

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary



Gray's Reef is located 19 miles off of Sapelo Island, Georgia.

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With its headquarters located in the port city of Savannah, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary is part of a network of 15 underwater parks that comprise the sanctuary system. At 22 square miles in size, Gray's Reef is the only natural protected reef area on the continental shelf off the Georgia coast, and one of only a few natural marine protected areas between Cape Hatteras, North Carolina and Cape Canaveral, Florida. It is a UNESCO International Biosphere Reserve and lies within the endangered North Atlantic right whale's critical calving grounds. Since 1981, NOAA has protected the quality of this unique and fragile ecological community as a national marine sanctuary, allowing recreational use by boaters, fisherman and divers. Teeming with marine life, Gray's Reef is also an important scientific study site and a success story for how we, as a country, protect our underwater treasures for future generations.

Advanced divers delight in Georgia's amazing underwater park

Explore a hidden wonder just off of the Georgia Coast

Advanced divers who make a trip to Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary will be shocked by the vivid colors of its soft corals and sponges. Just a short trip from Savannah, Georgia, named a "Best City" by "Condè Nast Traveler" and "Travel + Leisure" magazines, this natural live-bottom reef provides wonders for divers, boaters and fishermen.

Gray's Reef is teeming with marine life - from the loggerhead turtles that rest at the reef, to the more than 200 fish species identified by scientists. Additionally, sea stars, octopuses, crabs, lobsters, soft corals, sharks, whelks, dolphins and thousands of other animals live among the ledges and slopes of Gray's Reef.

The reef is located 70 feet below the surface, where divers may encounter strong currents, cold water at depth and occasional limited visibility.

In order to protect the reef, anchoring is not permitted, but divers may use a weighted marker buoy as reference to locate their dive site. Marker buoys can weigh up to 10 pounds with a buoy line up to ¼ inch. For a complete list of regulations, please contact the site's permit coordinator or visit the following link:

<http://graysreef.noaa.gov/newregs.html>.

Protecting the reef while you dive

Divers are important stewards of Gray's Reef and we appreciate your help to protect this beautiful national treasure. Here are some tips to assist you:

- Control your buoyancy and streamline equipment to avoid bumping into marine life or touching the reef.
- Remember not to touch or take anything
- Keep a safe distance from marine animals
- Do not spearfish; it is prohibited at Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary
- Keep a watchful eye and have fun!



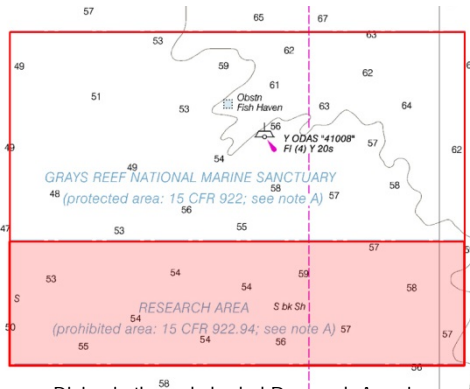
Photo: Greg McFall, NOAA

The spectacular colors of Gray's Reef await advanced divers.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



Gray's Reef Research Area



Diving in the red shaded Research Area is prohibited.

Sanctuary Dive Area Coordinates

- Northwest: 31°25.264'N (31.421064°N)
80°55.272'W (80.921200°W)
- Northeast: 31°25.264'N (31.421064°N)
80°49.689'W (80.828145°W)
- Southwest: 31°23.067'N (31.384444°N)
80°55.272'W (80.921200°W)
- Southeast: 31°23.067'N (31.384444°N)
80°49.689'W (80.828145°W)

Find us

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www.facebook.com/graysreefsanctuary
www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/earthisblue.htm
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Photo: Greg McFall, NOAA

Gray's Reef is an important and rare example of a live-bottom habitat.



Photo: Greg McFall, NOAA

The threatened loggerhead turtle forages and rests among the rocky outcrops in Gray's Reef.



Photo: Greg McFall, NOAA

Regal sea goddess nudibranch is one of the many colorful animals living in Gray's Reef.

<http://graysreef.noaa.gov>