



Greg McFall, NOAA  
Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

## Off the Beaten Path

# Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, Texas/Louisiana

*Remote Colorful Reefs and Majestic Marine Life*

### Outdoor Recreation in Federal Waters

**Dive:** Visitors will be awed by the [diversity of marine life](#) hidden under the waves far off the Texas and Louisiana coasts. Magnificent coral reefs present a colorful display atop underwater mountains rising from the depths of the Gulf of Mexico. The exceptional underwater visibility allows divers to experience [spectacular sights throughout the water column](#): coral heads the size of cars, schools of fish, graceful eagle and manta rays, and even a chance to witness majestic whale sharks during summer visits to the area.

The banks of the sanctuary include over a dozen [moored dive sites](#), with typical dive profiles of 70-130 feet. Situated 70- 115 miles offshore, the sanctuary is only accessible by boat, so divers interested in visiting these hidden gems can book [dive charters](#) for a truly unique and authentic Gulf of Mexico experience. Charters depart from numerous Texas ports, including: Galveston, Freeport, Sabine Pass, and Surfside.

**Fish:** Several of the ports that offer dive trips are also home to commercial [fishing charters](#) for anglers wanting to fish the Flower Garden and Stetson Banks. Snappers, jacks, barracuda, and wahoo are just a few of the fish commonly caught by sportfishing enthusiasts.

**Learn more about America’s lands and waters in the area:** [Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge](#), [Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge](#), [San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge](#), [Texas State Parks along the Gulf Coast](#)

### Known For

- Colorful marine life that makes the reefs look like “Flower Gardens”
- Diving
- Fishing



### Nearby Cities

- Galveston, Texas\*
  - Freeport, Texas\*
  - Houston, Texas (add 1 hour drive)
- [\*Length of boat ride ranges from 3-8 hours depending on sea conditions, departure port, dive site, and vessel speed]



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