

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
Marine Zoning and Regulatory Review
Ecosystem Protection: Ecological Reserves / Preservation Areas and Wildlife Protection**

Draft Working Group Recommendations for Preliminary Consideration

Working Group Objectives:

- Review and evaluate existing reserves designated for protection of coral reef ecosystems.
- Review current exceptions to regulations in Sanctuary Preservation Areas and Ecological Reserves.
- Review and evaluate Sanctuary Preservation Areas reduction of conflicting uses.
- Recommend new or modified ecological reserves to ensure protection of a diversity of resources:
 - Spawning aggregations
 - Full suite of marine flora and fauna (i.e., seabird, marine mammal, turtles, seagrass, soft corals, hard corals)
- Consider temporal zoning to address seasonal impacts associated with intense uses or seasonal ecological activities (i.e., nesting, breeding, spawning).
- Ensure the FKNMS zoning scheme promotes sustainable use of the sanctuary resources and protects areas that represent diverse habitats as well as areas important for maintaining natural resources and ecosystem functions.

Working Group Consensus Decision Making Process

- Consensus is achieved if at least 75% of the members give a “3” or above as outlined in the table below.
- On final consensus tallying, numbers will be added up, recorded and documented in proceedings.
- No one person can veto and stop the process.
- Members who register a “1” or “2” are encouraged to provide an alternate proposal that achieves the goals and objectives set out by the SAC. If no alternative is offered, they are encouraged to explain why they voted a one or two, and their reasons and objections will be noted and recorded.

	Level of Consensus
5	I strongly agree with this decision.
4	I agree with this decision.
3	I do not agree or disagree with this decision.
2	I disagree with the decision.
1	I strongly disagree with this decision.

Working Group Preliminary Recommendations for Consideration

Section I: Potential Modifications to Existing Ecological Reserves p. 2-3
 Section II: Potential New Ecological Reserves (including making SPAs ERs) p. 4-7
 Section III: Modifications to Existing Sanctuary Preservation Areas p. 7-14
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For all zone modifications, refer to the corresponding zone map. Maps can be found at <http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/review/reserves.html>

Section I: Potential Modifications to Existing Ecological Reserves

Western Sambo Ecological Reserve

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Expand to include all known fish spawning aggregations.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Expand offshore to 30 m depth contour.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: Expand protection for near-shore habitat; include idle only in 6-ft. of water.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider:

- The original (1990) design for this area was to establish an ecological reserve from the shoreline out to at least 30-m depth.
- The boundary should be extended seaward to at least 30-m depth to protect the deeper fore-reef habitat, including known spawning aggregation sites.
- Potential boundary expansion to the 30-m contour should consider impact to charter fishing and trolling and any possible diving use.
- Potential boundary expansion to include the near-shore habitat should include an idle only zone in 6-ft water depth due to concern regarding vessel traffic and impact to fish. Zone could promote proactive management for party zones. Consider displacement of current use.

Tortugas Ecological Reserve

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Consider expanding Tortugas South westward to better protect spawning aggregations.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Take some of the deepest part of the Tortugas South away and add it to the west side to better protect the spawning aggregations.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: Make a larger, contiguous Ecological Reserve with regulations consistent with Tortugas North (permit required to stop or use a mooring buoy).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 5: Make a larger, contiguous Ecological Reserve with regulations consistent with the current Tortugas South (no activities, transit only).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 6: Make regulations consistent between Tortugas North and South using existing Tortugas North regulations (permit required to stop or use a mooring buoy).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 7: Make regulations consistent between Tortugas North and South using existing Tortugas South regulations (no activities, transit only).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Based upon spawning site data, the Tortugas South Reserve boundaries may not need to be modified.
- Extend the boundary westward for improved ecosystem protection of multi-species fish spawning aggregation at Riley's Hump and protection of associated habitat including the water column and benthos.
- The boundaries of the Tortugas North reserve encompass some of the best deeper reef habitat in the region, including the Sherwood Forest area and a portion of Little Tortugas Bank.
- Modifications to existing boundary and the potential of creating one large ecological reserve should consider impacts to current activities and impact of displacement of activities, including impact to fishing and diving, and trap fishing impacts.

SECTION II: Potential New Ecological Reserves that would include making some existing Sanctuary Preservation Areas or Special Use Research Only Areas into parts of Ecological Reserves

New Area: Carysfort Reef (modifications specific to existing SPA are on p. 7)

Recommendation 1: Extend the boundary of the current Carysfort SPA to the shoreline and to the 30-m depth contour. Make this zone an Ecological Reserve.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Creation of an ecological reserve here would increase ecosystem protection in the upper Keys region and provide a protective buffer for one of the Keys "best" coral reefs. Meets SAC principle to have a non-extractive zone in each of the Keys sub-regions.
- This area provides a large enough landscape encompassing varied features and important elements represented that include a heterogeneous topography, multiple diverse and contiguous habitat types used at various times in life histories of multiple fish assemblages with migratory corridors in place, and essential oceanographic currents necessary for larval dispersal.
- Protect the deeper fore-reef habitat, including known spawning aggregation sites (i.e. black grouper).
- Shoreline includes mangrove area (State Park)
- Consider displacement of uses and economic impact
- Consider allowing some type of use that is "permitted/managed" blue star etc

New Area: Grassy Key

Recommendation 1: Establish new Ecological Reserve from Grassy Key to 30 m depth contour on ocean side.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- There are no existing ecological reserves in the middle Keys region of the Sanctuary, despite several islands, some of which are largely undeveloped, and a spectacular mid-depth to deeper fore reef from ~15-30 m depth.
- Grassy Key and Conch Key have heavy commercial fishing activity offshore, somewhat (Grassy) to very (Conch) developed shorelines, and the Grassy proposal would impact the popular Valhalla sandbar gathering place.
- Just west of Grassy Key is the Curry Hammock State Park (undeveloped and protected shoreline).

New Area: Conch Key

Recommendation 2: Establish new Ecological Reserve from Conch Key to 30 m depth contour on ocean side.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- There are no existing ecological reserves in the middle Keys region of the Sanctuary, despite several islands, some of which are largely undeveloped, and a spectacular mid-depth to deeper fore reef from ~15-30 m depth.
- Grassy Key and Conch Key have heavy commercial fishing, developed shorelines (see above), and would displace a party zone (the Valhalla sandbar is only relevant for the Grassy proposal).

New Area: Sombrero Key (modifications specific to SPA are on p. 11)

Recommendation 1: Consider making Sombrero SPA the center point of a middle Keys Ecological reserve with connectivity to Boot Key mangroves, flats, seagrass, hardbottom, patch reefs and deeper reefs outside Sombrero.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- This is the principal offshore reef area that is visited by divers/snorkelers in Marathon area, aside from Coffins Patch and some of the artificial wreck sites.
- Creation of an ecological reserve here would increase ecosystem protection in the middle Keys region and provide a protective buffer for one of the Keys most economically important (from the diving perspective) coral reefs.
- Commercial, charter and recreational fishermen who use this general area will need to be consulted to determine if this is practical.

New Area: Tennessee Reef

Recommendation 1: Establish a new Ecological Reserve with Tennessee Reef as the center point with connectivity to Long Key mangroves, flats, seagrass, hardbottom, patch reefs and deeper reefs outside Tennessee.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Creation of an ecological reserve here would increase ecosystem protection in the middle Keys region and provide a protective buffer for an important coral reef.
- Shore-line is state park.
- Commercial, charter and recreational fishermen who use this general area will need to be consulted to determine if this is practical.

New Area: Looe Key & Newfound Harbor (modifications specific to SPAs are on p. 11-12)

Recommendation 1: Combine Looe Key SPA, Looe Key Research Area and Newfound Harbor SPA into one new Ecological Reserve from shoreline to deep reef.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Creation of an ecological reserve here would increase ecosystem protection in the lower Keys region and provide a protective buffer for one of the Keys most diverse and economically important (from the diving perspective) coral reefs.
- Commercial, charter and recreational fishermen who use this general area will need to be consulted to determine if this is practical.
- Since 2006 or so Mote Marine Lab has had a coral nursery located just outside Looe ROA that would need to be considered.

New Area: Western Dry Rocks (modifications specific to SPAs are on p. 12-13)

Recommendation 1: Combine Sand Key, Rock Key, Eastern Dry Rocks, and Western Dry Rocks (including known spawning aggregations) into a larger Ecological Reserve.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Combine Sand Key, Rock Key, and Eastern Dry Rocks into an Ecological Reserve (boundary squared off).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Combine Sand Key, Rock Key, and Eastern Dry Rocks into an Ecological Reserve (boundaries of existing SPAs connected).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: Create an Ecological Reserve around Western Dry Rocks and known spawning aggregation sites to the south.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Documented multi-species fish spawning aggregation is a unique (or at least very rare) natural feature with high importance for ecosystem productivity that benefits commercial and recreational fishing and diving beyond the aggregation itself.
- Protecting the site from intense fishing pressure provides insurance for the ecosystem and the industries and activities that rely on it.
- This area is a heavily used, multi-use area; need to determine impacts to users particularly Key West.

New Area: Marquesas region of the Sanctuary

Recommendation 1: Create an ecological reserve south of the Marquesas that extends from the southern shoreline of the southern islands to the deep reef. The width would be the entire extent of the islands.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Create an ecological reserve south of the Marquesas that extends from the southern shoreline of the southern islands to the deep reef. The width would be half of entire extent of the islands (eastern side).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- There is no ecological reserve in the Marquesas region.
- Include several island groups and a spectacular mid-depth to deeper reef tract that extends westward to the Tortugas region. This area, which includes the Pourtales Terrace, is part of a meso-scale circulation system that potentially supports self-recruitment and entrainment of far-field and locally produced larvae.
- Reserve boundaries need to take into consideration: 1) ease of enforcement and 2) proximity to Key West.
- This area is a place of refuge for vessels so would need to maintain some ability to moor vessels.

Potential New Ecological Reserve: No Specific Site Identified

Create an ecological reserve on the bayside of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification and Issues to Consider

Specific site that has representative habitat would need to be identified and impacts to users assessed.

Section III: Modifications to Existing Sanctuary Preservation Areas

Carysfort Sanctuary Preservation Area (modifications to make this SPA an ER are on p. 4)

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Extend the current Carysfort/S. Carysfort SPA boundary to the shoreline.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Extend the boundary seaward to at least 30-m depth to protect the deeper fore-reef habitat, including known spawning aggregation sites (i.e. black grouper).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Protect the deeper fore-reef habitat, including known spawning aggregation sites (i.e. black grouper).
- Shoreline includes mangrove area (State Park)
- Consider displacement of uses and economic impact

- Consider allowing some type of use that is “permitted/managed” blue star etc.

Elbow Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: The boundary of the SPA at The Elbow should be extended to at least the 30-m depth contour.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Combine Elbow, Grecian Rocks and Key Largo Dry Rocks; also include North North Dry Rocks in the SPA.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: If zone is expanded to combine Elbow, Grecian Rocks, and Key Largo Dry Rocks, consider establishing a professional use zone (see description on p. 18).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Protect deeper fore-reef habitats from fishing activities.

Key Largo Dry Rocks Sanctuary Preservation Area

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Combine Elbow, Grecian Rocks and Key Largo Dry Rocks; also include North North Dry Rocks in the SPA.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: If zone is expanded to combine Elbow, Grecian Rocks, and Key Largo Dry Rocks, consider establishing a professional use zone (see description on p. 18).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- This is a highly visited reef off northern Key Largo (including the site of the Christ statue), and thus should continue to separate snorkeling/diving from fishing activities.
- Key Largo Dry Rocks currently protects patch reefs, the back reef, and the fore-reef of this area and extends out to about 10 m depth, which marks the terminus of this reef.

Grecian Rocks Sanctuary Preservation Area

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Combine Elbow, Grecian Rocks and Key Largo Dry Rocks; also include North North Dry Rocks in the SPA.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: If zone is expanded to combine Elbow, Grecian Rocks, and Key Largo Dry Rocks, consider establishing a professional use zone (see description on p. 18).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Grecian Rocks currently protects the back reef and the fore-reef of this area and extends out to about 10 m depth, which marks the terminus of this reef.

French Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Combine French and Molasses into one SPA and extend to the 30-m contour.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Expand French to include some of the deep reef/drop off.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: If zone is expanded to combine French and Molasses, consider establishing a professional use zone (see description on p. 18).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Deep reef/drop off has been shown to be crucial to spawning activity to be included in the Sanctuary.
- Need to assess impact to fishing at the edge.

Molasses Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Combine French and Molasses into one SPA and extend to the 30-m contour.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Extend Molasses boundary to at least the 30m depth contour.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: If zone is expanded to combine French and Molasses, consider establishing a professional use zone (see description on p. 18).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Molasses Reef is perhaps the most heavily visited coral reef on the planet and should continue as a SPA to separate incompatible activities.
- Protect deeper fore-reef habitats, which are quite diverse and complex.

Conch Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Expand boundary landward to protect some of the back-reef habitats behind the main ledge.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Expand boundaries to include the 3 mooring balls on the deep side next to the Research Only Area.

1 2 3 4 5

Hen and Chickens Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Davis Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Extend to the 30-m depth contour.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Include nearby fish spawning aggregation(s).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Protect deeper fore-reef habitats from fishing activities
- Spawning aggregation is Yellowtail. Need to assess presence of ecological feature to support spawning.

Cheeca Rocks Sanctuary Preservation Area

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5 **Alligator Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area**

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Extend to 30 m depth contour.

1 2 3 4 5 Justification & Issues to Consider

- Protect deeper fore-reef habitats.

Coffins Patch Sanctuary Preservation Area

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Expand to deeper contour.

1 2 3 4 5 **Sombrero Key Sanctuary Preservation Area** (modifications to make this SPA an ER are on p. 5)

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Extend to 30-m depth contour.

1 2 3 4 5 Justification & Issues to Consider

- Protect deeper fore-reef habitats.

Newfound Harbor Sanctuary Preservation Area (modifications to make this SPA an ER are on p. 5)

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Combine Looe Key SPA, Looe Key Research Area and Newfound Harbor SPA into one new Ecological Reserve that includes nearby shoreline through deep reef.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: include fish aggregation sites near Big Pine Shoal in 2 above.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Creation of an ecological reserve here would increase ecosystem protection in the lower Keys region and provide a protective buffer for one of the Keys most diverse and economically important (from the diving perspective) coral reefs.

Looe Key Sanctuary Preservation Area (modifications to make this SPA an ER are on p. 5)

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Combine Looe Key SPA, Looe Key Research Area and Newfound Harbor SPA into one new Ecological Reserve that includes nearby shoreline through deep reef.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: include fish aggregation sites near Big Pine Shoal.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Creation of an ecological reserve here would increase ecosystem protection in the lower Keys region and provide a protective buffer for one of the Keys most diverse and economically important (from the diving perspective) coral reefs.

Eastern Dry Rocks Sanctuary Preservation Area (modifications to make this SPA an ER are on p. 6)

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Combine Sand Key, Rock Key, and Eastern Dry Rocks into one SPA (boundary squared off).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Combine Sand Key, Rock Key, and Eastern Dry Rocks into one SPA (boundaries of existing SPAs connected).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: Expand to the 30m depth contour.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 5: If zone is expanded to combine Eastern Dry Rocks, Rock Key and Sand Key, consider establishing a professional use zone (see description on p. 18).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification and Issues to Consider

- Protect deeper fore-reef habitats from fishing activities.
- Protect known spawning aggregation site.

Rock Key Sanctuary Preservation Area (modifications to make this SPA an ER are on p. 6)

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Combine Sand Key, Rock Key, and Eastern Dry Rocks into one SPA (boundary squared off).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Combine Sand Key, Rock Key, and Eastern Dry Rocks into one SPA (boundaries of existing SPAs connected).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Include fish aggregation sites on the Western Dry Rocks.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: Expand to the 30m depth contour.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification and Issues to Consider

- Protect deeper fore-reef habitats from fishing activities.
- Protect known spawning aggregation site.

Sand Key Sanctuary Preservation Area (modifications to make this SPA an ER are on p. 6)

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing zone boundaries.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Combine Sand Key, Rock Key, and Eastern Dry Rocks into one SPA (boundary squared off).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Combine Sand Key, Rock Key, and Eastern Dry Rocks into one SPA (boundaries of existing SPAs connected).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Include fish aggregation sites on the Western Dry Rocks.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: Expand to the 30m depth contour.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification and Issues to Consider

- Catch-and-release fishing should be prohibited, as this is one of the principal diving/snorkeling sites used by private boaters and dive boat charters operating out of Key West.
- Protect deeper fore-reef habitats from fishing activities.

Section IV: Potential New Sanctuary Preservation Areas

New Area: Snapper Ledge/Pickles Reef

Recommendation 1: Do not establish a SPA at this site.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Establish a new SPA including the previously proposed Snapper Ledge area and extending to cover Pickles and the large Pillar coral patch.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: If this zone is established, consider making it a professional use zone (see description on p. 18).

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Includes the previously proposed Snapper Ledge area and extends to cover Pickles and the large Pillar coral patch.
- The SAC deferred making a recommendation on Snapper Ledge when the dive community asked for it to be made into a SPA several years ago. Now is the time to determine if creation of a SPA is justified.
- Creation of a SPA here would increase ecosystem protection in the upper Keys region. Commercial, charter and recreational fishermen who use this area will need to be consulted to determine if this is practical.

New Area: Western Dry Rocks

Recommendation 1: Create Sanctuary Preservation Area around Western Dry Rocks and known spawning aggregation sites to the south.

1 2 3 4 5

Marquesas region of the Sanctuary

Recommendation 1: Within the entire inner circumference of the Marquesas islands, create a catch and release zone. This would be on a trial basis for 5 years with adaptive management goals and monitoring.

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Section V: Cross-Cutting Issues
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Regulations for Ecological Reserve

Recommendation 1: Regulations should be consistent for all Ecological Reserves.

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Recommendation 2: Ecological Reserves should be transit only, with fishing gear stowed (current Tortugas South restriction).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Ecological Reserves should be transit only, with fishing gear stowed. Access permits required to stop or use a mooring buoy and no anchoring allowed (current Tortugas North restriction).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: Diving and Snorkeling are prohibited in Ecological Reserves (current Tortugas South restriction).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 5: Diving and Snorkeling are allowed in Ecological Reserves (current Western Sambo management).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 6: Ecological Reserves should not allow anchoring.

1 2 3 4 5

Catch and release fishing by trolling

Recommendation 1: Continue to allow catch and release fishing by trolling in Conch Reef, Alligator Reef, Sombrero Reef, and Sand Key.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Remove exception to SPA regulation that allows catch and release fishing by trolling in Conch Reef, Alligator Reef, Sombrero Reef, and Sand Key.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Catch and release trolling creates confusion among FKNMS users and a compliance and enforcement challenge.

Anchoring in Sanctuary Preservation Areas

Recommendation 1: Allow anchoring in SPAs when mooring balls aren't available (current regulations).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Do not allow anchoring in SPAs.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Anchoring impacts benthic habitat protected through SPA designation.
- The option to anchor should be maintained in the event of weather or safety issues.

Bait-Fishing in Sanctuary Preservation Areas

Bait-fishing by cast net

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing permitting for bait fishing via nets in SPAs (cast net permits are valid in all SPAs).

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Recommendation 2: Do not permit commercial bait fishing via nets in SPAs.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 3: Do not permit recreational and charter fishermen to bait fish via nets in SPAs.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 4: Do not allow any bait fishing via nets in SPAs.

1 2 3 4 5

Bait-fishing by Hairhook

Recommendation 1: No modification to existing hairhook exception (allow hairhook permits in Davis, Conch, and Alligator Reef).

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Do not allow hairhook permits for Davis Reef, Conch Reef, and Alligator Reef SPAs.

1 2 3 4 5

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Commercial scale bait fishing may be too intensive to be compatible with SPA designation.

- Castnet permits are valid in all SPAs and are issued by calendar year. Since 1997, annual permits issued has ranged from ~90-300.
- Since the inception of the cast net baitfish permits (also allow lampara net use -- the commercial gear) in 1997, permits have been issued to 823 individuals. Six (6) of those have identified themselves as commercial fishermen that use the lampara net.
- For 2012, 102 permits were issued and 48 permit holders reported actually fishing on those permits. There has been no difference in reporting compliance between the commercial fishermen and the non-commercial fishermen.
- Hairhook permits are valid in only 3 SPAs (Davis, Conch, and Alligator) and are issued for Oct. 15 - April 15, fishing is allowed only from 5am-10am. For 2012-13 17 permits have been issued.

Sanctuary Boundary Expansion

Recommendation 1: Expand the Sanctuary boundary to include the gap between the existing Tortugas Ecological Reserve North and South. All general Sanctuary regulations would apply in this zone. It would not be considered part of the Tortugas Ecological Reserve.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: If the Tortugas Ecological Reserve were expanded to include the current gap between Tortugas North and South, expand the Sanctuary boundary to include the zone not included in this larger proposed Ecological Reserve (see p. 3 for more details on this proposed larger Ecological Reserve).

1 2 3 4 5

Creation of New Zone: Professional Use

Recommendation 1: Consider development of a new zone type that only allows professionals (e.g. commercial fishermen, charter fishermen, dive tour operators) to use it.

1 2 3 4 5

Recommendation 2: Consider implementing such a zone in each of the relevant sub-regions of the Sanctuary (Upper, Middle, Lower, Marquesas) on a pilot basis for 5 years and adaptively manage it with clear goals and objectives and monitoring.

1 2 3 4 5

Current areas identified as potential professional use zones include: (1) proposed zone expanded to combine Elbow, Grecian Rocks, and Key Largo Dry Rocks (p. 8-9), (2) proposed new zone Snapper Ledge/Pickles Reef (p. 14), (3) proposed zone expanded to include French and Molasses Reef (p. 9-10), and (4) proposed zone expanded to include Eastern Dry Rocks, Rock Key, Sand Key and Western Dry Rocks (p.12-13). Votes specific to these zones are include when these zones are addressed individually in the above sections.

Justification & Issues to Consider

- Provide an incentive for professional and commercial user to exhibit responsible use and contribute to management and stewardship of Sanctuary resources.

- Professional use would include commercial fishing, commercial charter fishing, headboat fishing, and professional diving.
- Need to identify and implement metrics to measure success of zones, implementation, management and enforcement.
- To be considered for professional use access, certain educational and/or certification would be required. Private individuals who received training and certification could use such zones.
- Need to consider impact to private uses and displacement of these uses (those individuals not considered professional).

Section VI: Discussion & Rationale for Votes of 1 or 2

For those zones where you voted a 2: I disagree with the decision or 1: I strongly disagree with this decision, please provide brief comments on your decision/rationale and provide input for an alternative proposal. Provide the geographic name of the zone or area and the number of the recommendation that you want to comment on followed by your alternative proposal for the area or your rationale for opposing it. Please make your comments as clear as possible. If you have the same alternative or rationale for more than one or a few of the recommendations you may list multiple place name/recommendation number combinations followed by that comment. Your name will be included with any of these comments.

