

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

APPENDIX N. SYSTEM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SPAWNING SMZS

The Council's long-term goal is to have one System Management Plan (SMP) for all managed areas within the Council's area of jurisdiction from North Carolina through the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys. The Council directed staff to develop a SMP for the Snapper Grouper Amendment 14 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to ensure the proper monitoring, research, enforcement, and outreach work is done to adequately evaluate the effectiveness of the MPAs. Council staff worked closely with contractors Michelle Tishler and Dr. Ken Lindeman to develop a draft document. Chip Collier, SAFMC Staff, is responsible for coordinating the MPA SMP.

In addition, the Council directed staff to include an appendix (**Appendix N**) in Snapper Grouper Amendment 36 (Spawning SMZs) to address research, monitoring, enforcement, and outreach for the Spawning SMZs that are ultimately implemented. Eventually the Spawning SMZs SMP and the MPA SMP will be combined to form an overall System Management Plan. In the future, the Council will add sections addressing the Special Management Zones (SMZs) and Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (Coral HAPCs) and any other managed areas under the management of the South Atlantic Council.

1. System Management Plan for Spawning SMZs

1.1 Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives were used to choose the specific Spawning Special Management Zone (SMZ) sites and to specify the research, monitoring, evaluation, enforcement, and communication tasks. The goals and objectives will be reviewed by the SMP Advisory Panel (AP) to determine if the goals and objectives should be modified to meet management needs. The recommendations from the SMP AP will be reviewed by stakeholders, other APs, and the Council. The Council will approve the final Goals and Objectives of the SMP for the Spawning SMZs.

Goal 1: Develop and adopt an effective process to evaluate and refine management of Spawning SMZs

- Obj. A: Habitats where spawning for multiple snapper grouper species is likely to occur or documented are considered for management as SMZs based on input from scientist, fishermen, and public. (G 1F, B 2D?)
- Obj. B: Implement management planning and ensure an effective process (G 1A).
- Obj. C: Ensure a co-management system that is efficient and representative of fishery stakeholders. (G 3A)
- Obj. D: Co-management support by fishermen through cooperative research and citizen science projects within the Spawning SMZs is increased or maintained or developed. (G 4D)
- Obj. E: Evaluations conducted on the knowledge regarding spawning within each site at the end of 3, 6, and 9 years and reported to Council. (G 1F)

Goal 2: Knowledge and protection of important spawning locations increased or maintained through research and monitoring.

Obj. F: Knowledge on the spawning locations in SA for target species (Table xx) enhanced (G 6C, 6D)

Obj. G: Habitat characterization of potential or selected Spawning SMZs increased. (G 6C, 6D)

Obj. H: Habitats where spawning is likely to occur or documented for multiple snapper grouper species are protected from human impacts. (B 2E, 4A)

Goal 3: Environmental awareness and knowledge about the Spawning SMZs improved

Obj. I: Level of knowledge about the purpose, importance of and regulations in Spawning SMZs held by the public increased. (SE 6C)

Obj. J: Stakeholder participation strengthened and enhanced. (G 3C)

Obj. K: Existence value of Spawning SMZs enhanced or maintained. (SE 3B)

Goal 4: Enforceability and compliance within the Spawning SMZs enhanced

Obj. L: User participation in surveillance, monitoring, and enforcement increased (G 4D)

Obj. M: Surveillance and monitoring of coastal areas maintained or improved (e.g., satellites, drones, research vessels, etc.) (G 4A)

Obj. N: Compliance with regulations within the Spawning SMSs is increased or maintained through targeted communication. (G 4F)

Obj. O: Application of law and regulations adequately maintained or improved. (G 4E)

Obj. P: Law Enforcement AP recommendations for MPAs are considered.

Goal 5: Research and Monitor impact of invasive species (new goal added by IPT based on public comments)

Obj. Q: Invasive lionfish population reduced or eliminated in Spawning SMZs.

The Sunset Provision (**Action 9**) would require that spawning be documented within the Spawning SMZs and the Council would need to prepare a framework amendment to extend the Spawning SMZs status beyond 10 years. A preliminary list of target species (**Table 5**) are shown below; these are the species proposed to be used to document spawning.

Table xx. Spawning SMZs target species.

Groupers

Goliath grouper (*Epinephelus itajara*), Nassau grouper (*E. striatus*), red grouper (*E. morio*), red hind (*E. guttatus*) (due to documented aggregations in other areas), speckled hind (*E. drummondhayi*), snowy grouper (*Hyporthodus niveatus* formerly *E. niveatus*), Warsaw grouper (*H. nigritus* formerly *E. nigritus*), black grouper (*Mycteroperca bonaci*), gag (*M. microlepis*), scamp (*M. phenax*)

Snappers

Yellowtail snapper (*Ocyurus chrysurus*), cubera snapper (*Lutjanus cyanopterus*), dog snapper (*L. jocu*), gray snapper (*L. griseus*), lane snapper (*L. synagris*), mutton snapper (*L. analis*), red snapper (*L. campechanus*), silk snapper (*L. vivanus*)

Tilefish

Golden tilefish (*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*), blueline tilefish (*Caulolatilus microps*)

The Council is scheduled to choose preferred alternatives for all actions, including the specific Spawning SMZ sites, at the September 14-18, 2015 meeting. Once the sites are known, action items, similar to those shown below for outreach, will be developed for each Spawning SMZ site.

OUTREACH ACTION ITEMS – Spawning SMZs

The following ten outreach action items would be initiated by either Council staff and/or by potential partners:

Action Item 1: Work with fishing chart manufacturers (both printed and electronic) and/or vendors to improve available information for the Spawning Special Management Zones (SMZs).

- *Tasks:* identify manufacturers of more commonly used fishing charts in South Atlantic, contact manufacturers and coordinate methods to update products.
- *Justification:* fishermen have expressed concerns that charts commonly used do not currently portray the coordinates and restrictions for new spawning SMZs.
- *Deliverables:* add information to electronic and printed charts, possible labels to apply to existing printed charts available at retail outlets.
- *Schedule:* Year 1, identify manufacturers and assess best method to modify information currently available. Year 2, work with cooperating manufacturers to modify electronic data for products. Due to publishing constraints, outcomes of this project may not be immediately evident but will have long-reaching effects.
- *Budget:* Staff time is the primary expected cost for working with electronic chart manufacturers; dependent upon the number of printed fishing charts currently available (including those in storage), cost of creating and printing additional labels for existing printed charts.
- *Potential Partners/Roles:* Council staff will work with NOAA's Marine Charting Division to investigate if spawning SMZ boundaries and regulations can be included in a new proposed digital overlay of marine protection boundaries.

Action Item 1 addresses Goal 3, Obj I and J; Goal 4, Obj N and O

Action Item 2: Develop state-specific rack cards of spawning SMZs (SC/NC and GA/FL) to distribute at area bait and tackle shops, marinas, fish houses, boating stores, fishing tournaments, boat shows, etc.

- *Tasks:* new area specific rack cards – one for the Northern spawning SMZs (Carolinas) and one for the Southern spawning SMZs (Georgia/Florida) in the region – will be developed and distributed to targeted businesses and fishing tournament directors.
- *Justification:* effectively designed rack cards would draw attention to the Type 2 MPAs and provide quick access to general information about habitat, fish species, maps, regulations, and law enforcement contacts.
- *Deliverables:* rack cards
- *Schedule:* Year 1, design two rack cards – one for the Northern spawning SMZs (Carolinas) and one for the Southern spawning SMZs (Georgia/Florida) in the region – and receive input from the Council’s I&E AP; Year 2, print and distribute rack cards; Years 3-5, edit and reprint rack cards as needed.
- *Budget:* Staff time in Year 1; Year 2, printing and mailing costs for distributing rack cards; Years 3-5, printing and mailing costs for distribution, as needed.
- *Potential Partners/roles:* SAFMC Outreach Staff; State Marine Resource Agencies; SAFMC Information & Education Advisory Panel; NOAA Fisheries; and Sea Grant.

Action Item 2 addresses Goal 3, Obj I and J; Goal 4, Obj N

Action Item 3: Incorporate new information about spawning SMZs and the rack cards (Northern and Southern spawning SMZs) into the Council’s mobile application, *SA Fishing Regulations*.

- *Tasks:* new area specific rack cards – one for the Northern spawning SMZs (Carolinas) and one for the Southern spawning SMZs (Georgia/Florida) in the region – will be developed under Action Item 2. These new rack cards would be incorporated and made available on the Council’s website and the Council’s mobile app for fishing regulations, *SA Fishing Regulations*.
- *Justification:* Area specific rack cards with a concise summary of regulations can be used for targeted outreach efforts in the Carolinas (Northern) and Georgia/Florida (Southern). Using the Council’s website and mobile app are ideal platforms for making the information readily available to the public and easy to update in electronic form.
- *Deliverables:* Rack cards available for electronic download on the Council’s website and mobile app.
- *Schedule:* Year 1, design and development of rack cards; Year 2, rack cards made available on the Council’s website and mobile app; Years 3-5, update rack cards as needed.
- *Budget:* Year 1, staff time designing rack cards; Year 2, cost of incorporating rack cards into mobile app and staff time to upload to the Council’s website; Years 3-5, staff time to update as needed.
- *Potential Partners/roles:* SAFMC outreach staff; mobile app developer (Verona Solutions); website management company (Nassau Web Design).

Action Item 3 addresses Goal 3, Obj I and J; Goal 4, Obj N

Action Item 4: Develop a SAFMC spawning SMZs informational brochure to distribute to area fishermen.

- *Tasks:* Develop an informational brochure about spawning fish and habitats, the purpose of spawning SMZs and regulations within spawning SMZs for distribution to fishery stakeholders.
- *Justification:* The informational brochure will provide a summary of regulations and information for the spawning SMZs as well as an identification chart for snapper/grouper species found in the region. The brochure will also be available on the SAFMC website and the mobile application, *SA Fishing Regulations*.
- *Deliverables:* SAFMC informational spawning SMZ brochures.
- *Schedule:* Year 1, develop brochure and receive input from the Council's I&E AP; Year 2, print and distribute brochure; Years 3-5, reprint as necessary.
- *Budget:* Year 1, staff time; Year 2, printing and mailing costs for distribution; Year 3-5, reprinting and mailing costs for distribution, as needed.
- *Potential Partners/roles:* Council Outreach staff; State Marine Resource Agencies; SAFMC Information & Education Advisory Panel; NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC); possible contractual graphic designer (if not produced in-house).

Action Item 4 addresses Goal 3, Obj I, J, K; Goal 4, Obj N

Action Item 5: Develop PowerPoint presentations about the spawning SMZs in the region; post on the Web site and YouTube; and disseminate to fishing clubs, environmental groups, state Sea Grant programs, local governments, etc.

- *Tasks:* design and create a PowerPoint presentation using existing photos, video, maps, and other information to highlight information on spawning fish and habitat, spawning SMZs locations and regulations, etc.
- *Justification:* provides a quick method to distribute information for use by various audiences that can be readily updated.
- *Deliverables:* PowerPoint presentation on Web site and YouTube.
- *Schedule:* Year 1, produce and distribute PowerPoint; Years 2-5, update as necessary with current news and information on research and monitoring.
- *Budget:* Years 1-5, staff time.
- *Potential Partners/roles:* Council outreach staff

Action Item 5 addresses Goal 3, Obj I, J, K

Action Item 6: Expand the Council's existing Managed Areas web pages to provide comprehensive education and outreach products about spawning SMZs. Publicize availability of information by having links posted on other fishing/Non-Governmental Organizations/tourism related web sites.

- *Tasks:* enhance the Council's Managed Areas web pages and integrate materials, including links to other relevant sites. Publicize the availability of web-based information.
- *Justification:* The Web site is the best media for maintaining comprehensive, dynamic content and imagery. The availability of this information can be publicized from other existing high profile Web sites.
- *Deliverables:* Web site and promotion.
- *Schedule:* Year 1, develop expanded content with feedback from the Council's I&E AP and program partners; Years 2-5, implement expanded web pages, promote availability, and update quarterly.
- *Budget:* Year 1, staff time; Years 2-5, dependent on expansion of web page content and use of multi-media.
- *Potential Partners/roles:* Council Outreach Staff; State Marine Resource Agencies; NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) and Southeast Regional Office (SERO); NOAA Office for Law Enforcement; Sea Grant.

Action Item 6 addresses Goal 3, Obj I, J, K;

Action Item 7: Develop a list of key contacts (tackle shops, state parks, county government offices, outreach staff in other agencies, etc.) in the port communities near the spawning SMZs sites to target outreach efforts and materials.

- *Tasks:* enhance targeted communication and outreach efforts about the spawning SMZs through development of a database of key contacts in coastal communities in close proximity to deepwater MPA sites. Working with partners to identify key contacts will be critical to developing the contacts database.
- *Justification:* Identifying key contacts that facilitate information exchange within their local communities (tackle shops, state parks, county government offices, outreach staff in other agencies, etc.) will help streamline outreach efforts about specific spawning SMZs sites.
- *Deliverables:* Database of key contacts in coastal communities.
- *Schedule:* Year 1, work with program partners to develop database by state; Years 2-5, update database as needed.
- *Budget:* Years 1-5, staff time.
- *Potential Partners/roles:* SAFMC outreach staff; Sea Grant; State Marine Resource agencies; NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC);

Action Item 7 addresses Goal 1, Obj C and D;