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**FW: [External] Protect Florida's Oculina Coral Reef – Reject Amendments 11 & 12**

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**From** Murphey, Trish <trish.murphey@deq.nc.gov>  
**Date** Thu 8/21/2025 9:57 AM  
**To** Kathleen Howington <Kathleen.Howington@safmc.net>

Hi Kathleen, could you forward this out to the full council please?  
Thanks  
Trish

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**From:** Mark Perry <mperry@floridaocean.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 21, 2025 9:06 AM  
**To:** Murphey, Trish <trish.murphey@deq.nc.gov>  
**Subject:** [External] Protect Florida's Oculina Coral Reef – Reject Amendments 11 & 12

You don't often get email from [mperry@floridaocean.org](mailto:mperry@floridaocean.org). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Trish Murphey,

Dear Chair and Members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council,

I am writing to urge you to reject Comprehensive Coral Amendment 11 and Shrimp Amendment 12. These proposals would allow bottom trawling by the rock shrimp industry in parts of the Oculina Coral Habitat Area of Particular Concern (OHAPC), undoing decades of science-based protections.

The Oculina Coral Reef is a globally rare deep-water ecosystem found off Florida's east coast. It provides essential habitat for over 2,000 marine species, including critical spawning grounds for snapper and grouper. Bottom trawling in this area would physically destroy ancient coral structures, smother living corals in sediment, and reduce biodiversity that has taken centuries to develop.

There is no compelling economic justification for opening these protected areas. NOAA economists have found no significant economic benefit for the rock shrimp fishery in central and northern Florida, and shrimp do not depend on coral habitat.

This reef is too important to risk for short-term gain. Please uphold the long-standing protections for the Oculina OHAPC and prioritize the health of our fisheries, marine biodiversity, and coastal communities. Once these corals are destroyed, they are gone forever.

Thank you for your consideration and for protecting Florida's marine heritage.

Please Save this extraordinary Oculina Coral Reef.

Sincerely,  
Mark Perry

Florida Oceanographic Society  
Stuart, FL 34996

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