



SCOPING DOCUMENT

POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR THE USE OF MARINE RESERVES IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

A. BACKGROUND

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) is considering the potential use of marine reserves emphasizing the conservation of the species and the habitat associated with the snapper grouper complex. The Council began its consideration of marine reserves in 1990 when the Snapper Grouper Plan Development Team produced a report entitled “The Potential of Marine Fishery Reserves for Reef Fish Management in the U.S. South Atlantic”. The PDT offered this approach because they believed it was the only viable option for maintaining the size, age, and genetic structure of slow growing, long-lived species over the long-term. After a series of scoping meetings were held to gain public input on the use of marine reserves in 1992, the Council decided not to consider large scale reserves at that time. From 1992 through 1998 more stringent regulations were implemented in the snapper grouper fishery for both the commercial and the recreational sectors. In view of the increasing regulations and the failure of traditional management measures to allow the Council to meet its mandates, the SAFMC once again began looking at marine reserves as a possible management tool. In 1998 the Council formed a Marine Reserves Committee and Advisory Panel to try to gain a better understanding of reserves and to map out a plan to gain public input on the concept of reserves. In June of 1998, at its meeting in St. Augustine, Florida the Council held a marine reserves workshop. Participants included scientists, environmentalists and fishermen. In early 2000 Council members and staff attended a series of informal meetings that were designed to inform the public of the Council’s consideration of marine reserves and to receive feedback on the concept. The Council’s definition of a marine reserve is “specific areas of marine environment managed for the primary purpose of aiding in the recovery of overfished stocks and to insure the persistence of healthy fish stocks, fisheries and habitats”.

B. SCOPING MEETING

The purpose of a scoping meeting is to give you the opportunity to comment before the Council has made any decisions on an issue. Scoping meetings are required by the National Environmental Policy Act and are part of the pre-management plan and amendment process. Scoping meetings are different from public hearings in that the Council does not have a position on a particular issue prior to scoping meetings; public hearings occur after scoping meetings. During this

scoping meeting the Council would like your input on the concept of marine reserves. This meeting will allow you to let the Council know whether or not you support the use of marine reserves as a fishery management tool. If you do not support this idea please feel free to offer alternative solutions to overfishing problems. If you support the concept of marine reserves you may wish to comment on what criteria or parameters would be important to you in establishing a reserve.

C. SCOPING DATES AND LOCATIONS

Wednesday, April 26, 2000

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

217 Ft. Johnson Road
Charleston, SC 29422
Phone: 843-795-6350

Tuesday, May 9, 2000

Sea Turtle Inn
One Ocean Blvd.
Atlantic Beach, FL 32233
Phone: 904-249-7402

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Holiday Inn
1300 N. Atlantic Avenue
Cocoa Beach, FL 32931
Phone: 407-783-2271

Thursday, May 11, 2000

Ireland's Inn
2220 N. Atlantic Blvd.
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33305
Phone: 954-565-6661

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

Carteret Community College
McGee Building, Classroom 205
3505 Arendell Street

Morehead City, NC 28557
Phone: 252-247-3094

Wednesday, May 17, 2000

NCDMR Field Office
127 Cardinal Drive Extension
Wilmington, NC 28405-3845
Phone: 910-395-3990

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Murrell's Inlet Community Center
4450 Murrell's Inlet Road
Murrell's Inlet, SC 29576
Phone: 843-651-7373

Wednesday, May 31, 2000

University of Georgia Marine Extension Service
715 Bay Street
Brunswick, GA 31520
Phone: 912-264-7268

Thursday, June 1, 2000

Hyatt Regency
2 West Bay Street
Savannah, GA 31401
Phone: 912-238-1234

D. PUBLIC INFORMATION DOCUMENT

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council has prepared a more detailed public information document to inform the public of the Council's consideration of marine reserves. This document is available at this meeting, by calling the Council office (843/571-4366), on the SAFMC Web site (www.safmc.noaa.gov) or by written request (SAFMC, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306, Charleston, SC 29407).

