

## Recommendations of the SAFMC's Marine Reserves Advisory Panel July, 2000

**At the July 26&27, 2000 meeting the AP reviewed public comment received during the informal meeting and scoping process and came to consensus on the following recommendations:**

**Motion:** The Marine Reserves Advisory Panel recommends that the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council move forward to utilize marine reserves, nearshore and/or offshore, natural and man-made as needed to insure the persistence of healthy fish stocks, fisheries and habitats.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Council first consider reserves designed to rebuild and protect snapper grouper stocks.
- The Council should support the efforts by States and other agencies in establishing demonstration and experimental areas (such as area 51).
- Urge the Council to maximize educational efforts to continue educating the public regarding marine reserves including production of a brochure.
- Marine reserves should be established with goals, monitoring and enforcement plans in place prior to implementation.
- Expand and establish funding for cooperative agreements between state agencies, federal agencies and NGOs and educational agencies for the development of program monitoring, assessment and enforcement for marine reserves.
- Should it be necessary to designate existing habitat as a marine reserve then the use of artificial reefs should be fully considered to mitigate for lost opportunities. The Council should similarly consider the creation of artificial refugia (e.g. creating marine reserves utilizing man-made materials).
- Utilize social and economic information as essential criteria in the Council's decision making process when considering marine reserves as a tool in rebuilding fish stocks. Consequently, the Council should support the data collection and analysis which provide an adequate representation of the short and long term social and economic impacts of these management options.
- Establish state working sub-groups of local experts and users if it is determined that a reserve is needed off that state.
- Work very closely with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary staff to gather more information about issues of enforcement, monitoring, and assessment pertaining to the restricted use areas within the sanctuary.
- Urge the Council to encourage the National Marine Fisheries Service to reinforce and re-establish effective assessment, monitoring and enforcement of the *Oculina* Bank Experimental Research Reserve.
- Consider allowing activities that do not affect the snapper grouper complex within a reserve (i.e., trolling, non-consumptive diving).
- The Council look at different approaches and strategies reflecting the needs of each specific area and stocks as appropriate.

**Motion:** Staff draft a letter from the Marine Reserves Advisory Panel (AP) if/when the State of South Carolina requests special management zone status for area 51 stating the AP's support for this action and that the AP would like to see it moved forward as rapidly as possible.

**Motion:** The Advisory Panel commends the staff on their outstanding educational efforts.