



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5505

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June 6, 2008

FB08-036

NOAA Seeking Public Comments on Amendment to Establish Marine Protected Areas for Snapper-Grouper in U.S. Federal Waters of the South Atlantic

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) has published a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register* of Amendment 14 to the South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) has submitted Amendment 14 and associated Final Environmental Impact Statement for review, approval, and implementation by NOAA Fisheries Service. The public comment period is open through August 5, 2008.

The amendment would establish eight Type 2 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in federal waters ranging from North Carolina to Florida (see Figure 1). Within the MPAs fishing for or retention of snapper grouper species would be prohibited but other types of legal fishing would be allowed. The prohibition on possession would not apply to a person aboard a vessel that is in transit with fishing gear appropriately stowed.

The primary purpose of implementing these MPAs is to protect a portion of the population and habitat of long-lived, deep-water snapper grouper species (speckled hind, snowy grouper, warsaw grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden tilefish, and blueline tilefish) from directed fishing pressure to achieve a more natural sex ratio, age, and size structure, while minimizing adverse social and economic effects.

Request for Comments

Written comments on this amendment must be received no later than 5 p.m., Eastern time, on August 5, 2008. In order to be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service in its decision to approve, disapprove, or partially approve Amendment 14. See the **Addresses** section for information on where and how to submit comments.

Addresses

Electronic copies of Amendment 14 can be viewed on line at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Copies of the amendment may also be obtained from the Council by sending a written request to:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place, Suite 201
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405

Or you may obtain copies of the amendment by e-mailing safmc@safmc.net, or calling the Council's toll free number: 1-866-SAFMC-10.

You may submit written comments by any of the following methods:

- Electronic Submissions: Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA Fisheries Service will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic

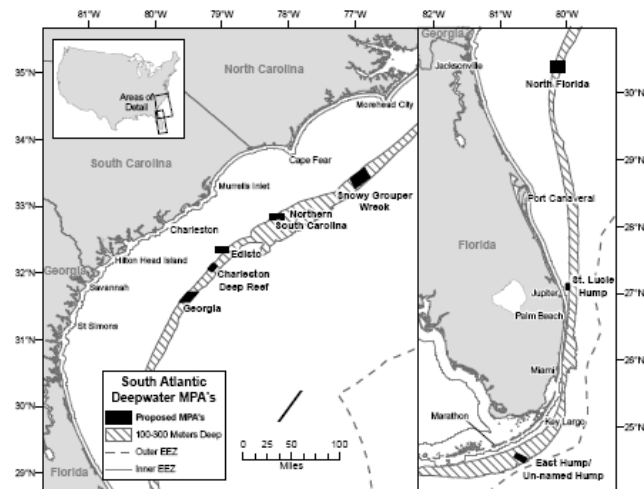


Figure 1. Map of proposed Type II MPA's.

The use of shark bottom longline gear would also be prohibited within the MPAs. This provision however, will be implemented through Amendment 2 to the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species FMP drafted by the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Division of NOAA, who is responsible for the management of HMS fisheries.

comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

- Mail: Kate Michie
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How Can We Improve These Fishery Bulletins?

If you have any suggestions on how we may improve the contents of future fishery bulletins, please contact:

Kim Amendola, Communication Specialist,

Phone: 727-551-5707, FAX: 727-824-5320

e-mail: SERO.Communications.Comments@noaa.gov.

If you would like to receive these fishery bulletins via e-mail as soon as they are published, e-mail SERO.Communications.Comments@noaa.gov and include: (1) Request for Electronic Fishery Bulletins in the subject line; and (2) Your preferred e-mail address in the body of the e-mail.

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FB08-036