

**Coral Committee Report
April 17, 2018
Dr. Tom Frazer, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda and approved the minutes.

Review Public Hearing Draft of Coral Amendment 9

Staff presented the Committee with the Public Hearing Draft of Coral Amendment 9, but focused discussion on the SSC recommended changes. Staff also provided the committee a summary of the shrimp AP recommendations and LETC recommendations. In Action 2, the SSC recommended adding a new alternative based on findings during outcomes of a recent research expedition. The new alternative would encompass a wall feature in depths of 400 to 600 m. The Shrimp AP preferred the new SSC recommendation, but only in the event that the other alternatives in Action 2 are no longer selected as preferred. The new recommendation has not been presented to other APs.

The Committee recommends and I so move: **In Action 2 to add the SSC’s recommended alternative 5.**

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: 1308-1974 ft (218-329 fathoms) Area: 36.3 nm²	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

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.

Motion carried with no opposition.

The Committee recommends and I so move: **In Action 2 to replace the current preferred alternatives with alternative 5, option b.**

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: 1308-1974 ft (218-329 fathoms) Area: 36.3 nm²	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

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.

Motion carried with no opposition.

In Action 3, staff provided the Committee with the recommended wording changes in the Council’s Preferred Alternative 7, Preferred Option c. The Committee discussed the rationale for the SSC’s recommended changes as well as the LETC and Shrimp AP’s recommended modifications to the SSC proposal. The Committee determined that it would keep the original wording of the alternative because it was the most straightforward for law enforcement and doesn’t add extra language which could affect the royal red shrimp fishermen. The Committee determined that the SSC’s recommendation would overcomplicate the exemption. Staff noted that there was discussion added to Chapter 2 to outline that the exemption was provided to continue to allow the fishermen to fish for royal red shrimp, but with the understanding that the gear deployed would not come in contact with coral.

Staff reviewed Actions 5, 6, and 7 and provided to the Committee the recommendations from the SSC on Action 5. The Committee also discussed the Shrimp AP’s recommendation that a transit provision be provided in the document. Staff will add “fishing with” after the word “prohibit” in the options to clarify that only fishing with the bottom-tending gear is prohibited based on the guidance from NOAA GC. Example: **Option b.** Prohibit fishing with 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.

Madam chair, this concludes my report.