

## Flower Garden Banks



### Habitats

Coral reefs

Algal-sponge communities

Brine seep

Sand flats

Pelagic, open ocean

Drowned reefs

## Key Species

Star and Brain coral

Grouper

Manta ray

Hammerhead shark

Loggerhead sea turtle

# Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

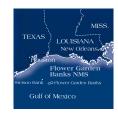
lies one hundred miles off the coasts of
Texas and Louisiana where three
underwater gardens emerge from the
depths of the Gulf of Mexico. The Flower
Garden and Stetson Banks are surface
expressions of salt domes beneath the
sea floor. These premier diving
destinations harbor the northernmost
coral reefs in the continental United
States and serve as regional reservoirs of
shallow-water Caribbean reef fishes and
invertebrates.

### **Research Activities**

A wide range of research activities are conducted in the sanctuary: monitoring reef health, cephalopod, elasmobranch and sea turtle surveys, mass coral spawning, genetics, fish censuses, and deep-water remotely operated vehicle surveys.

#### **Education Activities**

Classroom and shipboard presentations and volunteer training workshops for teachers and researchers are important parts of the sanctuary education activities. A news bulletin, brochures, posters and videos join with a technical series to relay research and management activities to the public.



Location Roughly 110 miles south of the Texas-Louisiana border

Protected Area 56-square miles

Designation January 1992 October 1996, Stetson Bank

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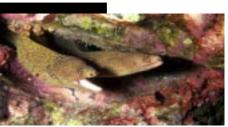
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turtle

Above: A marbled

grouper in the Flower Garden Banks; left to right: goldentail morays; french angelfish; coral spawning









Photos: Joyce & Frank Burek