

3/3/2013

MARINE PROTECTED AREA EXPERT WORK GROUP

Minority Report

Submitted by

Marine Protected Area Expert Work Group Fishing Industry Panelists'

In Response To Promulgated

Marine Protected Area Expert Work Group Meeting Report Drafts

To the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

When the expert witness fishermen of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) Region were asked to join this meeting as panelists of the "Marine Protected Area (MPA) Expert Work Group (EWG)" it was on the premise of providing critically needed factual expertise to historical accounts of Speckled Hind (SH) and Warsaw Grouper (WG) and to consider alternatives and recommendations for reorientation of existing marine protected areas (MPAs) in the South Atlantic Council's region.

From the beginning of this MPA work group meeting process, some of the expert witness participants have felt misled and confused by the initial intent of this meeting and that their suggestions of expert understanding of SH and WG were not taken for full value.

As members and participants of this workgroup there was much that was discussed and not included within the final EWG draft. We would like to file this minority report and grievance with regard to the submittal of the draft EWG Draft II document because it did NOT address ALL of our concerns for any NEW marine spatial planning or our concerns about the incorporation of ANY additional MPA sites throughout the South Atlantic Council's management region. Last, both draft reports were later than scheduled due to the work load and we did not get to properly respond to the second draft.

As members of the MPA EWG, we feel that we contributed important expert knowledge and understanding on the location and distribution of SH and WG within our respective areas of the SE coast.

Since incomplete scientific information exists with regard to spawning aggregations of these two species, we have requested multiple times that the number and size of these sites be kept to an absolute minimum so as to not adversely and economically impact local fishing economies adjacent to these areas of the Southeast coastal region.

We have individually submitted concerns to the EWG leaders (via email) and asked, prior to Council submission, that our requests be incorporated into this final draft which is being submitted at the March 2013 SAFMC meeting.

Our specific complaints are:

1. In the second meeting, being presented with a new power point presentation, by Dr. Nick Farmer (NMFS-SERO), which carried multiple new MPA alternatives that were unfamiliar and that we were led to believe the alternative sites presented, were only for discussion purposes, not a primary task for consideration by the panel, and not for a final draft under "Other Business".
2. Our understanding of the exact purpose for this second meeting was that it was still an effort to bring about better understanding and a unified consent for realignment of existing MPAs. Clearly, there was more time spent by the EWG panel on the consideration of "new" MPAs, versus the Council's request to consider alternatives for reorientation of existing MPAs.
3. We had very little of our suggestions made at meeting or via emails incorporated into this final draft. The EWG Report was also completed in a very short time frame, without opportunity for sufficient review of drafts.

We asked that this minority report and letter of grievance be given serious consideration by the South Atlantic Council regarding the final draft of the MPA EWG and ultimately any decisions the Council make concerning MPAs relating to SH and WG protection.

Sincerely,

Mark Brown
Rusty Hudson
Jack Cox
Mark Marhefka
Bobby Freeman