

## **Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting (Attachment 1)**

### **Oculina Outreach Update**

This overview provides highlights of recent outreach activities associated with the Oculina Bank Experimental Closed Area as well as the HAPC and deepwater corals.

#### **Oculina Bank Presentation – FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Division of Law Enforcement “Big Boat” Meeting:**

At the invitation of Major Brett Norton with FWC’s Division of Law Enforcement, Council staff PIO Kim Iverson gave a presentation regarding the Oculina Bank Experimental Closed Area and HAPC at the Division’s annual Big Boat Meeting July 15, 2008 in Ocala, FL. Personnel representing each of the Commission’s large vessel patrol boats were present, including vessel captains and crew from both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico regions and the FL Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The invitation stemmed from concerns expressed by scientists involved in recent research and monitoring efforts within the Oculina Bank. According to Dr. Sandra Brook and other scientists involved in coral recruitment studies, observations at the southern end of the Oculina Bank Experimental Closed Area showed continued signs of *Oculina* coral destruction by possible fishing gear interactions. Dr. Brook was invited to provide a presentation of recent research activities and the importance of protecting the Oculina Bank at the meeting. Unfortunately, she experienced car problems en route and was not able to attend. This afforded additional time for an overview of current fishery issues facing the SAFMC and an opportunity for informal discussion regarding enforcement concerns in the Oculina Bank, as well as proposed MPAs in the South Atlantic region. It was helpful to have input and recommendations regarding outreach efforts from LE personnel, including those involved with similar issues in the Gulf and FL Keys.

#### **2008 National Marine Educator’s Association Annual Conference, Savannah, GA – Oculina Presentation**

In conjunction with Cristin Ryan, Marine Educator from the Smithsonian Marine Station, PIO Kim Iverson co-presented a paper on management efforts to protect the Oculina Bank as part of the International Year of the Reef session of the National Marine Educator’s Association meeting July 21-24, 2008 in Savannah, GA. In addition to highlighting management efforts, copies of the DVD *Revealing the Deep* were distributed to session participants along with Oculina Bank Regulation Brochures, posters and other SAFMC materials. <http://www.nmeaweb.org/savannah2008/>.

#### **Continued Distribution of Printed Materials**

Additional packages of the reprinted Oculina Bank Regulations brochure were mailed in June to area marinas, bait and tackle outlets, and other marine related businesses in the Port Canaveral and Ft. Pierce areas by Gregg Swanson prior to completing her internship with the Council. Additional brochures were distributed by Council staff during public hearings held in Jacksonville and Cape Canaveral.