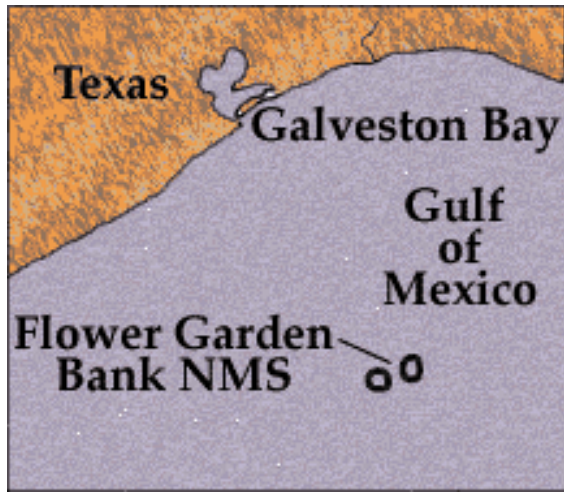


## **Flower Garden**

(Texas)



### **Description:**

One hundred miles off the coasts of Texas and Louisiana, a pair of underwater gardens emerge from the depths of the Gulf of Mexico like oases in the desert. The Flower Garden Banks are surface expressions of salt domes beneath the sea floor. This premiere diving destination harbors the northernmost coral reefs in the United States and serves as a regional reservoir of shallow water Caribbean reef fishes and invertebrates.

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### **Habitats and Key Species**

#### **Habitats**

- Coral reefs
- Algal-sponge communities
- Brine seep
- Sand flats
- Pelagic, open ocean Artificial reef

## **Key Species**

Star Coral

Brain coral

Manta ray

Hammerhead shark

Loggerhead turtle

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## **Specifications**

**Location:** Roughly 110 miles south of the Texas-Louisiana border

**Protected Area:** 56-square miles

**Designation:** January 1992

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## **Education Activities**

Classroom and shipboard presentations

Biennial news bulletin

Technical series relays research and management activities to the public

Brochures, posters, and videos

Workshops for teachers and researchers

Curriculum

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## **Research Activities**

Research cruises

Sanctuary fellowships

Monitoring program

Coral diseases

Mass spawning

Paleo-climatology

Fish censuses

Elasmobranch surveys

Toxicology

Turtle surveys

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## **Administration and Support**

Full-time staff consists of a manager, education coordinator, and research coordinator

Citizen participation through sanctuary advisory group

Supported by Flower Gardens Fund

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