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# MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION



A. Shepard et al., UNCW

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# Overview

- ◆ SAFMC definition
- ◆ Development timeline and implementation
- ◆ Regulations
- ◆ Research
- ◆ Challenges
- ◆ Red snapper management





# Marine Protected Areas are...

*A network of specific areas of marine environments reserved and managed for the primary purpose of aiding in the recovery of overfished stocks and to ensure the persistence of healthy fish stocks, fisheries and associated habitats.*

# MPAs in the South Atlantic

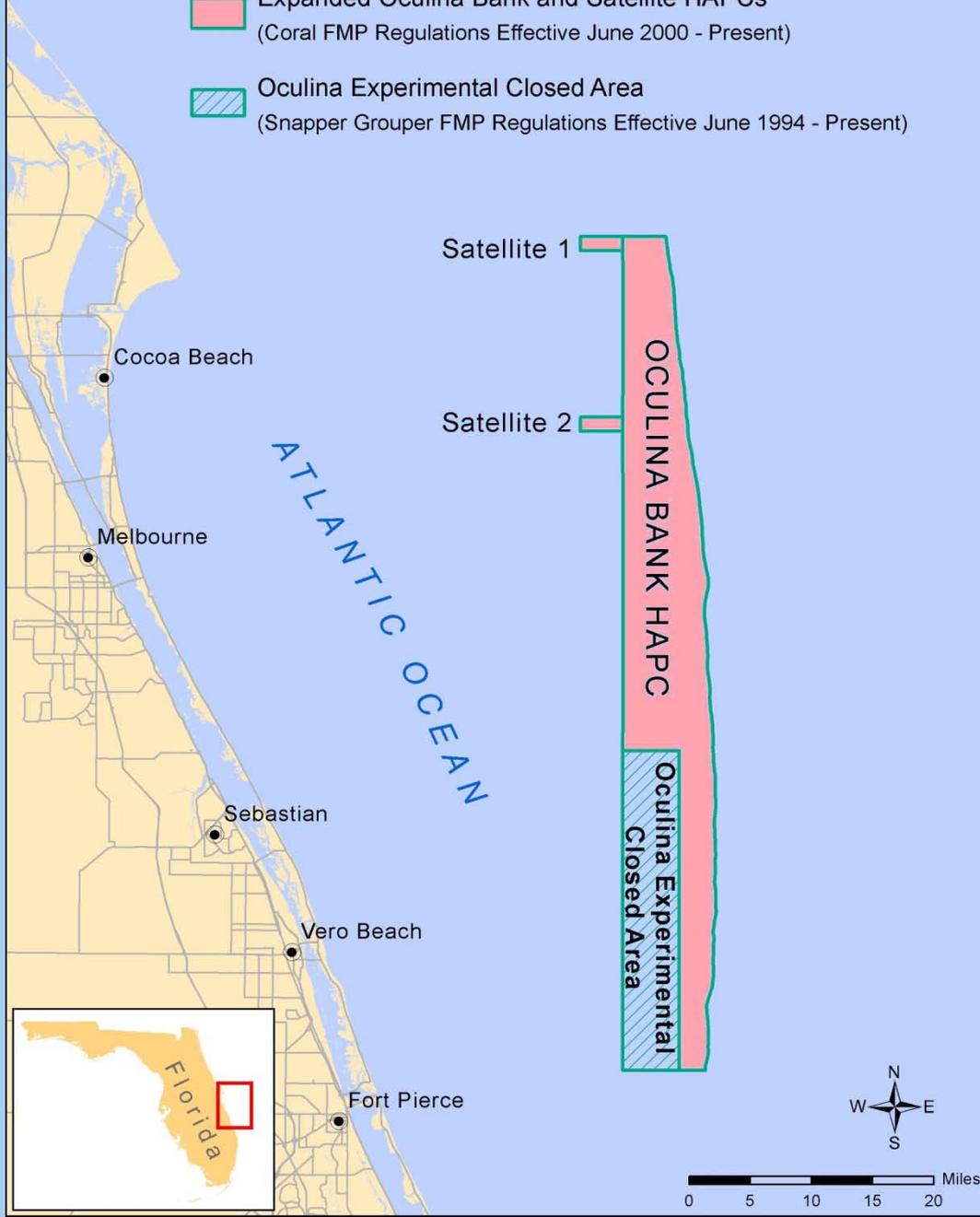
1. Oculina Habitat Area of Particular Concern
2. Oculina Experimental Closed Area
3. Deepwater Marine Protected Areas (8)
4. Deepwater Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (5)

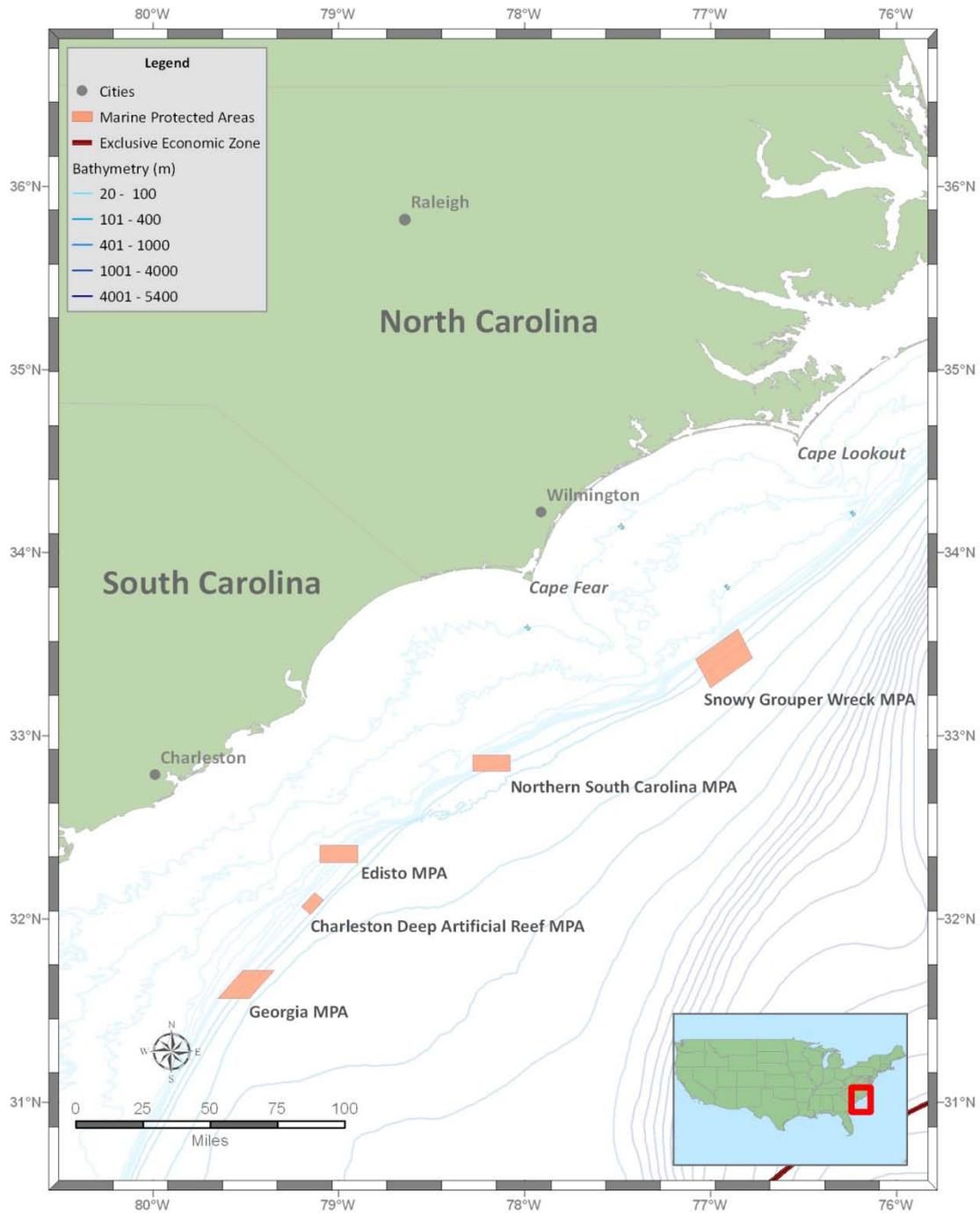


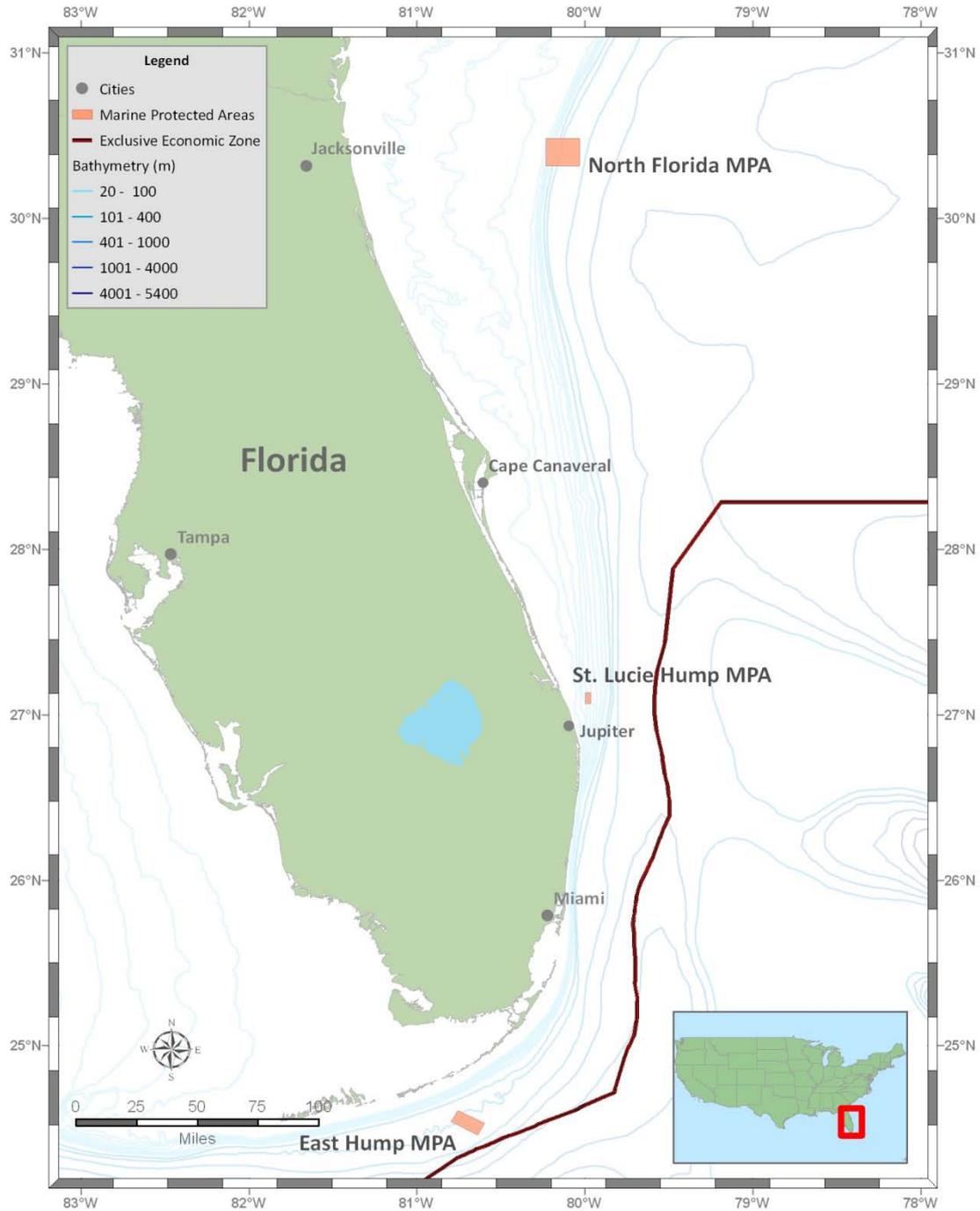
# Oculina Habitat Area of Particular Concern

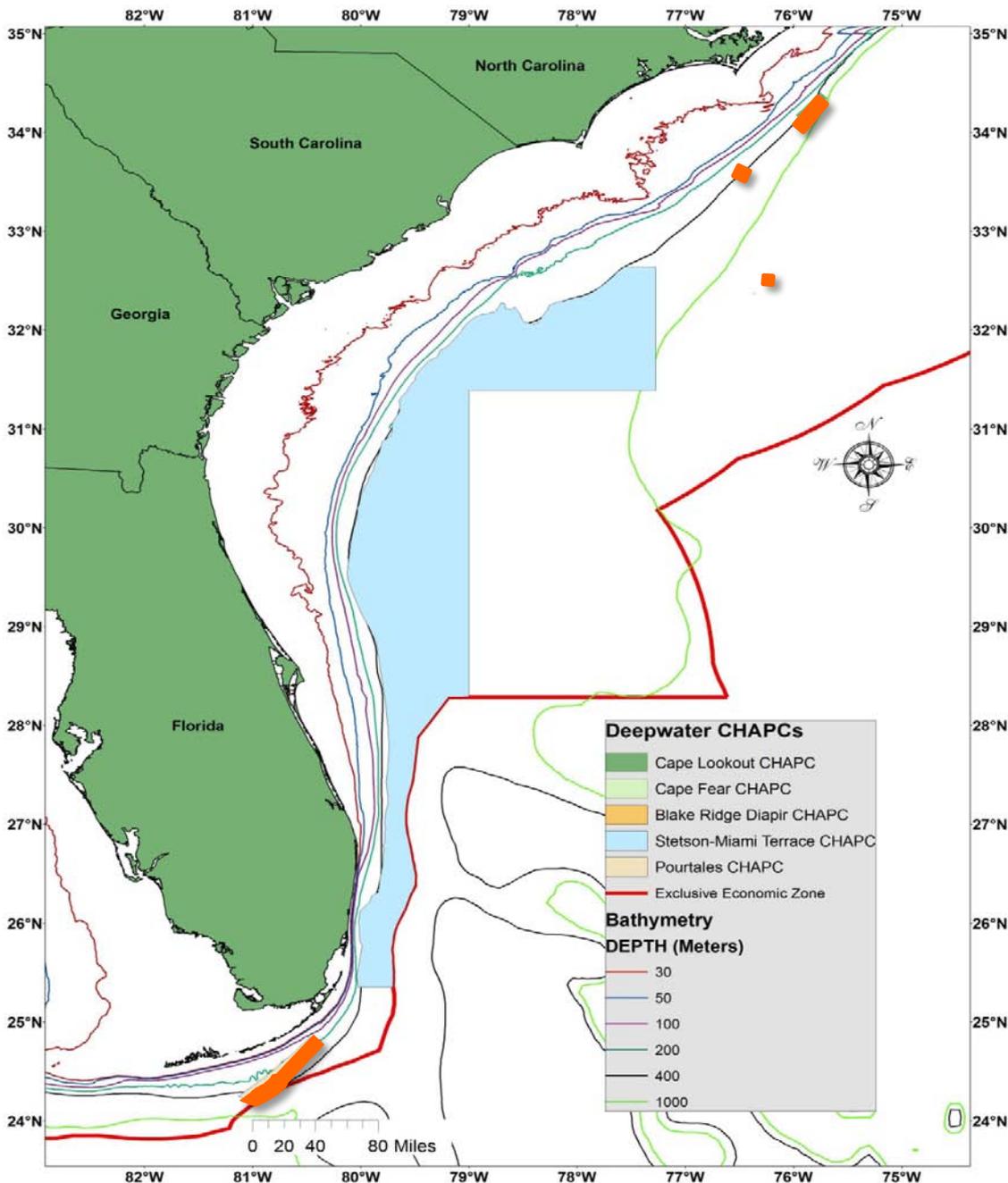
 Expanded Oculina Bank and Satellite HAPCs  
(Coral FMP Regulations Effective June 2000 - Present)

 Oculina Experimental Closed Area  
(Snapper Grouper FMP Regulations Effective June 1994 - Present)









Cape Lookout &  
Cape Fear  
CHAPCs

Stetson-Miami  
Terrace CHAPC

Blake Ridge  
Diapir CHAPC

Pourtales Terrace  
CHAPC

# 1990 - 1992



- ◆ Snapper Grouper Plan Development Team offers MPAs as “the only viable option for maintaining optimum size, age, and genetic structure of slow-growing, long-lived species over the long-term”.
- ◆ Scientific Review Panel considers concept of MPAs as a management tool.

# 1994 - 1998

- ◆ Oculina Experimental Closed Area established.
- ◆ Scientific Review Panel concludes that properly designed MPAs, in combination with other management measures, are effective.
- ◆ Council forms a Marine Reserves Advisory Panel and Committee.



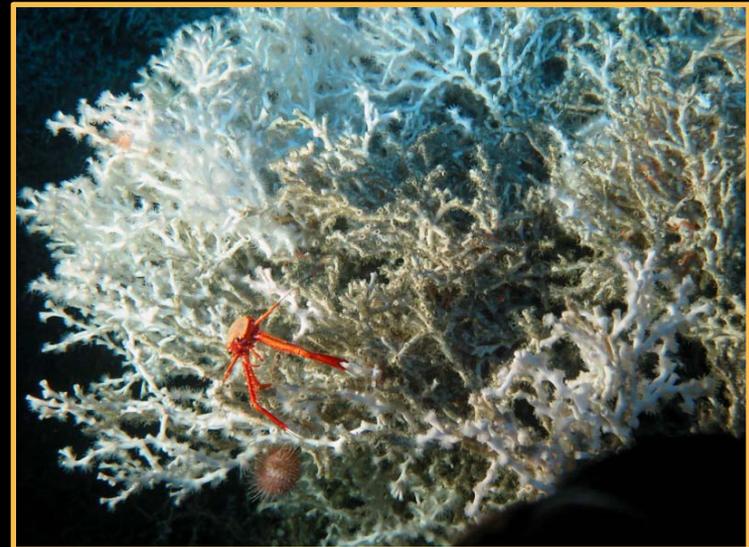
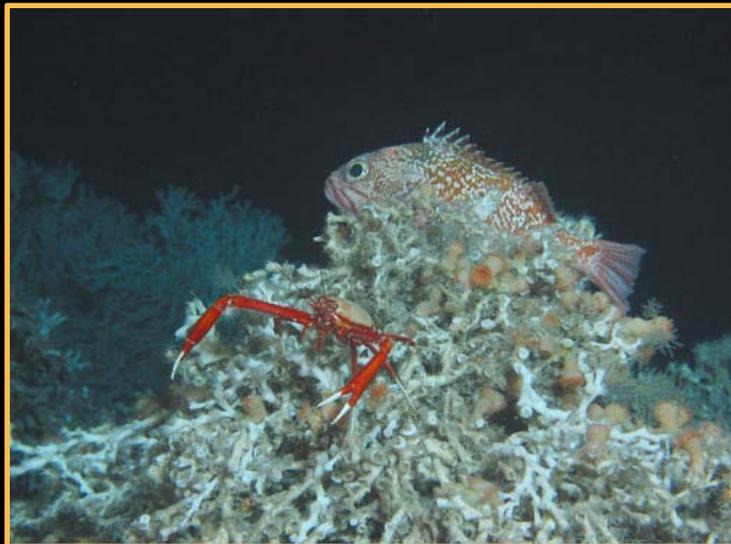
# 2000 - 2006



- ◆ Council begins deliberative process involving constituents to explore use of MPAs in the South Atlantic region.
- ◆ Advisory panel and committee meeting and public hearings are held to gather input.
- ◆ Council initiates establishment of Coral HAPCs to protect deepwater corals.

# 2007 - 2009

- ◆ Snapper Grouper Amendment 14 to establish 8 deepwater MPAs is submitted for review (July 2007)
- ◆ Amendment is approved on January 13, 2009 and regulations become effective February 13, 2009.
- ◆ Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 1 is submitted for review (October 2009)



Photos: S. Ross et al., UNCW

# Regulations

- ◆ Oculina and Deepwater MPAs are classified as “Type II” – permanent closure with some fishing allowed.
- ◆ Fishing for and/or possession of snapper grouper species is prohibited but trolling for pelagics is allowed.
- ◆ Bottom-tending fishing gear is prohibited in Coral HAPCs - Fishing for golden crab and royal red shrimp is allowed in designated areas.

# Regulations

- ◆ Vessels allowed to transit areas with snapper grouper species on board as long as fishing gear is stowed.
- ◆ Use of shark bottom longline gear is prohibited in the MPAs.



# Current MPA Activities



- ◆ Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3 (CE-BA 3) addresses establishing new or expanding current MPAs to protect speckled hind and Warsaw grouper
- ◆ The dilemma:
  - How much protection do the current MPAs provide?
  - How many new MPAs are needed to end overfishing?
  - Is overfishing occurring? (Last assessment 1992)
  - What are the social and economic impacts of MPAs?

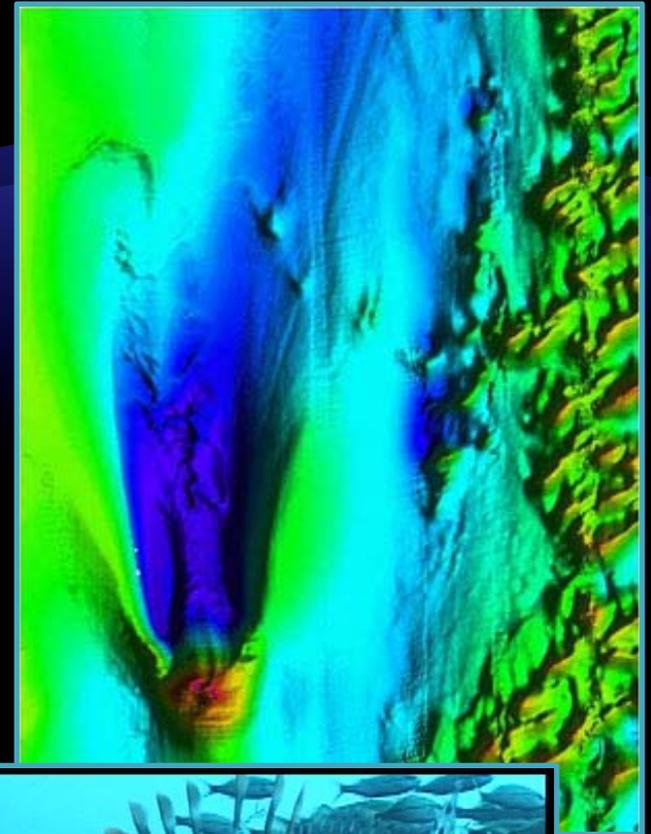
# Challenges



- ◆ Distance from shore limits law enforcement ability and research
- ◆ Prohibiting only certain types of fishing activity complicates law enforcement

# Challenges

- ◆ Funding to conduct scientific research is very limited
- ◆ Very high densities of invasive lionfish may compromise effectiveness of MPAs



# Research

- ◆ Snapper Grouper Amendment 13A called for development of an Evaluation Plan for the Oculina Closed Area
- ◆ 3 components: outreach and education; research, monitoring and assessment; and law enforcement
- ◆ Funding for research sporadic so not all objectives have been addressed.



# Research

- ◆ Amendment 14 did not include a research and monitoring plan for each MPA. However, it included a list of research, outreach and law enforcement needs.
- ◆ SEFSC Panama City Laboratory conducted research in 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008, prior to implementation of regulations.
- ◆ These data will be useful in comparing population levels of target species under reduced fishing pressure in the future.

# Research

- ◆ Establishment of the currently proposed CHAPCs is based primarily on recent scientific research
  - ◆ Low and high-resolution mapping
  - ◆ ROV and Submersible dives
- ◆ NOAA's Deep Sea Coral Research and Technology Program focused on additional research within the proposed CHAPCs in 2010 and 2011



# Research

- ◆ The Marine Conservation Biology Institute conducted a comprehensive review of federal and state law enforcement assets in the South Atlantic region appropriate to surveillance and monitoring of remote closed areas.
- ◆ The report is available from the SAFMC



Questions?

