



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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NOAA Fisheries Service Publishes Final Rule to Implement the Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 1

NOAA Fisheries Service has published a final rule to implement the Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 1 (CE-BA 1). The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) submitted CE-BA 1 and associated final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for review, approval, and implementation by NOAA Fisheries Service. The final rule was published in the Federal Register on June 22, 2010 (75 FR 35330) and the provisions are effective July 22, 2010.

CE-BA 1 amends the Coral, Coral Reefs, Live/Hard Bottom Habitats of the South Atlantic Region Fishery Management Plan (Coral FMP) to establish Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (CHAPCs) to protect what is believed to be the largest distribution (>60,000 square kilometers; 23,000 square miles) of deepwater coral ecosystems in the world. In the South Atlantic region, deepwater coral ecosystems are coral, coral reefs, and live/hardbottom habitat in waters extending from 400 meters (1,300 feet) to the seaward boundary of the exclusive economic zone.

Within the CHAPCs, the possession of coral species and the use of all bottom damaging gear is prohibited including bottom longline, trawl (bottom and mid-water), dredge, pot or trap, or the use of an anchor, anchor and chain, or grapple and chain by all fishing vessels.

CHAPCs are located in the following areas:

- Cape Lookout Lophelia Banks
- Cape Fear Lophelia Banks
- Stetson Reefs, Savannah and East Florida Lithoherms, and Miami Terrace (Stetson-Miami Terrace)
- Pourtales Terrace
- Blake Ridge Diapir Methane Seep

Currently, the only commercial fisheries that operate in the areas are the wreckfish, golden crab, and deepwater shrimp fisheries. CE-BA 1 establishes allowable gear areas for the golden crab fishery and shrimp fishery access areas for the deepwater shrimp fishery. The establishment of these areas allows for the continuation of the golden crab and deepwater shrimp fisheries in their historical fishing grounds with little or no negative impacts to protected deepwater coral habitat.

For detailed maps and coordinates for the location of the CHAPCs, see the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Web site: <http://www.safmc.net>

Addresses

Electronic copies of the final rule or amendment/FEIS may be obtained from the e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>, the Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>, or:

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