



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Jessica McCawley, Chair | Mel Bell, Vice Chair
Gregg T. Waugh, Executive Director

Minutes

System Management Plan Workgroup

October 8-9, 2019
Town & Country Inn
2008 Savannah Hwy.
Charleston, SC

The System Management Plan Workgroup held a meeting on October 8 and 9, 2019. The workgroup approved the agenda and minutes from May 2019.

1. Introduction to System Management Plans –

Chip Collier gave a brief introduction to system management plans (SMP). The Council is interested in developing SMPs for managed areas in the South Atlantic region. The SMP will help to evaluate if the areas are achieving the goals laid out in the fishery management plans and be used to adapt management based on the evaluation.

2. Revise Spawning Special Management Zones Outreach Webpage –

After the breakout groups, the workgroup discussed their recommended changes. The product should be more visual, rather than a text document, given that it's likely that users will access the page from a smartphone. The workgroup recommended keeping the webpage simple so fishermen and others can get the information quickly. They recommended the following:

- Reorder the tabs:
 - Summary
 - Background location with Council info
 - Location
 - Monitoring
- Reformat to a cascade style story map
- Integrate spawning information with location
- Add more videos to the background and reduce the text
- Edit each slide to better match the new format
- Remove objectives from the goals slide
- Use more bullets
- Add a testimonial section
- Focus law enforcement section and add regulations (report illegal fishing)
- Modify outreach to "Get Involved"
- State general information for the location and then have links to all the additional info. General information - water depth and target species
- Have target species up front. Have detailed list and find latest research and videos for each species

Chip Collier will work on modifying the document and incorporating more videos into the newly designed webpage (note: Videos have been provided by UNCW's Undersea Video Program). The new webpage should be completed and be ready for review by the SMP Workgroup in early 2020. The group also recommended developing a 1-page flier for the Spawning SMZs.

3. Oculina Experimental Closed Area Review –

The workgroup received a variety of presentations on past reviews. In addition, they received information to be used for the next review, to be conducted by the SMP workgroup. The presentations are included in the briefing book and have been placed in the Google Drive for the System Management Plan Workgroup. The workgroup separated into breakout groups: Biology, Socio-economic, Law Enforcement, and Outreach. After those discussions, the workgroup briefly went over recommendations to develop each section.

Biology:

- There are no new data since the last review
- Add visuals
- Incorporate research objectives from previous document into the outline but only include projects that are doable in the next 5 years
- Emphasize that we need sampling more than once a year

Trends in Coral Populations – Densities – Sandra Brooke, Bryan Walker

- Comparing digitized old data to newer ROV data
- Threats to corals – algal blooms
- Water samples from ROV

Trends in Fish Populations – CPUE - Stacey Harter, Roldan Munoz, Clinton Moran, Pat Harris, Alejandro Acosta

- Comparing digitized old data to newer ROV data
- Spawning Activity

Mapping – Bryan Walker, Chris Taylor, Roldan Munoz

- Habitat Mapping – Amanda Maness grad student project
- Groundtruth with ROVs

Connectivity Modeling – Nick Farmer

- Concentrate on gag and scamp spawning in Oculina - where would they recruit to and would it be successful

Socio-economic:

Amendment 13A will be the background for the latest review. There is not much new data. The analysis will be qualitative.

Law Enforcement:

Move the penalty and law enforcement to the end of the review document. Update on the law enforcement efforts. Monitoring of closed areas should be a priority in Joint Enforcement Agreements. AIS might be a method to determine effort in the Oculina Bank. It would be good for law enforcement to identify potential hot spots for biological sampling (on the water) and outreach (land).

Outreach:

Update the outreach material that is available. Develop different materials for different audiences. Update the website and make it more user friendly. Evaluate the performance of the outreach and follow-up to see if a graduate student conducted a socio-economic study in the Oculina Bank. Consider developing material directly for law enforcement so it is clear on why the area was developed. Reach out to Fish Rules to see if managed areas can be displayed differently in the app.

4. Research and Information Needed for Managed Area Evaluation –

The workgroup formed teams to develop research and information needs for each managed area. Below are the recommendations for each managed area type. These research ideas will be ranked by the Workgroup at a later meeting and provided to the Council.

Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

- More validation to identify where corals occur
- Identify user group/fishing gear types in the area and frequency of use
- Outreach Efforts
- Status of Coral – species, health, identify causes of damage
- Contrast with similar reefs in area without protection
- Time series data on water quality and coral development
- Habitat mapping and biogeographic assessment of fish and benthos with standardized data
- Identify/update fish that co-occur with coral

Special Management Zones

- What monitoring is done
- APAIS data
- Goals for various SMZ vs Monitoring
- Public Awareness
 - Regulations
 - Perception of area
- Frequency of Patrols and Intercepts
- How has status as EFH been leveraged

Oculina Experimental Closed Area

- Changes in abundance, size, biomass of target species
 - Surveys with repeated site sampling and high sample size
- Protection of Oculina and community dynamics
 - Mapping to characterize habitat
 - Tracking habitat quality through time including marine debris
 - Tracking species richness and diversity
- Quantify non-compliance
- Deliver report card to Council on MPA effectiveness with recommendations
- Quantify edge fishing/ more detailed fishing location from logbooks/trip reporting
- Tracking spawning activity and do connectivity modelling
- Monitoring and identifying fishing activity

Deep-water Marine Protected Areas

- Changes in abundance, size, sex ratio, and biomass of target species
 - Surveys with repeated site sampling and high sample size
 - non-invasive sampling ideal
- Protection of habitat and community dynamics
 - Mapping to characterize habitat
 - Tracking habitat quality through time including marine debris
 - Quantify non-compliance
- Deliver report card to Council on MPA performance
- Ensure areas are all on commercial charts to promote compliance
- Quantify edge fishing/ more detailed fishing location from logbooks/trip reporting
- Comparison of before and after at sites
- Boost outreach efforts – print materials/social news
- Secondary impacts to non-target /invasive species

Spawning Special Management Zones

- Continue to monitor to investigate spawning in target species
- Time of spawning – also of population while not just in Spawning SMZ
- Egg/larval transport
- Site fidelity of target species
- Target species present in each Spawning SMZ
- Quantify edge fishing/ more detailed fishing location from logbooks/trip reporting
- Ensure we are protecting the most productive areas (e.g., for red grouper)
- Make sure offshore research activities are prioritizing research in Spawning SMZ
- Increased outreach to recreational fishing community
- Perhaps new techniques include
 - Social media
 - Fishing clubs
 - Tournaments
- Enforcement frequency/effort

Workgroup Members

Highlighted members attended meeting.

Kerry Marhefka, Chair
Stacey Harter, Co-Chair

Dr. Alejandro Acosta

Cameron Brinton

Dr. Sandra Brooke

Scott Buff

Jill Christoferson

Dr. Lora Clarke

Michael Dixon

Dr. Nick Farmer

Dr. David Gilliam

Morgan Hart

Dr. Pat Harris

Rusty Hudson

Bob Martore

Dr. Clinton Moran

Dr. Roldan Muñoz -webinar

Gene Payne

Capt. Scott Pearce

Tom Roller

McLean Seward

Dr. Chris Taylor - webinar

Lt. Michael Paul Thomas

Dr. Brian Walker

Mj. Jason Walker

Jason White

Council Members: Chris Conklin, Tim Griner, Jessica McCawley, Steve Poland, David Whitaker

Staff: Julia Byrd, Myra Brower, John Carmichael, Chip Collier (Staff Lead), Brian Chevront, Cierra Graham, John Hadley, Allie Iberle, Cameron Rhodes, Gregg Waugh, Christina Wiegand

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