

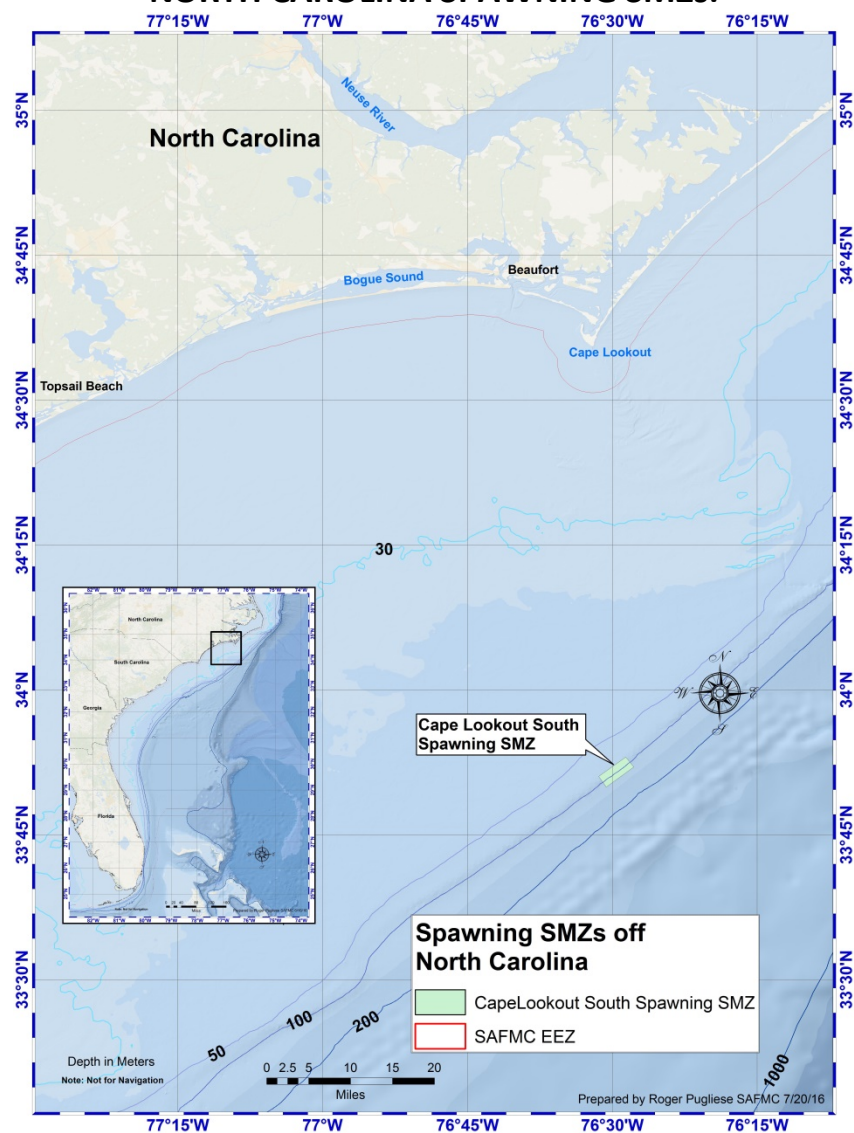
Snapper Grouper Amendment 36 – Summary

The Council recently approved Snapper Grouper Amendment 36 which intends to protect spawning fish and their habitat through the establishment of Spawning Special Management Zones (SMZs). Certain habitat areas are very important for a number of species as sites where the fish move/aggregate to spawn. Protecting these areas and the associated habitat could produce more eggs, larvae, and the subsequent recruitment of juvenile fish.

A Spawning SMZ is a designated area with habitat characteristics, bottom topography, and currents that provide important habitat for spawning snapper grouper species. In a Spawning SMZ, fishing for or retention of snapper grouper species would be prohibited and certain other activities (types of fishing, anchoring, etc.) would be restricted. Trolling for pelagic species would be allowed.

Through extensive public input as well as input from the Council's Marine Protected Area Expert Working Group, the Council chose the following sites to establish Spawning Special Management Zones (SMZs).

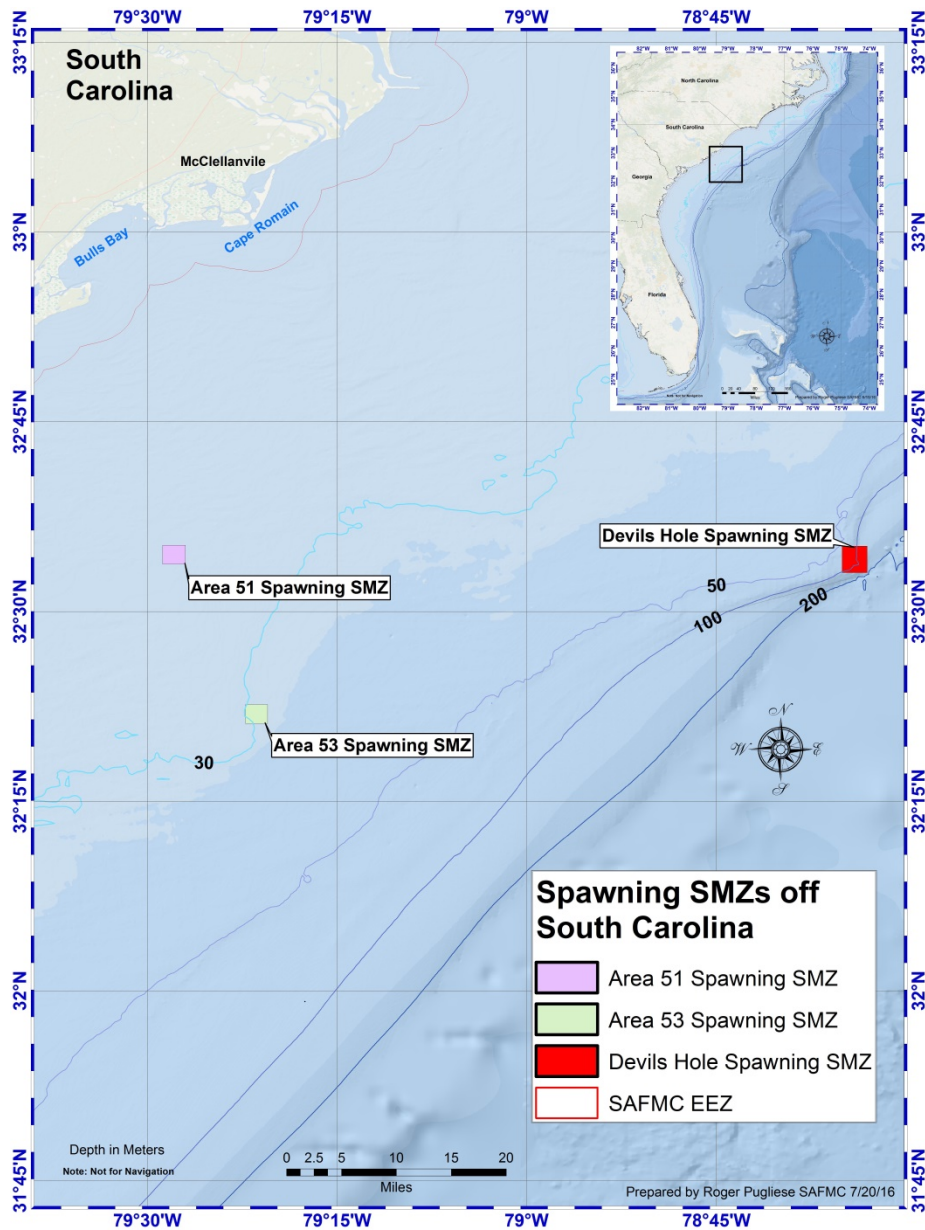
NORTH CAROLINA SPAWNING SMZs:



South Cape Lookout –

64 miles From South Inlet, NC;
5.1 square miles in size;
246 feet deep (inshore side);
453 feet deep (offshore side)

SOUTH CAROLINA SPAWNING SMZs



Devil's Hole –

55.8 miles from Georgetown, SC;
3.03 square miles in size; 203 feet deep (inshore side);
656 feet deep (offshore side)

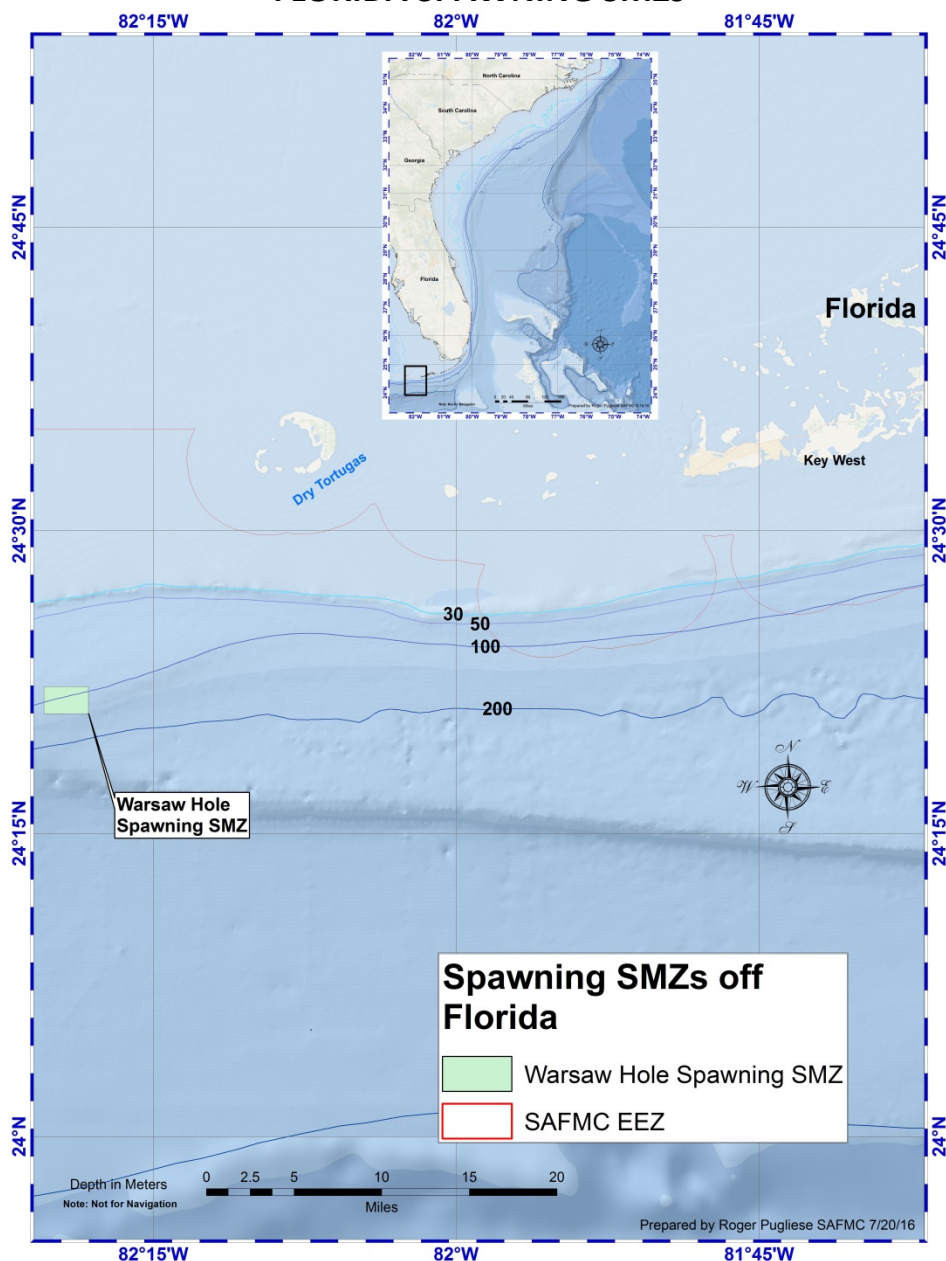
Area 51 –

experimental artificial reef site established by SCDNR; 2.99 square miles in size;
~70 feet deep

Area 53 –

experimental artificial reef site established by SCDNR; 2.99 square miles in size;
~105 feet deep

FLORIDA SPAWNING SMZs



Warsaw Hole –

34.7 miles from Key West, FL;
3.6 square miles in size;
230 feet deep (inshore side);
443 feet deep (offshore side)

Other items in the amendment include,

- Fishing for and/or possessing snapper grouper species in these Spawning SMZs will be prohibited.
- Revision to the boundary of the Charleston Deep Reef MPA,
- Measures to address transit and anchoring provisions within newly designated Spawning SMZs.
- A 10-year sunset provision whereby the Spawning SMZs designation would be discontinued unless spawning were documented is included, and a framework provision to reauthorize the Spawning SMZs is also included.
- The amendment includes a System Management Plan (SMP) to specify the outreach, law enforcement, and monitoring/research projects necessary to effectively monitor and evaluate the Spawning SMZs.

The amendment has been submitted to the Secretary of Commerce for review.

System Management Plan – Progress Update

The Council developed a System Management Plan (SMP) for the Spawning SMZs that describes in detail the law enforcement, research and monitoring, and outreach activities to support management of the proposed sites.

For Year 1 of the System Management Plan for Spawning SMZs, the following priority outreach action items were developed:

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

PROGRESS – Council staff have established contact with multiple electronic chart manufacturers (NOAA Office of Coast Survey, Navionics, Garmin, Anthropocene).

Action Item 2: *Develop files for managed area boundaries that can downloaded onto a SD card from the SAFMC website for various GPS units and have directions on how to use the file.*

PROGRESS – Point files are now available but Council staff are working on making contact with GPS manufacturers to find ways to develop shape files (polygons) that includes associated regulations.

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

PROGRESS – Need I&E AP input on content and format.

Action Item 4: *Develop a video presentation about Spawning SMZs; post on the SAFMC website and You Tube, and disseminate to fishing clubs, environmental groups, state Sea Grant programs, local governments, etc.*

PROGRESS – Need I&E AP input on content and format.

DRAFT Outline - Video Project - Spawning Special Management Zones

- I. What are Spawning Special Management Zones?**
 - a. Purpose and need of the management tool
- II. Why the Council thinks this tool can be used for management - Explain background of:**
 - a. deepwater habitats/geographic features
 - b. spawning sites/aggregations
 - c. ocean currents and larval transport
- III. Overview of 5 spawning special management zones – area information and regulations**
 - a. Cape Lookout spawning SMZ
 - b. Devil's Hole spawning SMZ
 - c. Explanation of the two artificial reef sites – Area 51 and Area 53
 - d. Warsaw Hole spawning SMZ
- IV. System Management Plan – Research & Monitoring of the spawning SMZs**
 - a. Explanation of system management plan and sunset review
 - b. Highlight research/monitoring being conducting within the SMZs (Dr. Will Heyman's research; Pisces cruises).