

Spiny Lobster Committee Meeting, December 5, 2011
Attachment 3

Recommendations from the **SAFMC Coral Advisory Panel** to the Council, based on information and discussions of the October 25-26, 2011 meeting of the Coral Advisory Panel (Charleston, SC) on Spiny Lobster Amendment 11

Based on information in Spiny Lobster Amendment 11, as presently written, the Coral AP does not believe sufficient information is presented to allow this to go forward at this time. The Coral AP recommends that the Spiny Lobster AP (and Habitat AP) review the draft of Amendment 11 to the Spiny Lobster FMP. The Coral AP offers to work with the Spiny Lobster AP to revise the draft. Suggested information needs to be addressed in this review include:

- a. Develop or define a process to address/protect Acroporids based on changes in distribution (i.e., new areas that become established, or present areas that lose coverage/presence),
- b. Include more complete information regarding how the baseline assessment was conducted, how the absolute location of the boxes were determined, and as well as the specific information relative to the bounding coordinates for the boxes
- c. Ensure all areas to be protected have been mapped with appropriate resolution (minimum mapping unit) and ground-truthed
- d. Further coordination with law enforcement relative to 'enforceability' of the plan

Notwithstanding the items noted above, the Coral AP would agree that it would be preferable to:

- Use geometric (boxes) descriptions for the protected areas
- There should be exclusion of all spiny lobster fishing within the areas to be protected and
- Encourage FWC to take a similar approach in state waters as SAFMC is taking in federal waters

We further recommend that the Council seek to review and assess the need, effect and appropriateness of the 'trap marking' as defined in the NMFS Biological Opinion, prepared under the ESA, for the spiny lobster fishery.