

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
HABITAT PROTECTION AND ECOSYSTEM BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Via Webinar
March 1, 2021

The Committee approved a revised agenda and minutes from the December 2020 meeting.

Coral Amendment 10

Staff provided an overview of the Coral Amendment 10 Decision Document on possible establishment of a Shrimp Fishery Access Area (SFAA) along the eastern boundary of the northern extension of the *Oculina* Bank CHAPC to address a previous request from the rock shrimp fishery to provide access to historic fishing grounds. The IPT was given license to edit and revise the public hearing document based on recommendations provided by the Committee. The Committee approved the following motion and provided the following guidance:

MOTION 1: APPROVE CORAL AMENDMENT 10 FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS AS MODIFIED APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Reword purpose to clarify the intent of the action is to allow rock shrimp fishing along the edge of the OHAPC.

The Committee reaffirmed selection of **Preferred Alternative 2:**

Preferred Alternative 2. Establish a rock shrimp fishery access area along the eastern edge of the northern extension of the *Oculina* Coral Habitat Area of Particular Concern. Allow a shrimp vessel with a valid commercial permit for rock shrimp to bottom trawl within the established area bounded by the following coordinates. No person may use a bottom longline, dredge, pot, or trap. If aboard a fishing vessel, no person may anchor, use an anchor and chain, or use a grapple and chain.

Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	29° 17.533' N	80° 10 ' 22" W
2	29° 10.983' N	80° 8 ' 39" W
3	29° 3.583' N	80° 7 ' 29" W
4	28° 54.417' N	80° 5 ' 23" W
5	28° 48.6' N	80° 4 ' 22" W
6	28° 30' N	80° 1 ' 1" W
7	28° 30' N	80° 0 ' 46" W
8	28° 46.017' N	80° 3 ' 29" W
9	28° 48.617' N	80° 3 ' 57" W
10	28° 53.3' N	80° 4 ' 49" W
11	29° 11.333' N	80° 8 ' 37" W
12	29° 17.567' N	80° 10 ' 7" W

FEP II Roadmap Update

Staff provided an overview of outcomes and highlights of the FEP II Roadmap Update developed by staff through Panel member deliberations and input. The Roadmap identified components of policies that could be turned into actions to be accomplished in 2 years. The Committee provided the following comments and guidance:

- As a vast resource, determine how can the FEP Roadmap be better used or operationalized.
- While policy statements were used in the past year as the basis for Council comments in the region there is a need to clarify how other policies get translated into actionable items.
- Policy statements are useful in supporting Council coordination with partners and other items such as providing material for the CCC document pertaining to MSA reauthorization.
- FEP roadmap is a good document housing all policies and region-wide policy statements and serves a good resource for states.
- The feedback loop connecting the FEP Roadmap to actionable items is going to be the Blueprint.

Habitat and Ecosystem Program Blueprint

Staff provided an overview of development of a Habitat and Ecosystem Blueprint and establishment of a Habitat and Ecosystem Blueprint Workgroup to discuss scope of and process to develop an overarching document.

The Committee provided the following guidance/comments:

- Composition of Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel and possible modification.
- Broader goal is how to better integrate information that we have into the conversation for all of the Council's actions.
- Role and pathways for the SSC and APs to engage along this process while avoiding creating a mega-working group
- Vision to bring the Council's habitat program more into the conversations and be more focused on deliverables informing management decisions.
- Insight into how policies can be integrated across all the work the Council does.
- Highlight important Council policies e.g., affecting forage fish, climate change and prioritization of needs to document how other fisheries are affected
- Split habitat from ecosystem and climate activities. Committee members stated addressing all those overarching topics under the Blueprint would become unwieldy. Additionally, new Executive Orders pertaining to climate issues warrant addressing separately.

Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Advisory Panel

Staff reviewed a draft list of agenda items noted below to be covered during the spring Habitat and Ecosystem AP webinar. Committee modified and endorsed the list shown below.

List of Agenda Items for Spring Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management AP (April 14-16, 2021)

- Briefing on Committee Action

- Status of Amendment Development
- NOAA Fisheries South Atlantic Climate Vulnerability Assessment
- Executive Order on Climate
- NOAA Fisheries South Atlantic Ecosystem Status Report
- FEP II Roadmap Activities
- Development of a SAFMC Habitat Blueprint
- Beach Dredge and Fill Policy Statement Revision
- ESA BiOp for beach, sand placement and dredging
- Habitat and Ecosystem Webpages/FEP II Dashboard
- Habitat and Ecosystem Web Services and Hub Development
- BOEM 2021 Activities
- Status Report on Kitty Hawk Wind and SC Call Areas
- Enhancing Collaboration with FSCs CCC Habitat WG
- SECAS and Regional Conservation Blueprint Update

The Committee discussed a recent Executive Order on Climate Change and 30-day comment period that was announced on March 1. Most Councils are interested in receiving a presentation from NMFS before CCC meets the 3rd week of May. The Council, has scheduled a meeting on March 29 to receive NMFS's presentation and provide comments. The EO was also added to the list of agenda items for the Habitat and Ecosystem AP meeting to obtain additional comment.

Timing and Task(s)

MOTION 2: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASK(S):

1. Modify Coral Amendment 10 to address Committee recommendations: clarify that industry came forward before the previous amendment (Coral Amendment 8) was approved; describe and clarify SFAA designation; reword language for no action stating no SFAA exists in the OHAPC at this time and modify wording in the preferred alternative to clarify the allowable activity within the proposed SFAA.
2. Schedule Coral Amendment 10 public hearings during the spring 2021.
3. Continue development of the Habitat Blueprint with the provided guidance (see above).
4. Schedule and facilitate the Habitat and Ecosystem AP April meeting with agenda topics listed above.