NOAA FISHERIES

Southeast Regional Office

Protected Resources Division

UPDATE:

SAFMC's Regulatory Amendment 16

Changes to the Seasonal Closure for the Black Sea Bass Pot Sector

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team

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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council: Regulatory Amendment 16

Purpose for Action

Re-evaluate the annual Nov. 1 through Apr. 30 prohibition on the use of black sea bass pot gear and enhance buoy line/weak link gear requirements and buoy line rope marking for black sea bass pots.

Need for Action

Reduce the adverse socioeconomic impacts resulting from the annual Nov. 1 through Apr. 30 prohibition on the use of black sea bass pot gear and increase the flexibility of black sea bass pot endorsement holders to fish with this gear while continuing to protect ESA-listed whales in the South Atlantic region; and reduce the adverse effects on whales if entangled and help identify black sea bass pot lines used in the South Atlantic.

Regulatory Amendment 16

Action 1

Modify the annual November 1 through April 30 prohibition on the use of black sea bass pot gear

Action 2

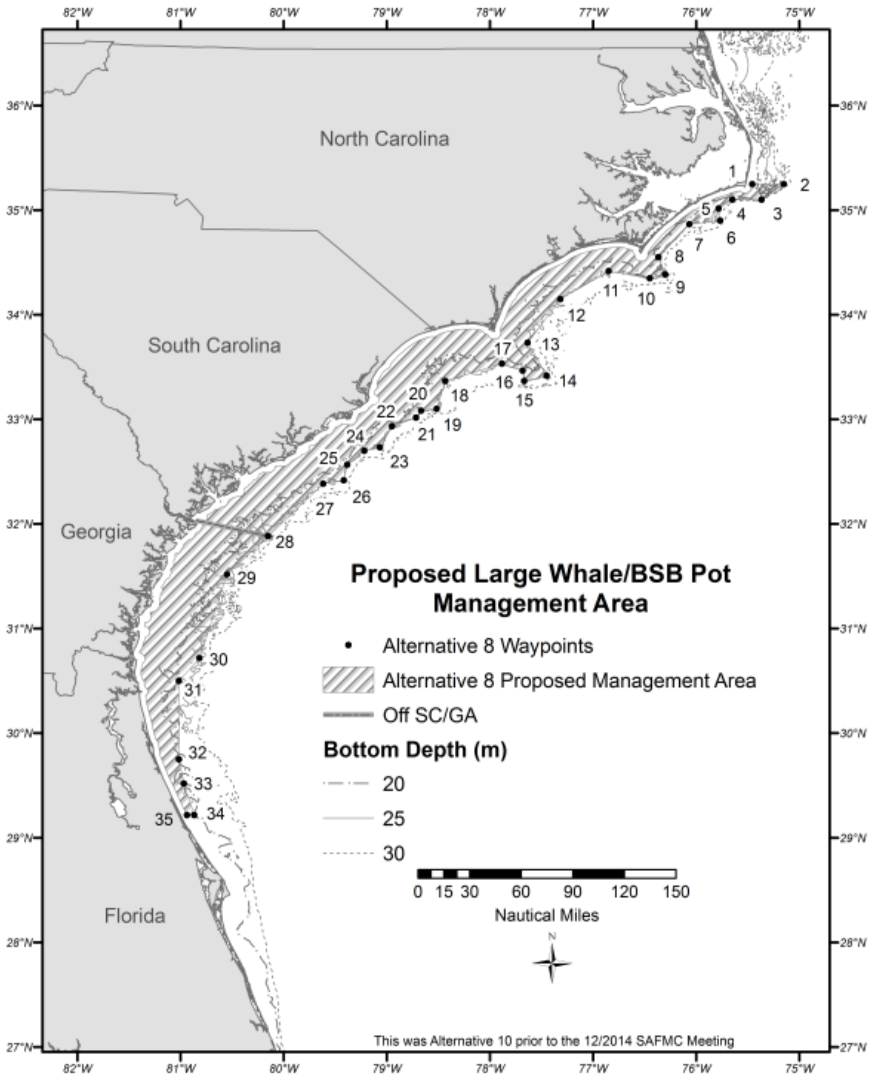
Enhance the existing Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) buoy line/weak link gear requirements and buoy line rope marking for black sea bass pots

Alternatives for Action 1

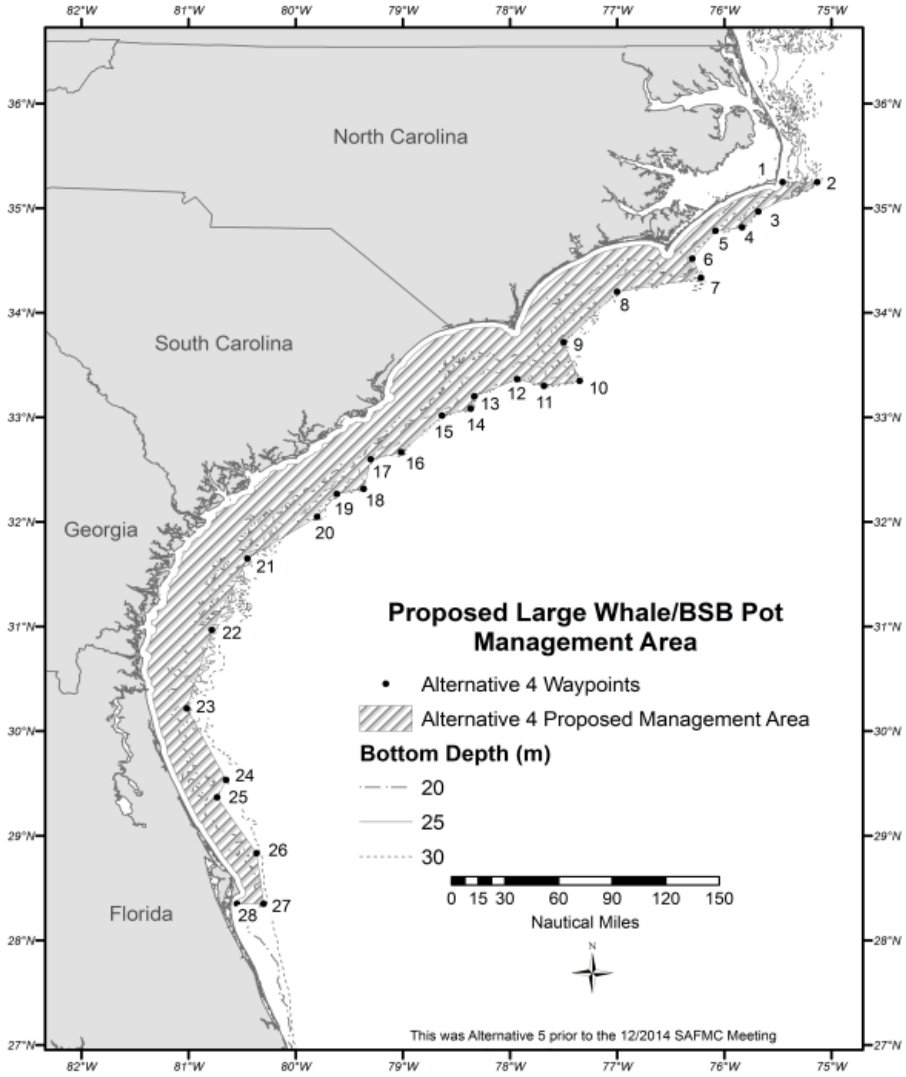
NARW Protection	Alternative
Most Protective	**Alternative 1:** no relative risk of entanglement (0 RRU)
	Alternative 6: low increase in relative risk off NC (+2-8 RRU); no additional risk off FL-SC (0 RRU).
	Alternative 4: low increase in relative risk off NC (+2-8 RRU); low increase in relative risk off FL-SC (+0-3 RRU).
	Alternative 11 : low increase in relative risk off NC (+3-15 RRU); low risk off FL-SC (+2-9 RRU)
	Alternative 12 : low increase in relative risk off NC (+2-15 RRU); low risk off FL-SC (+0-13 RRU)
	Alternative 5: low increase in relative risk off NC (+1-2 RRU); low to high increase in relative risk off FL-SC (+11-58 RRU).
	Alternative 3: low to moderate increase in relative risk off NC (+10-26 RRU); low to high increase in relative risk off FL-SC (+16-52 RRU).
	Alternative 8a: low to moderate increase in relative risk off NC (+13-36 RRU); low to high increase in relative risk off FL-SC (+13-64 RRU).
	Alternative 9a: moderate to high increase in relative risk off NC (+26-51 RRU); moderate to high increase in relative risk off FL-SC (+30-72 RRU).
	Alternative 7a: high increase in relative risk off NC (+69-74 RRU); very high increase in relative risk off FL-SC (+77-96 RRU).
	Alternative 8b: high increase in relative risk off NC (+51-68 RRU); high to very high increase in relative risk off FL-SC (+61-89 RRU).
	Alternative 10: high to very high increase in relative risk off NC (+55-75 RRU); high to very high increase in relative risk off FL-SC (+62-89 RRU).
	Alternative 9b: high to very high increase in relative risk off NC (+61-87 RRU); high to very high increase in relative risk off FL-SC (+67-94 RRU).
	Alternative 7c: high to very high increase in relative risk off NC (+75-97 RRU) and off FL-SC (+67-100 RRU).
	Alternative 7b: very high increase in relative risk off NC (+77-89 RRU); high to very high increase in relative risk off FL-SC (+70-106 RRU).
Least Protective	**Alternative 2:** very high increase in relative risk off NC (+100 RRU over status quo) and off FL-SC (+100 RRU).

Current Preferred Alternative 11

Closure boundaries: Nov 1-30 and Apr 1-30



Closure boundaries: Dec 1-Mar 31



Action 2: Alternatives

Alternative 1. (No Action)

Alternative 2. Enhance the current ALWTRP buoy line requirements from November 1 through April 30 in federal waters in the South Atlantic EEZ.

Sub-alternative 2a: The breaking line strength must not exceed 2,200 lbs .

Sub-alternative 2b: The breaking line strength must not exceed 1,200 lbs.

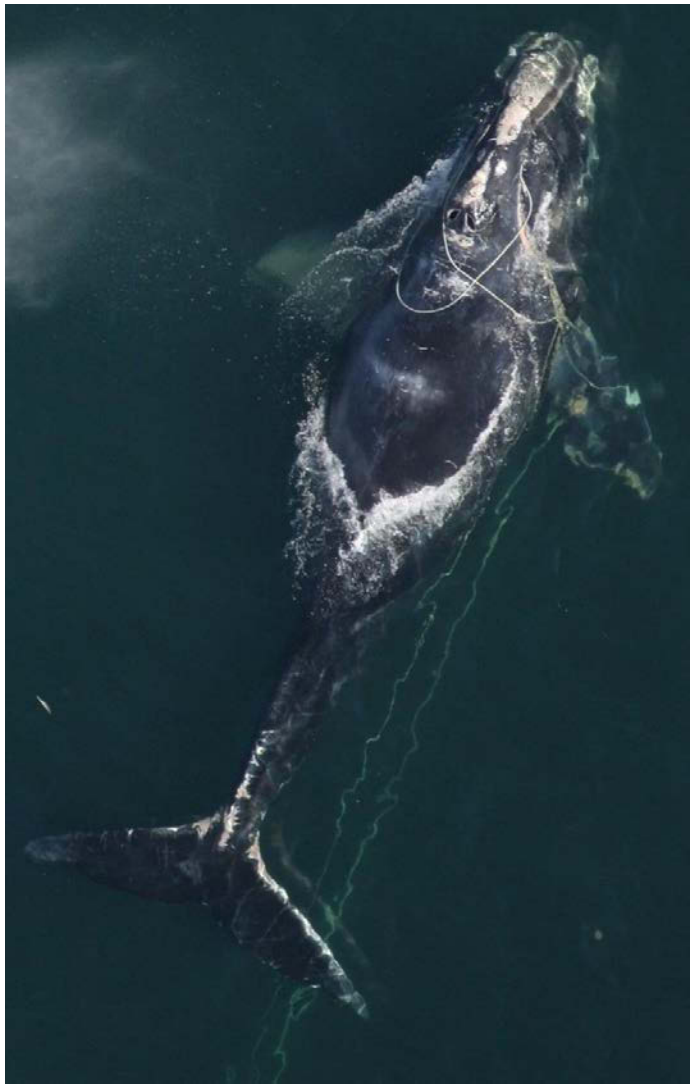
Alternative 3. Enhance the current ALWTRP weak link requirements. From November 1 to April 30, the breaking strength of the weak links must not exceed 400 pounds for black sea bass pots in the South Atlantic EEZ.

Preferred Alternative 4. Enhance the current ALWTRP gear marking requirements by including a feature to specifically distinguishing the commercial South Atlantic black sea bass pot component of the snapper grouper fishery. This alternative will require an additional 12-inch wide purple band be added at the end of each of the 3 ALWTRP required 12-inch colored marks. Each of the three marks would be a total of 24 inches in length. The additional gear marking requirements of this action are required in federal waters from November 15 through April 15 (Southeast Restricted Area North), September 1 through May 31 (Offshore Trap/Pot Area), and September 1 through May 31 (Southern Nearshore Trap/Pot Waters Area).

Next Steps

- Comment Period on Draft Environmental Impact Statement ends on December 7, 2015

- Council meeting from Dec 7-11
  - Review Public Comment
  - Finalize Action



Questions?