



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Ocean Service  
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
Southeast Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Region  
33 East Quay Rd  
Key West, FL 33040  
(305) 809-4670 Voice (305) 293-5011 Fax

February 3, 2009

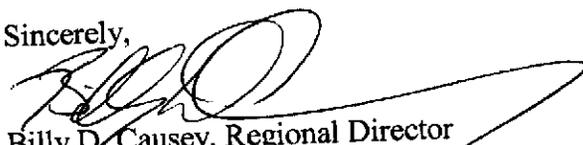
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Office  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201  
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Council Staff,

These comments are offered on the Fishery Ecosystem Plan and the Comprehensive Ecosystem-based Amendment 1.

- The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries applauds the efforts of the SAFMC to protect fragile deepwater coral habitat and its associated species. These areas are essential fish habitat and similar areas have been damaged by fisheries in other parts of the world. The **FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN** and the **COMPREHENSIVE ECOSYSTEM-BASED AMENDMENT 1** are important steps to protect habitats and species that support fisheries, and Amendment 1 is a proactive fisheries management plan to protect and conserve deep coral habitats not currently impacted by fishing in the south Atlantic region, but which have been shown to be extremely productive yet vulnerable elsewhere.
- Establishment of deepwater coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, as outlined in Amendment 1 [ACTIONS 1-4, (preferred) Alternative 2 and its sub-alternatives], will prevent destructive fishing practices, reduce bycatch, enhance management and allow for important research on these poorly-known habitats while they are relatively pristine.
- In the future, it may prove advantageous to further protect these productive yet fragile habitats. One way to do so is by incorporating them into the National Marine Sanctuary System. These sensitive habitats face a number of potential threats from non-fishing activities that could be addressed through NOAA's authorities under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. While doing this now may not be the highest priority for NOAA, it could become essential in the face of more imminent threats.

Sincerely,



Billy D. Causey, Regional Director  
Southeast Region  
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Flower Garden Banks  
National Marine Sanctuary  
4700 Avenue U, Bldg 216  
Galveston, TX 77551

Florida Keys  
National Marine Sanctuary  
33 East Quay Road  
Key West, FL 33040

Gray's Reef  
National Marine Sanctuary  
10 Ocean Science Circle  
Savannah, GA 31411



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE  
Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary  
10 Ocean Science Circle  
Savannah, Georgia 31411

5 February 2009

Mr. C. Duane Harris  
Chairman  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201  
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Mr. Harris:

Thank you and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council for the opportunity to comment on management plans and amendments dealing with ecosystem management for sustainable fisheries.

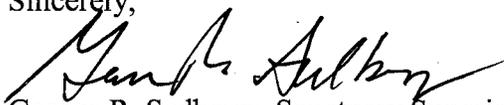
The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries applauds the efforts of the SAFMC to protect fragile deepwater coral habitat and its associated species. These areas are essential fish habitat and similar areas have been damaged by fisheries in other parts of the world. The **FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN** and the **COMPREHENSIVE ECOSYSTEM-BASED AMENDMENT 1** are important steps to protect habitats and species that support fisheries, and Amendment 1 is a proactive fisheries management plan to protect and conserve deep coral habitats not currently impacted by fishing in the south Atlantic region, but which have been shown to be extremely productive yet vulnerable elsewhere.

Establishment of deepwater coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, as outlined in Amendment 1 (ACTION 1, Preferred Alternative 2 and its sub-alternatives), will prevent destructive fishing practices, reduce bycatch, enhance management and allow for important research on these poorly-known habitats while they are relatively pristine. This proactive measure would help manage a productive ecosystem for sustainable use.

In the future, it may prove advantageous to further protect these productive yet fragile habitats. One way to do so is by incorporating them into the National Marine Sanctuary System. These sensitive habitats face a number of potential threats from non-fishing activities that could be addressed through NOAA's authorities under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. While doing this now may not be the highest priority for NOAA, it could become essential in the face of more imminent threats.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment. If I can be of assistance in further development or implementation of management to protect coral habitats of the South Atlantic Bight, please contact me.

Sincerely,

  
George R. Sedberry, Sanctuary Superintendent





**World Wildlife Fund**  
**Florida Program**  
32 Mutiny Place  
Key Largo, FL 33037

Direct Phone:(305) 853-0975  
Alessandra.Score@wwfus.org

[www.worldwildlife.org/florida](http://www.worldwildlife.org/florida)

February 6, 2009

Dear South Atlantic Fishery Management Council:

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) applauds supports the efforts of the Council to protect deepwater coral habitat and species. These areas not only provide essential fish habitat but provide necessary refugia and corridors of areas in which corals will be able to migrate and adapt with increasing climate change stressors. The **FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN** and the **COMPREHENSIVE ECOSYSTEM-BASED AMENDMENT 1** are important steps to protect habitats and species that support fisheries, and Amendment 1 is a proactive fisheries management plan to protect and conserve deep coral habitats and prevent destructive fishing practices, reduce bycatch, enhance management and allow for important research on these poorly-known habitats.

WWF would support that these areas be protected, conserved and managed through the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and the National Marine Sanctuary System. This would provide the necessary marine managed areas corridors for protection of species and habitats as well as protection from activities resulting in the alteration of the seafloor as that is not permitted in National Marine Sanctuaries and is not covered under the Magnuson-Steven Act.

Thank-you for allowing me to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Alessandra Score, Florida Program Marine Conservation Specialist