Summary Report
Coral Advisory Panel
Webinar

The Coral Advisory Panel met on May 9, 2018 through webinar. The AP approved the agenda with minor modifications and minutes from the May 2014 minutes.

1. Update on amendments recently submitted

The AP was provided an update on the status of all amendments under review or being developed.

AP Action: The AP did not make any motions on the update.

2. Joint Coral (Amendment 10), Golden Crab (Amendment 10), and Shrimp (Amendment 11)

The AP was provided an overview of a draft options paper for a Joint Coral, Golden Crab, and Shrimp Amendment. The AP felt they needed more information on the fishery and the coral resources before they would recommend new access areas in the CHAPCs. Some information on the how the fishery operated was provided and indication that gear conflicts in the fishery is one of the main reasons for needing additional access areas. The AP indicated for potential action #1 (golden crab access areas) that:

- the golden crab ACL seems very high for the fishery since they have not met the ACL,
- overfishing could be occurring if the golden crab fishermen need to work previously unfished areas,
- the Council should use the precautionary principle established in Magnuson to protect coral,
- if the issues are gear conflict among fishermen, it would be better to focus on methods to communicate than to open potential coral areas,
- additional options should be developed to focus more directly at the gear competition issue,
- the AP did not recommend use of probability models developed by Kinlan et al. (2012) as the sole source for developing alternatives, and
- there is very limited data on coral distribution and more data are being collected this summer.

The AP then discussed potential action #2 (VMS for golden crab fishery). The AP recognized the limitations of VMS to identify where the crab traps were fishing and determining when traps were being set. They recommended looking into other technologies that would be useful for determining the location of where the trap is set. The other technologies might not be able to supply real-time data for enforcement, but it would have better location information for the traps.

The AP wanted additional information on the map that was provided to them to provide a recommendation for action #3 (modify the boundary for the Oculina Bank). In addition to the new multi-beam information, they wanted past VMS tracks and the proposed boundary line

denoted. The AP indicated there could be a chronic sedimentation issue if the fishery is allowed to occur close to the coral.

The AP felt that action #4 could be better addressed by other advisory panels but the wanted to ensure any provision would prevent illegal fishing that would impact coral.

AP Motions:

MOTION #1: DO NOT OPEN NEW AREAS UNTIL NEW INFORMATION ON CORAL HABITAT DISTRIBUTION AND FISHERY NEEDS BECOME AVAILABLE AND MEET WITH GOLDEN CRAB AND SHRIMP APS TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT OF POTENTIAL AREAS.
Motion approved by AP

MOTION #2: EVALUATE OTHER TECHNOLOGY THAT COULD DETERMINE LOCATION OF GEAR IN ADDITION TO OR INSTEAD OF VMS.
Motion approved by AP

MOTION #3: DEVELOP BETTER MAPS WITH EXISTING BATHYMETRY AND VMS POINTS TO DETERMINE IF THE BOUNDARY ADJUST IN ACTION #3 WOULD IMPACT CORAL AND PROVIDE NEEDED BUFFER.
Motion approved by AP

MOTION #4: THE CORAL AP WOULD LIKE TO ENSURE ANY TRANSIT PROVISION IS ABLE TO PREVENT ILLEGAL FISHING IN THE DEEP-WATER SHRIMP FISHERIES. SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT WILL NEED TO BE ADDRESSED BY OTHER APS.
Motion approved by AP

3. Update on Coral Disease in Florida

The AP was provided an update on coral disease along the Florida Reef Tract by Dr. Joshua Voss, Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute and Coral AP member. A new coral disease in south Florida was first observed off Miami in 2014. The disease outbreak is still active and continues to spread and increase. The disease has been observed affecting more than 15 species of coral. The disease impacts different species of coral differently, but in general progresses very rapidly once visually detected. In 2017, the prevalence of disease had increased to 50% for some species in the Upper Keys where the disease was not previously observed or observed at low levels (typically less than 15%). The disease is reducing the number of colonies and number of genotypes in pillar coral (*Dendrogyra cylindrus*). The Coral Disease Advisory Committee is continuing to address the disease outbreak. Members are developing and testing new intervention techniques. It might turn out that a combination of multiple options would work best. Multiple option interventions have not been tested on a large scale, but show promise in lab experiments.

The AP discussed:

- information on the disease outbreak outside of SE FL,
- the published epicenter is a Port of Miami dredging project monitoring station,
- it was not clear if the disease outbreak could be linked back to a specific event,
- the disease is likely waterborne,

- the potential pathogens in culture have not been verified as pathogens causing the disease,
- symptoms are typical of pathogens in other events,
- it is not clear if it is one or multiple pathogens,
- symptoms can vary among species,
- some soft corals are showing some tissue loss, and
- samples have been preserved to look for viral particles.

AP Action: The AP did not make any motions on the update.

4. Update on Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area

Dr. Ken Banks, Section Manager for the Broward County Environmental Protection & Growth Management Department of Natural Resources, Planning & Management Division, provided an update on the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area, which will become effective July 1, 2018. Having elected officials, i.e., county and city commissioners and State representatives, on the working group proved to be an important step in the designation process. The working group spent one year educating and two more years developing recommendations. The current law establishes a box around state waters to designate an important conservation area. The Department of Environmental Protection and FWC were included in the development of the area. As a separate legislative action, DEP received $1 million designated for water quality monitoring and coral disease monitoring. Future actions will consider developing a joint management plan for the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area between DEP and FWC. The AP asked if some funds would be available to close some gray water (ocean outfalls) systems. Currently, there are no additional funds for gray water removals.

AP Action: The AP did not make any motions on the update.

5. Update on Deepsea Coral Research

The Coral AP was provided an update on Deepsea Coral Research occurring the Southeast Region. The Southeast Deepsea Coral Initiative started in 2016 by gathering data on past research dives, museum records, and mapping. Mapping and ROV dives were conducted in 2017 and continue in 2018. The proposed mapping and dive sites in the South Atlantic region include areas of potential interest to SAFMC and BOEM, as well as areas of scientific interest. The group is working with several different partners to leverage the funding and research with other initiatives. Dr. Sandra Brooke, Florida State University and Coral AP member, stated that the Deep Search program is a multi-agency project funded through BOEM, NOAA, and USGS for four years led by Eric Cordes, Temple University.

AP Action: The AP did not make any motions on the update.

6. Regulations Recommended for Removal

The Coral AP was provided an overview of regulations recommended for removal by Council and SERO staff. The AP indicated they did not have any additional items for removal but were concerned with removing the annual catch limit for spiny lobster. The AP was concerned about removing the ACL for spiny lobster. This could result in additional fishing effort in the spiny lobster pot fishery and recreational dive fishery, which could have impact on coral resources.

AP Action: There is potential impact on coral if ACLs are removed for spiny lobster.

7. Elections

The AP voted to approve Jocelyn Karazsia for chair and Sandra Brooke for vice chair.