



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Advisory Panel Meeting May 15-16, 2018 Crowne Plaza, Charleston, South Carolina

The Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Advisory Panel met May 15-16, 2018 at the Crowne Plaza in Charleston, South Carolina. Issues addressed during the meeting included: .

The Panel approved the agenda and minutes for the November 2017 Panel meeting.

FEP II Dashboard, Implementation Plan and Two-Year Roadmap (*Attachments 2-4*)

Description: Cameron Rhodes, SAFMC Outreach Staff and Roger Pugliese reviewed the structure of the comprehensive SAFMC FEP II Dashboard documents, links and tools

(<http://safmc.net/fishery-ecosystem-plan-ii-introduction/>) highlighting the Council's approval of FEP II, FEP II Dashboard, Implementation Plan and Two Year Roadmap, at their March 2018 meeting.

SAFMC Habitat and Ecosystem Conservation in FMPs (*Attachment 5*)

Description: Tina Udouj, FWRI provided a presentation on spatial presentation of Habitat and ecosystem conservation in FEP II Dashboard / Digital Dashboard.

Links: Digital Dashboard: http://ocean.floridamarine.org/safmc_dashboard/

Webservices: <http://safmc.net/habitat-and-ecosystems/web-mapping-applications/>

Presentation: [2 Pres Udouj Habitat Ecosystem GIS](#)

NOAA Fisheries Ecosystem Based Fishery Management (EBFM) Activities for the South Atlantic Region

Description: Cynthia Cooksey, NOAA Fisheries Habitat Conservation Division provided an update to the Panel on NOAA Fisheries EBFM activities including a developing South Atlantic Ecosystem Status Report, Climate Vulnerability Analysis and NOAA Fisheries EBFM Implementation Plan.

The following are key areas discussed by members and staff that should be addressed by NOAA Fisheries if they are fully supporting EBFM in the South Atlantic Region:

- provide a clear mandate to NOAA Fisheries SERO and SEFSC Staff that EBFM tasks are part of their responsibilities.
- fund Fishery Independent Surveys SEAMAP SA and SERFS (SEAMAP/MARMAP/SEFIS) at levels necessary to support EBFM in the region. In addition, they should provide resources for addition of new technology to the Fishery Independent survey vessel operations (e.g., AUV, ROV, fixed autonomous mapping system).
- identify resources to replace the SEAMAP vessel (Lady Lisa) which supports all nearshore trawl surveys.

- work with the SAFMC Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Advisory Panel to advance Ecosystem Status Reports and Climate Vulnerability Analysis. NOAA Fisheries will work with State Agency Panel representatives to identify and train species experts needed to advance the Analysis.
- continue to support completion of the South Atlantic Ecopath Model and identify additional resources to support operationalizing and maintaining the model.

Presentation: [3 Pres Cooksey NOAA Fisheries EBFM Activities Updates May18](#)

Fishery Independent Research Supporting EBFM and Developing South Atlantic Ecosystem Model (*Attachment 6*)

Description: Tracy Smart, SCDNR updated the Panel on regional Fishery Independent Research and data supporting EBFM and the developing Ecopath Model. Roger Pugliese updated the Panel on further advancement, coordination with NOAA Fisheries SEFSC and timing in the development of the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (SALCC) funded South Atlantic Ecopath Model. The model is on track for completion for review and discussion at the fall SSC meeting.

Presentation: [4 Pres Smart Update Fish Indep Surveys-Hab AP May 2018](#)

Aligning Threats and Policies: Creation of a Threat Matrix (*Attachments 7-16*)

Description: Cindy Cooksey provided members an introduction to the developing Threat Matrix based on Council Policies for incorporation into the FEP II Dashboard.

Presentation: [5 Pres Cooksey Aligning Threats And Policies May18](#)

Active Facilitated Session: Members Breakout into Two Groups and Provide Input to Complete the Habitat Policy / Threat Matrix

Description: Members broke-out into two groups and provided input to complete the Policy/ Threat Matrix.

Regulations recommended for removal (*Attachment 17*)

Description: On February 24, 2017 the President issued Executive Order 13777 as part of efforts to lower regulatory burdens on the American people by implementing and enforcing regulatory reform. The NMFS requested that each of the fishery management council identify a process to review/evaluate existing regulations by the end of December 2017. Each Council is to conduct the review/evaluation and provide recommendations on rules to be removed by the end of June 2018. The Council is reaching out to Advisory Panels to get their recommendations and Chip Collier, SAFMC staff, provided an overview of Attachment 13, the initial attempt by Council staff to identify regulations that could be considered for removal. The Panel provided comments for the record. One habitat related comment questioned the removal of ACL for Spiny Lobster considering Panel members research conducted in the Gulf of Mexico indicated a close association of spawn and adult habitat and not originating from distant sources.

Vice Chair Election

Description: Members nominated and unanimously elected Cindy Cooksey, NOAA Fisheries Habitat Conservation Division as the new Panel Vice Chair.

Ocean Observing and the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA) (Attachments 18-26)

Description: Debra Hernandez, SECOORA Executive Director provided members an overview of SECOORA observing capabilities and plans supporting buildout. Laurent Cherubin, FAU/HBOI provided a presentation on application of observing capabilities in the passive acoustic monitoring of fish spawning aggregation and characterization.

Presentations:

Hernandez- [7a Pres Hernandez SECOORA Briefing HabEcoAPMay18](#)

Cherubin- [7b Pres Cherubin Passive Acoustics Glider Fish Spawning](#)

BOEM Energy Development Activities (Attachments 27-30)

Description: Brian Hooker, BOEM provided members a status report on BOEM activities in the South Atlantic including: Offshore Oil and Gas, Marine Minerals, Renewable Energy, and Environmental Studies. Jeff Browning, BOEM provided members an overview of the Request for Feedback (RFF) on the BOEM Proposed Path Forward for Future Offshore Renewable Energy Leasing on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf.

Presentations:

Hooker- [8a Pres Hooker BOEM Update May 18](#)

Browning- [8b Pres Browning BOEM RFF Path Forward May 18](#)

Active Facilitated Sessions: Members Broke-out into Two Groups and Provided input on Ocean Observing Needs and Renewable Energy

Description: Members broke out into two working groups to discuss and provide input on:

- 1) Ocean observing needs to refine species and habitat/ecosystem information, for fishery operation and monitoring and expanding observing capabilities of fishery independent monitoring including advancing Citizen Science.

- 2) BOEM Path Forward for Renewable Energy and regional research priorities.

Report Out Session

Description: Overviews of input provided during facilitated sessions were provided: by Cindy Cooksey for the policy/threat matrix session; by Debra Hernandez for ocean observing needs and by Brian Hooker for BOEM Renewable Energy Path Forward and regional research needs.

SAFMC Policy / Threat Matrix Summary

	Food Web Connectivity	Climate Variability	Marine Aquaculture	SAV	Beach Nourishment	Energy Exploration	Flows	Invasive	Artificial Reefs	Total Number Policies Addressing Threat
Navigation	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Hydrologic Alterations	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	7
Natural Events and Climate Change	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	7
Urban/Suburban Development	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Offshore Mining, Beach Dredge and Fill	X		X		X			X	X	5
Oil and Gas			X		X	X		X	X	5
Transportation (roadways and bridges)	X			X	X		X	X		5
Alternative Energy Technologies			X		X	X		X		4
Dredged Material Disposal	X			X	X			X		4
Industrial/ Commercial Activities			X			X		X	X	4
Non-native or nuisance species			X	X				X	X	4
Agriculture	X			X			X			3
Aquaculture			X	X				X		3
Artificial Reefs			X					X	X	3
Dams, Impoundments, Barriers to Passage	X						X	X		3
Inshore Mining			X		X			X		3
Marine Debris			X					X	X	3
Nonpoint-source Pollution			X	X						2
Silviculture										0

Note: Additional recommendation is to drop Silviculture as a stand-alone threat from the list as it would be covered under Agriculture.

BOEM Path Forward for Renewable Energy -- Request For Feedback (RFF)

Facilitated by Brain Hooker, BOEM

Member Input from Breakout Sessions on go/no go criteria for sites and research priorities.

Criteria-

- Presently just looking at lease area since shore activities or access to shore is later in the project leasing is too early as line may go to shore in a different state than where the lease is located.
- Fisheries criteria not used during oil and gas drilling operations, Singular locations and resource location driven. Wind is likely to occupy more area and can come in contact with more areas.
- Biological data not considered in leasing since now large polygons area leased and any project is likely to be much smaller.
- Initial leasing may not be the right time to look at fisheries or habitat issues since many are site specific. Fisheries habitat likely to be a second-tier screening for area suitability for development. Then once actual plans for type of infrastructure a third tier more refined review should be used. Migratory birds, marine mammals, T&E species and EFH.
- 60 meters appears to be arbitrary and not biologically substantiated. If it was determined that some depth range was crucial, then it should be looked at.
- At initial NEPA evaluation there is review and then a second when construction is proposed.
- For fisheries the known impacts are limited to footprint of the structure and the transmission line to shore. If line can't be buried or needs to be covered with concrete

mattresses then it can potentially cover habitat or interfere with traditional fishing activity.

- When giving leases create a map of EFH for the South Atlantic and potentially map spawning/migration corridors. This may not be used as a go/no go criterion but to allow businesses to be fully aware of concerns with siting within the polygon.
- Conditioning out initial leases with more information about what may or may not be done with a polygon, specifically fisheries related issues.
- Will going further out avoid EFH impacts? Yes a positive should be noted. Limits on depth are due to installation. Local communities could decide on distance.
- Military activities are mostly 10-15mi zone because there are fewer recreational boats. Pushing turbines further out could increase conflict with military.
- Invasive species – Could the large structure cause migration of invasive species (e.g., lionfish.)
- Birds- If site are greater than 10 miles offshore they avoid most bird migration.
- Might be a depth that will avoid key habitat and fishing activity
- Turbines will be ~ 1 mile apart from each other.
- Lighting needs to be included so fishermen without AIS or radar will see the structures.
- Build to attract fish. Monopiles require scour protection (rock), jack supported don't.
- No one depth or distance from shore throughout the South Atlantic.

Not many specific comments for additional recommendations for wind siting. Current reviews done during the lease and permit process seem sufficient. Providing more information to commenting or regulatory agencies helps when projects come along.

Comment period is expected to be extended to early July.

Regional Research Priorities

- Will the sound of turbines in continuous operation impact in any way migration, spawning, feeding, etc.?
- Evaluate bird distribution
- Outfit turbines with continuous monitoring device
- Acoustic/sound/vibration effect of turbines on fish movement and effect on fish
- Once facilities up, look at effect on fishing activities and boat traffic; cause static and mobile gear conflicts

SECOORA and Ocean Observing Needs

**Facilitated by Debra Hernandez, SECOORA
Member Input from Breakout Sessions on Ocean Observing Needs**

Habitat/Ecosystem Info -

- Ocean acidification areas near corals specifically. Loss or coral habitat or changes in distribution not fully understood and additional data could be potentially beneficial.
- Leverage citizen science to collect observing information
- Dissolved oxygen monitoring nearshore in sounds
- Use radar data for monitoring boating use be it fishing or recreation.
- Monitoring of pollutants nearshore increased organic or chemical, etc.
- Education of general public on the importance of the mission of SECOORA, how to potentially be involved, what outcomes are generated from data collection. Saving lives, money, improving resource management, etc.
- Need more for deep water acidification data.
- Identify and characterize areas of upwelling
- Verify documented upwelling water and acidification on east coast
- Depth limit – depends. Glider goes between Gulf Stream and shore. Can go ~ 100 m (Slocum). Need 500 -800 m ideally (gap 200-800m – less data, where GS dynamics are). DO, T, S, Depth (pH?)– can determine aragonite concentrations from that. Spray glider – can go to 1500 m. Use info because deep corals there. GS meanders – time exposure could be increasing – need to ID
- Adding mooring with sensors needed too
- Robert Todd – GS quarterly
- IOSS Glider dac for glider data- <https://gliders.ioos.us/data/>
- Need to fully characterize within managed (designated) areas; event driven monitoring
- Photos/videos – helpful
- Pamlico Sound - DO, bathymetry (wave glider would be required due to depth being less than 25')

Expand Observing Capabilities of fishery independent and dependent monitoring -

- Citizen science
- Divers could collect temperature and photos and put on central website (SECOORA?)
- Train citizen scientist to maintain the data (crowd sourcing)
- Core spawning locations along entire South Atlantic shelf
- Some glider work has been done by NOAA partnering with universities
- If glider mission could be done, data would be used to determine what's going on within and characterize managed areas.
- Glider – initial snapshot, continuous data to get full picture
- Glider equipped with hydrophone could be used to find sciaenid spawning areas.

Fishery Operations and Monitoring

- Get info from all of the above to aid fishing operations and monitoring
- Value added to build to other technological investments.

Supplemental Information from Advisory Panel Meeting

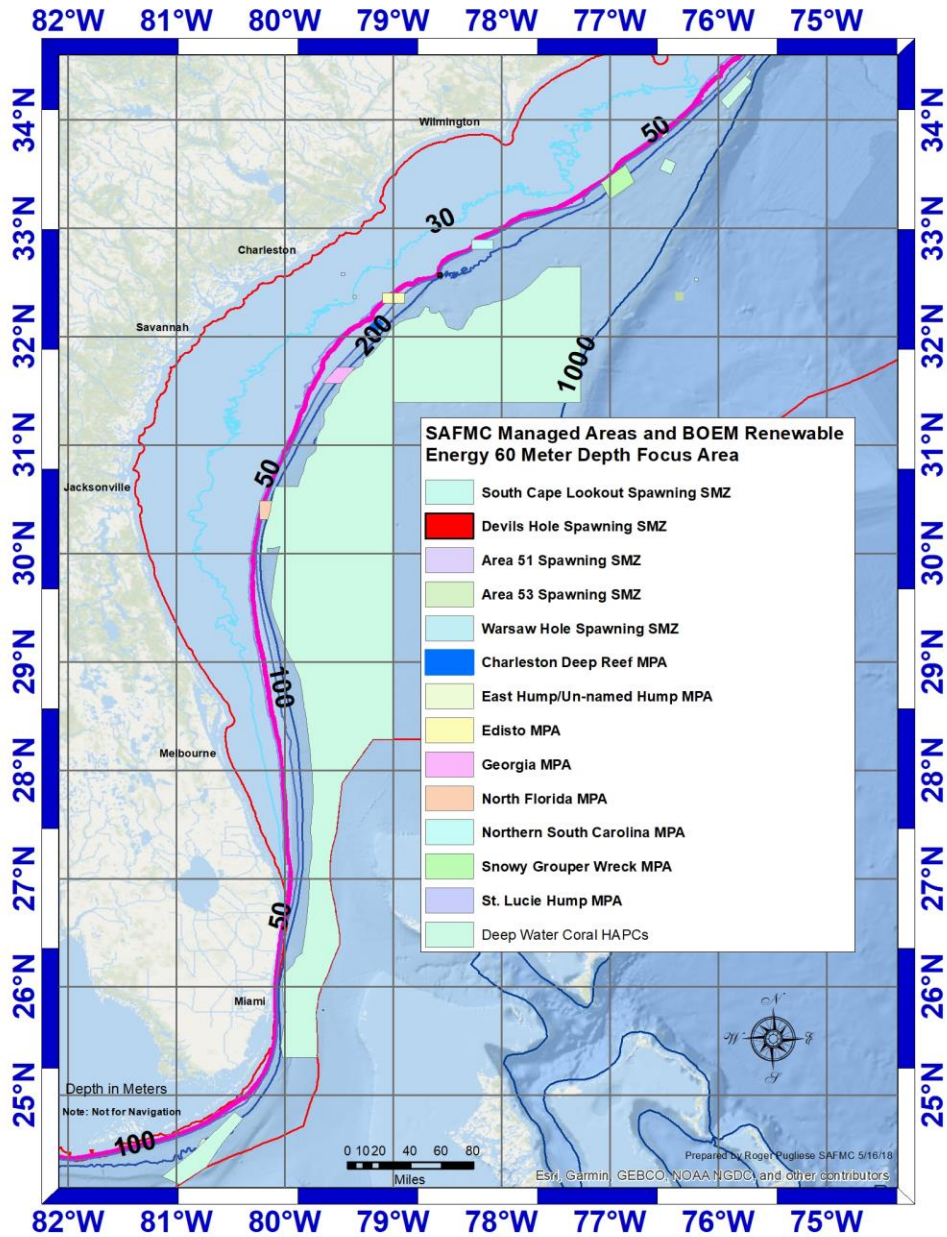


Figure 1. SAFMC Managed Areas as the relate to the Renewable Energy Focus Area proposed in BOEMs Draft Path Forward.

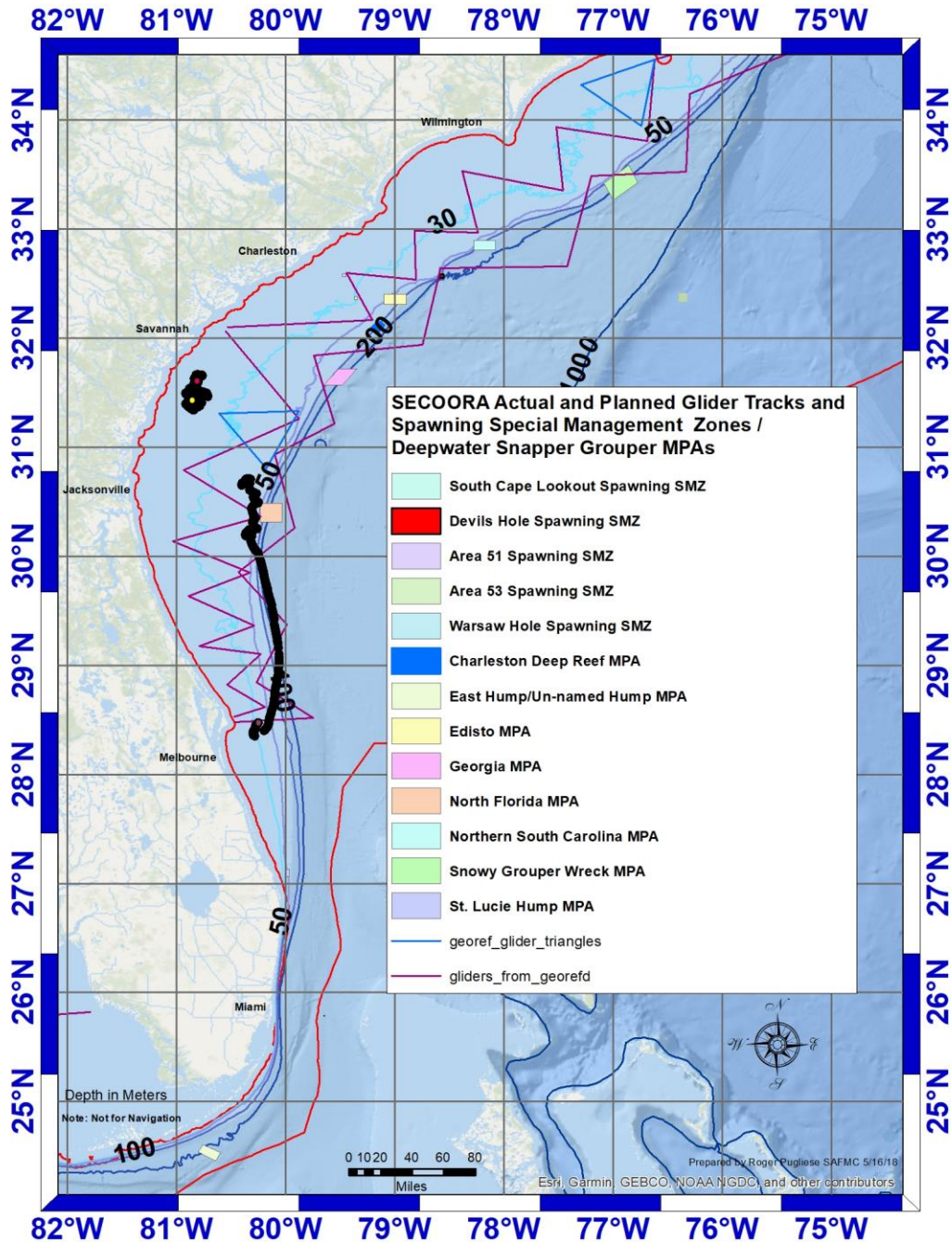


Figure 2. SECOORA Actual and Proposed Glider Paths as the relate to SAFMC Managed Areas.