



# South Atlantic Update

Published for fishermen and others interested in marine resource conservation issues Summer 2010

## Council Approves Amendment 17A to End Overfishing of Red Snapper

*Measures must be approved by the Secretary of Commerce, NOAA Fisheries comment period open*

Nearly two years to the day it was given notice from NOAA Fisheries Service that the red snapper stock in the South Atlantic was undergoing overfishing and overfished, members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, in a split vote of 9 to 4, approved Amendment 17A to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan during its June meeting in Orlando, Florida. The amendment, perhaps one of the most controversial amendments approved by the Council, is designed to end overfishing for red snapper and rebuild the stock as mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, the amendment will continue a closure of the red snapper fishery currently in place. In addition, Amendment 17A will further reduce fishing mortality for red snapper by creating a large area closure off the southeastern coast of Georgia and northern Florida where fishing for all species in the snapper grouper management complex will be prohibited. The use of spearfishing gear and commercial black sea bass pots would be allowed within the area closure because of the lack of red snapper bycatch associated with the gear. The harvest of red snapper would be prohibited within the area closure for all gear types. The amendment will also require the use of circle hooks when fishing for snapper grouper species and establish a monitoring program for red snapper.

The measures currently in Amendment 17A are based on a 2008 stock assessment for red snapper conducted through the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) program. A new benchmark stock assessment, known as SEDAR 24, is currently underway for red snapper and will be completed in December 2010. The new assessment incorporates updated information on red snapper, including recent landings data, and will provide updated stock status estimates.



### NOAA Fisheries Public Comment Open for Red Snapper - Amendment 17A

NOAA Fisheries is soliciting comments on Amendment 17A until **September 27, 2010**. See page 5 for more information and how to submit comments.

### September 13-17, 2010 Council Meeting Charleston, SC

Wednesday, September 15, 2010 at 5:30 PM  
Informal Q&A Session

Thursday, September 16, 2010 at 3:15 PM  
Open Public Comment

Interested persons will be provided the opportunity to present oral or written statements regarding matters on the Council agenda.



Photo: Sea Love II Charters

#### Actions in Amendment 17A include:

- Annual catch limit and accountability measures for red snapper in the South Atlantic;
- A rebuilding plan for red snapper;
- A prohibition on all harvest and possession of South Atlantic red snapper;
- An area closure off southern Georgia and north/central Florida where fishing for all snapper grouper species would be prohibited, except when using spearfishing gear or black sea bass pots to fish for species other than red snapper (see page 4);
- A requirement for circle hooks in the snapper grouper fishery north of 28 degrees N. latitude; and
- A requirement for a program to monitor red snapper.

The measures in Amendment 17A are not currently in effect. The red snapper fishery remains closed via an interim rule. The Council's intent is to have Amendment 17A approved before the current closure ends on December 5, 2010. NOAA Fisheries will receive public comment on Amendment 17A as part of the review process until **September 27, 2010**. See page 5 for details on how to submit comments.

#### Area Closure Modified

After considering public comment and reviewing alternatives for rebuilding strategies within the amendment, Council members chose to change its preferred alternative for a proxy of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for red snapper, lowering the necessary reduction in harvest of red snapper from 83% to 76%, in order to end overfishing. The Council then reconsidered its preferred alternative for the area closure in Amendment 17A, where fishing for all snapper grouper

*(Continued page 4)*

#### Inside This Issue:

SEDAR Stock Assessment Process .....	2
In The News .....	3
New Council Members Appointed .....	3
Deepwater Coral Protection .....	5
Oil Spill and Corals .....	6
September 2010 Meeting Agenda .....	7
Calendar .....	8

# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

**Robert K. Mahood**  
Executive Director

**Gregg T. Waugh**  
Deputy Director

## VOTING MEMBERS

### Designated State Officials

**Brian Chevront**  
Morehead City, NC  
(252) 726-7021

**Mark Robson**  
Tallahassee, FL  
(850) 487-0554

**Doug Haymans**  
Brunswick, GA  
(912) 264-7218

**Robert Boyles**  
Charleston, SC  
(843) 953-9304

### Appointed Obligatory Members

**Ben Hartig**  
Hobe Sound, FL  
(772) 546-1542

**Tom Burgess**  
Sneads Ferry, NC  
(910) 327-3528

**Duane Harris, Chairman**  
St. Simons Island, GA  
(912) 638-9430

**Tom Swatzel**  
Murrells Inlet, SC  
(843) 357-1673

### Appointed At-Large Members

**George J. Geiger**  
Sebastian, FL  
(561) 388-3183

**Charlie Phillips**  
Townsend, GA  
(912) 832-3149

**David Cupka, Vice-Chair**  
Charleston, SC  
(843) 795-8591

**Benjamin M. Currin**  
Raleigh, NC  
(919) 881-0049

### NMFS Regional Administrator

**Roy Crabtree**  
St. Petersburg, FL  
(727) 824-5301

### Non-Voting Members

**ASMFC**  
Washington, DC  
(202) 289-6400

**U. S. Fish & Wildlife**  
Atlanta, GA  
(404) 331-3588

**U. S. Coast Guard**  
Miami, FL  
(305) 415-6778

**State Department**  
Washington, DC  
(202) 647-2883

## *Editor's Note*

The South Atlantic Update is published by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Its purpose is to report developments in fisheries management that would be of interest to its readers. Please credit the Council when reprinting articles used in this newsletter. Anyone wishing to submit information or articles pertaining to fishing or fisheries management, or letters to the editor on a pertinent issue, is invited and encouraged to do so. Submissions may be mailed to Kim Iverson, Editor, *South Atlantic Update*, 4055 Faber Place Dr., Suite 201, N. Charleston, SC 29405, or may be sent via the internet; Email address: kim.iverson@safmc.net.

A publication of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA05NMF4410004.



## Applicants Solicited to Participate in the SEDAR Stock Assessment Process

*Fishermen pleased with their participation in the  
red snapper Data Workshop*

Fishermen often express their doubts about the results of stock assessments and data used in the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) stock assessment process. Now fishermen and others interested in the process can become directly involved by applying for the SAFMC SEDAR Advisory Panel. The South Atlantic Council is currently soliciting applicants to the Advisory Panel. The SEDAR AP functions as a 'pool' of individuals who are eligible for appointment by the Council to participate in future SEDAR workshop panels. The SEDAR AP does not hold meetings, and separate appointment to a specific SEDAR assessment panel is required to participate in that SEDAR.

Members of the SEDAR AP are selected based on their experience and knowledge of South Atlantic fisheries and interest in participating on future SEDAR assessment panels. Current members of SAFMC advisory panels are already automatically included in the SEDAR AP and need not apply for appointment. Persons interested in applying to the SAFMC SEDAR AP should contact Kim Iverson, Public Information Officer at [kim.iverson@safmc.net](mailto:kim.iverson@safmc.net) or by calling the Council office at 843/571-4366 or Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10 for application materials. For more information on the SEDAR process and role of appointed individuals, contact John Carmichael, Science and Statistics Program Manager, at [john.carmichael@safmc.net](mailto:john.carmichael@safmc.net) or call Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10.

### A Fisherman's Testimony

The Data Workshop for the SEDAR 24 red snapper stock assessment was held in May. Fisherman and seafood dealer Jimmy Hull of Ormond Beach, Florida participated in the data workshop as a representative of the Southeastern Fisheries Association (SFA), East Coast Section. Mr. Hull wrote the following to Bob Jones, Executive Director of the SFA

*GOOD MORNING BOB,  
JUST GOT BACK FROM SEDAR 24 AT 2 AM. HERE IS A SHORT  
REPORT. SO FAR PROCESS IS LOOKING GOOD. SEVEN  
MEMBERS OF SFA ECFS MADE THE TRIP TO CHARLESTON  
PLUS DR. HESTER AND RUSTY HUDSON, WHO WERE HIRED BY  
SFAECFS. THESE FISHERMEN AND SCIENTISTS WERE WARMLY  
WELCOMED AND TREATED WITH MUCH RESPECT.*

*WE WERE TOTALLY INVOLVED WITH EVERY WORKING GROUP  
AND THE EMPIRICAL DATA AND ACTUAL WORKING KNOWLEDGE  
THAT WE PROVIDED IS MAKING A HUGE DIFFERENCE SO  
FAR. THE SCIENTISTS ON THE SEDAR ASSESMENT PANEL ARE  
STARVING FOR KNOWLEDGE AND DATA TO WORK WITH. I WAS  
VERY IMPRESSED WITH THEM AND WANT TO HELP IN EVERY  
WAY POSSIBLE TO GET DATA FOR THEM. THIS IS WHERE THE  
FISHERMAN NEEDS TO BE, AT THE TABLES OF THE WORKING  
GROUPS OF THE STOCK ASSESMENT DATA WORKSHOPS. THIS  
IS WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD. YOU SHOULD BE  
VERY PROUD OF THESE FISHERMEN. I AM.*

JIMMY HULL

Note: SFA Executive Director Bob Jones sent a letter to NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco expressing the appreciation of the Southeast Fisheries Association for allowing fishermen and others interested in the stock assessment process the ability to directly participate in the SEDAR Data Workshop.

## In the News:

### Public Comment Part of SEDAR 24 Stock Assessment for Red Snapper

A new stock assessment for red snapper is under way, with a final report scheduled to be presented to the Council during its December 6-10, 2010 meeting in New Bern, NC. The Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) process involves three workshops. For SEDAR 24 involving red snapper, the Data Evaluation Workshop was held in May, the Assessment Workshop is currently being held via a series of webinars, and the Review Workshop is scheduled for October 12-14, 2010 in Savannah, GA.

**Public comment will be taken August 26 – September 6, 2010 on the draft stock assessment report.** A copy of the report will be posted at [www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/](http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/). Email comments should be sent to: [sedar24AWComments@safmc.net](mailto:sedar24AWComments@safmc.net). Contact Kari Fenske, SEDAR Coordinator at [kari.fenske@safmc.net](mailto:kari.fenske@safmc.net) or by calling 843/571-4366 or Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10.

### South Atlantic Red Grouper Undergoing Overfishing and Overfished Black Grouper Not Overfishing or Overfished



Photo: Miss Judy Charters

Red grouper

Atlantic, conducted through SEDAR shows the South Atlantic red grouper stock undergoing overfishing and overfished. The determination is based upon a review of the 2010 assessment of the species by the SEDAR 19 review panel and the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee. However, black

grouper are not undergoing overfishing nor is the stock considered overfished. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Council is required within two years of notification that a stock is undergoing overfishing and overfished, to prepare and implement a plan amendment or propose regulations to end overfishing. The Council is developing options for Amendment 24 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and will consider current regulations, including the 4-month spawning season closure for shallow water grouper as well as those proposed in Amendments 17A and 17B while developing management alternatives to end overfishing. Amendment 24 will also address allocations for both red and black grouper. The Council will hold public scoping meetings regarding measures in the amendment as it is developed.

grouper are not undergoing overfishing nor is the stock considered overfished.

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Council is required within two years of notification that a stock is undergoing overfishing and overfished, to prepare and implement a plan amendment or propose regulations to end overfishing. The Council is developing options for Amendment 24 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and will consider current regulations, including the 4-month spawning season closure for shallow water grouper as well as those proposed in Amendments 17A and 17B while developing management alternatives to end overfishing. Amendment 24 will also address allocations for both red and black grouper. The Council will hold public scoping meetings regarding measures in the amendment as it is developed.

## Secretary of Commerce Announces Council Appointees

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke announced appointments to the eight regional fishery management councils in June. Two appointments were announced for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Each year on behalf of the Secretary, the Director of NOAA Fisheries Service solicits nominations from the governors of fishing states, and oversees the annual appointment process. The Secretary selects council members from the list of nominees provided by the Governors. Council members serve three-year terms and may be reappointed to serve up to three consecutive terms.

**Tom E. Burgess**, a commercial fisherman from Sneads Ferry, North Carolina has been appointed to an obligatory North Carolina seat. For



Tom Burgess

two decades, Burgess has been involved in the black sea bass trap fishery in the South Atlantic and has served

on the Council's Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel since 2005. He also currently serves on the NC Division of

Marine Fisheries Habitat and Water Quality Advisory Committee and NOAA Fisheries' Large Whale Take Reduction Team.

Burgess brings to the position many years of cooperative research experience in commercial fisheries. He has worked on collaborative projects with NOAA Fisheries Service, N.C. Sea Grant Extension, N.C. State University, and UNC Wilmington. Several projects have provided valuable input towards management decisions in the snapper grouper fishery, including results from his applied research with black sea bass trap mesh sizes and biodegradable escape panels.

"I am a proud citizen of a small coastal town where responsible commercial fishermen land fish and shellfish that are sold as high-value seafood products in retail markets all across the country," Burgess said. "Twenty-five years of residency in Sneads Ferry has made me appreciate responsible stewardship of fish stocks and the importance of fishing to coastal areas."

**Tom Swatzel**, of Murrells Inlet, South Carolina has been reappointed to an obligatory South Carolina seat for a second term. Swatzel, a deep sea fishing



Tom Swatzel

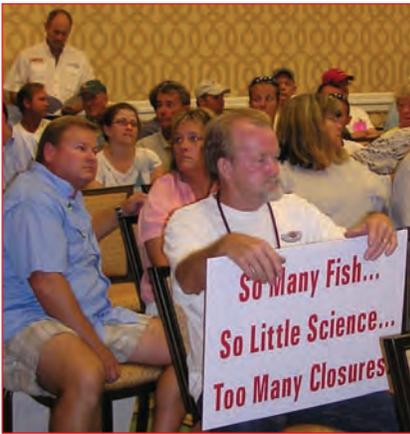
operator in Murrells Inlet, is the former President of Captain Dick's Marina where he oversaw operations of a fleet of offshore charter fishing vessels from 1985

until recently. He served on the Council's Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel from 1998-2001, the NMFS Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey Constituent Review Panel, and the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program For-Hire Subcommittee. Swatzel chairs the Dolphin/Wahoo Committee where he provides an instrumental voice from his fishing experience. He also serves on the Council's Golden Crab, Information & Education, King & Spanish Mackerel, Catch Shares, SEDAR, and Snapper Grouper Committees.

**Georgia Coastal Resources Division Appoints Representative to Council**

**Doug Haymans** was recently appointed to serve on the Council as the designee for the Coastal Resources Division Director, Spud Woodward of the GA Department of Natural Resources. Haymans is responsible for development

(Continued page 6)



More than 250 people attended the public comment session held during the Council's June meeting in Orlando. Many fishermen spoke against the continued closure of the red snapper fishery, the negative economic impacts of the proposed area closure, and asked the Council to wait until the new red snapper stock assessment was available before approving the amendment.

species would be prohibited. They also reviewed the exemptions for allowable gear within the area, deciding to allow both black sea bass pots and spearfishing within the closed area because of the lack of bycatch of red snapper associated with those gears.

The Council reviewed various scenarios and assumptions relative to the size and configuration of the area closure, including the expected effects of recent management actions, changes in release mortality stemming from regulations, and compliance estimates. After much discussion, the Council chose a smaller area closure as its preferred alternative in Amendment 17A, eliminating approximately 1,200 square miles off the coast of Georgia that were previously under consideration. The new area includes waters ranging from 98 to 240 feet off the southern coast of Georgia (31 degrees north latitude) extending southward off the north and central coast of Florida to just south of Melbourne (28 degrees north latitude).

**Incorporating Results of a New Stock Assessment – Changes in regulations may be considered**

Throughout the discussion of Amendment 17A, Council members consistently referred to the ongoing SEDAR 24 benchmark stock assessment for red snapper and the need to consider possible changes to the regulations proposed in the amendment following the assessment results that will be presented to the

Council during its December meeting in New Bern, NC. Some Council members advocated delaying approval of the amendment until the stock assessment results are available. "We've heard a lot of discussion last night [public comment] about the fact that we really should wait for the stock assessment," said Council member Tom Swatzel from South Carolina. "I understand some of the technical reasons why we're moving forward, but it seems really illogical to most fishermen and to myself to do so to meet these artificial deadlines and trying to meet the Magnuson Act." Other Council members pointed to the mandates of the Act and the deadline to implement measures to end overfishing as the driving forces behind the development of Amendment 17A.

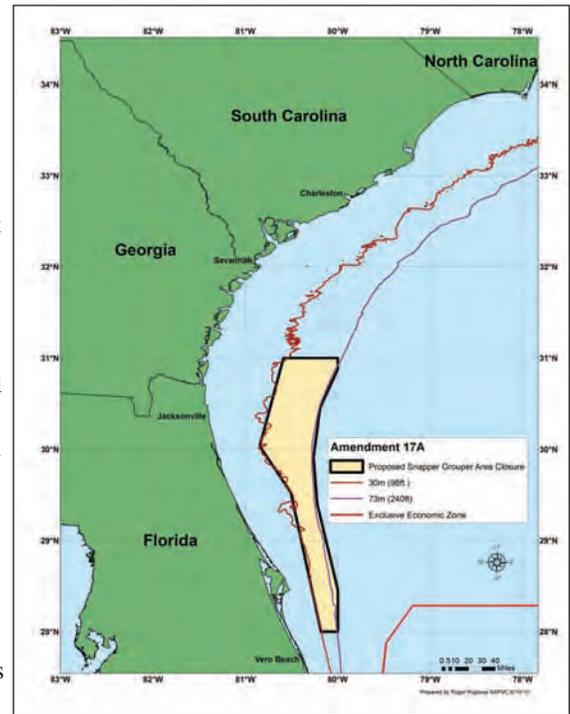
The Council's intent is to have Amendment 17A implemented before December 5, 2010, when the current closure of the red snapper fishery implemented through an interim rule is scheduled to expire.

However, once the new stock assessment has been completed, it is anticipated that modifications to the regulations in Amendment 17A may need to be made. Council members expressed

*"There is a misperception on the part of the public that what we do here today with 17A is going to be in place tomorrow, and that is simply not the case... SEDAR 24, currently in process, is going to be the vehicle used to ultimately make the decisions regarding what we do concerning the regulations on red snapper, whether we need a closed area, we don't need a closed area, ultimately the size of the closed area..."*

Council member George Geiger

necessary, they would be handled quickly. "I give you my assurance that



Because red snapper co-occur with other snappers and groupers and have relatively high release mortality rates, Amendment 17A includes an area closure where fishing for all snapper grouper species would be prohibited to further reduce fishing mortality of red snapper. The use of black sea bass pots and spearfishing (no harvest of red snapper) would be allowed within the area closure. The closure targets areas where red snapper catches are highest. The Council reduced the size of the area closure before approving Amendment 17A in June. If Amendment 17A is approved by the Secretary of Commerce, it is anticipated the area closure could be in effect by January 2011. The closed area may be modified again once the Council receives the results of the new red snapper stock assessment in December.

if the assessment comes out better or worse, and we need to make changes I will frontload this and do everything I can to make this move as quickly as possible." Possible changes include modifying the size and configuration of the area closure, and if the assessment results warrant, options to allow some fishing within the area. The Council will discuss possible options during its September meeting in Charleston, SC.

Copies of Amendment 17A and a summary highlighting management measures in the amendment are available online at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net) or call 843/571-4366 or Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10.



### What's Next for Red Snapper?

- Council approved Amendment 17A for submission to the Secretary of Commerce in June 2010.

- NOAA Fisheries public comment on 17A now open until September 27, 2010 as part of the Secretarial review process.

- New (SEDAR 24) benchmark stock assessment continues for red snapper.
- Draft SEDAR 24 stock assessment report available for public comment August 26 - September 6 (see page 3).
- December 5, 2010 – Interim rule for red snapper closure expires. The intent is to have regulations implemented prior to this date in order to avoid a lapse in the closure.
- December 6-10 Council meeting in New Bern, NC - Council receives the final Peer-reviewed Stock Assessment report.
- Council may request changes to regulations if warranted.

Note: The measures proposed in Amendment 17A as approved by the Council in June cannot be modified. The Secretary of Commerce may approve, partially approve, or disapprove the amendment. Therefore, if regulatory changes are warranted following the new stock assessment, they must be requested by the Council during its December 2010 meeting.

### NOAA Fisheries Seeks Public Comment on Snapper Grouper Amendment 17A

As part of the review process by the Secretary of Commerce, NOAA Fisheries Service is seeking public comment on Amendment 17A. **Written comments must be received no later than September 27, 2010.** Electronic copies of Amendment 17A are available from: NOAA Fisheries Service at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>, The e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> docket number NOAA-NMFS-2010-0035, and the South Atlantic Council's site at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net). Hard copies may be obtained by contacting NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 263 13th Ave. South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. Additional information, including a *Fishery Bulletin* and Frequently Asked Questions on Amendment 17A can be found online at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.



## Regulations Implemented to Protect Deepwater Corals

*Over 23,000 square miles of coral habitat protected from gear impacts*

The South Atlantic region is home to what may be the largest continuous distribution of deepwater corals in the world. New management measures proposed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to help protect these sensitive habitats recently received approval from NOAA Fisheries Service and the Secretary of Commerce and became effective July 22, 2010.

Five areas, located off the southeastern coast of the U.S. and encompassing more than 23,000 square miles (about the size of the State of West Virginia) have been designated Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (Coral HAPCs). The designation affords added protection to the areas that house an invaluable array of fish and invertebrate species, some of which may have biomedical applications in the treatment of human diseases.

Established through the Council's Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 1, management regulations in the Coral HAPCs enhance protection of the sensitive habitats from impacts associated with bottom fishing practices. The use of bottom damaging gear

such as longlines, trawls, dredges and pots plus the use of grapples, chains and anchors are prohibited within the designated areas. Working closely with fishermen that specialize in deepwater fisheries, the Council crafted the amendment to restrict fisheries that occur within the same depth zones as the corals to areas where they have traditionally operated.

For many years fishermen targeting golden crab and royal red shrimp have set their traps and hauled their nets near areas now known to provide suitable habitat for deepwater corals. These small traditional fisheries, however, operate in distinct areas where fishermen can be sure their gear will not become damaged. Therefore, establishing the Allowable Golden Crab Fishing Areas and Shrimp Fishery Access Areas within two of the deepwater Coral HAPCs will ensure the continued existence of

these fisheries and the communities they support.

While the Council's mandate is limited to conservation and management of fisheries, there is now heightened concern regarding future offshore energy development. The designation of these extensive coral areas as Coral HAPCs also elevates their importance in the permitting process.



Deepwater octopus and *Lophelia* coral Courtesy of NOAA

*"The historic, final approval of the Southeast deep-water Coral HAPCs is great news for the scientists, managers and fishermen who worked together so long and hard to make this a reality, and for all Americans who love the ocean. The timing – while we are all reeling from the oil disaster in the Gulf – is especially important, as a breath of fresh air, and as a down-payment in protecting the most special places in the sea."* Dr. Douglas Rader, past chairman of the Council's Habitat and Environmental Protection Advisory Panel and Chief Ocean Scientist for Environmental Defense Fund.

## Science Profile

by Myra Brouwer  
SAFMC Fishery Scientist

# The Deepwater Horizon Spill: implications for the South Atlantic's shallow and deepwater coral reefs

Deep-sea oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico began in earnest in the early 1980s. The federal government -- mainly the Minerals Management Service -- funded extensive scientific exploration to locate suitable sites for oil and natural gas extraction. Those investigations allowed scientists to document the existence of cold-seep communities of giant mussels and hydrocarbon-loving tube worms as well as breathtaking deepwater coral ecosystems. It is ironic that those who shed



Deepwater *Lophelia* coral

light into the deep cold waters of the Gulf of Mexico to expose the wonders of these unique ecosystems are now held responsible for possibly placing them in critical danger.

Effects of the Gulf oil spill to deepwater communities are hard to measure

because deep-sea exploration is expensive and can take months or years to plan. However, scientists agree that deepwater corals may be particularly vulnerable to environmental stressors. Deepwater corals feed by snatching food particles floating down the water column instead of relying on the assistance of photosynthetic algae, like their shallow-water cousins do. Directly ingesting tiny oil globules or food particles

contaminated with oil would essentially kill them. "It would be like food poisoning," says John Reed, research scientist at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute and member of the



Golden crab inhabit deepwater coral areas

Council's Coral AP. The oil plumes oozing for miles from the site of the Deepwater Horizon rig explosion could smother the coral polyps with equally devastating effects.

Adding to the scientists' frustration, the level of toxicity of the oil dispersants entering deepwater coral ecosystems is virtually unknown. Interestingly, naturally-occurring hydrocarbons seeps release an estimated one million barrels of oil per year into the depths of the Gulf of Mexico. Hence deepwater coral communities in the area may be adapted to low-level

### Council Appointees (Continued from page 3)



Doug Haymans and son Jacob

of environmental policy and regulation, coordination of education and outreach, and special projects for the Division. He previously supervised the Constituent Services Program, involving inshore fish habitat enhancement, offshore reef deployment, coastal boating and fishing access, and marine education. He was the agency's liaison to the commercial and recreational fishing communities in GA for

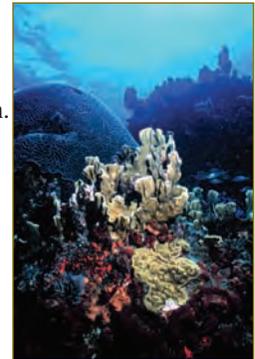
nearly 10 years. Prior to his position with the Coastal Resources Division, he was a fisheries biologist with the FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

concentrations of oil which could perhaps help them survive this catastrophe.

Whether remnants of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill will manage to make their way to the South Atlantic is still a matter of speculation. Until now there is no indication of oil having been entrained in the Loop Current, which would guide it around the Florida Keys and up the Florida Straits to the Gulf Stream.

The coral reefs of the Florida Keys are the third largest in the world and a top destination for divers and sportfishermen. The reefs provide essential habitat to many of the economically important species of fish, crabs, and lobsters harvested in the area.

As opposed to its effects on deepwater coral reefs, oil contamination in shallow reefs has been investigated. Direct exposure to oil smothers coral polyps and contaminates the organisms corals feed upon. Low-level exposure can cause oil to accumulate in coral skeletons and remain there for some time. In fact, examination of hydrocarbon deposits in coral skeletons can be used to study historical contamination in an area. Also, low-level exposure to oil mixed with dispersants has been shown to interfere with some corals' reproduction and cause deformities in larvae.



FL Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Reductions in fertility, reproductive success and recruitment have the greatest potential to severely impact coral survival over the long-term. In addition, oil can also hinder the photosynthetic activity of the symbiotic algae that reside in coral tissues and provide some of their nourishment. Coral "bleaching" -- as a result of the coral polyps expelling their colorful symbionts - is a common response to environmental stressors. Depending on the oil exposure, corals can become more susceptible to bleaching, which hinders reproduction and growth.

No oil contamination from the Deepwater Horizon spill has been reported in the Florida Keys or elsewhere in south Florida. However, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission are poised to launch an immediate response. Monitoring for oil impacts has been ongoing in various sites throughout south Florida and the Sanctuary. Scientists are hopeful that any oil finding its way to coral ecosystems in South Atlantic waters would be diffused after having broken down during its travel over hundreds of miles.



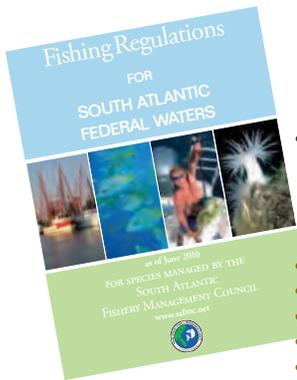
COOPERATIVE INSTITUTE FOR OCEAN EXPLORATION, RESEARCH, AND TECHNOLOGY

For more information about recent research efforts to assess impacts of the Gulf oil spill on corals, visit <http://cioert.org/>. The Cooperative

Institute for Ocean Exploration, Research, and Technology Web site provides blogs regarding research using manned submersibles and links to media features from MSNBC and the BBC on the mission's research. Additional information on the protection and management of corals in the South Atlantic can be found at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net).

NOW AVAILABLE!

## Federal Fishing Regulations for South Atlantic Waters



- **Recreational and Commercial Regulations:**
  - Snapper Grouper Species
  - King and Spanish Mackerel
  - Dolphin and Wahoo
- **Snapper Grouper ID Chart**
- **Deepwater MPAs**
- **Oculina Bank Managed Area**
- **New Deepwater Coral Protected Areas**
- **Proposed Regulations and More...**

Download your copy at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net). Complimentary copies are available from the Council office. Email [anna.martin@safmc.net](mailto:anna.martin@safmc.net) or call 843/571-4366 or Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10.

## SAFMC Meeting Dates and Locations 2010 Schedule

<b>March 1-5, 2010</b> Jekyll Island Club Hotel 371 Riverview Drive Jekyll Island, GA 31527 Phone: 1800/535-9547	<b>September 13-17, 2010</b> Charleston Marriott Hotel 170 Lockwood Boulevard Charleston, SC 29403 Phone: 1800/968-3569
<b>June 7-11, 2010</b> Renaissance Orlando 5445 Forbes Place Orlando, Florida 32812 Phone: 1800/545-1985	<b>Dec 6-10, 2010</b> Sheraton New Bern 100 Middle Street New Bern, NC 28562 Phone: 1800/326-3745

## South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting

### September 13-17, 2010



Charleston Marriott Hotel  
170 Lockwood Boulevard  
Charleston, SC 29403  
Phone: 800/968-3569 or 843/723-3000

For a detailed agenda contact the Council office toll free at 1-866 SAFMC-10 or 843/571-4366. The agenda is also available on the Council's web site [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)

### Acronyms

- ABC** - Allowable Biological Catch
- ACCSP** - Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program
- ACL** - Annual Catch Limit
- AM** - Accountability Measure
- ACT** - Annual Catch Target
- AP** - Advisory Panel
- ASMFC** - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
- BRD** - Bycatch Reduction Device
- EEZ** - Exclusive Economic Zone
- EFH** - Essential Fish Habitat
- EFH/HAPC** - Essential Fish Habitat/Habitat Area of Particular Concern
- FMP** - Fishery Management Plan
- HMS** - Highly Migratory Species
- ITQ** - Individual Transferable Quota
- LAPP** - Limited Access Privilege Program
- MSY** - Maximum Sustainable Yield
- MRFSS** - Marine Recreational Fishing Statistics Survey
- NMFS** - National Marine Fisheries Service
- OY** - Optimum Yield
- SEDAR** - Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (stock assessment process)
- SSC** - Scientific & Statistical Committee
- SFA** - Sustainable Fisheries Act
- TAC** - Total Allowable Catch
- VMS** - Vessel Monitoring System

### PRELIMINARY MEETING AGENDA

<b>Monday</b>	<b>1:30 - 1:45</b>	<b>Swearing in of New Council Members</b>
	<b>1:45 - 3:30</b>	<b>Spiny Lobster Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>3:30 - 5:30</b>	<b>Mackerel Committee Meeting</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>8:30 - 10:30</b>	<b>Ecosystem-Based Management Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>10:30 - 12:00</b>	<b>SEDAR Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>1:30 - 2:30</b>	<b>Joint Executive/Finance Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>3:00 - 4:00</b>	<b>Law Enforcement Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>4:00 - 5:30</b>	<b>Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>8:30 - 5:00</b>	<b>Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>5:30 PM</b>	<b>Open informal public Q&amp;A</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>8:30 - 10:00</b>	<b>Advisory Panel Selection Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>10:00 - 12:00</b>	<b>Catch Shares Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>1:30 - 3:00</b>	<b>SOPPs Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>3:00 - 6:00</b>	<b>Council Session</b>
	<b>3:15 PM</b>	<b>Public comment on agenda items</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>8:00 - 12:00</b>	<b>Council Session</b>

### Note! Video Provider Change

We've changed our provider for live video feed. TO WATCH THE COUNCIL MEETING LIVE FROM CHARLESTON CHOOSE A DIRECT LINK FOR LIVE VIDEO FEED AT [WWW.SAFMC.NET](http://WWW.SAFMC.NET)

**Mark your calendar...**

2010

- September 9 & 21**     *SEDAR 24 (red snapper) Assessment Workshop Webinars*  
www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/
- October 12-14**     *Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting*  
Cape May, NJ     www.mafmc.org
- October 12-14**     *SEDAR 24 (red snapper) Review Workshop*  
Savannah, GA     www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/
- October 18-22**     *Scientific and Statistical Committee National Meeting*  
Charleston, SC     www.safmc.net
- October 25 -28**     *Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting*  
Baton Rouge, LA     www.gulfcouncil.org



---

- *Public Comment Period Open for Snapper Grouper Amendment 17A (red snapper)*

- *Public comment also solicited August 26 - September 6, 2010 on the new red snapper stock assessment draft*  
*See inside for details*

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration

**South Atlantic  
Fishery Management Council**  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201  
North Charleston, SC 29405

First Class  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Charleston, SC  
Permit G-19

[www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)



Printed on  
recycled paper