

Public Reporting

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Public Comment Form



Meeting

July 2025 Habitat and Ecosystem AP Meeting

The Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel (AP) meeting will be held July 15, 2025, from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m.; July 16, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.; and July 17, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. until 1 p.m., EDT.

Submit Date	Submitted By	Location	Affiliation	Comment
7/16/2025	First Name: Albie Last Name: Solana Email:	City: Wilmington State: North Carolina	Commercial, Other	I just think its important to make note that the hard bottom map is very incomplete from Cape Lookout past Frying Pan Shoals. As tech improves and work like Chris Taylor's increases that area of the map will be about 75%-85% hard bottom. Much of it will be pavement bottom which could bring about complications with the Carolina Long Bay OSW Project that will need to be addressed and mitigated if the project is to move forward.
7/16/2025	First Name: bob Last Name: zales Email: bobzales@sfaonline.org	City: Panama City State: Florida	Private Recreational, Commercial, For-Hire, Wholesale/Dealer /Retail, Non-Govt Org (NGO), Other	<p>I was on the webinar today and not being familiar with how the ap is run misunderstood the public comment periods. I thought you could give comment before the issues were discussed each day and at the end of the day after all were discussed but apparently comment is taken at the beginning of the first day and at the end of the last day. I will not be able to attend the meeting after 10 am cst tomorrow as I will be out of town addressing med issues for my gf. I submitted comments on behalf of SFA for both rock shrimp and spacex but have info for your panel that no one on the ap or staff was able to provide.</p> <p>We have been involved with the issue since last oct and have met several times with space x folks and provided several comments already. We are having discussions with congressional folks and seeking discussions with several agencies and the company reps. Due to our involvement and various media articles that included some of my comments, a company, Launch on Demand, who tracks every launch and return contacted me to provide help to the fishers to reduce the restricted time before and after launches. This company is creating an app they will provide to the commercial fishers that will provide them real time data on the scheduled launch time, the period they will be restricted and when they will be able to access their fishing grounds. As some launches are scrubbed for various reasons, that info will be provided so they can access their fishing grounds faster. This is a significant change over what they deal with now.</p> <p>Frankly, and I think all should be aware, the reality of the launches is they will not be stopped. The government is to far into them and the various other government agencies will not buck the system as although most are commercial launches they all have national security issues with their operations. The best we can hope for is to mitigate the damages which is what we are working for and have made some progress.</p> <p>As I provided in the "questions section" on tues, the Spanish mackerel is a key fishery affected by the launches as restrictions of access in the launch area prevents these small boat commercial fishers from accessing the fish so they are not able to harvest them. I was surprised to not hear that fishery discussed during your meeting. In addition, damage to shrimp trawl nets due to rocket debris left on the bottom is a major issue. As you should know, there are national and international requirements against discharging various materials into the ocean and when such material is discharged it must be retrieved. Spacex folks told us at a meeting they did not attempt to recover debris they know has been discharged for a variety of reasons.</p> <p>These issues and more are why we are seeking the establishment of a mitigation fund to compensate fishers for lost fishing time and for damage to their equipment. As you may know, the offshore oil and gas industry provides such a fund for issues created by their industry.</p> <p>Thanks, Bob</p>
7/17/2025	First Name: Ron Last Name: Larsen Email: ronlarsen@searisksolutions.com	City: New Bern State: North Carolina	Other	<p>My name is Ron Larsen, I am the Managing Parther for Sea Risk Solutions, a company based in New Bern (NC) that conducts risk assessments, asset planning, asset awareness, and asset planning for critical subsea infrastructure (https://www.searisksolutions.com/). With over 25-years working in the subsea cable industry, and working in the offshore wind industry since 2017, we listened intently to the AECOM presentation, which did a very good job providing an overview of the subject. There were two (2) topics in the presentation that might benefit from some additional information.</p> <p>1) The slide deck indicated cable damage is rare with less than 4 instances/year worldwide. This is incorrect, on a global scale there are between 150-200 cable fault events annually. Please refer to this linked document on the International Cable Protection Committee website (https://iscpc.org/publications/submarine-cable-protection-and-the-environment/CPC_Public_EU_September_2023.pdf).</p> <p>2) The need for cable burial is dependent on the risk profile of the cable. A cable in Florida will have a different risk profile than a cable in South Carolina, and different again in VA, NJ, VY, and MA. These risk profiles drive the target level of burial. Most commercial fishing risk in the US can be mitigated by burial targets of 0.8 meters (2-3 feet) except where hydraulic clam dredging occurs, where target burial depth are 1.5 meters (5-6 feet). The increased burial depth to 1.5 meters has reduced the rate of cable faults due to fishing gear to near zero (https://www.n-a-s-c-a.org/). Burial tools/equipment that can target 3.0 meters of burial are common but the fishing risk that would necessitate that depth of burial does not exist on the east coast of the US.</p> <p>We have engaged the SAFMC in the past, most recently at the June council meeting in Florida, during our cable awareness campaigns. We would be happy to conduct any follow-up with the council on this subject. Thank you for your attention and for dedicating time to the topic of critical subsea infrastructure during your AP meeting.</p> <p>Kind Regards, Ron Larsen ronlarsen@searisksolutions.com. +1 570 242-5023</p>

