

**SUMMARY REPORT  
FROM THE  
SPINY LOBSTER COMMITTEE MEETING  
Charleston, SC  
September 13, 2011**

The Spiny Lobster Committee met on September 13, 2011, in Charleston, SC, with Bill Teehan as acting committee chair. The Committee received a presentation from Andy Herndon (SERO Protected Resources) on development of new alternatives for Spiny Lobster Amendment 11. The first action in Amendment 11 will address requirements in the biological opinion to establish closed areas to protect elkhorn and staghorn coral. Mr. Herndon presented the outcomes of workshops held with stakeholders in the Florida Keys to improve the proposed closed areas. Information from stakeholders was incorporated to identify areas to protect and to include coral nurseries. Additionally, proposed closed areas that were based on inaccurate data were removed. Lt Robert Foos stated that straight line areas (Alternative 3) would be more enforceable than the alternatives that use buffers.

Currently, maps of the closed areas are being reviewed by the stakeholders. Maps showing areas proposed in the alternatives will be made available to the Committee with draft Amendment 11 at the December meeting.

Additionally, Amendment 11 will include an action to implement a specific color (white) for lobster trap lines, which will meet the biological opinion requirement to monitor the effects of the fishery on protected resources. Mr. Herndon discussed different ways that lines may be marked (spray paint, tape, etc.) or that the entire trap line will be white. At this time, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has not discussed implementing the same requirements for lobster traps in state waters.

The current proposed alternatives for Amendment 11 are included below. A completed draft Amendment 11 will be ready for the December meeting.

The committee had no motions.

## Proposed Actions and Alternatives for Spiny Lobster Amendment 11

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

**Alternative 1:** No Action – do not limit spiny lobster fishing in certain areas in the EEZ off Florida to address ESA concerns for *Acropora* spp.

**Alternative 2:** Close all known hardbottom in the EEZ off Florida in water depths less than 30 meters.

**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.

**Alternative 3:** Create new closed areas in the EEZ off Florida consisting of identified *Acropora* colonies with straight line boundaries as shown in Figure 2.1.

**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.

**Alternative 4:** Create new closed areas in the EEZ off Florida consisting of identified *Acropora* colonies with a 500 ft. buffer surrounding each set of colonies as shown in Figure 2.2.

**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.

*Note: Transit would be allowed for vessels traveling through a closed area. The term "transit" is defined as on a direct and continuous course through a closed area.*

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

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

**Alternative 2:** Require all spiny lobster trap lines in the EEZ off Florida to have a white marking along its entire length, such as an all white line or a white tracer throughout the line. The marking must be visible at all times when traps are in use. All gear must comply with marking requirements no later than August 6, 2017.

**Alternative 3:** Require all spiny lobster trap lines in the EEZ off Florida to have a permanently affixed white marking at least 4-inch wide spaced at least every 15 ft along the trap line, or at the midpoint if the line is less than 15 ft. The marking must be visible at all times when traps are in use. All gear must comply with marking requirements no later than August 6, 2017.