



Coral Habitat Areas Considered for Management in the Gulf of Mexico

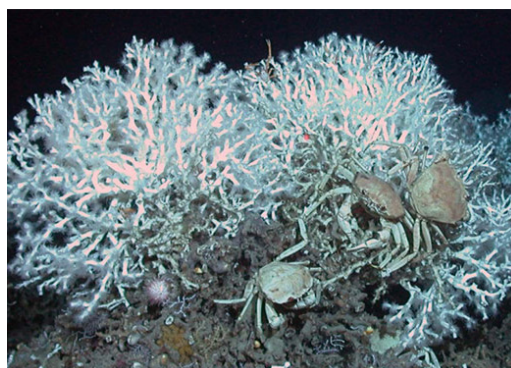
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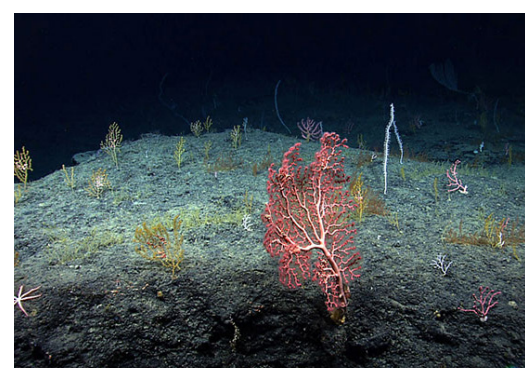
Leiopathes glaberrima with *Eumunida picta*



Leiopathes sp.



Lophelia reef



Deep-sea corals

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What is a Public Hearing?

A public hearing gives you an opportunity to comment on a fishery management plan or amendment that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) is developing. Public hearings are conducted later in the amendment development process, after the Council has begun selecting preferred alternatives for proposed actions, but before taking final action. Suggestions, issues, and concerns expressed during the public hearings will be presented to the Council for review and consideration before final action is taken. Focusing your comments on the pros and cons of specific alternatives in each action provides the most useful guidance to the Council. If you are unable to attend a public hearing in person, you are encouraged to submit your comments online. For online comment forms, video presentations, and full amendment documents, visit our website at www.gulfcouncil.org and click the thermometer icon at the bottom left of the homepage.

How does a Public Hearing affect fisheries management?

Comments provided during the public hearing process are reported to the full Council prior to final action. Your input is considered as the Council deliberates and chooses the most appropriate management measures to address the issue(s) at hand.



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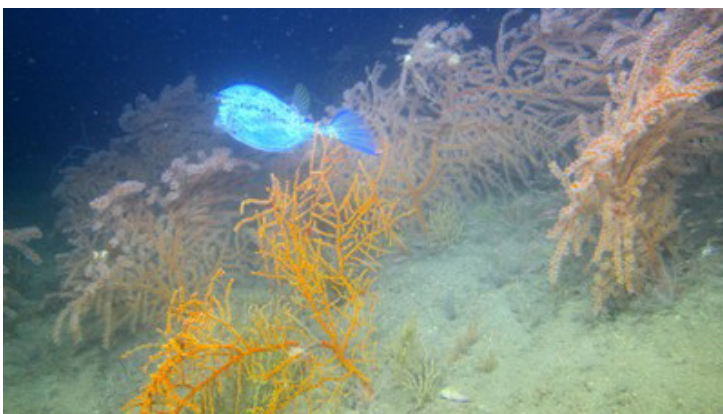
Introduction to Coral Amendment 9

Coral reefs are among the most diverse ecosystems on earth, and healthy coral reef ecosystems support fisheries and recreational activities across the world. Deep-water corals can live to be hundreds, if not thousands, of years old and provide important habitat to many fishes and invertebrates in a part of the ocean that is cold, dark, and low in oxygen.

The Council is responsible for the conservation and management of coral and fishery resources in the federal waters of the Gulf. Currently, the Council manages more than 140 species of black and stony coral including species that are on the federal list of threatened species. There is no harvest of black or stony coral allowed in the federal waters of the Gulf unless removal activity is for scientific research or exempted educational activity.

The Council's scientific advisors have recognized 23 areas across the Gulf that are known to have an abundance of corals and/or species with richness and diversity that makes them unique from other locations. In 2014, the Council convened a group of scientists who identified 47 areas, including existing Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs), that currently have no regulations. After reviewing the list, the Council consulted with user groups that would be affected by any potential fishing regulation changes by convening its Shrimp, Reef Fish, Coral, and Spiny Lobster Advisory Panels and Law Enforcement Technical Committee to review the identified areas. Finally, in August 2016, the Council's scientific advisors on Coral and the Coral and Shrimp Advisory Panels, and longline fishermen met and narrowed down the initial 47 areas to 15 priority areas. Eight additional areas were recommended to have a HAPC designation, but no fishing restrictions were recommended.

The Council is considering establishing fishing regulations for coral protection in the 15 priority areas to conserve essential fish habitat (EFH) and support sustainable fisheries. Essential fish habitat is considered to be the waters and substrate that are necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth. This document provides information about the Council's considerations for modifications of existing boundaries and designations of new areas as HAPCs, which are a subset of essential fish habitat. These areas are considered to be rare, provide an important ecological function, and are sensitive to human damage and stress.



Swiftia exserta sea fans with scrawled cowfish

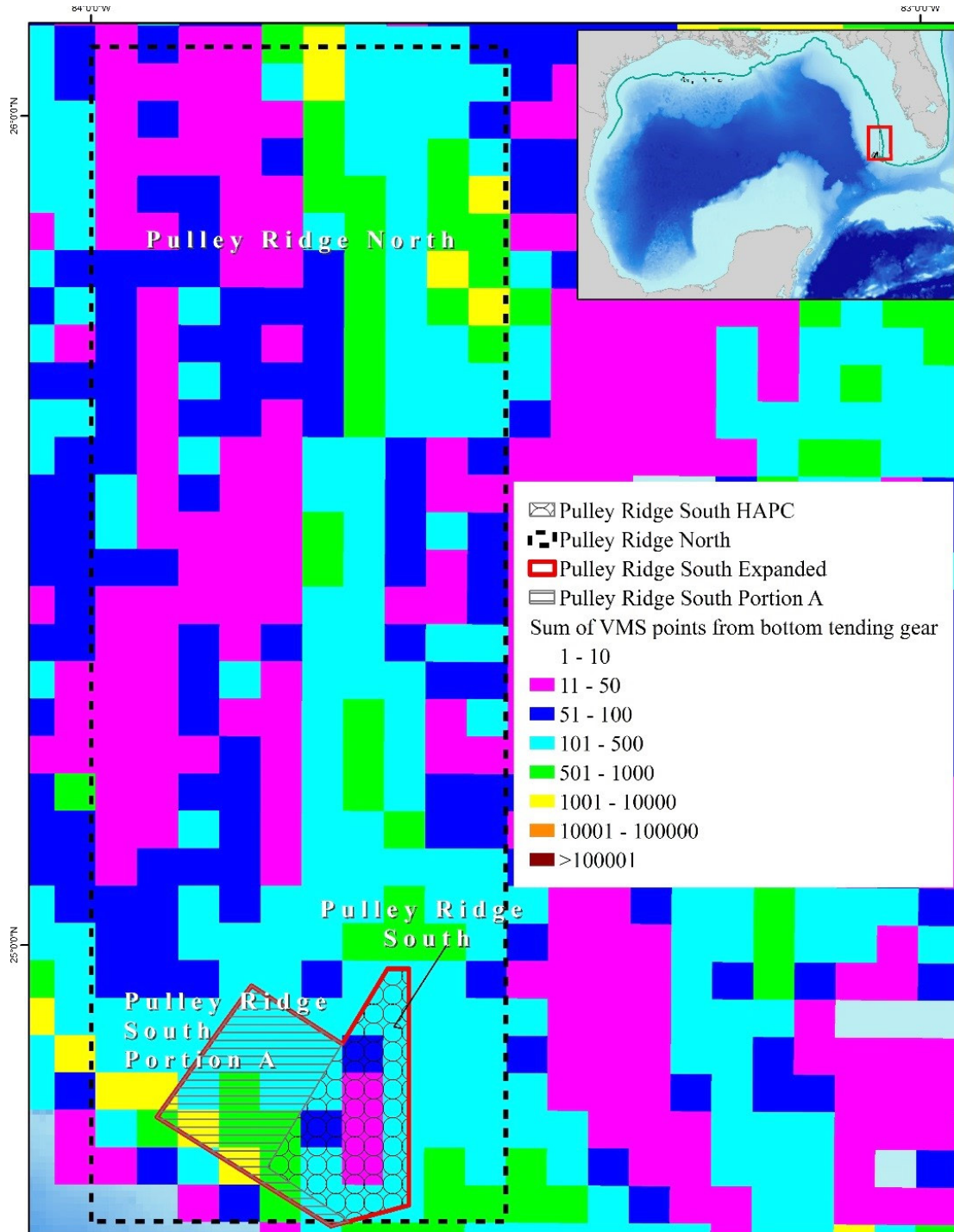


Deep sea coral with *Eumunida picta*

Action 1 - Modify Existing HAPC Boundary for Regulations in Pulley Ridge

The Pulley Ridge HAPC was established in 2005. While Pulley Ridge North, the large rectangle, was established as a HAPC, only a small portion of the rectangle (Pulley Ridge South) was given fishing regulations. Currently, fishing regulations in Pulley Ridge South prohibit fishing with bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring year-round. The Council is considering changing the area that is managed with these regulations or adding a new area with modified regulations.

Current and proposed Pulley Ridge HAPC overlaid with commercial vessel monitoring system data.



Alternative 1: No Action – Do not modify the existing Pulley Ridge South HAPC or change the area subject to fishing regulations.

Site	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Pulley Ridge South Depth Range: 27-109 fathoms Area: 100.7 nm ²	A	83°38.550'	24°58.300'
	B	83°37.000'	24°58.300'
	C	83°37.000'	24°41.183'
	D	83°41.367'	24°40.000'
	E	83°47.250'	24°43.917'
	A	83°38.550'	24°58.300'

Alternative 2: Expand the fishing regulations for Pulley Ridge South HAPC to the entire Pulley Ridge North HAPC.

Site	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Pulley Ridge North Depth Range: 27-109 fathoms Area: 2302.4 nm ²	A	84°0.000'	24°40.000'
	B	84°0.000'	26°05.000'
	C	83°30.000'	26°05.000'
	D	83°30.000'	24°40.000'
	A	84°0.000'	24°40.000'

Alternative 3: Modify the existing Pulley Ridge South HAPC to include Pulley Ridge South Portion A, with the same regulations throughout. The new Pulley Ridge South HAPC will be bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Site	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Pulley Ridge South Expansion Depth Range: 27-109 fathoms Area: 194.2 nm ²	A	83°38.550'	24°58.300'
	B	83°37.000'	24°58.300'
	C	83°37.000'	24°41.183'
	D	83°41.367'	24°40.000'
	E	83°42.648'	24°39.666'
	F	83°55.240'	24°47.555'
	G	83°48.405'	24°57.065'
	H	83°41.841'	24°52.859'
	A	83°38.550'	24°58.300'

Preferred Alternative 4: Add a new Area, Pulley Ridge South Portion A, and create separate regulations. Pulley Ridge South will have the following regulations: fishing with bottom trawl, buoy gear*, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited year-round. Pulley Ridge South Portion A will be bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Site	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Pulley Ridge South Portion A Depth Range: 27-109 fathoms Area: 93.6 nm ²	A	83°41.366'	24°40.000'
	B	83°42.648'	24°39.666'
	C	83°55.240'	24°47.555'
	D	83°48.405'	24°57.065'
	E	83°41.841'	24°52.859'
	F	83°47.250'	24°44.833'
	A	83°41.366'	24°40.000'

*Please note: buoy gear does not apply to HMS buoy gear which is not a bottom tending gear. Buoy gear is specifically defined by 50 CFR 635.2.

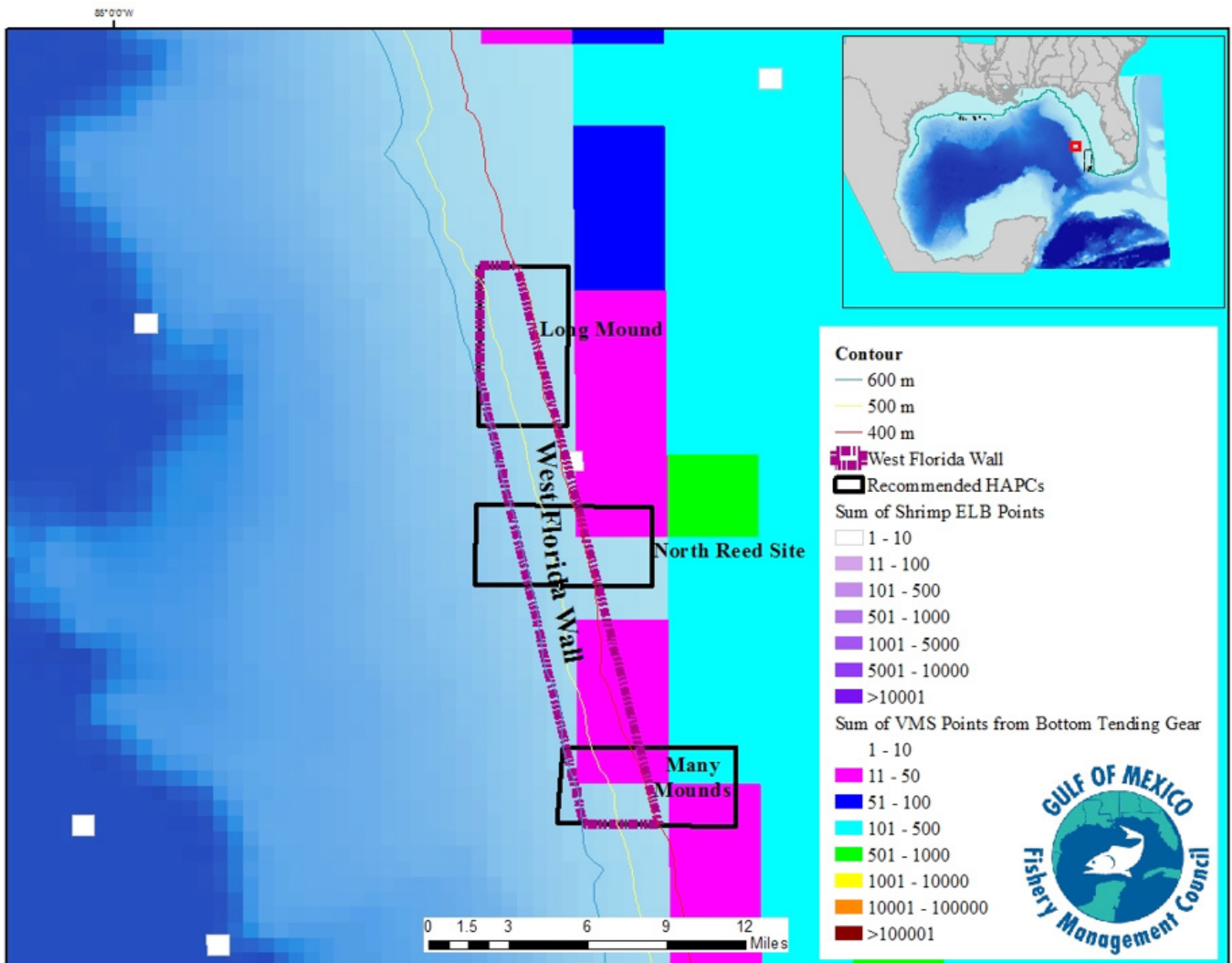


Villogorgia sp., Ellisella sp., sea whips, Swiftia exserta

Action 2 – New Areas for HAPC Status in the Southeastern Gulf

The Council is considering designating new areas found along the West Florida Shelf in the southeastern region of the Gulf of Mexico as HAPCs. Each area is between 100 and 500 fathoms deep and the areas have been explored extensively by remotely operated vehicles (ROVs). Research expeditions have confirmed the presence of deep-water coral banks with stony and black corals. Data from vessel monitoring systems do not indicate that these areas are frequently visited by vessels with bottom tending gear.

Proposed new areas for HAPC status in the southeastern Gulf overlaid with shrimp electronic logbook data and commercial vessel monitoring system data (please refer to the amendment for a comprehensive discussion on these data).



Alternative 1: No Action. Do not establish any HAPCs in the Southeastern Gulf.

Alternative 2: Establish a new HAPC named Long Mound bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Long Mound Depth Range: 164-383 fathoms Area: 13.6 nm ²	A	84° 47.955'	26° 28.835'
	B	84° 45.051'	26° 28.790'
	C	84° 45.153'	26° 23.562'
	D	84° 48.055'	26° 23.607'
	A	84° 47.955'	26° 28.835'

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the Long Mound HAPC.

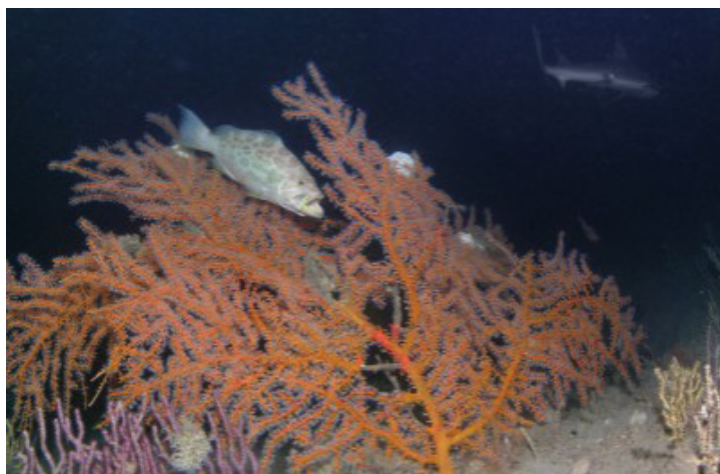
Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Long Mound HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

Alternative 3: Establish a new HAPC named Many Mounds bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Many Mounds Depth Range: 109-383 fathoms Area: 13.0 nm ²	A	84° 45.246'	26° 13.000'
	B	84° 39.559'	26° 13.015'
	C	84° 39.611'	26° 10.401'
	D	84° 45.435'	26° 10.565'
	A	84° 45.246'	26° 13.000'

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the Many Mounds HAPC.

Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Many Mounds HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.



Swiftia exserta with gag grouper



Leptogorgia sp.

Alternative 4: Establish a new HAPC named North Reed bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
North Reed Depth Range: 164-492 fathoms Area: 13.6 nm ²	A	84°48.104'	26°20.993'
	B	84°42.302'	26°20.902'
	C	84°42.354'	26°18.289'
	D	84°48.154'	26°18.380'
	A	84°48.104'	26°20.993'

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the North Reed HAPC.

Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the North Reed HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

*Please note: buoy gear does not apply to HMS buoy gear which is not a bottom tending gear. Buoy gear is specifically defined by 50 CFR 635.2.

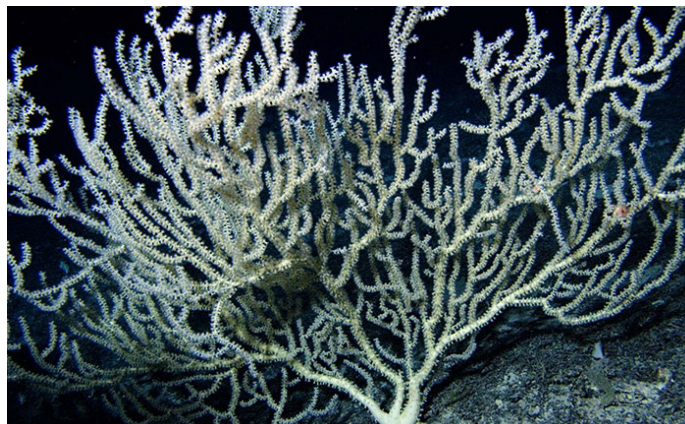
Preferred Alternative 5: Establish a new HAPC named West Florida Wall bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
West Florida Wall Depth Range: 218-329 fathoms Area: 36.3 nm ²	A	84°47.955'	26°28.835'
	B	84°46.754'	26°28.816'
	C	84°42.076'	26°10.471'
	D	84°44.577'	26°10.528'
	E	84°47.986'	26°25.028'
	F	84°47.980'	26°25.100'
	G	84°47.955'	26°25.835'

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the West Florida Wall HAPC

Preferred Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the West Florida Wall HAPC.

Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

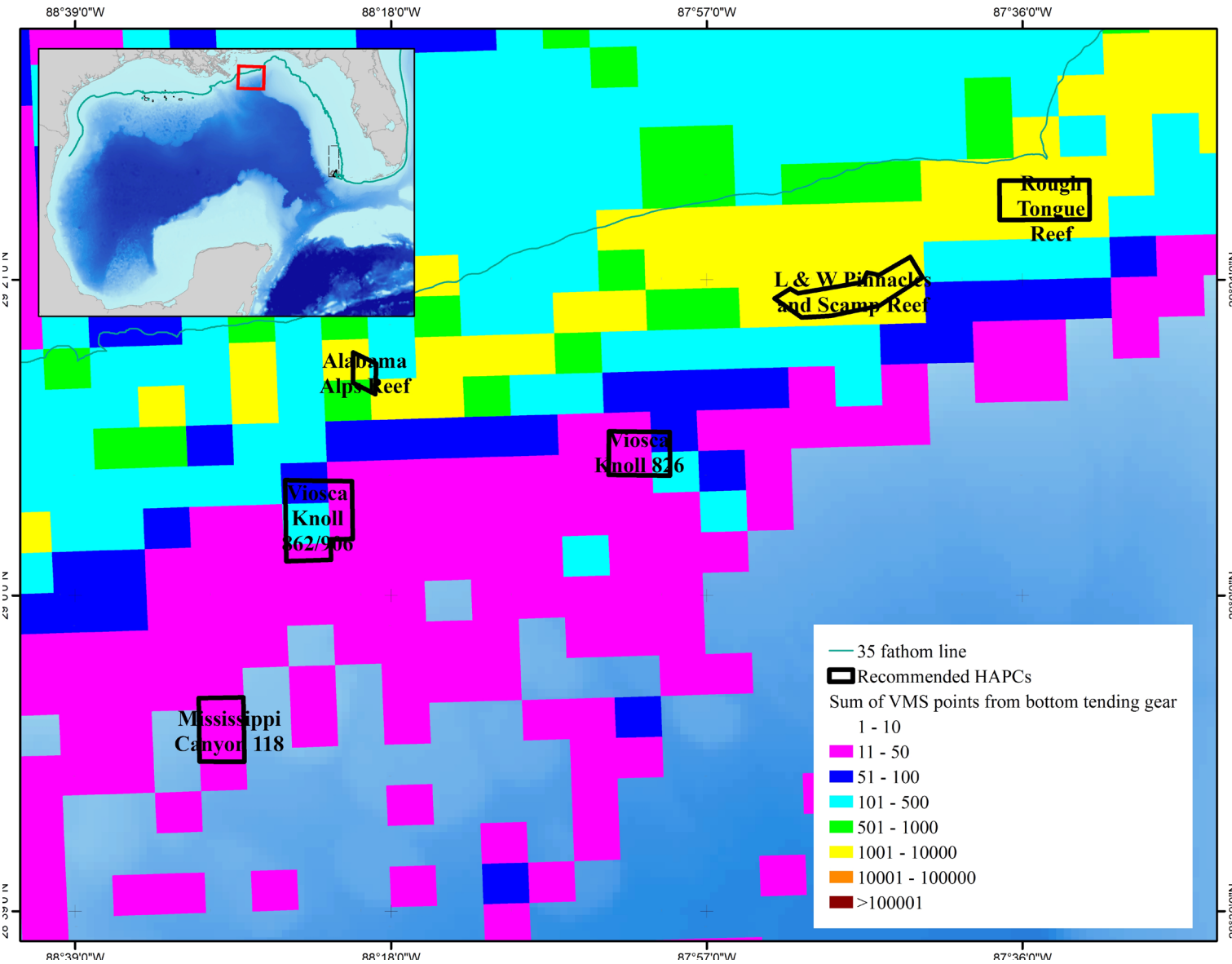


Bamboo coral

Action 3 – New Areas for HAPC Status in the Northeastern Gulf

The Council is considering designating six new areas in the northeastern Gulf as HAPCs. This region of the Gulf is characterized by hard bottom made from fossil reefs and pinnacles with patch reefs. Species diversity on these pinnacles increase from west to east. Bandit gear fishermen and shrimpers fish in some of these proposed areas.

Proposed new areas for HAPC status in the northeastern Gulf overlaid with commercial vessel monitoring system data.



Alternative 1: No Action. Do not establish any new HAPCs in the Northeastern Region.

Preferred Alternative 2: Establish a new HAPC named Alabama Alps Reef bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Alabama Alps Reef Depth Range: 27-109 fathoms Area: 2.7 nm ²	A	88° 20.525'	29° 16.160'
	B	88° 18.990'	29° 15.427'
	C	88° 19.051'	29° 13.380'
	D	88° 20.533'	29° 14.140'
	A	88° 20.525'	29° 16.160'

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the Alabama Alps Reef HAPC.

Preferred Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Alabama Alps Reef HAPC.

Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

Option c. Prohibit the following bottom tending gear in the Alabama Alps HAPC: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, and pots or traps.

Preferred Alternative 3: Establish a new HAPC named L&W Pinnacles and Scamp Reef bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
L&W Pinnacles and Scamp Reef Depth Range: 55-164 fathoms Area: 14.3 nm ²	A	87° 48.757'	29° 18.595'
	B	87° 50.688'	29° 18.484'
	C	87° 52.484'	29° 19.754'
	D	87° 51.449'	29° 20.401'
	E	87° 50.933'	29° 20.095'
	F	87° 46.631'	29° 20.832'
	G	87° 46.326'	29° 21.473'
	H	87° 45.535'	29° 21.314'
	I	87° 43.465'	29° 22.518'
	J	87° 42.632'	29° 21.144'
	K	87° 45.525'	29° 19.269'
	A	87° 48.757'	29° 18.595'

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the L&W Pinnacles and Scamp Reef HAPC.

Preferred Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the L&W Pinnacles and Scamp Reef HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

Option c. Prohibit the following bottom tending gear in the L&W Pinnacles and Scamp Reef HAPC: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, and pots or traps.

Preferred Alternative 4: Establish a new HAPC named Mississippi Canyon 118 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Mississippi Canyon 118 Depth Range: 437-820 fathoms Area: 11.0 nm ²	A	88°30.789'	28°53.183'
	B	88°27.819'	28°53.216'
	C	88°27.782'	28°50.602'
	D	88°27.759'	28°48.944'
	E	88°30.727'	28°48.962'
	A	88°30.789'	28°53.183'

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the Mississippi Canyon 118 HAPC.

Preferred Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Mississippi Canyon 118 HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

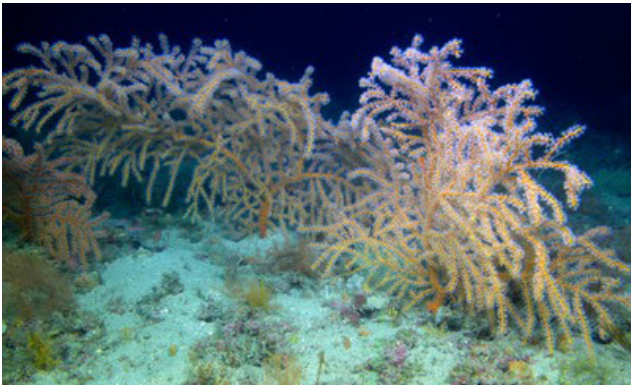
Preferred Alternative 5: Establish a new HAPC named Roughtongue Reef bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
<u>Roughtongue Reef</u> Depth Range: 27-109 fathoms Area: 13.6 nm ²	A	87°37.527'	29°27.596'
	B	87°31.552'	29°27.621'
	C	87°31.539'	29°25.007'
	D	87°37.510'	29°24.981'
	A	87°37.527'	29°27.596'

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the Roughtongue Reef HAPC.

Preferred Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Roughtongue Reef HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

Option c. Prohibit the following bottom tending gear in the Roughtongue Reef HAPC: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, and pots or traps.



Swiftia exserta sea fans

Preferred Alternative 6: Establish a new HAPC named Viosca Knoll 826 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Viosca Knoll 826 Depth Range: 273-492 fathoms Area: 10.3 nm ²	A	88° 3.509'	29° 10.920'
	B	87° 59.460'	29° 10.877'
	C	87° 59.448'	29° 7.974'
	D	88° 3.532'	29° 8.017'
	A	88° 3.509'	29° 10.920'

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the Viosca Knoll 826 HAPC.

Preferred Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Viosca Knoll 826 HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

Preferred Alternative 7: Establish a new HAPC named Viosca Knoll 862/906 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Viosca Knoll 862/906 Depth Range: 164-383 fathoms Area: 18.8 nm ²	A	88° 23.608'	29° 7.640'
	B	88° 20.590'	29° 7.603'
	C	88° 20.554'	29° 3.749'
	D	88° 22.016'	29° 3.734'
	E	88° 21.998'	29° 2.367'
	F	88° 24.972'	29° 2.281'
	G	88° 25.044'	29° 7.568'
	H	88° 25.044'	29° 7.592'
	I	88° 25.045'	29° 7.676'
	A	88° 23.608'	29° 7.640'

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the Viosca Knoll 862/906 HAPC.

Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Viosca Knoll 862/906 HAPC.

Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

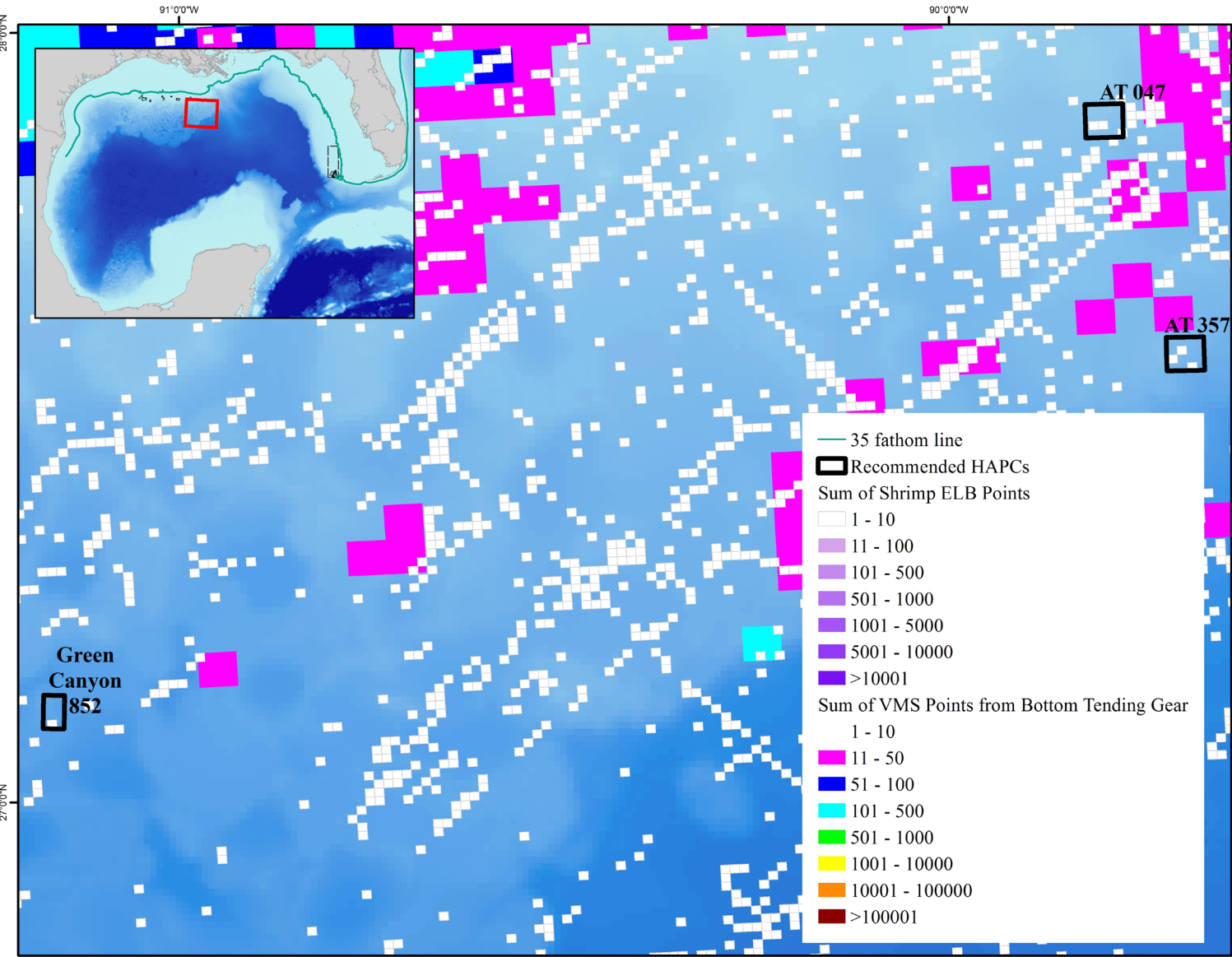
Preferred Option c. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Viosca Knoll 862/906 HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels. Provide an exemption to the bottom tending gear for fishermen possessing a royal red shrimp endorsement and are fishing with royal red shrimp fishing gear.

*Please note: buoy gear does not apply to HMS buoy gear which is not a bottom tending gear. Buoy gear is specifically defined by 50 CFR 635.2.

Action 4 – New Areas for HAPC Status in the Northwestern Gulf

The Council is considering designating three new areas in the northwestern Gulf as HAPCs. In this region of the Gulf, two bottom habitats are commonly found - hard bottom salt domes capped with carbonate and shallow banks with lots of sediment and often murky waters. All three of these areas are found in deep waters; both AT 357 and Green Canyon 852 are deeper than 500 fathoms. There is very little shrimping effort and almost no fishing with bottom tending gear occurring on these areas.

Proposed new areas for HAPC status in the northwestern Gulf overlaid with shrimp electronic logbook data and commercial vessel monitoring system data.



Alternative 1: No Action. Do not establish any new HAPCs in the Northwestern Gulf.

Preferred Alternative 2: Establish a new HAPC named AT 047 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
AT 047 Depth Range: 437- 820 fathoms Area: 6.8 nm ²	A	89° 49.404'	27° 54.426'
	B	89° 46.464'	27° 54.486'
	C	89° 46.397'	27° 51.874'
	D	89° 49.336'	27° 51.814'
	A	89° 49.404'	27° 54.426'

Option a. Do not establish regulations in the AT 047 HAPC.

Preferred Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the AT 047 Bank HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.



Lophelia pertusa

Preferred Alternative 3: Establish a new HAPC named AT 357 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
AT 357 Depth Range: 547-820 fathoms Area: 6.8 nm ²	A	89° 43.068'	27° 36.259'
	B	89° 40.136'	27° 36.315'
	C	89° 40.073'	27° 33.703'
	D	89° 43.004'	27° 33.646'
	A	89° 43.068'	27° 36.259'

Option a. Do not establish regulations in the AT 357 HAPC.

Preferred Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the AT 357 HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

Preferred Alternative 4: Establish a new HAPC named Green Canyon 852 bound by the following coordinates:

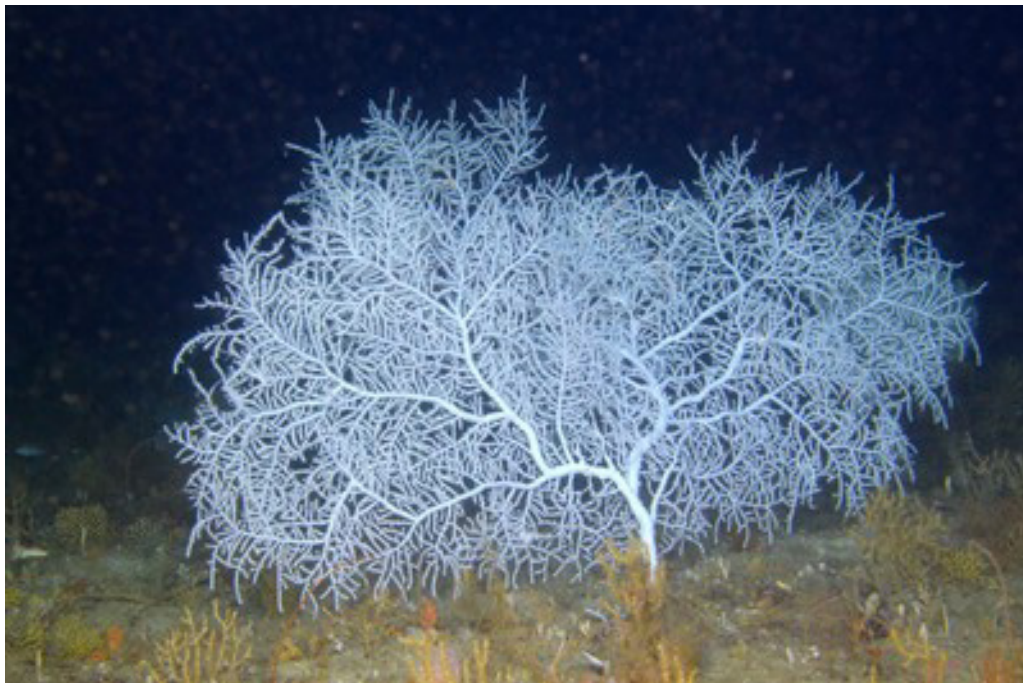
Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Green Canyon 852 Depth Range: 820-1094 fathoms Area: 3.8 nm ²	A	91° 8.929'	27° 8.354'
	B	91° 8.963'	27° 5.740'
	C	91° 10.610'	27° 5.762'
	D	91° 10.567'	27° 8.376'
	A	91° 8.929'	27° 8.354'

Option a. Do not establish regulations in the Green Canyon 852 HAPC.

Preferred Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Green Canyon 852 HAPC.

Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

*Please note: buoy gear does not apply to HMS buoy gear which is not a bottom tending gear. Buoy gear is specifically defined by 50 CFR 635.2.

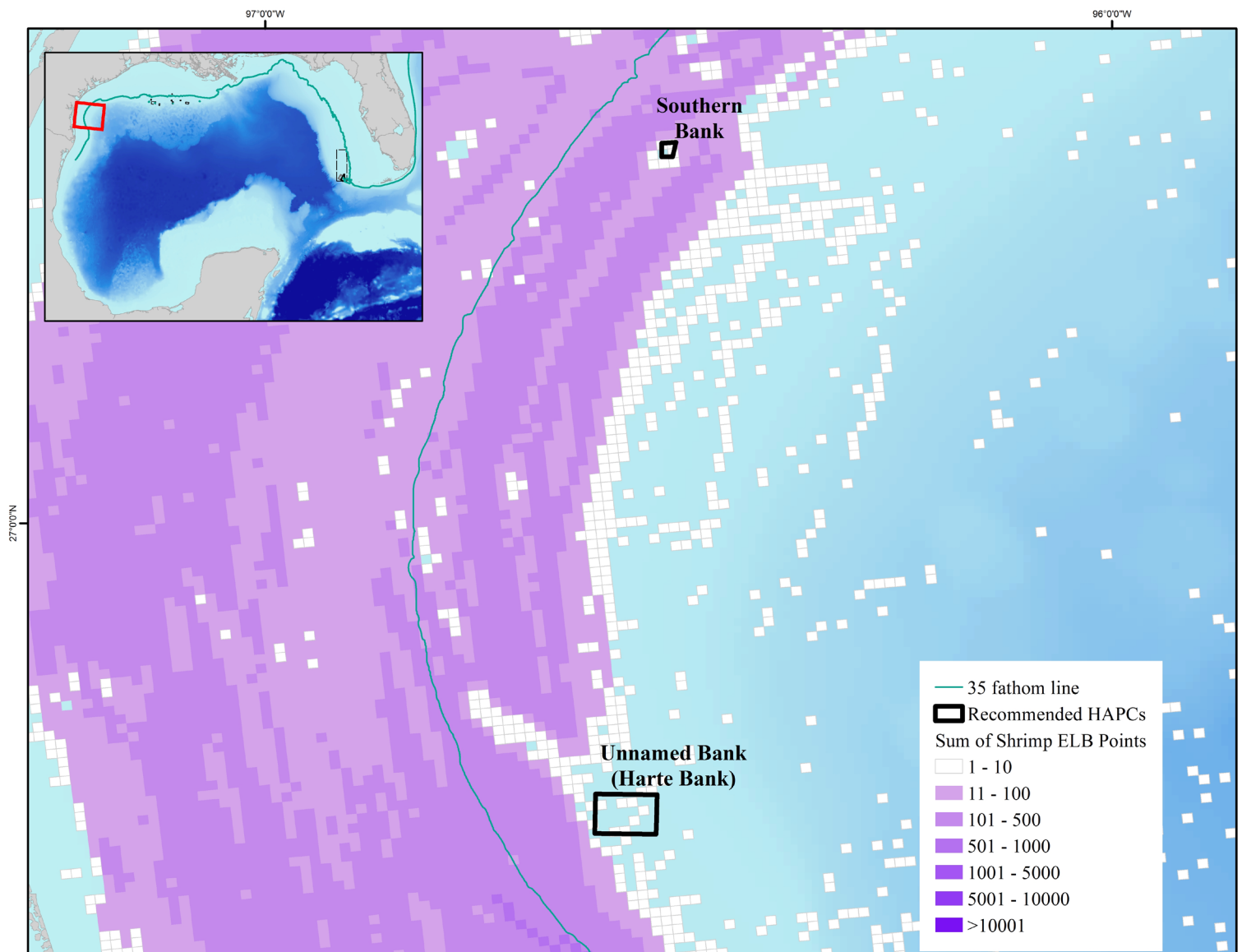


Hypnogorgia pendula

Action 5 – New Areas for HAPC Status in the Southwestern Gulf

The Council is considering designating two new areas in the southwestern Gulf as HAPCs. This region off Texas is largely a flat shelf with a few well-known hard banks. The areas under consideration both contain reefs that are anywhere from 2.5 to 5 million years old. Fishing with bottom tending gear is relatively low in both sites.

Proposed new areas for HAPC status in the southwestern Gulf overlaid with shrimp electronic logbook data.



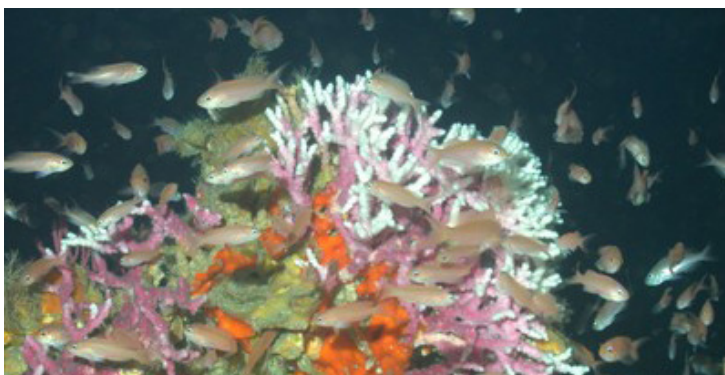
Alternative 1: No Action. Do not establish any new HAPCs in the Southwestern Gulf.

Preferred Alternative 2: Establish a new HAPC named Harte Bank bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Harte Bank Depth Range: 27-82 fathoms Area: 10.8 nm ²	A	96°36.590'	26°40.826'
	B	96°32.220'	26°40.789'
	C	96°32.308'	26°37.992'
	D	96°36.636'	26°38.043'
	A	96°36.590'	26°40.826'

Preferred Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the Harte Bank HAPC.

Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Harte Bank HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.



Madracis sp. and red barbier fish

Preferred Alternative 3: Establish a new HAPC named Southern Bank bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Southern Bank Depth Range: 27-55 fathoms Area: 0.8 nm ²	A	96°31.902'	27°26.923'
	B	96°30.881'	27°26.989'
	C	96°31.134'	27°25.958'
	D	96°31.892'	27°25.958'
	A	96°31.902'	27°26.923'

Preferred Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the Southern Bank HAPC.

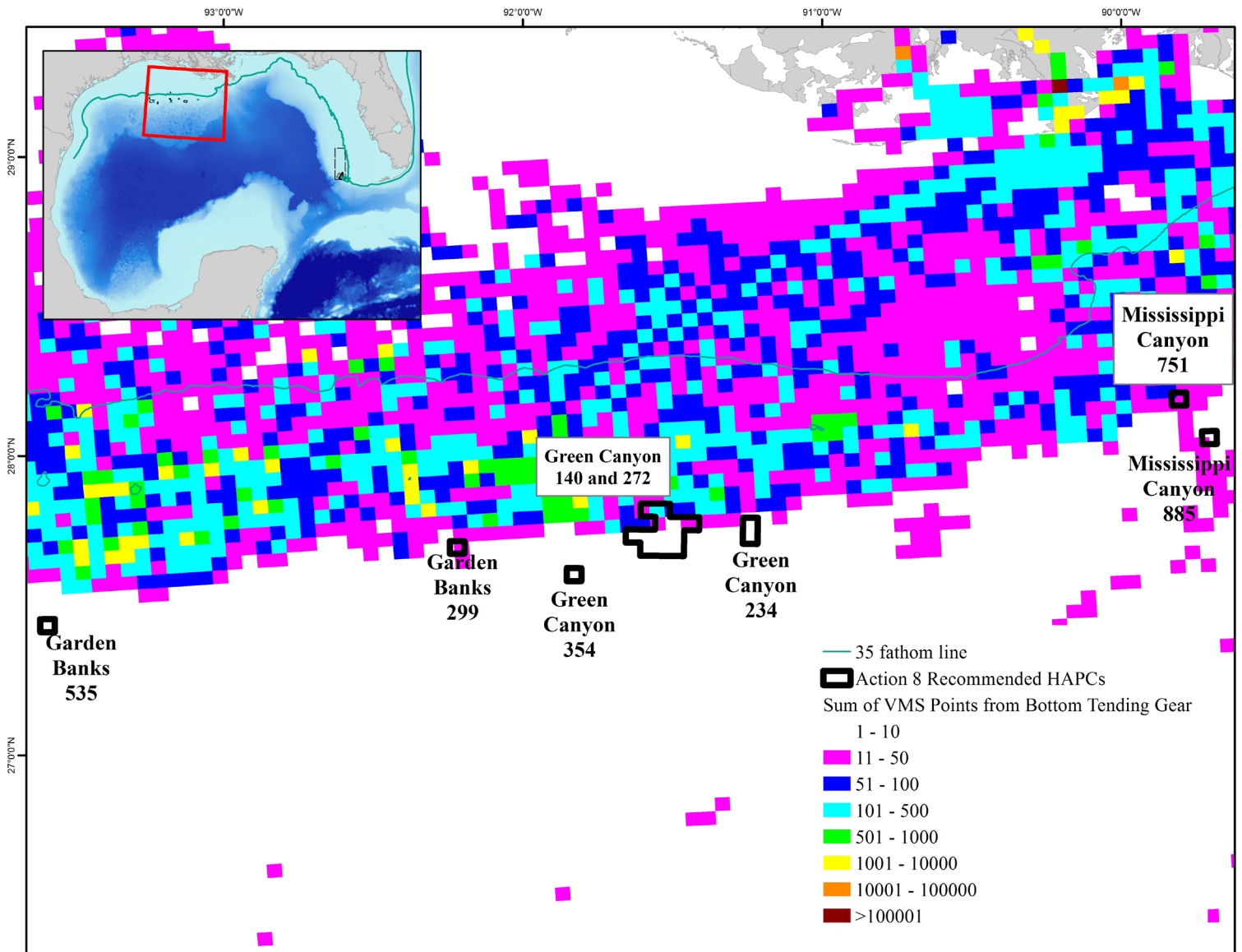
Option b. Prohibit bottom tending gear in the Southern Bank HAPC. Bottom tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

*Please note: buoy gear does not apply to HMS buoy gear which is not a bottom tending gear. Buoy gear is specifically defined by 50 CFR 635.2.

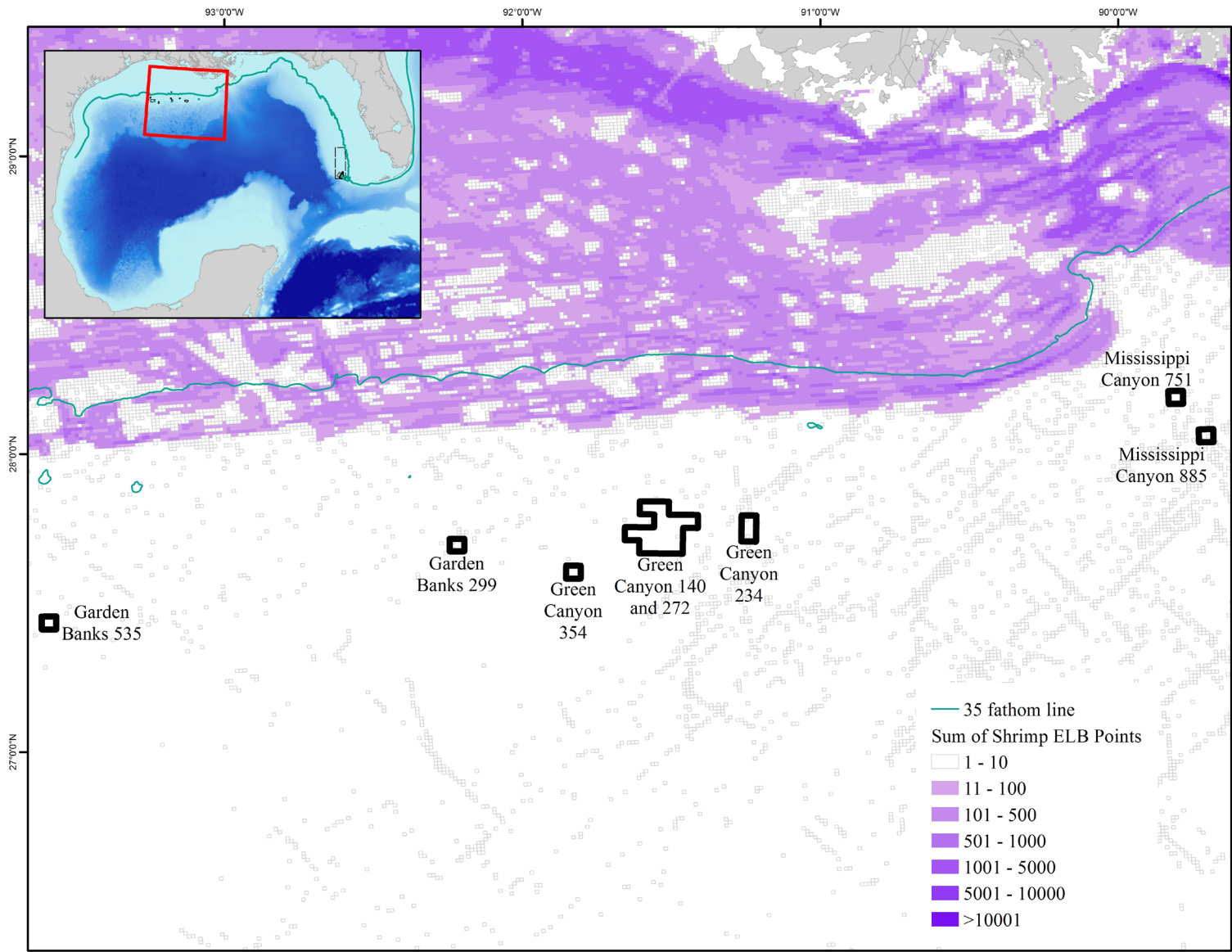
Action 6 – New Areas for HAPC Status Not Recommended to Have Fishing Regulations

The Council is considering designating eight new areas as HAPCs, but is not considering fishing regulations for these areas. The areas under consideration are not fished and are found in depths which are unlikely to have fishing with bottom tending gear. The areas are unique and contain coral communities that are rare and have the potential to be harmed by human activity.

Proposed new areas for HAPC status in the southwestern Gulf overlaid with commercial vessel monitoring system data.



Proposed new areas for HAPC status in the southwestern Gulf overlaid with shrimp electronic logbook data.



Alternative 1: No Action. Do not establish any new deep-water coral HAPCs.

Preferred Alternative 2: Establish a new HAPC named South Reed bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
South Reed Depth Range: 219-820 fathoms Area: 6.8 nm ²	A	83°56.220'	24°40.870'
	B	83°53.360'	24°40.926'
	C	83°53.300'	24°38.313'
	D	83°56.159'	24°38.257'
	A	83°56.220'	24°40.870'

Preferred Alternative 3: Establish a new HAPC named Garden Banks 299 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Garden Banks 299 Depth Range: 219-328 fathoms Area: 6.5 nm ²	A	92° 14.635'	27° 42.963'
	B	92° 11.697'	27° 42.946'
	C	92° 11.703'	27° 40.457'
	D	92° 14.652'	27° 40.435'
	A	92° 14.635'	27° 42.963'

Preferred Alternative 4: Establish a new HAPC named Garden Banks 535 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Garden Banks 535 Depth Range: 273-328 fathoms Area: 6.8 nm ²	A	93° 36.825'	27° 27.314'
	B	93° 33.894'	27° 27.326'
	C	93° 33.880'	27° 24.711'
	D	93° 36.811'	27° 24.699'
	A	93° 36.825'	27° 27.314'

Preferred Alternative 5: Establish a new HAPC named Green Canyon 140 and 272 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Green Canyon 140/272 Depth Range: 164-547 fathoms Area: 81.6 nm ²	A	91° 36.342'	27° 50.510'
	B	91° 30.460'	27° 50.448'
	C	91° 30.496'	27° 47.834'
	D	91° 24.616'	27° 47.768'
	E	91° 24.654'	27° 45.154'
	F	91° 27.593'	27° 45.187'
	G	91° 27.666'	27° 39.959'
	H	91° 36.475'	27° 40.052'
	I	91° 36.442'	27° 42.666'
	J	91° 39.379'	27° 42.695'
	K	91° 39.347'	27° 45.310'
	L	91° 36.408'	27° 45.281'
	M	91° 33.470'	27° 45.251'
	N	91° 33.435'	27° 47.865'
	O	91° 36.375'	27° 47.895'
	A	91° 36.342'	27° 50.510'

Preferred Alternative 6: Establish a new HAPC named Green Canyon 234 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Green Canyon 234 Depth Range: 219-492 fathoms Area: 13.6 nm ²	A	91° 15.798'	27° 47.662'
	B	91° 12.859'	27° 47.625'
	C	91° 12.944'	27° 42.397'
	D	91° 15.881'	27° 42.434'
	A	91° 15.798'	27° 47.662'

Preferred Alternative 7: Establish a new HAPC named Green Canyon 354 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Green Canyon 354 Depth Range: 273-547 fathoms Area: 6.8 nm ²	A	91° 51.185'	27° 37.572'
	B	91° 48.249'	27° 37.547'
	C	91° 48.278'	27° 34.932'
	D	91° 51.212'	27° 34.957'
	A	91° 51.185'	27° 37.572'

Preferred Alternative 8: Establish a new HAPC named Mississippi Canyon 751 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Mississippi Canyon 751 Depth Range: 328-383 fathoms Area: 6.8 nm ²	A	89° 49.883'	28° 12.710'
	B	89° 46.934'	28° 12.770'
	C	89° 46.866'	28° 10.158'
	D	89° 49.814'	28° 10.098'
	A	89° 49.883'	28° 12.710'

Preferred Alternative 9: Establish a new HAPC named Mississippi Canyon 885 bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
Mississippi Canyon 885 Depth Range: 219-328 fathoms Area: 6.8 nm ²	A	89° 43.787'	28° 4.993'
	B	89° 40.841'	28° 5.051'
	C	89° 40.777'	28° 2.439'
	D	89° 43.721'	28° 2.381'
	A	89° 43.787'	28° 4.993'

Action 7 – Prohibit Dredge Fishing in All Existing HAPCs that Have Fishing Regulations

The Council is considering adding a prohibition on dredge fishing, as it is incorporated in the definition of bottom tending gear, to existing HAPCs that do not currently prohibit dredge fishing but do prohibit other bottom tending gear. Bottom-tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

Currently, West and East Flower Garden Banks HAPC, Florida Middle Grounds HAPC, and the Tortugas Marine Reserve, have prohibitions on bottom-tending gear (including dredge fishing) within their boundaries. However, the current Pulley Ridge HAPC, Stetson Bank HAPC, and McGrail Bank HAPC only prohibit bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels; there is no explicit prohibition on dredge fishing.

Alternative 1: No Action. No new dredge fishing-specific management measures will be implemented in currently established HAPCs. Areas with dredge fishing restrictions already in place will retain those restrictions.

Preferred Alternative 2: Prohibit dredge fishing in all existing HAPCs that have fishing regulations.



Villogorgia scleracis with bank butterflyfish



Paramuricea callogorgia with brittle stars

Send Us Your Comments

The Council would like to hear your input on this proposed amendment before taking final action.

We are hosting the following public hearing workshops beginning at 6 p.m. local time:

- **Monday, May 7, 2018** - Courtyard by Marriott Brownsville, Brownsville, TX
- **Tuesday, May 8, 2018** - Port of Palacios, Palacios, TX
- **Wednesday, May 9, 2018** - Hampton Inn & Suites Houston/League City, League City, TX
- **Tuesday, May 22, 2018** - Webinar - 6 pm, EST,
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4248295616605995266>
- **Monday, June 4, 2018** - Marriott Beachside, Key West, FL & Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Laboratory, Grand Isle, LA
- **Tuesday, June 5, 2018** - Holiday Inn Express & Suites St. Petersburg/Seminole, St. Petersburg, FL & Courtyard by Marriott Biloxi/North D'Iberville, D'Iberville, MS
- **Wednesday, June 6, 2018** - Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel, Mobile, AL

If you are unable to attend a public hearing, your input is still important. Submit your comments online by visiting: <http://tinyurl.com/CoralComments>

Notes