

**Summary Report  
Protected Resources Committee  
June 9, 2014  
Sawgrass Marriott  
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL**

**Members**

David Cupka, Chair  
Wilson Laney, Vice-Chair  
Anna Beckwith  
Michelle Duval  
LT Morgan Fowler  
John Jolley

The agenda was adopted, and the minutes of the March 2014 meeting were approved.

Ongoing ESA Consultations

The Committee received an update from Jennifer Lee, SERO Protected Resources Division, on the ongoing formal consultations for the Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) fishery, triggered by the listing of the Carolina and South Atlantic distinct population segments (DPSs) of Atlantic sturgeon as endangered under the ESA in 2012. The biological opinion is currently in progress, with some delay due to other priorities, and consideration of how to address mixing among the different DPSs in the marine environment.

The briefing was provided in accordance with a request from the South Atlantic Council in June 2013 for SERO Protected Resources Division to provide the Committee with an update on any ongoing formal consultation and record input from Committee members for consideration during the consultation.

Biological Opinion for the Southeastern Shrimp Fisheries

In April 2014, NOAA Fisheries issued a biological opinion on the continued implementation of the sea turtle conservation regulations under the ESA and the continued authorization of federal Southeastern shrimp fisheries. Jennifer Lee provided a presentation on the biological opinion, including background, data, findings, and conservation recommendations. Overall the recommendations are directed at continuation and improvement of monitoring, enforcement, and outreach by NMFS.

Final Determination for Coral Listings

In December 2012, NMFS issued a proposal to list 82 coral species as threatened or endangered, including seven species found in the South Atlantic region. Additionally NMFS proposed to relist two *Acropora* species (elkhorn and staghorn coral) as endangered. The final determination was due on June 6, 2014. The final determination for coral listings was delayed and not available in time for the committee meeting. The final determination is expected to be published in the next few months. Protected Resources Division staff will present information about the coral listings at the next meeting.

### Proposed Critical Habitat for Loggerhead Sea Turtles

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has begun the process of identifying coastal beach habitat important for the recovery of the threatened Northwest Atlantic Ocean distinct population segment (DPS) of loggerhead sea turtles in partnership with NMFS, who will designate in-water critical habitat. Ann Marie Lauritsen, Southeast Regional Sea Turtle Coordinator for the USFWS, who is attached to the North Florida Ecological Services Office, St. Petersburg satellite office, provided a presentation to the committee on proposed terrestrial critical habitat, including background on loggerheads and selection criteria for the sites. The USFWS proposes 739 miles of island and mainland coastal beaches in six states be designated as loggerhead critical habitat. The final rule on critical habitat is expected to publish in July 2014 concurrent with the NMFS final rule on in-water critical habitat.

The Protected Resources Committee did not approve any motions.