

**REPORT OF THE  
ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANGEMENT COMMITTEE  
Orlando, Florida  
June 9-10, 2008**

The Ecosystem-Based Management Committee met on June 9-10, 2008 in Orlando Florida.

Monica Smit-Brunello, NOAA General Counsel, provided a summary of the Presidential authority under the Antiquities Act.

Dr. Douglas Rader, Senior Scientist for the Environmental Defense Fund and Habitat Advisory Panel Chairman summarized the background of the proposal to designate a number of marine deepwater habitats throughout the US as National Monuments under the authority of the Antiquities Act.

Roger Pugliese reviewed written and email comments and public hearing comments on the Fishery Ecosystem Plan and Comprehensive Ecosystem Amendment.

Carolyn Belcher, SSC Chair, provided discussion and comments on the FEP developed at their meeting on June 8 and advised that individual members of the SSC were tasked with additional review. The SSC also requested the documents be provided to the SSC as they are being completed for Council review in September.

Roger projected charts in the Comprehensive Ecosystem Amendment of the royal red and rock shrimp fishing activity in relationship to the proposed Stetson-Miami Terrace CHAPC, the NMFS analysis of VMS data points relative to the CHAPC boundary, and deepwater habitat data relative to the VMS data.

Dr. Rader provided an updated proposal to address concerns expressed about the deepwater shrimp fishery operating on the Western border of the proposed Stetson-Miami Terrace CHAPC. An informal meeting was held recently at the Southeast Regional Office of NMFS between representatives of the Habitat Advisory Panel, representatives of the deepwater shrimp fishermen and the Regional Administrator to discuss these concerns. The discussion led to an additional alternative creating a Shrimp Fishery Access Area designed to accommodate continued trawling within a small area of the proposed CHAPC. Thus, the CHAPC Western boundary remains as proposed but an allowable gear area or "Shrimp Fishing Access Area" was proposed. The alternative also includes three cutout areas suggested by the Habitat and Coral Advisors of known or highly probable deepwater coral habitat.

**The Committee approved the following motions:**

**Motion #1. INCLUDE THE ALTERNATIVE ("SHRIMP FISHERY ACCESS AREA") INTO THE DOCUMENT.**

**Motion #2. MAKE THE ALTERNATIVE ("SHRIMP FISHERY ACCESS AREA") THE PREFERRED OPTION.**

**Motion #3. MOVE ALTERNATIVE 4 (SECTION 2.1.2) REGARDING ACOUSTIC MONITORING TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.**

**Alternative 4. Create a “Shrimp Fishery Access Area” (SFAA) within the proposed Stetson Reefs, Savannah and East Florida Lithoherms, and Miami Terrace C-HAPC boundaries, where fishing with a shrimp trawl and/or shrimp possession is allowed by any vessel holding a rock shrimp limited access endorsement and equipped with an approved vessel monitoring system (VMS).**

The SFAA is located as follows: The western boundary is the western boundary of the CHAPC. The northern boundary of the SFAA is at latitude 30° 12' N. The southern boundary is at latitude 26° 18' 56" N.

From the northern boundary extending southward to latitude 27° 30' N, the eastern boundary is 1.0 nm due east of the western boundary of the HAPC, except between latitudes 29° 20' 25" N. and 29° 8' N., and between latitudes 28° 30' 37" N. and 28° 14' N., where shrimping is not allowed within the CHAPC.

From the southern boundary extending northward to latitude 27° 30' N, the eastern boundary is 1.5 nm due east of the western boundary of the HAPC, except between latitudes 26° 57' 6" N. and 26° 49' 58" N., where shrimping is not allowed within the C-HAPC.

The intent of the Council is to allow transit with shrimp on-board at non-trawling speeds.

**Motion #4. SELECT NEWLY FORMED GOLDEN CRAB ALTERNATIVES AS ALTERNATIVES FOR THE AMENDMENT.**

**Motion #5. MAKE GOLDEN CRAB ALTERNATIVES THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES.**

**In addition, the committee provided the following guidance and/or made the following requests:**

Roy Crabtree submitted preliminary SERO staff comments on the CEA.

Mac Currin requested staff update tables in the document to include the most recent available data. He encouraged State agency representatives to have staff review appropriate sections of the FEP and CEA especially pertaining to their state and provide information and updates to staff as soon as possible.

Committee members requested staff work with NMFS, industry advisors, states agency officials, and habitat and coral advisors to verify coordinates.

Susan indicated the alternatives for accommodating the deepwater shrimp fishery should include the following 1) Moving the boundary, 2) Leaving the boundary where it is and not establishing trawling areas, 3) No action and 4) the Preferred Alternative.

Monica requested staff include a clean, simple map in the front of the document that clearly depicts the proposed CHAPC boundary and the allowable gear areas for golden crab and deepwater shrimp.

The committee requested the acoustic monitoring alternative for golden crab be included as a proposed research item in the research section of the document.

Monica requested that in the front of the amendment document, staff clarify the CHAPC designation and EFH HAPC development processes to resolve any confusion. In addition, she requested staff check coral and other EFH designations developed pursuant to 50CFR part 800 relative to the CHAPC proposal.

Tom identified the need to provide comment on Council activities relative to the proposed CHAPC to the administration and the Committee agreed by consensus to recommend the Council send a letter to the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior highlighting how the Council has invested 10 years of leadership in efforts to protect these deepwater coral resources. Additionally, the committee directed that the letter outline the extensive stakeholder involvement in this effort. The direction was to draft and send the letter as soon as possible in cooperation with Habitat AP Chair.

Susan also indicated the Council needs to comment as soon as available if a public rule is published for the establishment of a southeast deepwater coral National Monument. In addition, support information should be provided ongoing documentation of clear evidence of the Council process and status (e.g., public hearing draft and “Revealing the Deep” DVD).

#### **ADDENDUM (not part of the committee report)**

Following the committee meeting the Golden Crab industry representatives requested they be granted access to a portion of the area designated as Shrimp Fishery Access Area. They indicated the deepwater shrimp representatives had agreed to this additional alternative. I suggest the council agree to add this additional alternative to take to the next public hearings for comment and further consideration. I so move.