

Upper Keys Region

Ecosystem Protection Working Group concepts presented for potential modifications to marine zones in the Upper Keys region. The below table reflects working group discussion, zone and regulation concepts, issues to note, and status of working group decision. The following are Ecosystem Protection Working Group Upper Keys Region recommendation for the Sanctuary Advisory Council.

Area	Rationale	Zone Concepts	Regulation Concepts	Consensus
Carysfort Reef	More protective of deeper reefs and historic black grouper spawning aggregation	Concept 1: Move outer boundary line to 30-m contour to encompass deeper reefs and historic spawning aggregation (black grouper). Consider moving the inner boundary east just in-shore of the reef-line.	Concept 2: Consider allowing certain level of bait-fishing (limit number of permits allowed in zone) Concept 3: Make it a no anchoring zone. Limit number of mooring balls, limit use. Concept 4: Consider making part of this zone as an ecological reserve/research type area. Close to all user groups. (allow traditional use at existing mooring balls)	Consensus: Support zone and regulation concepts 1, 2, & 3 Show of hands for Concept 4: 6 in favor of 12 present
Issues to Consider for Carysfort Reef and associated Concepts:				
<p>Need to consider a buffer zone for natural resources that zone is designed to protect. Concern about lots of trap fishing gear and proximity to boundary and potential that it could impact resources in the zone.</p> <p>If no anchoring regulations put in place: Would need to allow anchoring for bait-fishing (if the bait-fishing exception is still allowed). If manage through mooring buoys: how many and where they are placed should be determined by those who use the reef, which will enhance effectiveness. Clear about what the concept of Limit Use means. Consider allowing continued use in areas where mooring bouys exist (are placed) and designate the remaining area as an ecological reserve/transit only type zone. Modifications to Carysfort Reef need to consider Biscayne National Park and management there.</p>				
Basin Hill Shoals and/or Turtle Rocks	Area is already a Pennekamp Coral Formation Zone, includes patch reefs, high relief, inner patch reefs are not currently well represented in FKNMS zoning scheme and represent a different habitat than fore-reef area. Higher number of diversity and abundance of coral. Could serve as the resilient corals in the face of future impact. Many users are already not allowed in zones, would create equitable no use for all. Area is complex for navigation Considers charge to working group to include range of habitats; this could serve as in in-shore stepping stone to Carysfort reef (would not capture contiguous zone, but could serve as a patchwork to capture intent of SAC goals) Many users are already not allowed in zones, would create equitable no use for all. Area is complex for navigation	Concept 1: create a new zone in this area - Basin Hill Shoals (considered creating zone that matched existing Pennekamp Coral Formation Zones, but no draft or final coordinates were recommended) Concept 3: create a new zone in this area - Turtle Rocks (considered creating zone that matched existing Pennekamp Coral Formation Zones, but no draft or final coordinates were recommended)	Concept 2: Consider no take, close to all uses. Concept 4: Consider no take, close to all uses.	Show of hands for Concept 1 & 2: 6 in favor of 13 present. Show of hands Concept 3 & 4: 10 in favor of 13 present
Issues to Consider for Basin Hill Shoals and associated concepts:				
<p>Basin Hill area should most closely match existing Pennekamp Coral Formation zones to most closely match existing managed zone and have least impact to existing uses. If closed to all uses, need to evaluate impact and benefit from closing areas to all</p> <p>State research 20-years of data – loss from 2010 cold front was minimal, indicate higher resilient reef. Aggregation of a lot of small patch reefs. Area includes high diversity coral and seagrass. Staghorn presence</p> <p>Use and impact to charter fishing and bait-fishing</p> <p>Consider that area is self-regulated due to shallow areas.</p>				
Issues to Consider for Turtle Rocks and associated concepts:				
<p>State research shows high range of coral species, more of a bank reef habitat, appears to be resilient site. Planning for a long-term monitoring site.</p> <p>Use and impact to charter fishing and bait-fishing</p>				

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Area	Rationale	Zone Concepts	Regulation Concepts	Consensus
Snapper Ledge & Pickles Reef	Hot spot for pillar coral. Also includes coral nursery. Big reef area just south of the no spearfishing area. Long standing proposal from the dive community that this area become a SPA.	<p>Concept 1: do nothing at this site.</p> <p>Concept 2: Create a new zone that includes the existing Closed Area for Lobster Trap Gear area at Pickles Reef and consider including an additional ½ mile area of Snapper Ledge to protect whole area.</p>	<p>Concept 3: Make into a research only or ecological reserve to protect this area more fully. No take, closed to all uses</p> <p>Concept 5: No anchoring zone (believe 4 mooring buoys exist)</p>	Show of hands for Concept 1: 12 in favor of 13 present. No show of hands taken for other concepts
<p>Issues to Consider for Snapper Ledge & Pickles Reef and associated concepts:</p> <p>This area was brought to the SAC as an area to consider for additional protection through this review process.</p> <p>Area around Pickles – where no trapping is currently allowed, if way to address the anchoring impact through regulations rather than through a zone of no-take. Snapper Ledge area would be specific to the ledge area and would allow use around that area.</p> <p>Due to the number of zones in the Upper Keys Region, decision to not create a new zone in this area.</p>				
Davis Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area	<p>The working group discussed the Davis Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area and value of keeping that area as a marine zone.</p> <p>Noted that the original reason for creating a zone in this area was primarily to separate use.</p> <p>The area includes a ledge on the landward side, the zone is almost identical to Conch and Alligator, and includes four-mooring buoys.</p>	No Recommendation Made	No Recommendation Made	Consensus: No Action
<p>Issues to Consider for Davis Reef and associated concepts:</p> <p>FWC and Coral Restoration Foundation have permits to conduct coral restoration activities in this zone.</p>				
Key Largo Existing Management Area	Marine life collection is allowed, with limited entry, in other places. This is an area where marine life collection has not been allowed for many years, there is little evidence that the closure has made a difference for the region. Consider the issue of users and commercial activities allowed in this region.	No zone concept.	Concept 1: consider removing ban on marine life collection.	No vote taken, decision to leave the area as zoned.
<p>Issues to Consider for Key Largo Marine Life Collection Ban</p> <p>Challenge regarding opening area for marine life collection for commercial vs. recreational use.</p>				