Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 2
Actions and Alternatives

Action 1. Establish Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for octocorals in the South Atlantic.

Alternative 1. No Action. Do not specify MSY for octocorals in the South Atlantic.

Alternative 2. Specify MSY for octocorals in the South Atlantic region based on Coral AP recommendations.

Option 1. MSY = 5,000 colonies (just above mode of annual harvest for 2000 – 2009).

Option 2. MSY = 29,200 colonies (50K colonies split between GOM and SA based on percentage of harvest).

Option 3. MSY = 21,000 colonies (approximately twice the maximum annual harvest for 2000-2008).

Action 2. Establish an Overfishing Level (OFL) for octocorals in the South Atlantic

Alternative 1. No Action. Do not specify OFL for octocorals in the South Atlantic.

Alternative 2. Specify OFL for octocorals in the South Atlantic based on Coral AP recommendations.

Option 1. OFL = MSY

Option 2. OFL = 10,407 colonies (maximum annual harvest for 2000-2008).

Option 3. OFL = 20,814 colonies (double the maximum annual harvest for 2000-2008).

Alternative 3. Specify OFL for octocorals in the South Atlantic region based on SSC recommendations:

Option 1. OFL = 4,970 colonies (SA Federal waters only)

Option 2. OFL = 33,755 colonies (SA Federal and State waters)

Action 3. Establish Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for octocorals in the South Atlantic

Alternative 1. No Action. Do not specify ABC for octocorals in the South Atlantic.

Alternative 2. Specify ABC for octocorals in the South Atlantic based on Coral AP recommendations

Option 1. ABC = OFL

Option 2. ABC = 13,114 colonies (maximum annual harvest for 2000-2008)

Option 3. ABC = 26,228 colonies (double the maximum annual harvest for 2000-2008)

Alternative 3. ABC = 50,000 colonies (SSC recommendation, August 2010) NOTE: In the EEZ for SA and Gulf combined.

Action 4. Establish an Allowable Catch Limit (ACL) for octocorals in the South Atlantic

Alternative 1. No Action. Do not specify ACL for octocorals in the South Atlantic

Alternative 2. Specify ACL for octocorals in the South Atlantic based on Coral AP recommendations

Option 1. ACL = 0
Option 2. ACL = ABC
Option 3. ACL = ABC (but no more than 50K colonies aggregate for state and federal waters)
Option 4. ACL = 15,000 colonies (approximately maximum annual harvest plus 10%).
Option 5. ACL = 39,900 colonies (mean harvest 2000-2008 for state and federal waters combined).

Action 5. Establish Accountability Measures (AMs) for octocorals in the South Atlantic

Alternative 1. No action. Do not specify AMs for octocorals in the South Atlantic.

Alternative 2. Harvest in state waters closes once ACL is met.

Alternative 3. Reduce following year's harvest by amount of overage.

Alternative 4. When total harvest of both state and federal waters reaches 50,000 colonies, then harvest would be closed in federal waters. Note: The Council would request that Florida issue concurrent regulations.

Action 6. Extend the SAFMC's Fishery Management Unit for octocorals into the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's area of jurisdiction.

Alternative 1. No action. Do not extend the Fishery Management Unit for octocorals into the GMFMC's jurisdiction.

Alternative 2. Extend the management boundaries for all octocorals species in the coral FMP to include the GMFMC jurisdiction

Discussion:
The GMFMC must first remove octocorals from their Coral and Coral Reefs Fishery Management Plan and request that the Secretary of Commerce designate the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to manage octocorals throughout their range.

Action 7. Transfer management authority of the octocoral fishery to the State of Florida

Alternative 1. No action. Do not transfer management authority of the octocoral fishery to the State of Florida.

Alternative 2. Delegate management of the octocoral fishery to the State of Florida.

IPT suggestion (based on input from Dr. Andrew Rhyne): May want to consider requesting the State of Florida add trip ticket codes for species level reporting and enforce documentation of harvest area.

IPT suggestion (based on input from Dr. Andrew Rhyne): May want to consider the State of Florida develop a photographic key of coral species harvested to improve enforcement and data collection.

IPT suggestion (based on input from Dr. Andrew Rhyne): Council may want to consider restricting harvest of ocotcorals to those fishermen (MLD endorsement holders) that have demonstrated harvest over the past 3 years. This would be provide an effective cap on effort until such time as better data is available.

Action 8. Modify management of South Carolina Special Management Zones (SMZs).

Alternative 1. No action. Do not modify the current management of SMZs off South Carolina.

Alternative 2. Limit harvest and possession of snapper grouper species (with the use of all non-prohibited fishing gear) in South Carolina's Special Management Zones to the recreational bag limit.

Alternative 3. Limit harvest and possession of CMP species (with the use of all non-prohibited fishing gear) in South Carolina's Special Management Zones to the recreational bag limit.

IPT suggestion: Council may want to consider a possible Alternative 4 to prohibit use of spear-guns and hand spears in the SMZs.

Action 9. Modify management of Special Management Zones throughout the South Atlantic.

Alternative 1. No action. Do not modify management of SMZs in the South Atlantic to their respective states.

Alternative 2. Transfer management of SMZs off the South Atlantic states to the respective state upon request.

Sub alternative 2a. South Carolina

Sub alternative 2b. Georgia

Sub alternative 2c. Florida

Sub-alternative 2d. North Carolina (Note: NC requested to look into transfer of artificial reefs to the state.)

Discussion – North Carolina has reefs outside of state waters that are currently not designated as SMZs. In fall 2009, NC reported having problems in some of these reefs and their inability to control or affect any kind of management measures in those areas. In order to address any problems, NC would have to go through the Council process. Therefore, NC requested that

NOAA GC look into the feasibility of the Council ceding management of those reef areas to the state.

Action 10. Amend the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to designate new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs).

Alternative 1. No action. Do not amend the Shrimp FMP to designate new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs).

Alternative 2. Amend the Shrimp FMP to designate the new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs):

Sub-Alternative 2a. Cape Canaveral, Florida, scallop grounds (for rock shrimp)

Sub-Alternative 2b. Bulls Bay, South Carolina (for penaeid shrimp)

Sub-Alternative 2c. Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto (ACE) Basin, South Carolina (for penaeid shrimp)

Action 11. Amend the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to designate new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs).

Alternative 1. No action. Do not amend the Snapper Grouper FMP to designate new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs).

Alternative 2. Amend the Snapper Grouper FMP to designate the following Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs):

Sub-Alternative 2a. Golden and Blueline Tilefish

Areas which meet the criteria for EFH-HAPC for golden tilefish (*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*) include soft bottom substrate comprised of mud, sand, or clay; burrows found in soft bottom; irregular bottom comprised of troughs and terraces inter-mingled with sand, mud, or shell hash bottom. Mud-clay bottoms in depths of 150-225 m are HAPC (Sedberry, pers. comm., 2010). Golden tilefish are generally found in 80-540 m, but most commonly found in 200 m depths (Dooley 1978).

Areas which meet the criteria for EFH-HAPC for blueline tilefish (*Caulolatilus microps*)include irregular bottom habitats along the shelf edge in 45-65 meters (m) depth; shelf break; or upper slope along the 100-fathom contour (150-225 m); hardbottom habitats characterized as rock overhangs, rock outcrops, manganese-phosphorite rock slab formations, or rocky reefs in the South Atlantic Bight; and the Georgetown Hole (Charleston Lumps) off Georgetown, SC. Blueline tilefish are generally found in 30-236 m (Ross 1978; Ross and Huntsman 1982; Parker and Mays 1998; and Sedberry, pers. comm., 2010), with depths of 48-232 m being critical for spawning during February through October with peak spawning in May (Harris et al., 2004).

Sub-Alternative 2b. All waters classified as Outstanding Resource Waters

Sub-Alternative 2c. North Carolina Strategic Habitat Areas

Sub-Alternative 2d. Bulls Bay, SC

Sub-Alternative 2e. Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto (ACE) Basin, SC

Sub-Alternative 2f. Deepwater Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

Action 12. Amend the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to designate new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs).

Alternative 1. No action. Do not amend the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP to designate new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs).

Alternative 2. Amend the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP to designate new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs):

Sub-Alternative 2a. All waters classified as Outstanding Resource Waters

Sub-Alternative 2b. North Carolina Strategic Habitat Areas

Sub-Alternative 2c. Bulls Bay, SC

Sub-Alternative 2d. Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto (ACE) Basin, SC

Action 13. Amend the Coral, Coral Reefs and Live/Hardbottom Habitat Fishery Management Plan (Coral FMP) to designate new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs).

Alternative 1. No action. Do not amend the Coral FMP to designate new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs).

Alternative 2. Amend the Coral FMP to designate new Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs):

Sub-Alternative 2a. Deepwater Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern.

Action 14. Amend the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Pelagic *Sargassum* Habitat to designate new Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)

Alternative 1. No action. Do not amend the *Sargassum* FMP to designate Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

Alternative 2. Amend the *Sargassum* FMP to designate the top ten meters of the water column in the South Atlantic EEZ as EFH for pelagic *Sargassum*.

Alternative 3. Amend the *Sargassum* FMP to designate the top ten meters of the water column in the South Atlantic EEZ bounded by the Gulfstream, as EFH for pelagic *Sargassum*.

Action 15. Amend the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Pelagic *Sargassum* Habitat to designate Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs).

Alternative 1. No action. Do not amend the *Sargassum* FMP to designate Essential Fish Habitat- Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs).

Alternative 2. Amend the *Sargassum* FMP to designate the following Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs):

Sub-Alternative 2a. The Charleston Bump Complex

Sub-Alternative 2b. The Point, NC