

**SUMMARY REPORT  
FROM THE  
SPINY LOBSTER COMMITTEE MEETING  
Raleigh, NC  
December 5, 2011**

The Spiny Lobster Committee met on December 5, 2011, in Raleigh, NC, with Jessica McCawley as committee chair. Jennifer Lee (SERO Protected Resources Division) gave a presentation on the process of ESA Section 7 Consultations and resulting Biological Opinions. Glen Salvador from the Northeast Regional Office Protected Resources Division presented on the gear marking requirements in the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan.

In regards to Spiny Lobster Amendment 11, the Committee received an update on the Gulf of Mexico Council meeting in October and Amendment 11 actions; a summary of Coral Advisory Panel recommendations for Amendment 11; and a recommendation from the SSC on Action 2.

The Committee reviewed Spiny Lobster Amendment 11 Action 1 and discussed the alternatives, and selected a preferred alternative and option to recommend to the Council. The preferred alternative and option are the same as those selected by the Gulf Council. Bill Kelly (Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association) also participated in the discussion on Action 2. Mr. Kelly provided examples of rope used in many spiny lobster trap (vertical) lines and an example of a marked line. Mr. Kelly reported that due to the tightly woven characteristic of the rope, it was difficult and time-consuming to insert markings into the line.

The Committee and other Council members discussed concerns that the stone crab and blue crab fisheries will not have line marking requirements, and the requirements will not serve the intended purpose (greater accuracy in identifying gear in interactions with protected species) without an integrated system that includes all the trap fisheries in the area. Additionally, at this time FWC does not intend to implement similar measures for the spiny lobster trap fishery in state waters. The Committee selected No Action as the preferred alternative (same as the preferred alternative selected by the Gulf Council) and some Committee members noted the need for additional time to research the current options for marking the rope and to develop new ideas.

The Committee passed a motion to approve Amendment 11 for public hearings.

**The Committee made the following motions:**

**Action 1: Spiny Lobster Fishing in Certain Areas in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off Florida to Protect Threatened Staghorn (*Acropora cervicornis*) and Elkhorn (*Acropora palmata*) Corals**

**MOTION: ACTION 1, ALTERNATIVE 3, OPTION A AS PREFERRED.**

**Alternative 3:** Create new closed areas of the EEZ off the Florida Keys consisting of identified *Acropora* spp. colonies with straight-line boundaries.

**Option a.** In the closed areas, spiny lobster trapping would be prohibited.

**APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.**

**MOTION: ACTION 1, MOVE ALTERNATIVE 4 TO CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED.**

**Alternative 4:** Create new closed areas of the EEZ off the Florida Keys consisting of identified *Acropora* spp. colonies with a 500 ft buffer surrounding each colony.

**Option a.** In the closed areas, spiny lobster trapping would be prohibited.

**Option b.** In the closed areas, all spiny lobster fishing would be prohibited.

**APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.**

**Action 2: Require Gear Markings for Spiny Lobster Trap Lines in the EEZ off Florida**

**MOTION: ACTION 2, ALTERNATIVE 1 AS PREFERRED.**

**Alternative 1:** No Action – do not require markings for spiny lobster trap lines.

**APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.**

**Public hearings:**

**MOTION: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL APPROVE AMENDMENT 11 (AS MODIFIED) FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS AND REQUEST THAT A NMFS STAFF MEMBER INVOLVED IN WRITING THE BIOLOGICAL OPINION AND WORKING WITH THE PUBLIC IN DEVELOPING THE MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES ATTEND THE HEARINGS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.**

**APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.**