

Results from the October 29-30, 2001 Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting

At their October 29-30, 2001 meeting the Snapper Grouper Committee took the following actions on the recommendations made by the Marine Protected areas Committee:

- (1) The Snapper Grouper Committee will consider the use of MPAs to supplement management approaches to be considered for the deepwater grouper tilefish complex.
- (2) The Snapper Grouper Committee is considering the potential MPAs as listed below. This list provides areas identified to protect habitats known to be inhabited by the deepwater groupers and tilefish. Nominated sites not recommended will be held for possible future consideration.
- (3) The Snapper Grouper Committee will hold a joint meeting with the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, Snapper Grouper Assessment Group and the Scientific and Statistical Committee to review data provided by MARMAP and other sources to determine if any additional sites may be reasonable candidates to further protect species of concern.
- (4) Finally the Snapper Grouper Committee will move forward with the concept of artificial refugia by endorsing site NC-2 and other possible sites in the region.

The Snapper Grouper Committee also concurred with the following recommendations that came forward from the Marine Protected Areas Committee:

The Council should continue to develop an integrated and ecologically based network of MPAs as part of an ecosystem-based management program, with a principle focus on protecting and rebuilding all species in the snapper grouper complex.

Specifically, the Council should request that the Habitat, MPA, Snapper Grouper, Wreckfish, Calico Scallop, Rock Shrimp, Law Enforcement, and Coral APs provide further input to the Snapper Grouper Committee and the Council on actions needed to implement such a network, including:

- a) Actions to protect and rebuild pertinent pre-adult life history stages of the severely overfished deepwater snapper grouper species, and
- b) Actions to protect and rebuild pertinent life history stages for the other species of the complex.

DRAFT

List of Sites Recommended by the Snapper Grouper Committee to be Considered as Marine Protected Areas

The Snapper Grouper Committee recommends the Council move forward with consideration of the following sites as marine protected areas:

North Carolina Site 1a: This site is larger than site NC-1b; it is an area that encompasses a portion of the 30 fathom break. Water depth is approximately 128-148 fathoms. It is recommended that this be a Type 2 MPA. The coordinates are as follows:

NW	77°5'W	NE	76°50'W
	33°30'N		33°30'N
SW	77°5'W	SE	76°50'W
	33°20'N		33°20'N

North Carolina Site 1b: This site is a smaller version of NC 1a in which the entire box has been moved to the west of the original boundary. This is an area that encompasses a portion of the 30 fathom break. Water depth is approximately 128-148 fathoms. It is recommended that this be a Type 2 MPA. The coordinates are as follows:

NW	77°0'W	NE	76°50'W
	33°30'N		33°30'N
SW	77°0'W	SE	76°50'W
	33°20'N		33°20'N

***It is the Snapper Grouper Committee's intent we retain NC 1a and 1b for further input from the Snapper Grouper AP with the intent that we move forward with one site.**

North Carolina Site 2: This site is a recommendation for an artificial refugia site in an area approximately 12 miles south of Beaufort Inlet. This area would be about 2 square miles in approximately 10 fathoms. It is recommended this site be a Type 1 MPA.

North Carolina Site 3: Approximated from known hard/live bottom habitat distribution (based in part on MARMAP collections) & approximation of location from MARMAP maps indicating deepwater species captured or captured during spawning season. It is recommended that this be a Type 2 MPA. The coordinates are as follows:

NW	76°17'W	NE	76°8'W
	34°11'N		34°11'N
SW	76°17'W	SE	76°8'W
	34°4'N		34°4'N

South Carolina Site 1a: The center point of suggested South Carolina 1a (formerly site N-4) would lie at 33° 06.0' N; 77° 49.0' W and the 5 x 10 nautical mile box surrounding it would be oriented horizontally. It is recommended this site be a Type 2 MPA.

South Carolina Site 1b: The center point of suggested South Carolina 1b (formerly site N-3) would lie at 32° 51.0' N; 078° 11.0' W and the 5 x 10 nautical mile box surrounding it would be oriented horizontally. It is recommended this site be a Type 2 MPA.

***It is the Snapper Grouper Committee's intent we retain SC 1a and 1b for further input from the Snapper Grouper AP with the intent that we move forward with one site.**

South Carolina Site 2: The center point of suggested South Carolina site 2 (formerly C-3) would lie at 32° 21.0' N; 79° 00.0' W and the 5 x 10 nautical mile box surrounding it would be oriented horizontally. It is recommended this site be a Type 2 MPA.

South Carolina Site 3/Georgia Site 1: It is recommended that this site be a Type 2 MPA.

NW	79°41'W	NE	79°31'W
	31°33'N		31°33'N
SW	79°41'W	SE	79°31'W
	31°23'N		31°23'N

Florida/ Sea bass Rocks: The coordinates of Sea Bass Rocks are as follows: the NW corner lies at 27° 8' N latitude and 80° W longitude; the NE corner lies at 27° 8' N latitude and 79°58' W longitude; the SW corner lies at 27° 4' N latitude and 80° W longitude; and the SE corner lies at 27° 4' N latitude and 79° 58' W longitude. This is an Oculina based pinnacle system. It is a diverse mixture of habitats with north to south ledge systems and isolated Oculina studded pinnacles. It is also interspersed with flat hard bottom areas. It has one southeast facing ledge with 50' and greater relief. The water depth at this site is 240' -360'. The most abundant commercially and recreationally important species in this area is sea bass. It is the only area in this region where commercial quantities of sea bass occur. Snowy grouper are the second most important species. Vermilion snapper, red snapper, scamp, speckled hind, warsaw grouper, gag grouper, and red porgy are present at this site. Also the "amberjack" group is well represented by greater amberjack, almaco jack, banded rudderfish, and a few small lesser amberjack. It is recommended this site be a Type 2 MPA.

Florida/ East Hump and Unnamed Hump: The coordinates of this site are as follows:

NW	24.36.50N	NE	24.32.00N
	080.45.50W		080.36.00W

SW	24.32.50N	SE	24.27.50N
	080.48.00W		080.38.50W

Running oblique to the Florida Keys, covering a broad area of deepwater. The shallowest point is 648' deep and the deepest point is 832'. This demographic contains two humps within its boundaries – the popular East Hump, a known spawning area for greater amberjack, and an unnamed hump closer to the proposed inshore line of demarcation. Overall, the area is popular as a deep drop site for snowy grouper, tilefish, deepwater porgies, vermilion snapper, and banded rudderfish. The surface waters of the East Hump and the unnamed hump are frequently trolled for schools of blackfin tuna, bonito, wahoo, dolphin and billfish. Anglers working the deeper depths of both humps are most apt to catch greater amberjack and sharks. Warsaw grouper have also been known to inhabit these hump sites due to their deeper environs.