a notarized letter from the fisher must be submitted before release of any information may occur.

ELECTRONIC REPORTING FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERS

DFW has been collaborating with environmental conservation and research organization *Conservacion ConCiencia* and fisheries technology developer *Shellcatch* to develop an electronic reporting system for the U.S. Virgin Islands. This new system would modernize the catch reporting process for commercial fishers in the USVI. The e-reporting system will help to improve the efficiency, reliability, and timeliness of commercial fisheries data collection and will advance fisheries management in the USVI for those fishers who prefer digital reporting over using paper forms. Many commercial fishers have been requesting an electronic reporting method for years, and the mobile application (app) has been in development since 2017.

To use the app, fishers will need a USVI commercial fishing license, a smartphone, and an e-mail address. The app will be available for fishers who use both iPhone and Android phones. DFW is available to assist fishers with registering an e-mail address if they don't already have one. Instructions and training will be provided to all fishers who would like to use the app. When the app is finalized, detailed information will be provided to all fishers to let them know that the app is ready for use and how to download and register an account through the app. This program marks a significant advancement in fisheries management and catch reporting in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and DFW is excited to be able to offer this option to interested fishers in the very near future! Contact us for updates (see contact information on back cover).

TERRITORIAL COMMERCIAL FISHING – GENERAL RULES

1. **Gear Compliance** – Before placing any gear in service, contact the Division of Environmental Enforcement to ensure it complies with current regulations.
2. **Boat Marking** (*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A §312g*) – All commercial fishers are assigned buoy colors that pertain to their fishing license number. All boats owned by commercial trap fishers must bear the fisher’s colors when engaged in commercial trap fishing.
3. **Marking Fishing Gear** (*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A §312e*) – All fish traps and nets must be marked with the fisher’s license number. Buoys must also bear the fisher’s assigned unique color scheme and the license #. The number must be cut or burned into the buoy.
4. **Trap Inspection** (*V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A §304-6*) – All commercial fish traps must be inspected and tagged prior to use. Call the USVI Division of Environmental Enforcement (DEE) to have the traps inspected and tagged prior to taking them out to sea. For information concerning pre-fishing trap inspections and mesh regulations, contact DEE.
5. **Commercial Fishing Licenses** (*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A §312c, §312h*) – Each commercial fisher is required to have a commercial fishing license. Commercial fishers must have the number of helpers who work with them indicated on their license. **The licensed fisher must be onboard when fishing and must have their commercial license with them.** Both helpers and licensees must have ID cards.
6. **Fishers’ Helpers** (*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A §312h*) – Commercial fishers’ helpers must have their own “Helpers License,” issued by the USVI Division of Environmental Enforcement. The helpers may not fish without the licensed commercial fisher on board.
7. **Commercial Catch Reports (CCRs)** (*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A §315*) – To monitor the status of USVI fisheries, each fisher is required to submit a commercial catch report for every fishing trip to DFW. CCRs must be submitted bi-weekly. If there was no fishing activity within a calendar month, a single monthly CCR must be received no later than 15 days after the end of the month for which it was prepared.
8. **Taxes** – (*V.I.C., Title 7, Chapter 13, §193*) – Fishers who obtain a commercial fishing business license from the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) may become eligible for several tax and fee benefits. Please contact DLCA in St. Thomas at (340) 774-3130 or St. Croix at (340) 773-2226 for information about these laws.
9. **Sampling of Catch / Port Sample Interviews** – Commercial fishing policies require the submission of commercial catch reports bi-weekly as well as participation in DFW’s port sampling program, whereby DFW measures your catch to collect detailed data that aids in the management of fisheries resources. Those who are actively fishing are required to participate in at least one (1) port sample per quarter, totaling four (4) for the fishing year. Failure to comply may result in the inability to renew your fishing license. Port samples can be conducted at the dock, at the DFW office, or at another agreed upon location.

TERRITORIAL FISH SALES REGULATIONS

1. **Fish Sales to the Public** (*V.I.C., Title 23, Chapter 3, Subchapter IX §342*) –The sale of fresh fish and agricultural products shall be allowed in public fish markets, butcher stalls, on public streets in areas designated by the USVI Police Department (VIPD), or when taken to residences. To sell fish landed in USVI, whether caught in Territorial waters or the USVI Exclusive Economic Zone (Federal waters), a fisher must possess a commercial fishing license issued by the USVI Division of Environmental Enforcement and a business license issued by DLCA. Possession of a federal Highly Migratory Species commercial permit and/or dealer permit or a Highly Migratory Species Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit does not grant authority to sell fish in the USVI without a USVI commercial fishing license and DLCA license.
2. **Local/Native Seafood** (*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A §324*) – No person shall sell, or represent for the purpose of sale, in any form, any seafood as local or native seafood unless the same shall have been originally caught or taken in this territory; nor shall any person so sell, or represent for the purpose of sale, in any form, any crustacean as local or native lobster unless the same is of the species known as *Panulirus argus*; nor shall any person so sell, or represent for the purpose of sale, in any form, any meat as local or native lobster meat unless such meat is wholly from crustaceans of such species. Any person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction therefor, shall be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five (\$25) dollars nor more than one hundred (\$100) dollars on each count.
3. **Sale of seafood by non-residents** (*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A §313*) – Any person not a resident of the territory and desiring to engage in commercial fishing in the territory, must conform to the same laws, rules, and regulations by which the resident fishers of the territory are governed and no person not a resident of the territory may bring his catch of fish to sell in the territory unless he obtains the proper license duly issued by the Commissioner, which license shall be granted by the Commissioner only in those cases which will be of benefit to the interest and welfare of the territory.
4. **Seafood caught outside the Territory** (*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A §313*) – Fish caught or harvested outside the jurisdictional waters of the territory and brought to the territory for consumption, whether in local or foreign vessels, shall be subject to the regulatory requirements and other provisions relative to harvesting of domestic species.

No person may import a Caribbean Spiny Lobster with less than a 6-ounce tail weight into the USVI (*50 CFR 622.458*). Consult the CFR for additional specifications.

5. **Conch Imports** – Conch is protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Federal law prohibits import or export of conch unless: (1) the conch is accompanied by a CITES import/export permit from the regulatory authority of the exporting country, and (2) it is imported / exported through a federally designated port of entry. A “Designated Port Exemption” permit is needed to import through San Juan, Puerto Rico. For information or an import/export license application, visit “import/export permits” on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at www.fws.gov, or contact the USFWS Office of Wildlife Inspection in Miami at (305) 526-2620. To check on the status of an application, contact the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement in Atlanta, Georgia at (404) 679-7195.

PENALTIES FOR FISHERIES VIOLATIONS

Anyone convicted of violating any fisheries law or regulation in USVI Territorial waters shall have their commercial fishing license suspended for one month on the first offense, three months on the second offense, and one year on the third and subsequent offenses [*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §312j*]. Fees will not be refunded for a license that has been suspended or voided.

Any person violating fisheries laws and regulations of the USVI shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and fined [*V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A §325, V.I. Territorial Court Order Misc. No. 23/2004 STT/STJ District and Misc. No. 06/2004 STX District*]. Fines for fishing violations are up to \$500, lobster violations are up to \$600, and violations in wildlife and marine sanctuaries are up to \$5,000. For further information, contact the USVI Division of Environmental Enforcement.

The fishing license and/or vessel registration of any person who willfully fails to make a report or makes a false report concerning fisheries violations shall be suspended, and a new fishing license shall not be issued until a valid report is made [*VIC Title 12, Chapter 9A, 315(c) and 312(j)*].

Any commercial fisher who does not comply with the mandatory requirements for participation in the fisheries data collection programs (submission of their commercial catch reports bi-weekly and participation in port sampling of their catch by DFW) may be prohibited from renewal of their commercial fishing license and boat registration.

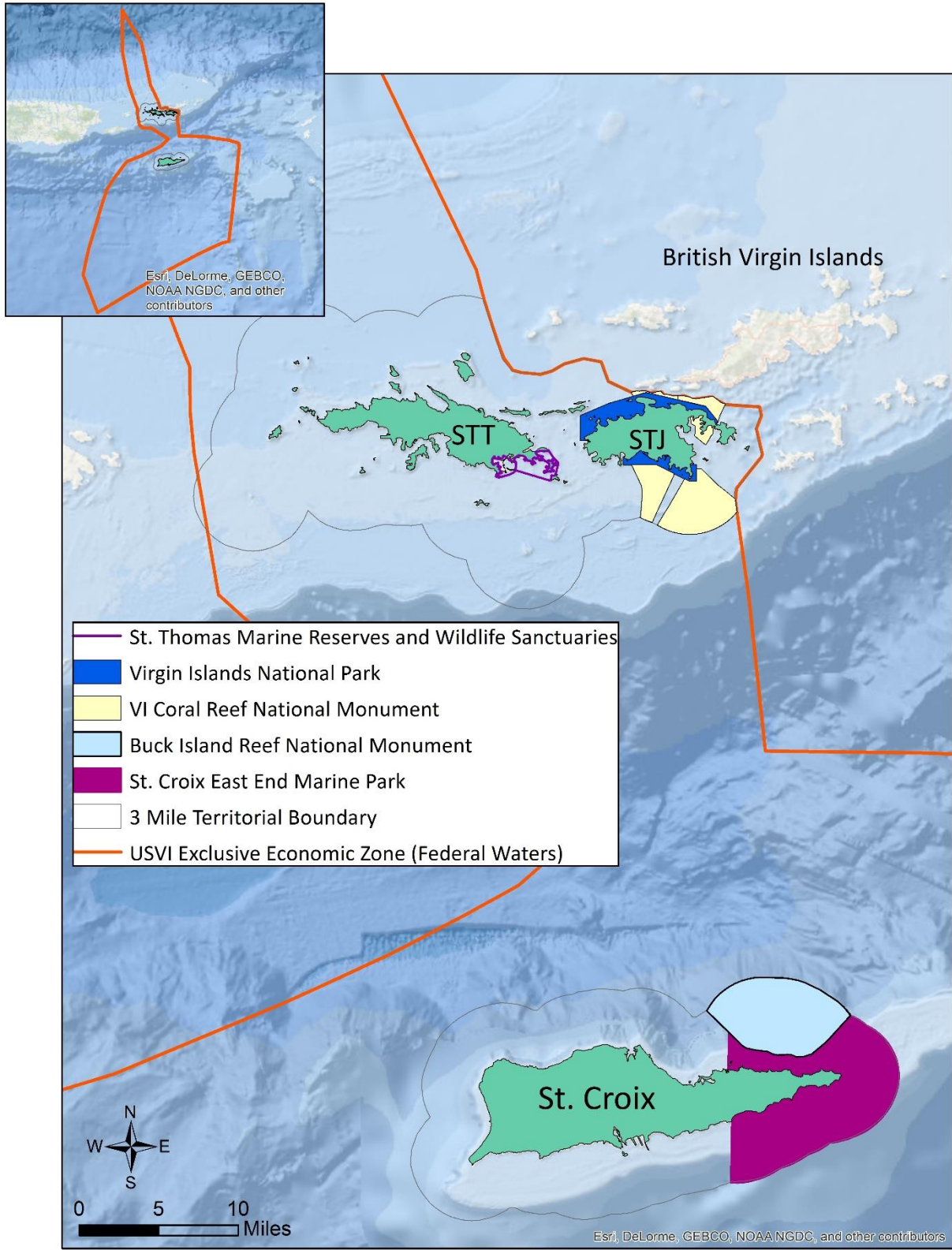
REWARDS FOR CONVICTIONS

V.I.C. Title 12, Chapter 9A §325 - Any person, other than a law enforcement officer, who furnishes evidence sufficient to convict any violator of the regulations which address marine turtles and their eggs or nests; lobsters and their eggs; fishing with explosives; or contaminating public waters shall receive a reward of \$50.00 for each conviction from the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources.

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

USVI Division of Environmental Enforcement (for violations in Territorial waters)	
St. Thomas/St. John:	(340) 774-3320
St. Croix:	(340) 773-5774
NOAA Fisheries (for violations in Federal waters)	
NOAA Fisheries Law Enforcement	(787) 890-0715 (Office)
NOAA Fisheries National Enforcement Hotline:	(800) 853-1964
NOAA Fisheries in St. Petersburg, Florida:	(727) 824-5344 (Office) / (727) 824-5355 (Fax)
U.S. Coast Guard	
St. Thomas/St. John:	(340) 344-3537
St. Croix:	(340) 778-6311
USCG 24-Hour Emergency Line:	(787) 729-6800

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS TERRITORIAL AND FEDERAL BOUNDARIES



Maps showing USVI territorial and federal boundaries and managed areas within the territory.

SUMMARY OF FISHING REGULATIONS - U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS TERRITORIAL WATERS

TERRITORIAL WATERS EXTEND FROM SHORE TO 3 MILES OFFSHORE

1. **Whelk (West Indian Top Shell):** *V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316-5, 316-6, & 316-7.*

Size Limit: Minimum size of shell must be greater than 2 7/16" in diameter across the width of the shell at its widest point (see Appendix 3). No harvest of undersized whelk is permitted.

Landing Restriction: Must be landed live and whole in the shell.

Closed Season: **No harvest or possession April 1 through September 30.**

2. **Queen Conch:** *V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316-1:4.*

Size Limit: Minimum size of 9-inch shell length from the tip of the spire to the distal end of the shell, or 3/8-inch lip thickness (width) at its widest point (see Appendix 3). No harvest of undersized conch is permitted.

Harvest Quota: Quota = 50,000 pounds for the St. Croix district.

Commercial Trip Limit: Limited to 200 conch per day per registered commercial fishing vessel on which a licensed commercial fisher must be present.

Recreational Bag Limit: Limited to 6 conch per day per recreational (personal use) fisher; not to exceed 24 conch per boat per day.

Landing Restriction: *V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316-2.*
Conch must be landed alive and in the shell and reported in the district from which they were harvested. It is prohibited to land conch shells on offshore islands and cays for the purpose of removing meat from the shell. It is prohibited to dispose of conch shells by throwing the empty shells back in the water.

Sale Restriction: No sale of undersized conch shell or meat from undersized conch. No sale of imported conch meat unless shipment is accompanied by a CITES export permit and shipment is cleared at the Port of Miami. See Conch Imports, page 17 for exceptions and further information.

Closed Season: **No harvest or possession June 1 through October 31.**
V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316 (c); V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316

(a).

Once June 1st is reached, the season will close until November 1st of that year. No harvest, possession, or sale of fresh or preserved (frozen, salted, or treated in chemical solution) conch which has been caught in the U.S. Virgin Islands seven days after the start of the closed season.

V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316 (c); V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316 (b).

Sale and transportation of conch is permitted during the closed season if the conch is imported from outside the U.S. Virgin Islands or is caught and stored prior to the closing of the season.

3. **Caribbean Spiny
Lobster:**

V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §319.

Size Limit:

Minimum size limit of no less than 3.5 inches carapace length (see Appendix 3).

Harvest Quota:

No harvest quota in Territorial waters. Annual catch limits apply in Federal waters, see page 36.

Landing Restriction:

Must be landed whole.
No harvest of females with eggs.

Gear Restrictions:

No explosives, poisons, drugs, other chemicals, spears, hooks, or similar devices may be used to take lobsters. No gill nets or trammel nets may be used.

4. **Shrimp:**

V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §303 (a)(1).

No commercial harvest or sale in Altona Lagoon or Great Pond.
Recreational harvest allowed only with permit (see page 8).

5. **Goliath Grouper:**

V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316.

The harvest possession of Goliath Grouper is **prohibited year-round** in the territory.

6. **Nassau Grouper:**

V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316.

The harvest and possession of Nassau Grouper is **prohibited year-round** in the territory.

7. **Other Groupers:
Red, Black, Tiger
Yellowfin, &
Yellowedge:**

V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316.

No harvest or possession from **February 1 through April 30** in the territory.

8. **Snappers:** *V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316.*
Black, Blackfin, Silk & Vermillion: No harvest or possession **October 1 through December 31** in St. Thomas/St. John district. **St. Croix is exempt from the seasonal closure for these species in Territorial waters.**
- Lane & Mutton: No possession from **April 1 through June 30** for the territory.
9. **Billfish, Swordfish, Tuna & Shark:** *V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A.*
 Federal regulations (e.g., permit, gear, landing, reporting requirements) may apply in both federal and Territorial waters for recreational and commercial permit holders. See pages 32 – 34 for specific regulations.
10. **Tarpon & Bonefish:** *V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §303(a)(1-3)and (b).*
 No harvest. Catch and release using hook and line only.
11. **Sea Turtles:** *V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §318; Chapter 2 §105(b).*
 Endangered species. No harvest, no possession, and no harassment of sea turtles or their eggs. See Appendix 4.
12. **Traps:** *V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A §304 (b).*
Fish Trap Reduction Program: The Virgin Islands Fish Trap Reduction Program was signed into law by the Governor of the USVI in August 2017. The purpose of these rules and regulations is to establish a sustainable management program for the fish trap fishery within Territorial waters in order to achieve the following general intentions and purpose of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands:
- 1) Limit participation in the Virgin Islands fish trap fishery; 2) Cap the maximum number of allowable fish traps per fisher; 3) Reduce the total number of fish traps by about 20% relative to the status quo in St. Thomas/St. John; 4) Reduce the total number of fish traps by about 10% relative to the status quo in St. Croix; 5) Improve the economic efficiency of the fish trap fishery by increasing catch per trap.
- Fish Trap Reduction Program Eligibility: All fishers who held a valid USVI commercial fishing license on February 10, 2011, and who recorded landings on commercial catch records with fish trap gear between February 10, 2010 and February 10, 2011 will be eligible to participate in the program. A valid USVI fish trap license is required to utilize fish traps within USVI Territorial waters. A valid USVI fish trap license is required to land fish in the USVI that have been harvested with fish trap gear from Territorial waters.

Reduction for St. Thomas and St. John District:

Each fisher with a USVI fish trap endorsement will be authorized to set a specific number of fish traps with USVI Territorial waters based on their prior reported landings. Each eligible fisher's fish trap tags allocation will be calculated to an amount to equal 20% less than the maximum number of traps they recorded on commercial catch reports between February 10, 2010 and February 10, 2011, unless a greater reduction is required to cap them at the 250 trap maximum. 250 is the maximum number of fish trap tags any fisher may possess.

Reduction for St. Croix District:

The maximum number of fish traps that any fisher can receive is 150. Each eligible fisher's fish trap tags allocation will be calculated to an amount to equal 10% less than the maximum number of traps they recorded on commercial catch reports between February 10, 2010 and February 10, 2011, unless a greater reduction is required to cap them at the 150 trap maximum.

Administration:

All fish traps set in USVI Territorial waters must be identifiable with a uniquely lettered/numbered USVI fish trap tag composed of a durable material not easily destroyed. All lost or stolen fish traps must be reported to DPNR- Division of Environmental Enforcement through submission of a Lost or Stolen Fish Trap Report. Replacement tags may be requested from DPNR through submission of a Fish Trap Tag Replacement Application. Fish trap authorization will be issued on an annual basis. Annual renewal will occur in conjunction with DPNR's commercial fisher registration.

Fees:

The Division of Environmental Enforcement shall charge an annual one dollar (\$1.00) fish trap license fee for each fish trap authorized and registered pursuant to this Regulation. The annual license fee shall commence for the registration period starting July 1, 2018, and shall be paid in accordance each calendar year on or before June 30. A onetime total late fee of \$25.00 shall be assessed, if payment is received after July 1st. A \$5.00 monthly fee will be assessed after August 1st and for every month for which the annual fish trap license fee is due and owing.

Enforcement:

Any person violating or otherwise failing to comply with these rules and regulations shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined not more than \$500.00 or imprisoned for not more than six months, unless otherwise provided by law. Any person convicted of a violation of these rules and regulations by a court of competent jurisdiction shall have their fish trap license suspended and inoperative for one month for the first offense, three months for the second offense, and for one year for the third and subsequent offenses. All suspended or void fish trap licenses shall be surrendered

forthwith to the Commissioner.

Gear Restriction:

V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A §304-4 & 304-6.

District of St.

All fish traps must have minimum 2-inch square mesh. All fish traps must be inspected and tagged by the Division of Environmental Enforcement prior to use.

Thomas/St. John:

District of St. Croix:

V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A §304-5 & 304-6.

All traps placed in Territorial waters must have a minimum of 1.5-inch hexagonal or 2-inch square mesh as the smallest mesh on two sides of the fish traps. All fish traps must be inspected and tagged by the Division of Environmental Enforcement prior to use.

Both Districts:

V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 9A §304(b) & §321(c).

Fish traps may be constructed of any material; provided that the entrance, or one side of the fish pot, or the door or the fastening of the door for the removal of fish shall be constructed of some material less durable than that used in the construction of the fish pot itself, such as twine, bamboo, or soft wood. No person shall use wooden or bamboo or metal buoys on any traps, pot, or set in the inland or coastal waters of the territory after January 1, 1973.

All buoys shall be marked with the licensee's number, which shall be burned or cut into the surface thereof. All buoys, pots, and traps that are not marked as required shall be removed from the jurisdictional waters by any conservation officer and held for a period of 2 months.

13. Nets:

Mesh Restrictions:

V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §321.

Haul seines shall have no meshes smaller than 1 ½ inches stretch measure; except that seines specifically used for catching of bait fish may have smaller meshes; provided that such bait seines and the use thereof shall otherwise conform to the rules and regulations.

The use of all gill and trammel nets (single or multiple wall entanglement nets) is prohibited in the territory, with the exception of single-wall surface gillnets for the baitfish ballyhoo (Family Hemiramphidae), gar (Family Belonidae), and flying fish (Family Exocoetidae). Surface gillnets must be tended at all times, may not be more than 1,800 ft in length as measured by the float line, and may not be used within 20 ft of the bottom. Mesh size may not be smaller than 0.75-inch square or 1.5-inch stretch. Only one 1,800 ft bait net is permitted per boat. Restricted gill and trammel nets may not be possessed onboard vessels in Territorial waters.

Gear Prohibition:

V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §321.

The use of **trammel nets** (multiple wall entanglement) is **prohibited**.

The penalties for gill and trammel net violations are a \$1,000 fine and confiscation of vessel and equipment.

14. **Year-Round
Closures/Marine
Reserves:**

No fishing or collecting of any kind is allowed **except as noted** below.

Cas Cay/Mangrove

Lagoon Reserve:

V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 1, §96-2 and §96-5.

Permitted Acts:

The use of a cast net with a minimum square mesh size of 0.25-inch to capture bait fish (“fry”) within 50 feet of the north and west shorelines of Cas Cay only. See Appendix 1, areas “A” and “B”.

Fishing Permits:

A special monthly permit is required to catch baitfish in the Reserves. Obtain a permit from the Division of Environmental Enforcement.

Prohibited Acts:

In the Inner Mangrove Lagoon (see Appendix 1 map, area “A”), no fishing, no traps, and no seines are permitted. In short, no take at all. Use of internal combustion engines is prohibited.

Compass Point

Marine Reserve and
Wildlife Sanctuary,
St. Thomas:

V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 1, §96-1.

Designated September 24, 1992. No fishing, hunting, or taking of any plants or animals within the marine reserve and wildlife sanctuary. See Appendix 1 map, area “D”.

Salt River Bay

National Historical
Park and Ecological
Preserve, St. Croix:

V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 1, §96.

Designated July 19, 1995. It is unlawful to (1) collect, take, or possess any fish, coral, bird, or other wildlife, or part thereof: (2) use or possess any firearm, bow and arrow, spear gun or any trap, net or other contrivance designed to be, or capable of being, used to take birds, fish, or other wildlife or to discharge any firearm or release any arrow into the sanctuary. Contact the DPNR Division of Environmental Enforcement at (340) 773-5774 or the National Park Service at (340) 773-1460 x234 for complete regulations.

The Small Pond at

Frank Bay Wildlife
and Marine
Sanctuary, St. John:

V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 1, §96-4.

Designated on March 24, 2000, signed on April 11, 2001. No hunting, fishing, or harvest of fisheries or wildlife resources. The use of a motorized vessel is prohibited within Frank Bay Pond.

15. **Territorial Marine
Parks:**

V.I.C., Title 12, Chapter 1, §98.

St. Croix East End
Marine Park:

Designated on January 9, 2003. Regulations designate certain restricted zones within the park boundaries, including areas where fishing is completely prohibited (no-take zones) and areas which require special permits for some fishing activities. Terrestrial signage and marker buoys indicate and demarcate zones. Contact the Marine Park Coordinator at (340) 718-3367 or the Division of Environmental Enforcement for regulations at (340) 773-5774. See Appendix 3.

16. Altona Lagoon and Great Pond Shrimp Management:

Commissioner Prescribed Rule 1992 under V.I.C. Title 12, Chapter 9A §303. Portions of this rule have been superseded by provisions of the East End Marine Park.

- a. All seine nets, gill nets, and traps are prohibited in Altona Lagoon, Great Pond, and their respective connecting channels to the sea.
- b. All seine nets, gill nets, and traps are prohibited in Christiansted Harbor within 100 yards of the mouth of Altona Lagoon channel. All seine nets, gill nets, and traps are prohibited in Great Pond Bay, as it is part of the No-Take Zone of the East End Marine Park.
- c. No motorized vessels are allowed in Altona Lagoon, Great Pond, and their respective connecting channels to the sea.
- d. A recreational shrimp fishing permit is required to harvest shrimp on St. Croix. A permit may be obtained from the Division of Environmental Enforcement. The annual fee for this permit is \$10.00.
- e. Monofilament or nylon cast nets of 3/8-inch square mesh (3/4-inch stretch mesh) may be used to harvest shrimp in Altona Lagoon channel. Cast nets of knotless nylon netting are prohibited.
- f. Cast nets of 1-inch square mesh (2-inch stretch mesh) may be used to harvest fish in Altona Lagoon and the channel connecting it to the sea. Cast nets of knotless nylon netting are prohibited.
- g. The sale of southern pink shrimp is prohibited. Vendors selling shrimp must possess a certificate of origin for the shrimp.
- h. The use of lights to attract shrimp for harvest is prohibited.
- i. Recreational handline and rod and reel fishing are **permitted** in Altona Lagoon and the channel connecting it to the sea. Recreational handline and rod and reel fishing are **prohibited** in Great Pond and the channel connecting it to the sea.

17. General Provision: *V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A, §316-14(f).*

Filleting:

The filleting of fish in Federal waters of the U.S. Caribbean is prohibited and it is required that fish captured or possessed in Territorial waters be landed with heads and fins intact.

V.I.R.R., Title 12, Chapter 9A §321(f)

Use of hooka gear to harvest marine resources in Territorial waters is prohibited.

FEDERAL WATERS AROUND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

SUMMARY OF FISHING REGULATIONS

FEDERAL WATERS EXTEND FROM 3 TO 200 NAUTICAL MILES OFFSHORE

1. Queen Conch:

- Size Limit: *50 CFR 622.492* - Minimum size of limit is either 9 inches (in) in length, that is, from the tip of the spire to the distal end of the shell, or 3/8 inch lip width (thickness) at its widest point (see Appendix 3).
No harvest, possession, sale, or purchase of undersized conch.
- Landing Restrictions: *50 CFR 622.493* - Queen Conch in or from the Caribbean EEZ must be maintained with meat and shell intact.
- Seasonal and Area Closures: *50 CFR 622.491* - No person may fish for, or possess on board a fishing vessel, a Caribbean Queen Conch in or from the Caribbean EEZ, **except during November 1 through May 31** (or earlier depending on the quota), in the area east of 64°34' W longitude which includes Lang Bank east of St. Croix, USVI. When the USVI closes Territorial waters off St. Croix to the harvest and possession of queen conch, the EEZ will close concurrently.
- Commercial Trip Limit: *50 CFR 622.495* - Commercial trip limits are limits on the amount of the applicable species that may be possessed on board or landed, purchased, or sold from a vessel per day. A person who fishes in the EEZ may not combine a trip limit specified in this section with any trip or possession limit applicable to state waters.
The commercial trip limit for Queen Conch in or from the Caribbean EEZ is 200 Queen Conch per day. This applies to a vessel that has at least one person on board with a valid commercial fishing license issued by the USVI.
- Recreational Bag Limit: *50 CFR 622.494* - The recreational bag limit for Queen Conch in or from the Caribbean EEZ is 3 per person or, if more than 4 persons are aboard, 12 per boat.
- Prohibited Gear and Methods: *50 CFR 622.490(a)* - No person may harvest Queen Conch by diving while using a device that provides a continuous air supply from the surface.

Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures: 50 CFR 622.12 – Annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs) apply to Queen Conch in the EEZ. *See Page 36 of this handbook for specific information about ACLs and AMs.*

2. **Caribbean Spiny Lobster:** 50 CFR 622.2 - Caribbean Spiny Lobster or Spiny Lobster refers to the species *Panulirus argus*, or a part thereof.

Size Limit: 50 CFR 622.454 - Minimum size is no less than 3.5 inches, carapace length (see Appendix 3).

Harvest Prohibition on egg-bearing spiny lobster: 50 CFR 622.453(a) - Egg-bearing Spiny Lobster in the Caribbean EEZ must be returned to the water unharmed. An egg-bearing Spiny Lobster may be retained in a trap, provided the trap is returned immediately to the water. An egg-bearing Spiny Lobster may not be stripped, scraped, shaved, clipped, or in any other manner molested, in order to remove the eggs.

Landing Restrictions: 50 CFR 622.455 - Caribbean Spiny Lobster in or from the Caribbean EEZ must be maintained with head and carapace intact.

Recreational Bag Limit: 50 CFR 622.456 - The recreational bag limit for Spiny Lobster in or from the Caribbean EEZ is 3 per person per day, not to exceed 10 per vessel per day, whichever is less.

Prohibited Gear and Methods: 50 CFR 622.9 - An explosive may not be used to fish in the Caribbean EEZ.

50 CFR 622.452(a) - A spear, hook, or similar device may not be used in the Caribbean EEZ to harvest a Spiny Lobster. The possession of a speared, pierced, or punctured Caribbean Spiny Lobster in or from the Caribbean EEZ is evidence of violation.

50 CFR 622.452(b) - A gillnet or trammel net may not be used in the Caribbean EEZ to fish for Spiny Lobster. Possession of a gillnet or trammel net and any Caribbean Spiny Lobster in or from the Caribbean EEZ is *prima facie* evidence of violation of this paragraph.

ACLs and AMs: 50 CFR 622.12 – ACLs and AMs apply to Spiny Lobster in the EEZ.
See page 36 of this handbook for specific information about ACLs and AMs.

- Reef Fish:**
3. **Goliath Grouper:** *50 CFR 622.434(a) and (b)* - No harvest or possession. Such fish caught in the Caribbean EEZ must be released immediately with a minimum of harm.

 4. **Nassau Grouper:** *50 CFR 622.434(a) and (b)* - No harvest or possession. Such fish caught in the Caribbean EEZ must be released immediately with a minimum of harm.

 5. **Other Groupers:** *50 CFR 622.435(a)(1)(i)* - **February 1 through April 30**, no fishing for or possession of these species in or from the Caribbean EEZ. This prohibition on possession does not apply to such grouper harvested and landed ashore prior to the closure.
Seasonal Closures:
Red, Black, Tiger,
Yellowfin, Yellowedge
Groupers:

 6. **Snappers:** *50 CFR 622.435(a)(1)(iii)* - **October 1 through December 31**, no fishing for or possession of these species in or from the Caribbean EEZ. This prohibition on possession does not apply to such snapper harvested and landed ashore prior to the closure.
Seasonal Closures:
Black, Blackfin, Silk,
Vermillion Snappers:

Lane and Mutton
Snappers: *50 CFR 622.435(a)(1)(iv)* - **April 1 through June 30**, no fishing for or possession of these species in of from the Caribbean EEZ. This prohibition on possession does not apply to such snapper harvested and landed ashore prior to the closure.

Size Limit:
Yellowtail Snapper: *50 CFR 622.436(a)* – Minimum size is 12 inches total length (see Appendix 3).

 7. **Parrotfish:** *50 CFR 622.434(a) and (c)* – No person may fish for or possess these species in or from the Caribbean EEZ. Such fish caught in the Caribbean EEZ must be released without harm.
Harvest Prohibition:
Midnight, Blue, Rainbow
Parrotfish:

Other Parrotfish: *50 CFR 622.436(c)* – 8-inch fork length minimum size for Redband Parrotfish (*Sparisoma aurofrenatum*) applicable to all fishers (St. Croix EEZ only).
Size Limits: *50 CFR 622.436(b)* – 9-inch fork length minimum size for all other allowable parrotfish species in Federal waters off St. Croix (including Princess, Queen, Striped, Redtail, Stoplight, and Redfin Parrotfish) applicable to all fishers (St. Croix EEZ only).

No minimum size limit for harvest in St. Thomas/St. John EEZ.

8. **Recreational Bag Limits:**

Groupers, snappers, & parrotfish combined:

50 CFR 622.437(a) and (b)(1) - 5 per person per day or, if 3 or more persons are aboard, 15 per vessel per day; but not to exceed 2 parrotfish per person per day or 6 parrotfish per vessel per day.

Other reef fish species combined:

50 CFR 622.437(a) and (b)(2) - 5 per person per day or, if 3 or more persons are aboard, 15 per vessel per day, but not to exceed 1 surgeonfish per person per day or 4 surgeonfish per vessel per day.

9. **Aquarium Trade:**

Sale/Purchase Restriction:

50 CFR 622.438(a) - Live Red Hind or live Mutton Snapper in or from the Caribbean EEZ may not be sold or purchased and used in the marine aquarium trade.

10. **Prohibited Gear and Methods:**

50 CFR 622.9 and 50 CFR 622.433(a) – Explosives, poisons, drugs, or other chemicals may not be used to fish for Caribbean reef fish in the Caribbean EEZ.

50 CFR 622.433(b) - A powerhead may not be used in the Caribbean EEZ to harvest Caribbean reef fish. The possession of a mutilated Caribbean reef fish in or from the Caribbean EEZ and a powerhead is *prima facie* evidence that such fish was harvested by a powerhead.

50 CFR 622.434(c) - A gillnet or trammel net may not be used to fish for Caribbean reef fish. Possession of a gill or trammel net and any Caribbean reef fish is *prima facie* evidence of violation.

11. **Reef Fish ACLs and AMs:**

50 CFR 622.12 – ACLs and AMs apply to all managed reef fish species in the EEZ. *See Page 36 of this handbook for specific information.*

12. **Spiny Lobster and Reef Fish Traps:**

Marking:

50 CFR 622.450 and 50 CFR 622.430 - Spiny lobster and reef fish traps must display the official number specified for the vessel by the USVI.

Unmarked Traps/buoys:

All individual traps or end of trap lines require a surface buoy that must display the official number and color code. An

unmarked trap or a buoy deployed is illegal and may be disposed of by an authorized officer.

Trap Tending:

50 CFR 622.451(b) and 50 CFR 622.431(b) - A spiny lobster or a reef fish trap may be pulled or tended only by a person (other than an authorized officer) aboard the trap owner's vessel or aboard another vessel if such vessel has on board written consent of the trap owner, or if the trap owner is aboard and has documentation verifying his identification number and color code.

Reef Fish Trap Specifications:

Minimum Mesh Size:

50 CFR 622.431 - A bare-wire fish trap that has hexagonal mesh openings must have a minimum mesh size of 1.5 inch in the smallest dimension measured between centers of opposite strands. A bare-wire fish trap that has other than hexagonal mesh openings or a fish trap of other than bare wire, such as coated wire or plastic, must have a minimum mesh size of 2.0 inch in the smallest dimension measured between centers of opposite strands.

Escape Mechanisms:

A fish trap must have a panel located on one side of the trap, excluding the top, bottom, and side containing the trap entrance. The opening covered by the panel must measure not less than 8 by 8 inches. The mesh size of the panel may not be smaller than the mesh size of the trap. The panel must be attached to the trap with untreated jute twine with a diameter not exceeding 1/8-inch. An access door may serve as the panel, provided it is on an appropriate side, it is hinged only at its bottom, its only other fastening is untreated jute twine with a diameter not exceeding 1/8-inch, and such fastening is at the top of the door so that the door will fall open when such twine degrades. Jute twine used to secure a panel may not be wrapped or overlapped.

Lobster Trap Specifications:

50 CFR 622.451(a)(1) - A spiny lobster trap must contain on any vertical side or on the top a panel no smaller in diameter than the throat or entrance of the trap. The panel must be made of or attached to the trap by either: untreated fiber of biological origin with a diameter not exceeding 1/8-inch. This includes, but is not limited to tyre palm, hemp, jute, cotton, wool, or silk, or ungalvanized or uncoated iron wire with a diameter not exceeding 1/16-inch that is, 16-gauge wire.

13. **Corals:**
Prohibited Corals: 50 CFR 622.470(a) - Required permits. (1) Prohibited coral. A Federal permit may be issued to take or possess Caribbean prohibited coral only as scientific research activity, exempted fishing, or exempted educational activity.

50 CFR 622.2 - Caribbean prohibited coral includes gorgonians (Class Anthozoa, Subclass Octocorallia, Order Gorgonacea); live rock; or stony coral (Class Hydrozoa [fire corals and hydrocorals] or Class Anthozoa, Subclass Hexacorallia, Orders Scleractinia (stony corals) and Antipatharia (black corals)); or a part thereof (*See Table 1 of Appendix A of 50 CFR 622 for full list*).

Sale/Purchase Restriction: 50 CFR 622.472 - Caribbean prohibited coral may not be fished for or possessed in or from the Caribbean EEZ. The taking of Caribbean prohibited coral in the Caribbean EEZ is not considered unlawful possession provided it is returned immediately to the sea in the general area of fishing.

Coral Reef Resources
(Aquarium Trade):
Prohibited Gear and
Methods:

50 CFR 622.473 - No person may sell or purchase a Caribbean prohibited coral harvested in the Caribbean EEZ. A Caribbean prohibited coral that is sold in the USVI will be presumed to have been harvested in the Caribbean EEZ, unless it is accompanied by documentation showing that it was harvested elsewhere.

Coral Reef Resources for the Aquarium Trade are listed in Table 1, Appendix A of 50 CFR 622.

50 CFR 622.9 - Explosives, chemicals, plants, or plant-derived toxins cannot be used to fish in the Caribbean EEZ. A toxic chemical may not be used in a coral area.

50 CFR 622.471 – A power assisted tool may not be used in the Caribbean EEZ to take a Caribbean coral reef resource.

ACLs and AMs:

50 CFR 622.12 - ACLs and AMs apply to the harvest of aquarium trade species. *See page 36 of this handbook.*

14. **Billfish, Swordfish, Tuna & Sharks:**

50 CFR 635 – The NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species Management Division regulates billfish, Swordfish, Atlantic tunas (Bigeye, Albacore, Skipjack, Yellowfin, Bluefin), and sharks in U.S. Caribbean waters. For more information, contact the HMS Management Division at 727-824-5399, visit the Atlantic HMS Management Division Website (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species>) or the websites below.

HMS Commercial,
Recreational, and Dealer
Compliance Guides:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-fishery-compliance-guides>

Permit Information:

An HMS recreational permit is required to recreationally fish for, take, retain, possess, or land Atlantic tunas in territorial and Federal waters; and sharks, billfish, and Swordfish in Federal waters. An HMS commercial permit is required to commercially fish for, take, retain, possess, land or sell Atlantic tunas in Territorial and Federal waters; and sharks and Swordfish in Federal waters. For more information, contact the HMS Management Division at 727-824-5399. To purchase permits please visit the websites below (numbers provided are for permit shop customer service).

NOAA Permit Shop
888-872-8862

<https://hmspermits.noaa.gov>
Atlantic HMS Angling permit (recreational)
HMS Charter/Headboat permit
Atlantic Tunas permits (General Category, Harpoon, Purse Seine)
Swordfish General Commercial

Greater Atlantic Region
Permits Office
978-828-8438

<https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/permits/index.html>
Atlantic Tuna Dealer (Bigeye, Albacore, Skipjack, Yellowfin, Bluefin Tuna)

Southeast Regional Office
Permit Shop
877-376-4877

sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/permits
Commercial Caribbean Small Boat Permit
Atlantic Tunas Longline
Shark Directed/Incidental and Dealer
Swordfish Directed/Incidental and Dealer

Retention and Size Limits:

Retention and size limits vary for Swordfish, sharks, Bluefin Tuna, *BAYS* (Bigeye, Albacore, Yellowfin, Skipjack) tunas, and marlin depending on the type of permit, the type of fishing (recreational or commercial), the condition of the fish, and in-season adjustments to retention limit, among other things. Please see the HMS Compliance Guides listed above or call the HMS Management Division at 727-824-5399 for latest retention and size limit information.

Fishermen and dealers must comply with commercial and

recreational reporting requirements. See the HMS Compliance Guides listed above or call the HMS Management Division with questions.

HMS Reporting:

Recreational billfish landings and Bluefin Tuna landings and dead discards must be reported within 24 hours online at www.hmspermits.noaa.gov, or by calling the Billfish Reporting Line (800-894-5528) and the Bluefin Tuna Reporting Line (888-872-8862).

15. **Sea Turtles:** *50 CFR 17.11* – No harvest, possession, or harassment of sea turtles or their eggs (see Appendix 4).
16. **Seabirds:** *50 CFR 10.12* – Seabirds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. To minimize injury to seabirds, do not discard fishing line at sea.
17. **Year-Round Closures:**
Hind Bank Marine Conservation District (MCD), St. Thomas: *50 CFR 622.435(b)(1)* – No fishing for any species, and no anchoring by fishing vessels. Appendix 5 provides coordinates and a map of the boundaries of the MCD.
18. **Seasonal Area Closures:** *50 CFR 622.435(b)(2)* – Fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited year-round in the three seasonally closed areas specified below.

Grammanik Bank, St. Thomas: *50 CFR 622.435(a)(2)(iii)(B)* – **February 1 through April 30**, no person may fish for or possess any species of fish, except highly migratory species, in or from the Grammanik Bank closed area. “Fish” means finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animal and plant life other than marine mammals and birds. “**Highly migratory species**” means Bluefin, Bigeye, Yellowfin, Albacore, and Skipjack Tunas; Swordfish; sharks (listed in Appendix A to part 635), and White Marlin, Blue Marlin, Sailfish, and Longbill Spearfish. Appendix 5 provides coordinates and a map of the boundaries of the Grammanik Bank seasonal closure area.

Red Hind Spawning Aggregation Area, East of St. Croix: *50 CFR 622.435(a)(2)(ii)(A)* - **December 1 through February 28**, no fishing in those parts of the area that are in the EEZ. Appendix 6 provides coordinates and a map of the boundaries of the Red Hind Spawning Aggregation seasonal closure area.

Mutton Snapper Spawning Aggregation, St. Croix: *50 CFR 622.435(a)(2)(i)* - **March 1 through June 30**, no fishing in that part of this area that is in the EEZ. Appendix 6 provides

coordinates and a map of the boundaries of the Mutton Snapper Spawning Aggregation seasonal closure area.

19. **General Provisions:**

Filleting:

50 CFR 600.1200-1203 – Sharks must be landed with fins naturally attached to the carcass. Finning at sea is prohibited. Shark fins that are not naturally attached may not be landed, transferred, possessed, purchased, or sold.

50 CFR 622.10(a) – Finfish must be maintained with head and fins intact.

50 CFR 622.3(b); 50 CFR 600.1203; 50 CFR 635.30 – Sharks, billfish, swordfish, and tunas may not be filleted at sea.

50 CFR 635.30 – **Billfish** must be landed with heads, fins, and bill intact through offloading. **Atlantic tunas** must be maintained through offloading either in round form or eviscerated with the head and fins removed, provided one pectoral fin and the tail remain attached. The upper and lower lobes of the tuna tail may be removed for storage purposes as long as the fork of the tail remains intact. **Sharks** must not have the backbone removed and must not be halved, quartered, filleted, or otherwise reduced. All fins, including the tail, must remain naturally attached to the shark through offloading

50 CFR 622.10(c)(1) - Bait is exempt from the requirement to be maintained with head and fins intact.

50 CFR 622.10(c)(2) - Legal-sized finfish possessed for consumption at sea on the harvesting vessel are exempt from the requirement to have head and fins intact, provided: (i) such finfish do not exceed any applicable bag limit; (ii) such finfish do not exceed 1.5 lb (680 g) of finfish parts per person aboard; and (iii) the vessel is equipped to cook such finfish on board.

Anchoring:

50 CFR 622.432(a) – Any fishing vessel, recreational or commercial that fishes for or possesses Caribbean reef fish must ensure that the vessel uses only an anchor retrieval system that recovers the anchor by its crown, thereby preventing the anchor from dragging along the bottom during recovery. For a grapnel hook, this could include an incorporated anchor rode reversal bar that runs parallel along the shank, which allows the rode to reverse and slip back toward the crown. For a fluke- or plow-type anchor, a trip line consisting of a line from the crown of the anchor to a surface buoy would be required.

Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and Accountability Measures (AMs) in Federal Waters

An *annual catch limit (ACL)* is the amount of a particular species or species group that can be caught in a given year which, if met or exceeded, triggers *accountability measures (AMs)* such as a seasonal or quota closure. *AMs* are sustainable management controls to prevent ACLs from being exceeded and to correct or mitigate overages of the ACL if they occur. The reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act requires ACLs and AMs to prevent overfishing. Although AMs only apply to Federal waters, it is the combined landing reports of both Federal and Territorial waters that managers use to determine if ACLs are being reached or have been exceeded. If the ACL is exceeded based on the most recent multi-year average of landings available, and NOAA Fisheries determines that the exceedance is not due to enhanced data collection and monitoring efforts, AMs will be applied in the year following the determination, and the fishery will be closed to all fishing for the affected species or species group.

An AM-based closure for all species, except queen conch, will be implemented from September 30th of the closure year backward, toward the beginning of the fishing year, for the number of days necessary to achieve the reduction in landings required to ensure landings do not exceed the applicable ACL. If the length of the required fishing season reduction exceeds the period of January 1 through September 30, any additional fishing season reduction required will be applied from October 1 forward, toward the end of the fishing year (December 31). For queen conch in St. Croix Federal waters, when the ACL is reached or projected to be reached, NOAA Fisheries will close the area east of 64°34' W longitude, which includes Lang Bank, east of St. Croix, USVI to the harvest and possession of queen conch. The queen conch harvest season will reopen at 12:01 AM local time on November 1.

Annual Catch Limits, applicable only in Federal waters, for each fishing district.

Species	St. Croix ¹	St. Thomas / St. John ²
Queen Conch	50,000 lbs (22,680 kg)	0 lbs (0 kg) (EEZ only)
Parrotfish	240,000 lbs (108,863 kg)	42,500 lbs (19,278 kg)
Snapper	102,946 lbs (46,696 kg)	133,775 lbs (60,679 kg)
Grouper	30,435 lbs (13,805 kg)	51,849 lbs (23,518 kg)
Angelfish	305 lbs (138 kg)	7,897 lbs (3,582 kg)
Boxfish	8,433 lbs (3,825 kg)	27,880 lbs (12,646 kg)
Goatfish	3,766 lbs (1,708 kg)	320 lbs (145 kg)
Grunts	36,881 lbs (16,729 kg)	37,617 lbs (17,063 kg)
Wrasses	7 lbs (3 kg)	585 lbs (265 kg)
Jacks	15,489 lbs (7,076 kg)	52,907 lbs (23,998 kg)
Scups and Porgies	4,638 lbs (2,104 kg)	21,819 lbs (9,897 kg)
Squirrelfish	121 lbs (55 kg)	4,241 lbs (1,924 kg)
Surgeonfish	33,603 lbs (15,242 kg)	29,249 lbs (13,267 kg)
Triggerfish and Filefish	24,980 lbs (11,331 kg)	74,447 lbs (33,769 kg)
Spiny Lobster	107,307 lbs (48,674 kg)	104,199 lbs (47,264 kg)

Annual Catch Limits that apply to landings of these species groups throughout the Caribbean EEZ³.

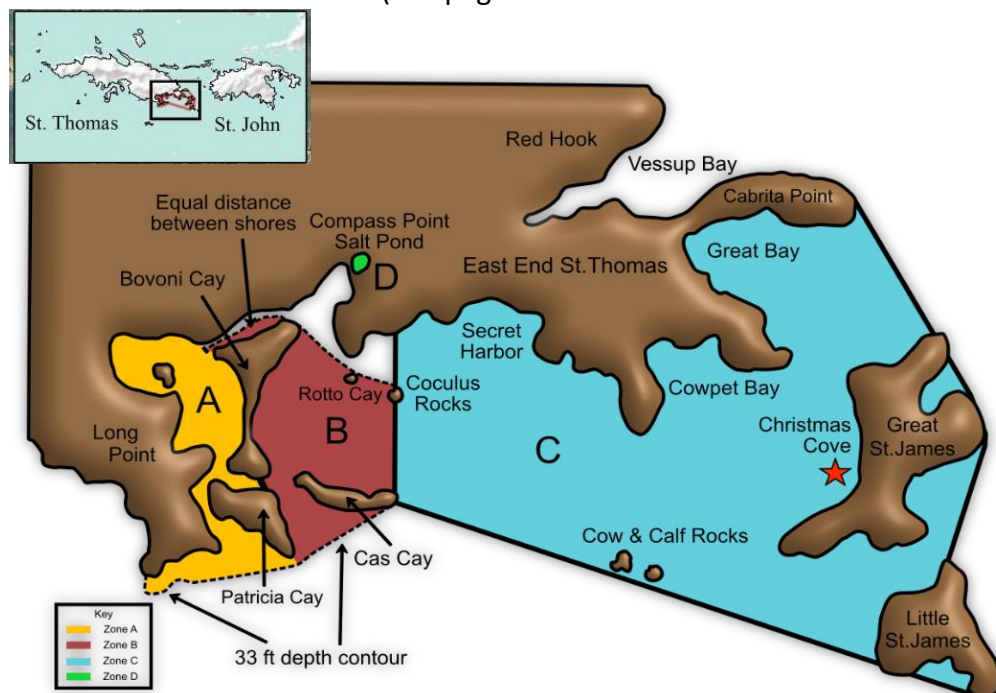
Species	USVI
Tilefish	14,642 lbs (6,641 kg)
Aquarium Trade	8,155 lbs (3,699 kg)

¹50 CFR 622.12 (a)(2)(i) ²50 CFR 622.12 (a)(3)(i) ³50 CFR 622.12(a)(4)(i)

APPENDIX 1

Southeast St. Thomas Marine Reserves and Wildlife Sanctuaries

(See page 25 of this handbook for summaries of regulations pertaining to these areas)



For A, B, C, and D - No take of conch, lobster, or whelk

A. Inner Mangrove Lagoon – No fishing or take of any natural resources is allowed. No internal combustion engines. Electric motors, sails or paddles are acceptable. Engines cause wakes, noise, and pollution.

B. Cas Cay/Mangrove Lagoon – No fishing or take of any natural resources is allowed, except that use of a cast net for baitfish within 50 feet of the north and west shorelines of Cas Cay is allowed only with a permit from DPNR Division of Environmental Enforcement (340-774-3320).

C. St. James – No fishing or take of any natural resources is allowed, except that baitfishing using a cast net within 50 feet of the shoreline (except for Cow and Calf Rocks) and fishing by hook and line is allowed with a permit from DPNR Division of Env. Enforcement (340-774-3320).

D. Compass Point Salt Pond – No fishing, hunting, or take of any natural resources is allowed within this marine reserve and wildlife sanctuary.

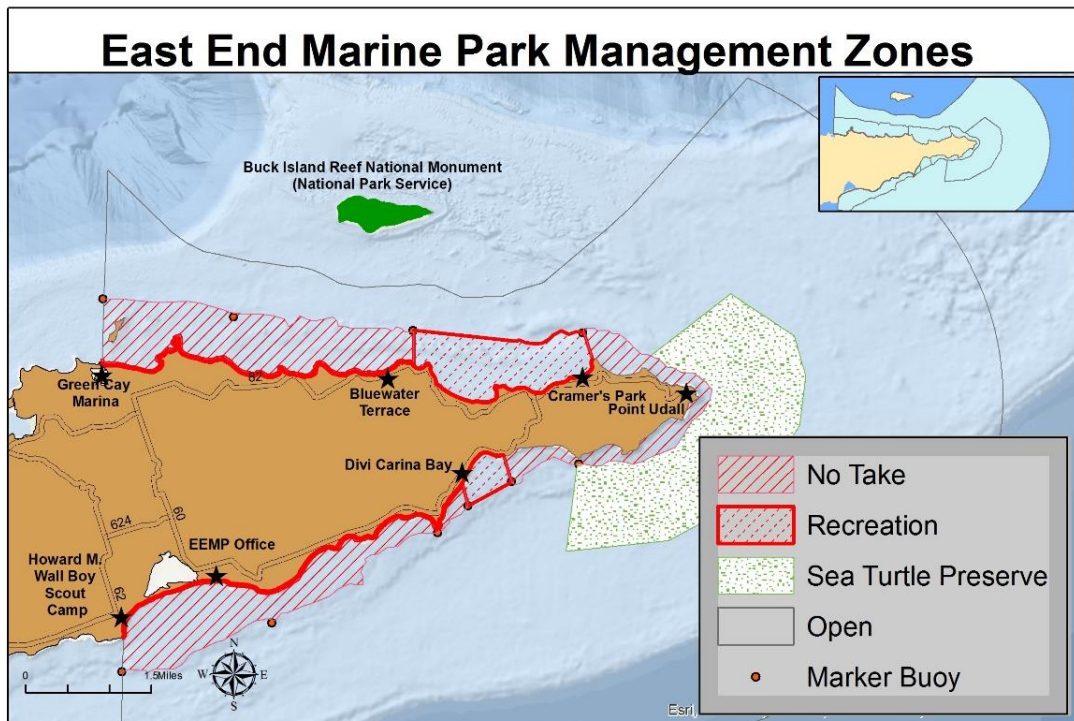
These areas have been protected for a variety of reasons, all of which will benefit your use and enjoyment of our marine natural resources. These marine reserves:

1. Contribute to commercial and recreational fishery resources by protecting a portion of the spawning stock from exploitation.
2. Preserve important coral reef, mangrove, and seagrass habitats for larval, juvenile, and adult fish and invertebrates, such as lobster and conch.
3. Provide coastal and marine viewing and recreation areas for the public, snorkelers and SCUBA divers, school groups, and scientists.

For more information on these marine reserves and wildlife sanctuaries, please call DPNR Division of Fish and Wildlife at (340) 775-6762. To obtain permits or to report violations, contact the Division of Environmental Enforcement at (340) 774-3320.

APPENDIX 2

ST. CROIX EAST END MARINE PARK (STXEEMP) ZONE REGULATIONS



No-Take Zone – Traditional fishing (including spearfishing, fish traps/pots, gillnets, lobster, whelk and conch harvesting) is **prohibited** in this zone [Section 98-5(d)(2)]. Removal of, injury to, or possession of living or dead coral (without a permit) is **prohibited** [Section 98-4(a)(1)]. Allows snorkeling, diving (with a flag), and boating. Operating a personal watercraft is prohibited. The seaward boundaries of this zone are marked in the water with a series of white spar buoys.

Recreational Zone – Traditional fishing (including spearfishing, fish traps/pots, gillnets, lobster, whelk and conch harvesting) is **prohibited** in this zone. [Section 98-5(d)(2)]. Removal of, injury to, or possession of living or dead coral (without a permit) is **prohibited**. [Section 98-4(a)(1)]. Allows snorkeling, diving (with a flag), and boating. Recreational shoreline line fishing (to 100 ft from shore) is permitted from Green Cay Marina to Cottongarden Point (north shore) and from Grapetree Point to Milord Point (south shore). Special Marine Park permits may be issued for cast-net baitfishing and catch-and-release guide fishing (please check with the Park for the status of permits which are in development). Personal watercraft are permitted in this zone.

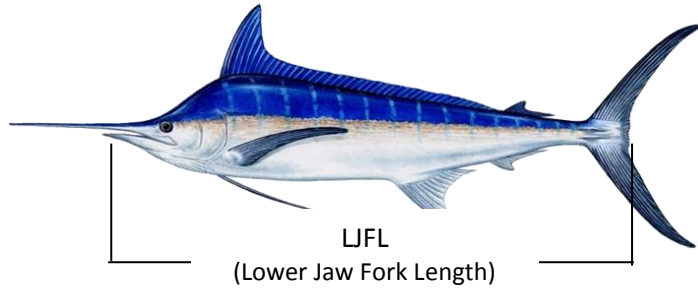
Wildlife Preservation Zone / Sea Turtle Preserve – Protects nesting female sea turtles using beaches in East End, Isaac, Jack, and Boiler Bays to lay eggs.

Open Zone / Park Wide – Taking or injuring coral, altering the seabed, discharging materials, groundings, anchoring on hard bottom or coral communities, and diving without a flag are prohibited.

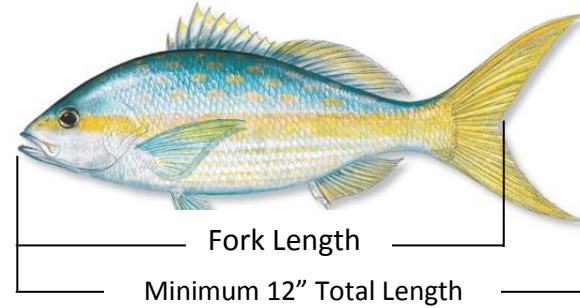
APPENDIX 3

Length Measurements for Billfish, Finfish, Spiny Lobster, Whelk, and Queen Conch

BILLFISH



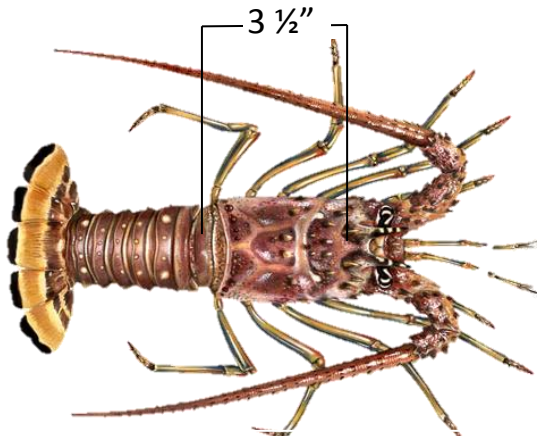
YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER



For specific measurements and measuring techniques for sharks, swordfish, and tunas, consult NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species Division at 727-824-5399 or see the online HMS Species guide at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-fishery-compliance-guides>

SPINY LOBSTER

Carapace Length

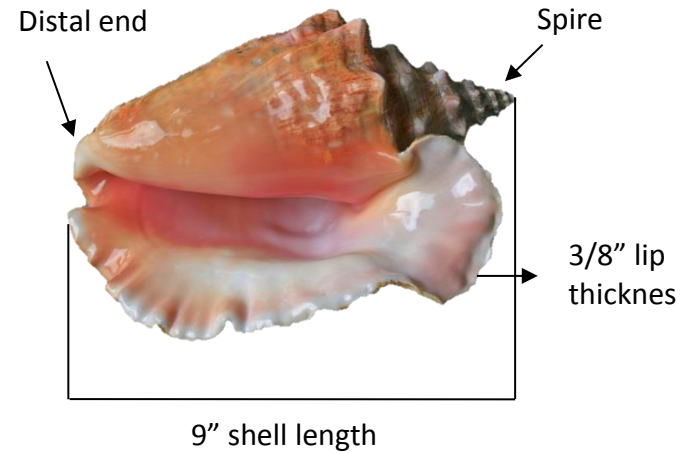


Carapace length is measured along the midline

**WHELK
(WEST INDIAN TOP SHELL)**



QUEEN CONCH



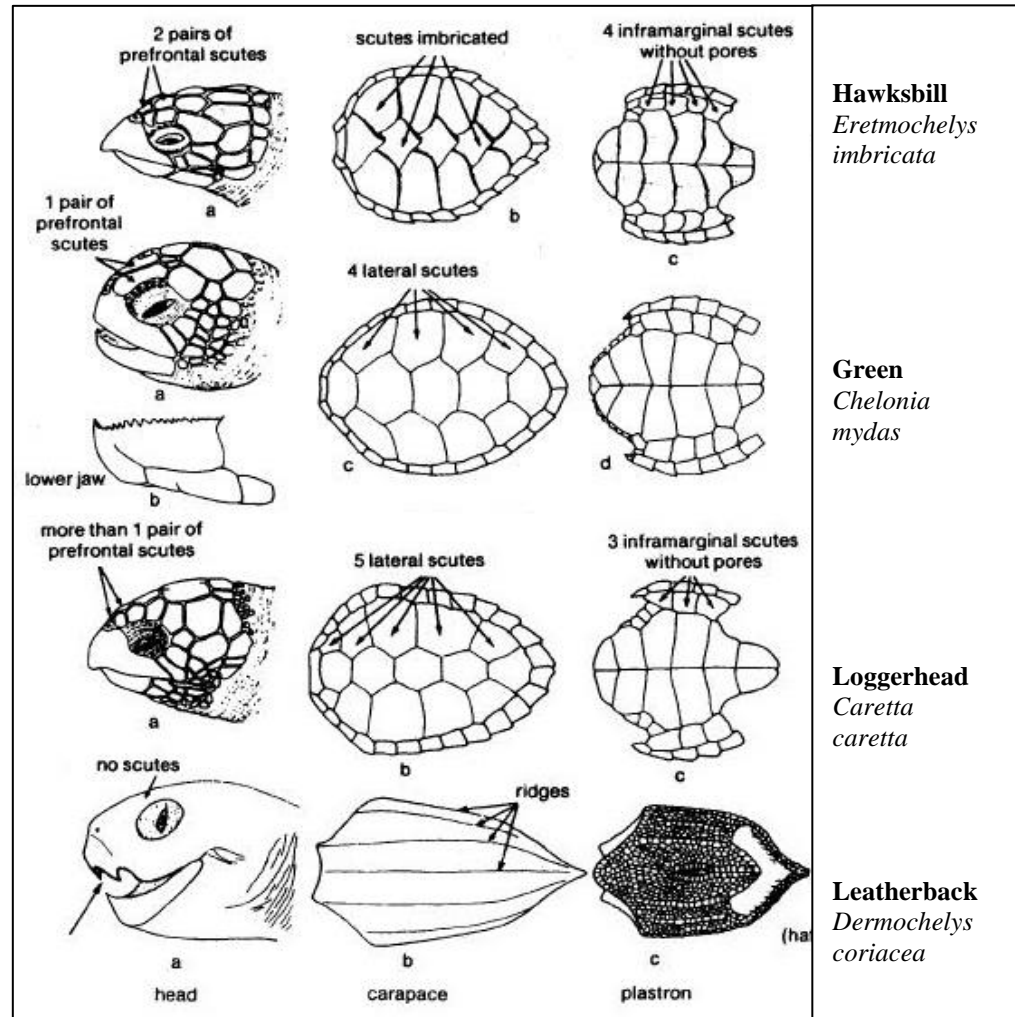
APPENDIX 4 SEA TURTLES

Boaters can reduce the chance of harming sea turtles by always operating boats at safe and responsible speeds, especially when traveling close to any shoreline, coral reef, or seagrass bed.

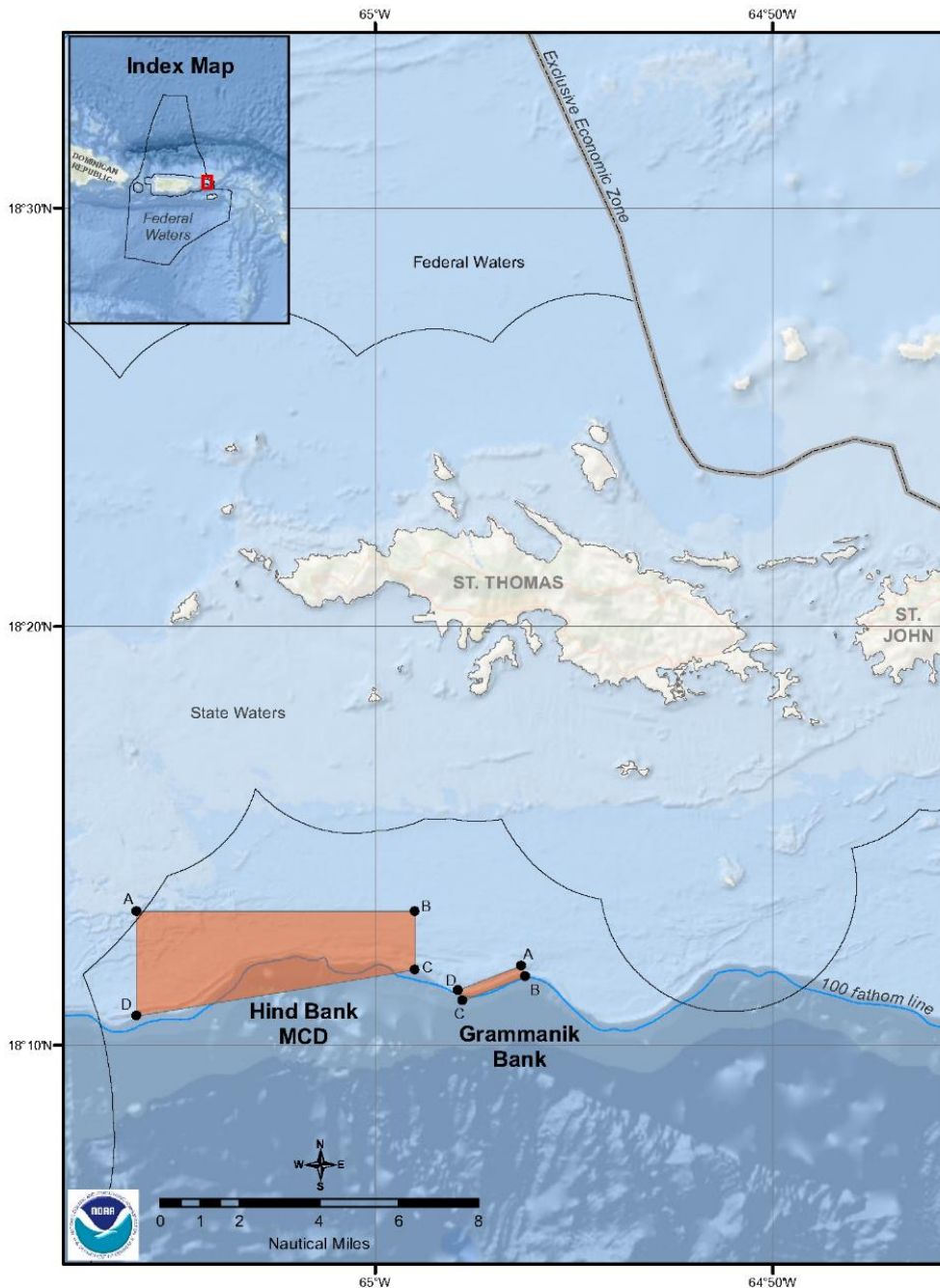
Stay in deep water channels when boating and avoid boating over seagrass beds and coral reefs where sea turtles might be feeding. Be aware that turtles also use deep water channels when traveling; stay alert and avoid sea turtles that are swimming or basking on the surface. Look for the head, shell, or flippers breaking the surface of the water. If you see a sea turtle when operating a powerboat, remain a safe distance away – 50 feet is the recommended minimum.

If you see a turtle that is entangled in fishing gear, injured by boat strike, or otherwise in distress, make a note of the specific location and type and extent of injuries and call DFW at (340) 773-1082 or call the Sea Turtle Assistance and Rescue (STAR) at (340) 690-0474.

All sea turtles are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act and the Territorial Endangered and Indigenous Species Act. The ESA states that it is illegal to harass, harm, capture, or collect sea turtles or their eggs. Violators can be prosecuted under civil and criminal laws and charged heavy penalties. Members of the community are encouraged to report any suspicious activities or information about sea turtle poaching to the Division of Environmental Enforcement: (340) 774-3320 or (340) 773-5774.



APPENDIX 5 – HIND BANK MCD AND GRAMMANIK BANK CLOSURES, ST. THOMAS



Ocean Basemap from ArcGIS.com
Sources: Esri, GEBCO, NOAA, National Geographic, DeLorme, HERE, Geonames.org, and other contributors

HIND BANK MARINE CONSERVATION DISTRICT, ST. THOMAS

The Hind Bank Marine Conservation District (MCD) is **closed year-round**. Fishing for any species and anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited in this 14-square mile area south of western St. Thomas. The following points define the corners of the closed area:

- 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

GRAMMANIK BANK SEASONAL CLOSURE, ST. THOMAS February 1 to April 30

From February 1 through April 30, no person may fish for or possess any species of fish, except highly migratory species (bluefin, bigeye, yellowfin, albacore, skipjack tunas; swordfish; sharks; billfish), in or from the Grammanik Bank closed area. The following points define the corners of this closed area:

- A – 18° 11.898' N, 64° 56.328' W
- B – 18° 11.645' N, 64° 56.225' W
- C – 18° 11.058' N, 64° 57.810' W
- D – 18° 11.311' N, 64° 57.913' W

Fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets, or trammel nets is prohibited year-round in both Hind Bank Marine Conservation District and Grammanik Bank Seasonal Closure.

APPENDIX 6 – LANG BANK RED HIND SPAWNING AGGREGATION AND MUTTON SNAPPER SPAWNING AGGREGATION SEASONAL CLOSURES, ST. CROIX

LANG BANK RED HIND SPAWNING AGGREGATION SEASONAL CLOSURE, ST. CROIX December 1 to February 28

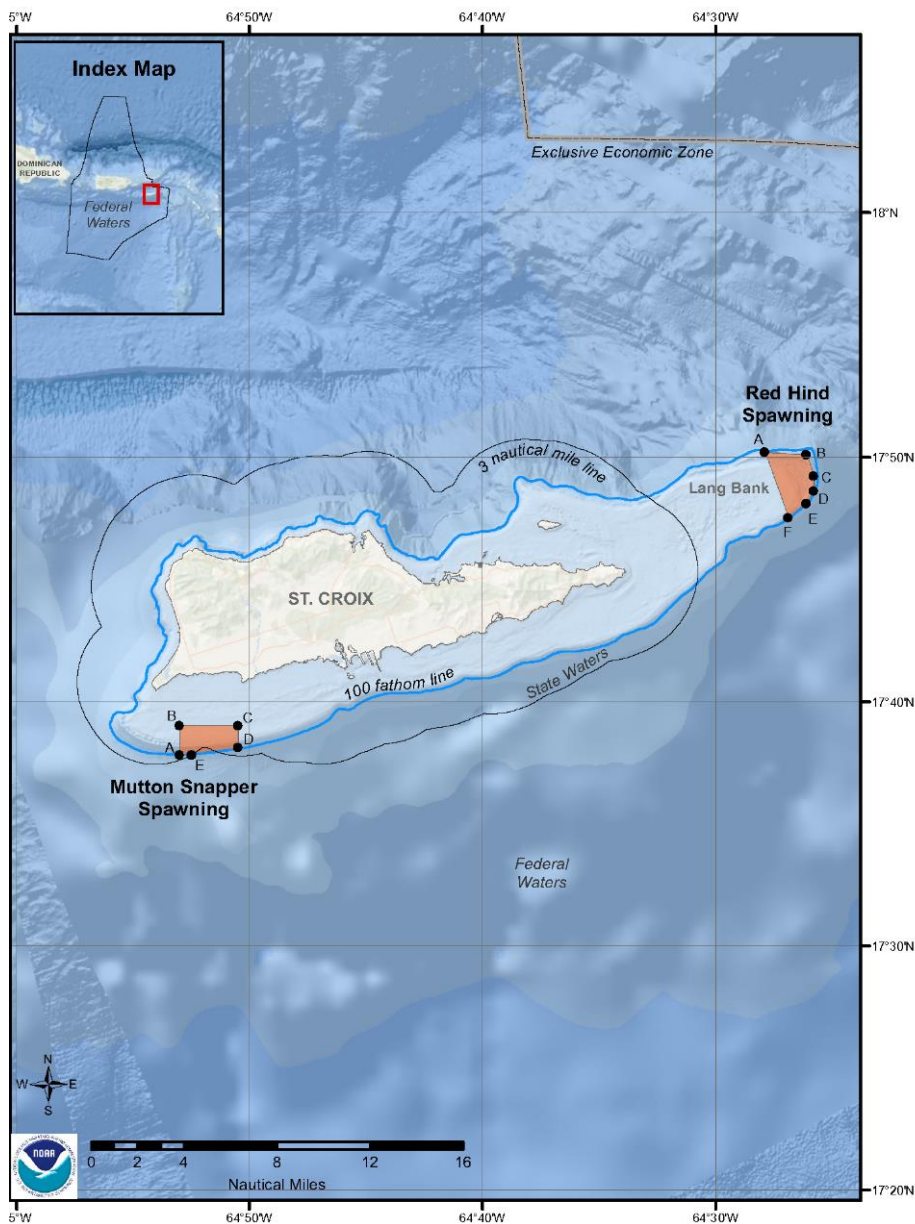
The Lang Bank Red Hind Spawning Aggregation seasonal closure is from December 1 to February 28. Fishing is prohibited during these months. The following points define the boundaries of this closed area:

- 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

MUTTON SNAPPER SPAWNING AGGREGATION SEASONAL CLOSURE, ST. CROIX March 1 to June 30

From March 1 through June 30, fishing is prohibited in the part of the Mutton Snapper Spawning Aggregation that is located within the Exclusive Economic Zone (Federal waters). This area is defined by the following points:

- A - 17° 37.8' N, 64° 53.0' W
- B - 17° 39.0' N, 64° 53.0' W
- C - 17° 39.0' N, 64° 50.5' W
- D - 17° 38.1' N, 64° 50.5' W
- E - 17° 37.8' N, 64° 52.5' W



Ocean Basemap from ArcGIS.com
sources: Esri, GEBCO, NOAA, National Geographic, DeLorme, HERE, Geonames.org, and other contributors

Fishing with pots, traps, bottom longlines, gillnets or trammel nets is prohibited year-round in both Lang Bank Red Hind Spawning Aggregation Seasonal Closure and Mutton Snapper Spawning Aggregation Seasonal Closure.

Contact Information for Relevant Agencies and Helpful Resources

Medical Contacts	
St. Thomas Hospital Roy L. Schneider Hospital.....	(340) 776-8311
St. Croix Hospital Juan F. Luis Hospital.....	(340) 778-6311
Morris F DeCastro Fire Department.....	(340) 776-6400
Poison Information.....	1-800-222-1222
SCUBA Emergencies	
St. Thomas Hyperbaric Chamber.....	(340) 776-8311 (ER)
St. Croix SCUBA emergencies.....	(340) 778-6311 x 2664 (ER)
Divers Alert Network (DAN).....	(919) 684-2948/ 1-800-446-2671
U.S. Coast Guard	
St. Thomas/St. John (duty phone).....	(340) 344-3537
St. Croix (duty phone).....	(340) 332-7008
Search and Rescue	(787) 289-2040
USCG 24-Hour Emergency Line.....	(787) 729-6800
SeaTow.....	(340) 777-4869 / (800) 473-2869
USVI Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA)	
St. Thomas.....	(340) 774-2244
St. John.....	(340) 776-6444
St. Croix.....	(340) 773-2244
National Park Service	
St. Thomas/St. John.....	(340) 776-6201
St. Croix.....	(340) 773-1460
NOAA Fisheries	
National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office.....	(727) 824-5305
Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Division.....	(727) 824-5399
USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources	
DPNR St. Thomas/St. John.....	(340) 774-3320
DPNR St. Croix.....	(340) 773-1082
Division of Environmental Enforcement	
St. Thomas/St. John.....	(340) 774-3320
St. Croix.....	(340) 773-5774
Coastal Zone Management	
Toxic Spills.....	(800) 424-8802
St. Croix East End Marine Park	(340) 718-3367
Division of Fish and Wildlife	
St. Thomas/St. John.....	(340) 775-6762
St. Croix.....	(340) 773-1082

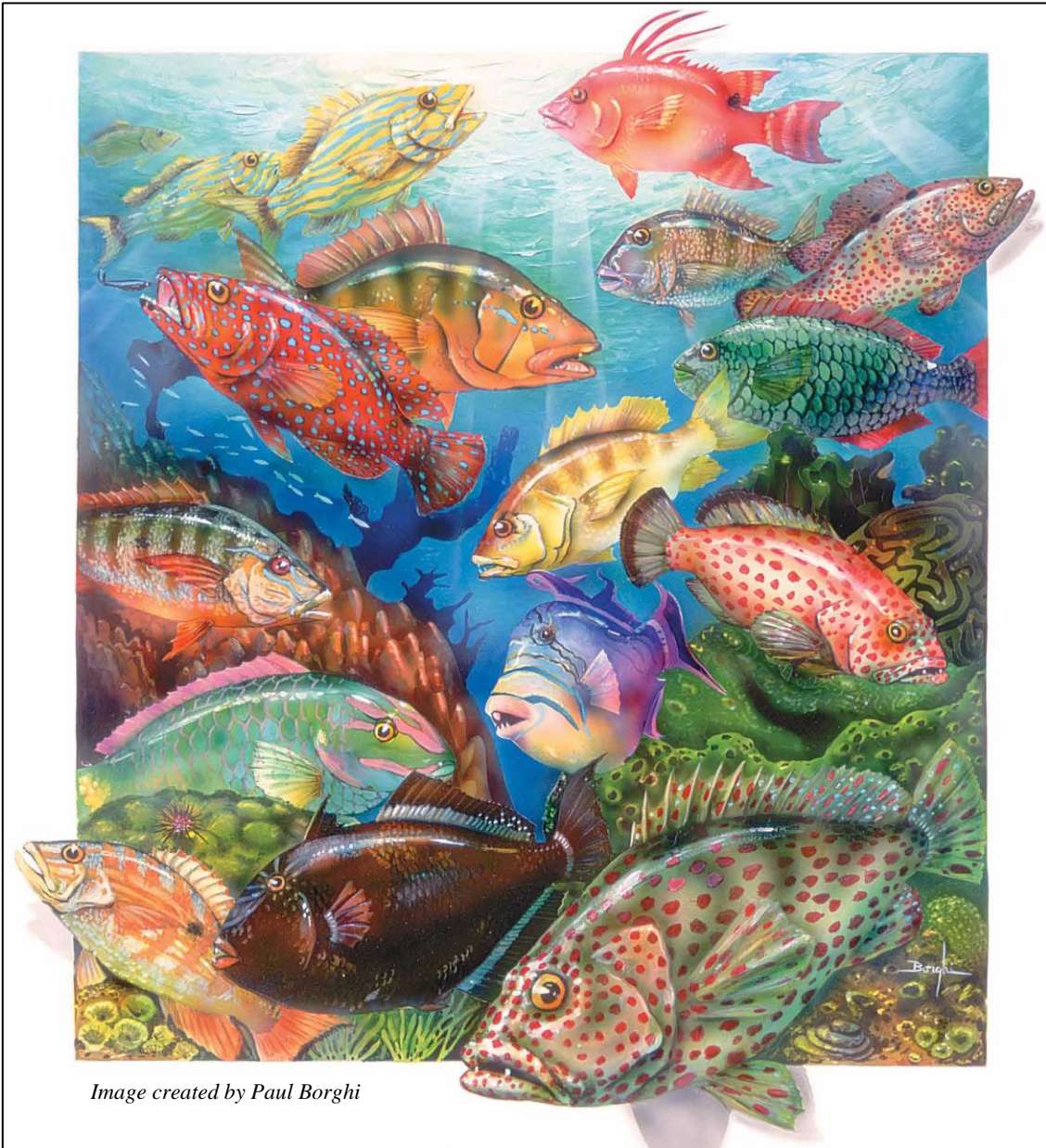


Image created by Paul Borghi

DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

6291 Estate Nazareth
St. Thomas, VI 00802
(340) 775-6762

45 Mars Hill Complex
Frederiksted, St. Croix, VI 00840
(340) 773-1082

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT

Charles W. Turnbull Public Library
4607 Tutu Park Mall
St. Thomas, VI 00802
(340) 774-3320

6003 Anna's Hope
Christiansted
St. Croix, VI 00821
(340) 773-5774