

## Criteria

There has been some discussion and confusion over the criteria the Council is using for siting marine protected areas and how the criteria fit into the process we are now using for developing MPAs. In order to clear up this issue and to ensure that the record clearly reflects the Council's intent staff has prepared the following summary of the way we understand the Council's past deliberations on criteria for MPAs:

- The original list of criteria was developed (Attachment 1) by the MPA Advisory Panel and was included in the original Public Information Document (Spring 2000). The Council asked the public and the AP to rank the list of criteria with the intent that the Council would use public input to rank the criteria. Those criteria would then be used to determine which sites in the South Atlantic would be appropriate for MPAs.
- The Committee held meetings in November 2000 and February 2001 to discuss many things, including the issue of criteria. In November 2000 the Committee received a presentation on the criteria and had extensive discussion on this topic but no motion was made nor was consensus reached. It was agreed that the issue of criteria would be discussed at the February 2001 Committee meeting.
- At the February 2001 meeting of the MPA Committee another discussion was held on which criteria to use as the Council moved forward with MPAs. The initial discussion focused around the original list of criteria, a motion was made to retain the original list, there was much discussion but the motion was never voted on. The following day the Committee discussed criteria again and looked at a new list of criteria (this was criteria that had been used in the development of the Tortugas Reserve). The meeting ended without coming to a conclusion on which criteria would be used, but the Committee had developed a clear plan for moving forward with the development of MPAs.
- The Spring 2001 Scoping Document included as an appendix the criteria that reflected what was used for the Tortugas process (Attachment 2). These criteria were included so that the Council could gather public comment on which criteria should be used in developing MPAs.
- As a result of the scoping meetings that were held in the Spring of 2001 and an MPA AP meeting that was held in conjunction with these meetings, a list of suggested MPAs was developed.
- Many of the listed criteria have been used in our determinations to date, i.e. spawning areas, size of area, allowable activities, location, scientific basis, geography, social acceptance, regional considerations, urgency and degree of threat, timing for implementation, and fisheries sustainability. Further as we move through the process other items from the list of criteria will come into play, such as measurable goals, biodiversity and habitat, monitoring, education, timeframes to evaluate results, research needs and opportunities, periodic review and enforcement/compliance.

- At its meeting in June 2001 the MPA Committee and the Council looked at the list of suggested MPAs brought forth through the scoping process and decided to develop MPAs using sites from the list developed by the public. The Council further determined that more specifically the most important criteria during this round of developing MPAs would be the protection of deepwater snapper grouper species. Therefore, the Council is only considering sites that provide protection for deepwater species. The biological, economic and social impacts of these sites will be evaluated. However, as we understand the Council's position there is no mandate that we use all items listed as criteria in Attachments 1 and 2 as we develop Amendment 14.