

SPINY LOBSTER

AMENDMENT 11 SUMMARY

SPINY LOBSTER ADVISORY PANEL | JUNE 2022 | SOUTH ATLANTIC
FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



THE ESA

The ESA requires that federal agencies ensure actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species.

BIOP

BiOps document how an action affects ESA-listed species and habitat. They may include exemptions for limited take, measures to minimize impacts, and conservation recommendations.

BACKGROUND

To satisfy Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation requirements, NOAA Fisheries Service completed a formal consultation and resulting Biological Opinion (BiOp) on the spiny lobster fishery in 2009. The BiOp concluded that commercial trap gear was likely to adversely affect sea turtles, smalltooth sawfish, and elkhorn and staghorn corals.

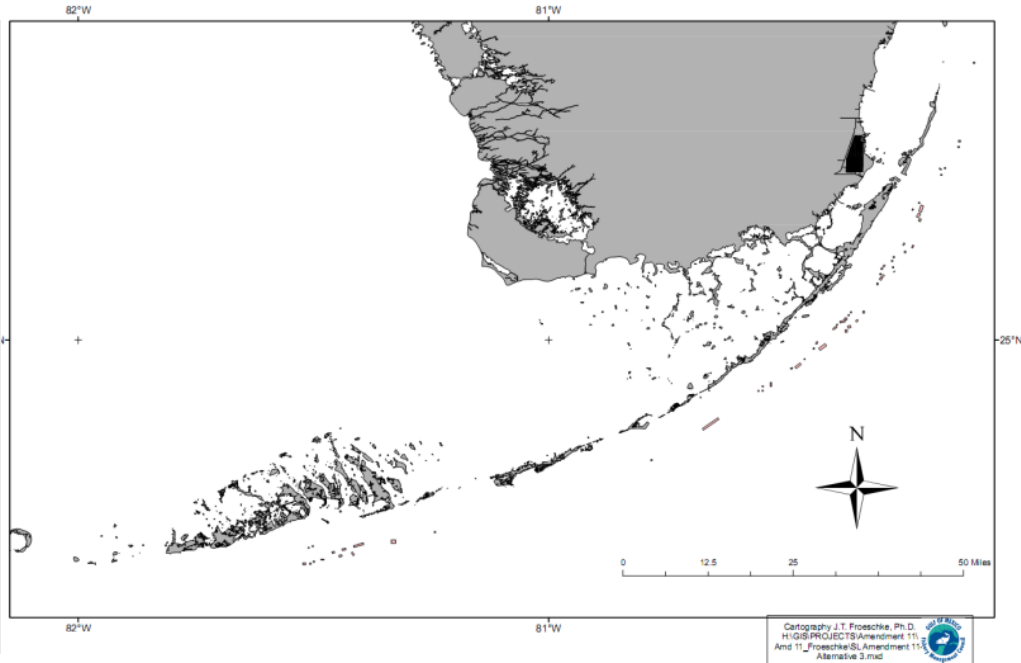
The purpose of Amendment 11 was to implement measures to protect endangered and threatened species. The branching morphology of elkhorn and staghorn corals causes colonies to be susceptible to fragmentation from fishing activity. Creating closed areas was anticipated to reduce the likelihood of commercial spiny lobster traps coming into contact with colonies.

TAKE

To take a listed species means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any of those activities.

Amendment 11 established straight-line boxes around identified *Acropora* spp. colonies or groups of colonies that included approximately 500 ft of area between the colonies and where traps could be set. Sixty areas covering approximately 5.9 square miles were established.

Go to https://safmc-shinyapps.shinyapps.io/FPRAll/#2_Spiny_Lobster to see an interactive map of closed areas for spiny lobster trap fishing in the South Atlantic region.



"In order to ensure that ESA-listed Acroporid corals are getting adequate protection, the Council intends to work with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to re-examine the 60 areas in federal waters of the FKNMS that were closed to the use of lobster traps through Amendment 11 to the Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The Council will determine if these areas are still in the right locations to provide protection to corals, whether different areas need protections, and whether some existing areas need to be removed if they are no longer offering protection for these species following Hurricane Irma."

In March 2020, the South Atlantic Council provided comments on the Draft Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Restoration Blueprint. The comments indicate the intent to review the areas closed via Amendment 11.

QUESTIONS FOR THE SPINY LOBSTER ADVISORY PANEL

01

Are you aware of the Spiny Lobster Trap Gear Fishery Management Areas in the Florida Keys that are closed to trap gear?

02

Do you think these areas are providing adequate protection to corals? Should these areas be reevaluated and modified?

