



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

# Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel October 2024

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# EFH 5 year review

- Limited FEP II Update (Prey and References) Subcommittee Report - Wilson Laney NC State University
  - The Food Web policy was last updated 2016.
  - The workgroup updated the food web map, diet information, defined prey abundance, and updated the reference section.
  - The panel recommended adding more information to the new appendix identifying the top 5 prey items per FMP.
- Next Steps
  - The EFH letter has been drafted and is an attachment
  - The habitat that is used by these top prey items will be incorporated into the EFH definition by FMP for the next 5 year review to be completed in December 2029.
  - The HEAP also plans to incorporate abundance information and updated life stage information.
- Recommend that the Council request an Integrated Ecosystem Assessment to aid in the next EFH review.

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## EFH Policy Statement on energy

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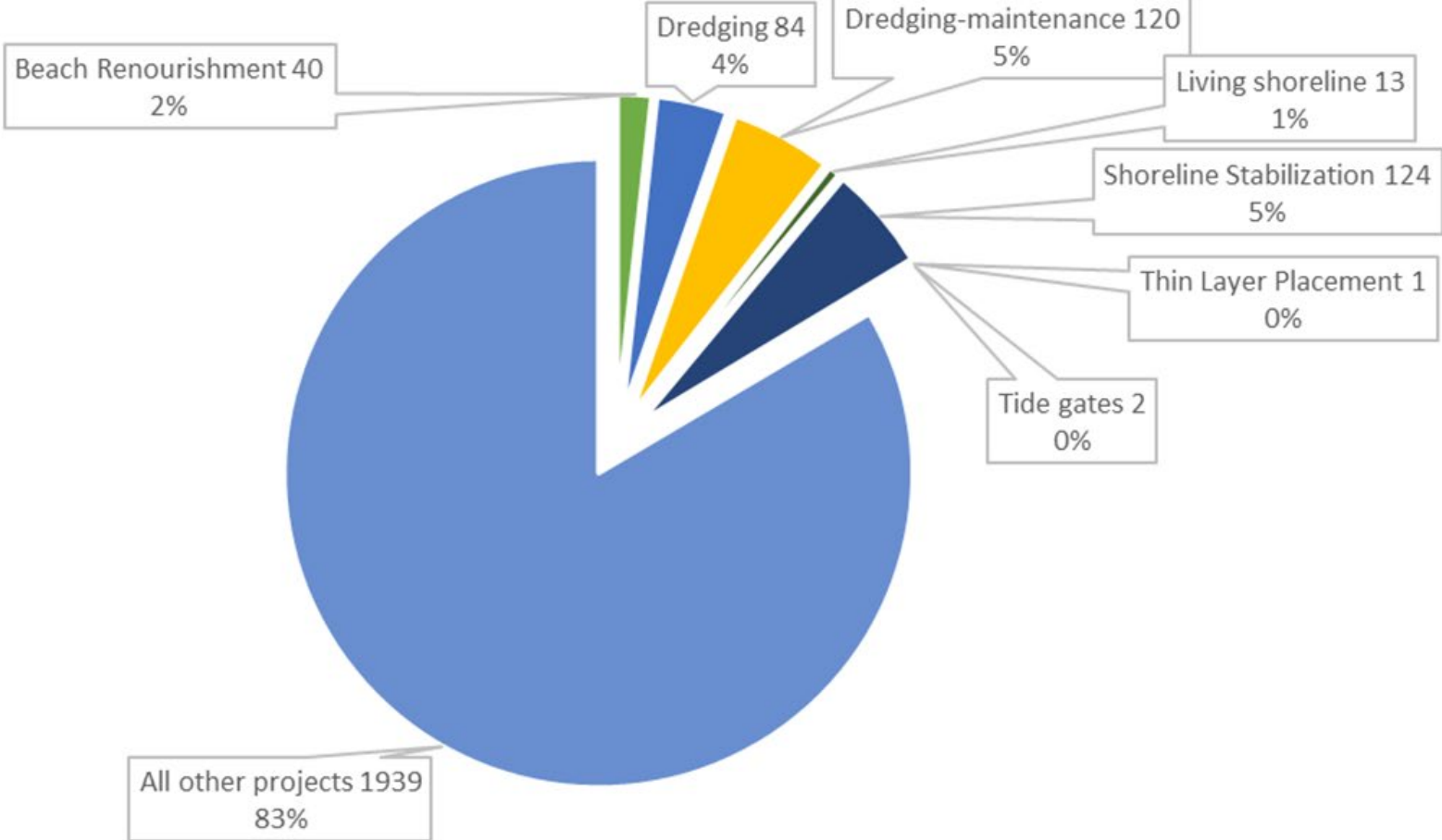
- Work on the policy statement is Complete
- The additional revisions since the last update included details on decommissioning and long-term monitoring of impacts.
- The policy is updated, and on the website.



# Review of Upcoming projects that require EFH consultations



### EFH Consultations 2022-2024



- Beach Renourishment 40
- Dredging 84
- Dredging-maintenance 120
- Living shoreline 13
- Shoreline Stabilization 124
- Thin Layer Placement 1
- Tide gates 2
- All other projects 1939

# Living shorelines



## **SAFMC Living Shorelines Recommended Definition:**

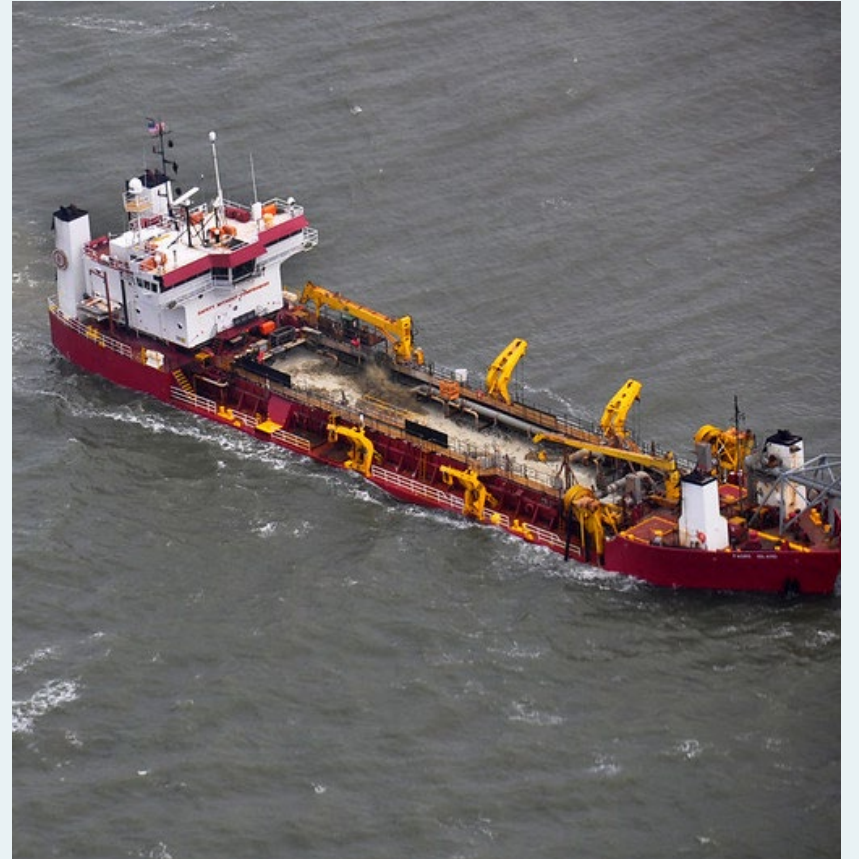
- **A living shoreline is a coastal management approach that stabilizes and protects the shoreline using a suite of options that promote the use of natural materials, such as native plants, sand, rocks, and oyster shells. The details of material usage and percentage of material type are determined by state management bodies.**
- **Unlike traditional hard structures such as seawalls, living shorelines should maintain the natural connections between upland, intertidal, and aquatic environments.**
- **This approach not only minimizes erosion and aims to reduce wave energy but also provides valuable wildlife habitat, maintains or improves water quality, and supports ecological resilience.**
- **Living shorelines should be designed to spontaneously grow and adapt over time, making them a dynamic, nature-based solution for coastal protection and management.**

**HEAP will maintain tracking of these consults. If HCD reviews a consult that is concerning it will be discussed at future meetings.**

# Beneficial Use Projects

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- **Beneficial use projects use dredge materials to do a variety of projects**
- **These types of projects are going to be increasing**
- **The supportive knowledge base for these projects has not been fully explored**
- **HCD requests the HEAP's help in compiling a knowledge base**
  
- **Recommendations**
  - **Add a time slot to the working plan to discuss consults and resources that HCD can use to recommend locations where beneficial use projects would be most effective.**
  - **Request a presentation from Molly Bost (NOAA) who has released a study on the beneficial use of sediment in marshes**
  - **Gather information to compile a framework for consultations.**



# Flood Projects



HCD foresees these types of projects quadrupling in the next year



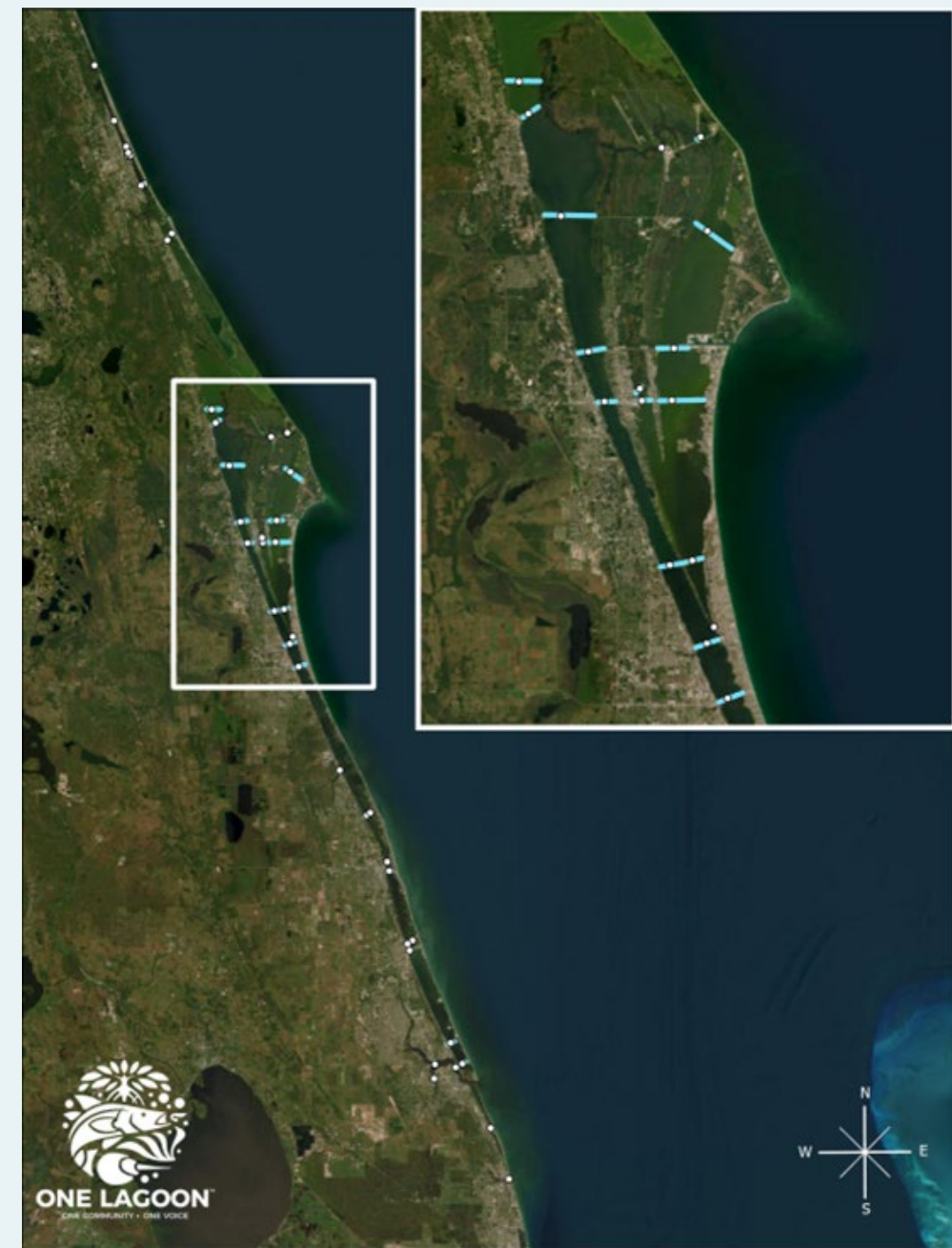
Tide gates are becoming an increasingly popular solution to combat flooding that can have large long term impacts.



The HEAP will continue to monitor tide gates and flood projects and will add in recommendations on these projects to the flow policy.

## Discuss revisions to the “Alterations to Riverine, Estuarine and Nearshore Flows” policy to address threats to the Indian River Lagoon

- Revisions were approved by the Council in June 2024.
- The panel recommends including ecological flows and river flows.
- **Work group volunteers:** Wilson Laney, Stacie Crowe, David Webb, Jordy Wolfe, Matthew Kenworthy.



45 bridge - causeway or bridge corridors  
Most of the earthen causeways in Brevard county



# Offshore wind infrastructure coverage and artificial reef footprint

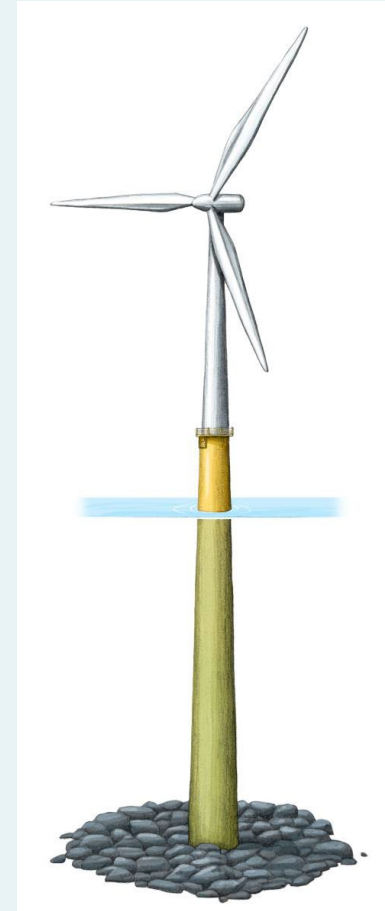
- Brendan Runde and Avery Paxton (SEFSC) summarized their findings on offshore wind projects and artificial reef footprint.
  - NE offshore wind footprint is much larger than that of artificial reefs.
  - The Southeast and Gulf of Mexico have higher artificial reef footprints than wind based on current construction plans.
  - Currently the leased area for offshore wind is two times greater than that of artificial reefs



# Offshore wind infrastructure coverage and artificial reef footprint

Recommend that the energy policy contain the following addition:

- “Recommend that during permitting negotiations between the developer, BOEM, and NOAA Fisheries, ensure the inclusion of appropriate and equivalent funding for long term monitoring (throughout the life span of the wind farm) of the surrounding substrates in addition to the developed structures. Equal contemporary study and analyses of both ecological regimes will provide future policymakers with more adequate, balanced information to determine the appropriate final disposition of the decommissioned infrastructure and a better assessment of both ecological and sociological benefits and costs.”
- Recommend requesting an Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (must be done by the Council)



# CHARLESTON HARBOR POST 45 DEEPENING PROJECT

Kevin Spanik, SCDNR, summarized the report provided by the Army Corps of Engineers and SCDNR on Post 45 Mitigation Reef Monitoring.

- There was a large undertaking to deepen the waterways in Charleston Harbor.
- They used diver surveys transects and baited camera frames.
- The results showed greater diversity at the mitigation reef than at impact sites.
- They found more fish species on the mitigation reef compared to the impact site so the reef was considered successful.

## **AP Discussion:**

- The panel discussed that the available data to compare the mitigation reef came from the Dial Cordy 2016 study of the area.
- The cameras were used to ensure that the diver's presence did not change the behavior of the fish.
- They did look at the beneficial reefs in the paper but not as much as the mitigation reef.

# Fishing Gear Effects on Marine Habitats



[https://fishmaps.shinyapps.io/FishingEffectsDatabase/\\_w\\_a40a09c0/#/](https://fishmaps.shinyapps.io/FishingEffectsDatabase/_w_a40a09c0/#/)

The Fishing Gear Effects on Marine Habitats Database [Home](#) [About](#) [Fishing Gear](#) [Map](#) [Submit](#)

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Search full database: ?

Enter Search Term(s)

Search Study ID

Filters: ?

## Publication Type

- Journal article (259)
- Book section (20)
- Conference presentation (1)
- Grant report (4)
- Technical report (9)
- Conference proceedings (1)
- Research note (1)
- Council report (2)
- MS Thesis (2)
- Dataset (1)

## Type of Review

## Study Type

## Large Marine Ecosystem

## Depth Ranges

Study ID #	Title	Year	Author
11	The impacts of mobile fishing gear on seafloor habitats in the Gulf of Maine (Northwest Atlantic): implications for conservation of fish populations	1996	Auster, P.J., R.J. Malatesta, R.W. Langton, L. Watling, P.C. Valentine, C.L.S. Donaldson, E.W. Langton, A.N. Shepard, and W.G. Babb
17	Long- and short-term consequences of a Nephrops trawl fishery on the benthos and environment of the Irish Sea	2000	Ball, B.J., G. Fox, and B.W. Munday
21	Mortality in megafaunal benthic populations caused by trawl fisheries on the Dutch continental shelf in the North Sea in 1994	2000	Bergman, M. J. N. and J. W. Van Santbrink
24	Fishing effects on diversity, size and community structure of the benthic invertebrate and fish megafauna on the Bay of Biscay coast of France	2004	Blanchard, F., F. LeLoc'h, C. Hily and J. Boucher
34	Effects of commercial otter trawling on benthic communities in the southeastern Bering Sea	2005	Brown, E.J., B. Finney, S. Hills, and M. Dommissé
35	Effects of commercial otter trawling on the physical environment of the southeastern Bering Sea	2005	Brown, E.J., B. Finney, M. Dommissé, and S. Hills
38	Measurement of the rate of depletion of benthic fauna by prawn (shrimp) otter trawls: an experiment in the Great Barrier Reef, Australia	2003	Burridge, C.Y., C.R. Pitcher, T.J. Wassenberg, I.R. Poiner, and B.J. Hill
39	A comparison of demersal communities in an area closed to trawling with those in adjacent areas open to trawling: A study in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Australia.	2006	Burridge, C.Y., C.R. Pitcher, B.J. Hill, T.J. Wassenberg, and I.R. Poiner
43	Underwater observations on tracks of dredges and trawls and some effects of dredging on a scallop ground	1973	Caddy, J.F.
64	Deepwater fisheries and aspects of their impact on seamount habitat in New Zealand	2003	Clark, M. and R. O'Driscoll
69	Effects of bottom fishing on the benthic megafauna of Georges Bank	1997	Collie, J. S., G. A. Escanero and P. C. Valentine

# Habitat Blueprint



Reviewed updates to the website and recommended adding helpful links to partner agencies



Reviewed outreach plans and recommended developing FAQs and outreach on the updated flow policy.



Outreach should also include water quality information.



Reviewed the work plan. Added short- and long-term goals to the workplan.

A wide-angle photograph of a beach at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and long shadows. The sky is filled with large, dark clouds that are illuminated from below by the setting sun. The ocean waves are visible, and the beach is sandy. In the distance, a few small figures of people can be seen walking along the shore.

# Meeting dates and methods

- Due to the continued scheduling crunch in spring and fall the HEAP decided to move to a winter summer meeting schedule
- The next meeting is scheduled for July 15-17, 2025 in Charleston. This will be finalized after the March Council meeting.



## **Other business**

Lara Klibansky (SAFMC Climate Readiness Projects Coordinator) and Holden Harris (SEFSC CEFI staff member) introduced themselves and requested that time be permitted in the summer meeting for them to present their projects to the HEAP. **The AP agreed to add them to the work plan**

An underwater photograph showing a school of fish swimming around a coral reef. The fish are mostly silver with dark stripes. The coral is diverse, including a large purple brain coral and a yellowish sponge-like structure. The background is dark blue, and the seabed is sandy. The text "Thank you" is overlaid in the center in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

**Thank you**