

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
HABITAT PROTECTION AND ECOSYSTEM BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Charleston, South Carolina
September 26, 2017

The Committee approved minutes from the June 2017 meeting and the current agenda.

EFH Policy Statement on Artificial Reefs

Council staff reviewed the Draft EFH Policy Statement on Artificial Reefs developed by the Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Advisory Panel in cooperation with State Artificial Reef Program representatives and the ASMFC Artificial Reef Committee. The Committee and Council had a robust discussion regarding some potential concerns regarding artificial reefs and fishing pressure, among other issues. Many of the concerns have been addressed in the policy.

The Committee approved the following motion:

MOTION 1#. MOVE THE POLICY STATEMENT TO THE COUNCIL
FOR APPROVAL.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: APPROVE THE EFH POLICY STATEMENT ON ARTIFICIAL
REEFS

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: APPROVE THE EFH POLICY STATEMENT ON ARTIFICIAL REEFS
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Fishery Ecosystem Plan II Implementation Plan

Council staff provided an overview of the draft FEP II Implementation Plan and timeline for completion. The Committee and Council members provided recommendations on actions and structure and directed development of a two-year roadmap based on the detailed plan highlighting accomplishable high priority actions. The draft Implementation Plan and roadmap will be reviewed by the Committee during the December Council meeting.

Habitat and Ecosystem Tools and Model Development

Council staff noted Tom Okey, University of Victoria, in cooperation with Howard Townsend, NOAA Fisheries ecosystem modeling lead, will review South Atlantic ecosystem model development and example issues during the October 2017 SAFMC SSC meeting.

SAFMC FEP II Dashboard Development

Council staff provided an overview and live access to the FEP II Dashboard and integration into Council Website. The page will be accessible through and eventually replace the Habitat /Ecosystem webpage. Staff demonstrated some of the capabilities of the Dashboard and encouraged Council members to explore the site and to use it.

Other Business

Dr. Wilson Laney reviewed the recent publication of a Final Rule for designation of Atlantic Sturgeon Critical Habitat which became effective September 18. Questions are coming from stakeholders regarding whether USFWS and NMFS will seek to work together on Section 7 and CH consultations in cases where Critical Habitat for Atlantic Sturgeon may overlap with species under USFWS jurisdiction.

Timing and Task(s)

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

Staff will:

- 1) Finalize the Artificial Reef EFH Policy Statement and post on the FEP II Dashboard.
- 2) Revise Draft FEP II Implementation Plan based on Council member and Core Team input and drawing on the plan, develop a draft roadmap for review during the November Habitat Ecosystem Advisory Panel meeting and completion for consideration and possible approval at the December Council meeting.
- 3) Continue to refine format, evaluate capabilities and operationalize FEP II Dashboard and finalize Sections for approval during December Council meeting.
- 4) Ongoing- Work with South Atlantic Ecosystem Modeling Workgroup to support completion and presentation of a first iteration of the next generation South Atlantic Ecopath model during the October SSC meeting.
- 5) Ongoing - Work with FWRI to further expand detailed information presented in the EcoSpecies online system supporting FEP II.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL