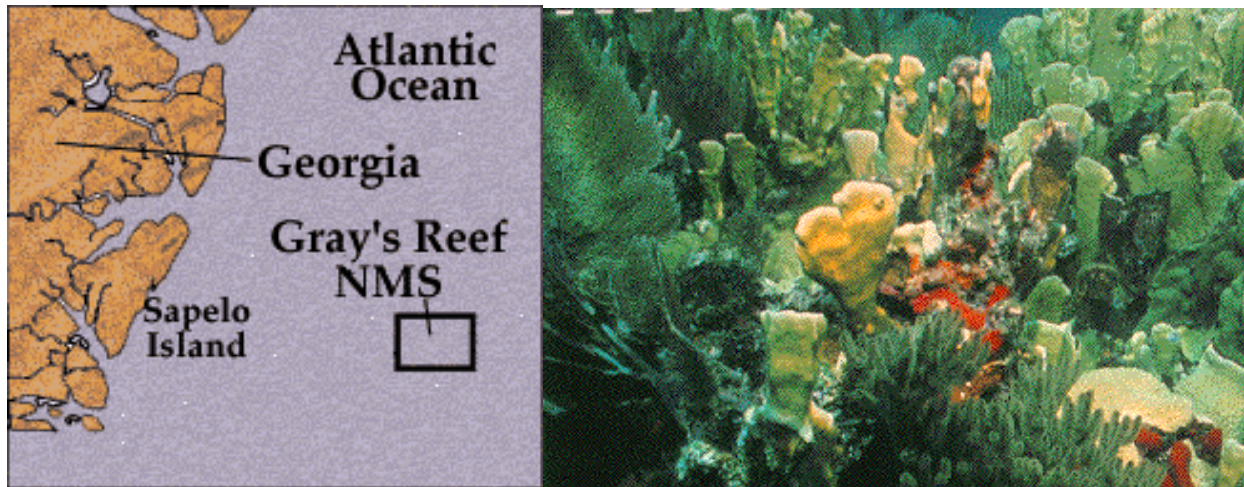


Gray's Reef

(Georgia)



Description:

Just off the coast of Georgia, in waters 20 meters deep, lies one of the largest near-shore sandstone reefs in the southeastern United States. The area earned sanctuary designation in 1981 and was recognized as an international Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1986. Gray's Reef consists of sandstone outcroppings and ledges up to three meters in height, with sandy, flat-bottomed troughs between. Because of the diversity of marine life, Gray's Reef is one of the most popular sport fishing and diving destinations along the Georgia coast.

Habitats and Key Species

Habitats

- Calcareous sandstone
- Sand bottom communities
- Tropical/temperate reef

Key Species

- Northern right whale
- Loggerhead sea turtle

Grouper
Black sea bass
Angelfish
Barrel sponge
Ivory bush coral
Sea whips

Specifications

Location: 17 miles east of Sapelo Islands, Georgia

Protected Area: 23-square miles

Designation: January 1981

Education Activities

Community outreach marine programs, seminars, and presentations

Education publications and exhibits

Elementary, middle, and high school marine science curriculum materials

Research Activities

Long-term monitoring of environment conditions and processes

On-site projects by regional researchers

Reef fish tagging and assessment

Archaeological surveys

Administration and Support

Full-time staff consists of a manager, assistant manager, education coordinator

Cooperating agencies include:

Skidaway Institute of Oceanography

University of Georgia Marine Extension Service

Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Community volunteers

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