

SUMMARY REPORT
FROM THE JOINT HABITAT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION &
ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES MEETING
Sawgrass Marriott
Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida
June 9, 2014

A joint meeting of the Habitat and Environmental Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committees was held June 9, 2014 in Ponte Vedra, Florida. Pat Geer, Habitat Advisory Panel Chairman provided an overview of issues addressed and recommendations developed during the April 1-3, 2014 Habitat and Environmental Protection AP meeting held in Charleston, SC. Redrafted Essential Fish Habitat Policy Statements were provided by the Habitat AP for Marine Aquaculture, In-stream Flow, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation, and Marine and Estuarine Invasive Species. In addition, the AP is reviewing and updating the Energy Policy and Beach Dredge and Fill Policy and will further develop a new policy statement on Artificial Reefs and provide those for Council consideration when completed. The Panel also met as State Sub-Panels to review and provide input on lists of preparers of FEP-sections to support development of FEP II.

The Committee received a status report from Dr. Jack McGovern of the NMFS Southeast Regional Office on Coral Amendment 8. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) submitted Amendment 8 to the Fishery Management Plan for Coral, Coral Reefs, and Live/Hardbottom Habitats of the South Atlantic Region (FMP) (Amendment 8) for review, approval, and implementation by NMFS. Amendment 8 proposes actions to expand portions of the northern and western boundaries of the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern and allow transit through the Oculina Bank HAPC by fishing vessels with rock shrimp onboard; modify vessel monitoring systems requirements for rock shrimp fishermen transiting through the Oculina Bank HAPC; expand a portion of the western boundary of the Stetson Reefs, Savannah and East Florida Lithoherms, and Miami Terrace Deepwater Coral HAPC (CHAPC) (Stetson-Miami Terrace CHAPC), including modifications to the shrimp fishery access area 1; and expand a portion of the northern boundary of the Cape Lookout Lophelia Banks Deepwater CHAPC (Cape Lookout CHAPC). NMFS published the Notice of Availability on May 20, 2014 and requested comments by July 21, 2014. NMFS has determined the Amendment is consistent with the FMP, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other applicable law and on June 3, 2014 published the proposed rule in the Federal Register for public review and comment. To be considered public comments must be received by July 21, 2014.

Council staff reviewed the redrafted SAFMC Essential Fish Habitat Policy Statements addressing Marine Aquaculture, In-stream Flow, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation, and Marine and Estuarine Invasive Species.

Council staff provided an overview of the timing and process for revisions to the Fishery Ecosystem Plan II and update to EFH and completion of the EFH 5 Year review. Council staff also provided an update on ecosystem activities.

The Committee received a presentation on Everglades Water Management by Dr. Peter Ortner, Director of the Cooperative Institute for Marine & Atmospheric Studies / Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (RSMAS), University of Miami, as it relates to habitat, fish, and fisheries. The Committee also received a brief overview of the Pulley Ridge Connectivity Study by Dr. Ortner, RSMAS.

The Committee was provided a copy of a presentation on the development of a Conservation Blueprint by the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (SALCC). Council staff will coordinate with SALCC staff to hold a Webinar within the next two weeks for Council members on the Blueprint. The Committee also received a copy of the presentation updating activities associated with South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (SALCC), the Southeast Assessment and Monitoring Program (SEAMAP), the Southeast Coastal and Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA), the Southeast Aquatic Resource Partnership (SARP), and the Governors South Atlantic Alliance (GSAA).

The following motions were developed during the joint Committee session.

MOTIONS

- 1. APPROVE MARINE AQUACULTURE POLICY
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

***POLICY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN
ESSENTIAL FISH HABITATS AND MARINE AQUACULTURE***

- 2. APPROVE SAV POLICY
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

***SAFMC POLICY FOR PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF ESTUARINE AND
MARINE SUBMERGED AQUATIC (SAV) HABITAT***

- 3. APPROVE INSTREAM FLOW POLICY
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

***POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF ESSENTIAL FISH
HABITATS FROM ALTERATIONS TO RIVERINE, ESTUARINE AND NEARSHORE
FLOWS***

- 4. APPROVE MARINE AND ESTUARINE INVASIVE SPECIES POLICY
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

***POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF SOUTH ATLANTIC MARINE AND ESTUARINE
ECOSYSTEMS FROM NON-NATIVE AND INVASIVE SPECIES***

5. MOTION: APPROVE TIMING & TASK

- A. Approved policy statements - distribute and post to website by June 30, 2014.
- B. Work with the Habitat AP to further refine existing and develop new SAFMC EFH policy statements for consideration at the December 2014 Council meeting.
- C. Coordinate with Council Members, Habitat AP state sub-panel chairs and ecosystem partners to refine membership on review and writing teams for development of FEP II and integrated EFH update. Provide update on timing and participation at September 2014 meeting.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

6. MOTION: NMFS SEFSC PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING BY 9/1/14:

- 1. VMS data to up to latest in 2014
- 2. SA rock shrimp bycatch results from observer trips
- 3. Detailed mapping (% area mapped, etc.) of the area (northern extension)
- 4. Observations on algae in the southern area of the rock shrimp fishery
- 5. Updated landings through 2014
- 6. Updated trip costs and value
- 7. ELB data from Gulf shrimp vessels operating in the South Atlantic

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Ecosystem-Based Management

Committee Members

Doug Haymans, Chair
Anna Beckwith
Chris Conklin
Dr. Michelle Duval
Dr. Wilson Laney
Jessica McCawley
Charlie Phillips
Robert Beal

Habitat and Environmental Protection

Committee Members

Dr. Wilson Laney, Chair
Anna Beckwith
Chris Conklin
LT Morgan Fowler
Doug Haymans
John Jolley
Charlie Phillips
Robert Beal