

## Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Socioeconomics Factsheet



The health of Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary demonstrates that resource protection and economic development can be compatible, generating economic value reaching far beyond the water.



Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary is a focal point for scientific research. Scientists from a variety of universities, research foundations, and government agencies are constantly monitoring and evaluating the fauna and flora of the sanctuary. The reefs of the Flower Garden Banks provide a benchmark for comparison to other reefs in the region and are of critical interest to the scientific community. Significant investments have been made by a variety of research entities to better understand this important area.



Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary contributes to the health and sustainability of regional fisheries by protecting essential habitat for a variety of fish species of commercial and recreational importance.



An estimated 1,500 – 2,000 divers visit Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary annually.



The northwestern Gulf of Mexico is home to one of the most active areas of oil and gas exploration and development in the world. Approximately 150 oil and gas platforms are located within 25 miles of the existing boundaries of the sanctuary. One production platform is within the sanctuary boundary at the East Flower Garden Bank.

*Although the reefs of the Flower Garden Banks are isolated and remote, they are also connected geologically, biologically and economically to the mainland watersheds and the rest of the Gulf of Mexico. The model of science-based management demonstrated by Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary is one that can be applied throughout the region.*

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