

Sanctuary Wide Concepts for SAC Consideration

Ecosystem Protection Working Group concepts presented for potential modifications that could apply through-out the Sanctuary. The below table reflects working group discussion, concepts, issues to note, and status of working group decision. The following are Ecosystem Protection Working Group Sanctuary-wide recommendation for the Sanctuary Advisory Council.

Regulation Concepts	Rationale	Regulations and Other Concepts	Consensus
No anchoring in SPAs.	<p>Sanctuary Preservation Areas and Areas Closed to Lobster Trap Gear are set aside due to coral reef presence to protect coral; anchoring is destructive and anchor damage can be fairly substantial.</p> <p>If have limited number of mooring buoys and are not allowed to anchor if all mooring buoys are taken, this could help set the carrying capacity of number of boats that can use an area at any one time.</p> <p>Current anchoring regulations are confusing and inconsistent.</p>	Anchoring exception for bait-fishing could be allowed by permit. This exception could be seasonal and could include an educational requirement (i.e. create Blue Star model for charter fishing industry)	Consensus to forward to SAC for consideration (see March, June, and July meeting notes for more detail.)
<p>Issues to Consider for No Anchoring:</p> <p>If no anchoring is allowed, should apply to all users to create equity (example given was bait fishing); need to have enough mooring bouys in the right spots and consider safety issues</p> <p>Need to consider the practice of vessels rafting-up to the vessel using the mooring buoy.</p> <p>Anchoring is a basic safety issue particularly in the case of vessel issues, bad weather, or other emergency. Decisions to anchor and raft-up to other vessels are often made due to weather, current, and visibility.</p> <p>Some mooring buoys are located in places not close to reef; therefore vessels anchor to be closer to coral for snorkeling, etc. If mooring balls are used, they need to be more strategically placed. Need to consider the operators ability to execute the trip that has been sold. The number and location of mooring balls should be informed by the users; to provide information for use issues and considerations for weather.</p> <p>Have to consider issue of safety (potentially discretion of enforcement officer)</p> <p>Need to increase enforcement of anchoring and/or increase available mooring buoys.</p> <p>Note that consideration should be given to special events including holidays and other high use events that have an increased number of vessels that will need to moor and or anchor.</p> <p>Noted financial challenges to installing and maintaining sufficient mooring balls; note the expense involved in installing and maintaining; discussed idea of private funding for mooring balls; however also noted challenge of this approach</p> <p>Clarified that if you are going to allow anchoring – all forms of anchoring. If anchoring will not be allowed than no type of anchor should be allowed.</p> <p>Note that SPAs contain sand areas</p> <p>Note the line/chain attached to anchors can do a lot of damage</p> <p>Could perhaps consider designated anchoring areas or moveable mooring balls</p>			
No Anchoring in FMP Areas Closed to Lobster Trap Gear	Fishery Management Plan Areas Closed to Lobster Trap Gear should be marked and no anchoring allowed. If not allowed to throw traps because these are special areas, no anchoring should be allowed. Protect the coral from traps and anchors and create equity across users.		Consensus: No anchoring. (see March & April meeting notes for further details)
Mark FMP Areas Closed to Lobster Trap Gear	When an area is not defined or marked, enforcement is difficult. Individuals do not know where these areas are or what the regulations are.	Due to the number of these zones in the Upper Keys region, marking all of these zones could create confusion and complications. Considering marking zones where feasible and makes sense.	Consensus: Mark zone near Alligator reef and consider marking other zones where feasible (see March & April meeting notes for further details)

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Limited Use / Limited Entry	<p>Commercial fishermen already have limited use/ entry; this sort of approach might be appropriate to consider for other commercial uses in the sanctuary. Limited entry provides opportunity for the business to have a greater value and creates greater incentive to protect the value of that business through protecting the resources. Limited use can also serve to protect the resources by limiting overall use pressure.</p> <p>This could provide an opportunity to better track use, impact, and support compliance.</p>	Consider establishing a permit system to limit use in some or all areas. If this is considered for one sector, it should be considered for other sectors including other eco-tourism sectors.	Recommend that the SAC consider limited entry as part of the regulatory review process (6 in favor of 10 present).
<p>Issues to Consider for Limited Use / Limited Entry</p> <p>Need to look to the future and how more and more people and uses will be both using and impacting sanctuary resources.</p> <p>Consider starting a Blue Star model for charter vessels, which could serve as a mechanism to lead to limited entry. Blue Star serves as a means to educate people about regulations. Discussed the potential that Blue Star status gives access to catch baitfish in Sanctuary Preservation Areas.</p> <p>If a permit system is established: (1) provide annual training to vessel crews, (2) provide educational programs for recreational users, (3) track use and type of use; and (4) include both commercial and recreational</p>			
Artificial Reefs	Some studies have shown that artificial reefs can provide benefits to the ecosystem and the economy. However artificial reefs have also been shown to change the topography of the bottom and change the behavior of the fish.		<p>Recommend that a sub-committee be formed to review the benefits and drawbacks of the use of artificial reefs (6 in favor of 10 present).</p> <p>Recommend reconfirming that this is an important issue and the SAC tackle it in the way they see fit (4 in favor of 10 present).</p>
<p>Issues to Consider for Artificial Reefs</p> <p>Consider a zone onto themselves for artificial reefs, particularly relevant for the Upper, Middle, and Lower Regions.</p> <p>Consider the use of artificial reefs to create an ecological bridge/corridor between productive patch reef areas and other hard bottom area.</p> <p>Consider identifying specified areas to consider for artificial reefs. Artificial reef zones should be carefully designed with location and type of material used. Areas should be experimental with one in each region, with no activity allowed for 5-10 years, zones would serve as control areas adjacent to natural areas to determine if artificial reefs could help regrow natural area. After 5-10 years, evaluate if they have demonstrated to be an effective tool to aid in ecosystem protection/recovery and determine if/how people can then use these areas.</p> <p>Consider including artificial reef sites in Western Sambo Ecological Reserve. This could serve as a means to monitor effectiveness in a closed environment.</p> <p>Discussed the value and opportunity presented through artificial reefs for potential ecological and economic benefit.</p> <p>Noted drawbacks and issues with artificial reefs in that they change the topography of the bottom and change the behavior of the fish</p> <p>Noted the importance of establishing clear goals for artificial reef projects.</p> <p>Question about funds for artificial reefs and if they are not better spent on restoring natural reefs</p>			
Use of Technology	Technology is a good way to address management and promote education		Technology identified as a tool to use as appropriate (see March meeting notes for further detail).
<p>Issues/Ideas to consider:</p> <p>Consider adding a QR code on buoys that can be scanned and provide information on the sanctuary, specific zone, and associated regulations. This could be applied Keys-wide, but tested in a smaller area.</p> <p>Consider partnership opportunities with GPS manufacturers and electronic charts to ensure regulations and other relevant information is readily accessible for users.</p> <p>Need to consider that by the time this review is complete and is being implemented, there could be a lot more technology in place that could be used and applied.</p>			

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Mini Season			Issue noted for SAC consideration
Issues/Ideas to consider: No further discussion, however working group raised this as an issue and concern for the SAC to address			
Coral Reef Restoration & Resilient Reefs	Noted that high resilience reefs seem to make sense as an area to explore for targeted coral restoration.	Concept 1: Consider resilient reefs as important areas to conduct coral restoration activities. (note, this was specifically noted for the Marquesas Region.)	Consensus Reached to forward concept to the SAC for consideration.
		Concept 2: Ecological Reserve areas should be left natural and that permits should not be issued for restoration work in those areas.	
Issues/Ideas to consider: Noted that identifying areas for coral restoration would not necessarily impact allowed uses. Discussed challenges and requirements of getting a permit issued.			
Florida Keys Fishery Management Council or Sub-Committee	Florida Keys is a unique ecosystem and has special needs for fishery management; working group will always hope to push for better management for Keys fisheries.	Recommend the Fishery Management Councils manage the Florida Keys as a distinct area.	Consensus Reached to forward concept to the SAC for consideration.
	Rationale and need exists to manage the Florida Keys separately. Fish that are targeted here are different and/or have different seasons, etc that occur elsewhere in the South Atlantic and Gulf Fishery Management Council management zones. It is important that the Councils recognize the need to integrate ecosystem management.	The boundary of a Florida Keys Fishery Management Area should be aligned with the northern boundary of the FKNMS SAC Study Boundary. Consistent regulations should apply within the entire area of the Florida Keys.	Consensus Reached to forward concept to the SAC for consideration.
Get rid of trolling exception in 4 SPAS		Remove existing exception for Catch and Release by Trolling in 4 SPAS where it is currently allowed: Davis Reef, Conch Reef, Alligator Reef, and Sombrero Reef	Consensus Reached to forward concept to the SAC for consideration.
Biscayne National Park Coordination	Encourage dialog between the Sanctuary and Biscayne National Park; Request that Biscayne National Park consider impacts of their actions to the adjacent Sanctuary; Request that Advisory Council explore this issue and have an update on the Park's activities and progress.		Consensus Reached to forward concept to the SAC for consideration.
Turtle Research Zone west of Marquesas as recommended by Shallow Water Working Group			No vote taken, working group wanted these issues to be noted
Issues to Consider boats use this area; most commercial vessels are traveling slow through this area and will not impact turtles; area to west of Marquesas is most popular area to anchor			