



## *Special Management Zones*

North Carolina's Artificial Reefs

*DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY*

Marine Fisheries

Steve Poland and Jordan Byrum | August 20, 2020





# What is a Special Management Zone?

Established process in first Snapper-Grouper FMP (1983) - SAFMC

- Allows states to request restrictions on **gear** inside Artificial Reef boundaries in Federal waters

Intent: *Promote biological production and/or fishing opportunities by limiting **gear** that offers “exceptional advantages”*



Source: NC SeaGrant



<https://safmc.net/safmc-managed-areas/>



Director Murphey requested SMZ designation for **30 Artificial Reefs** in **Federal waters** – *March 2019*

Restrictions requested:

- Handline, rod and reel, and spear **ONLY**
- Snapper-Grouper harvest restricted to recreational limits for spear

Rationale

- Increased opportunities
- Biological considerations with selective gears
- Addressing protected species



Codify boundaries and gear restrictions into the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)

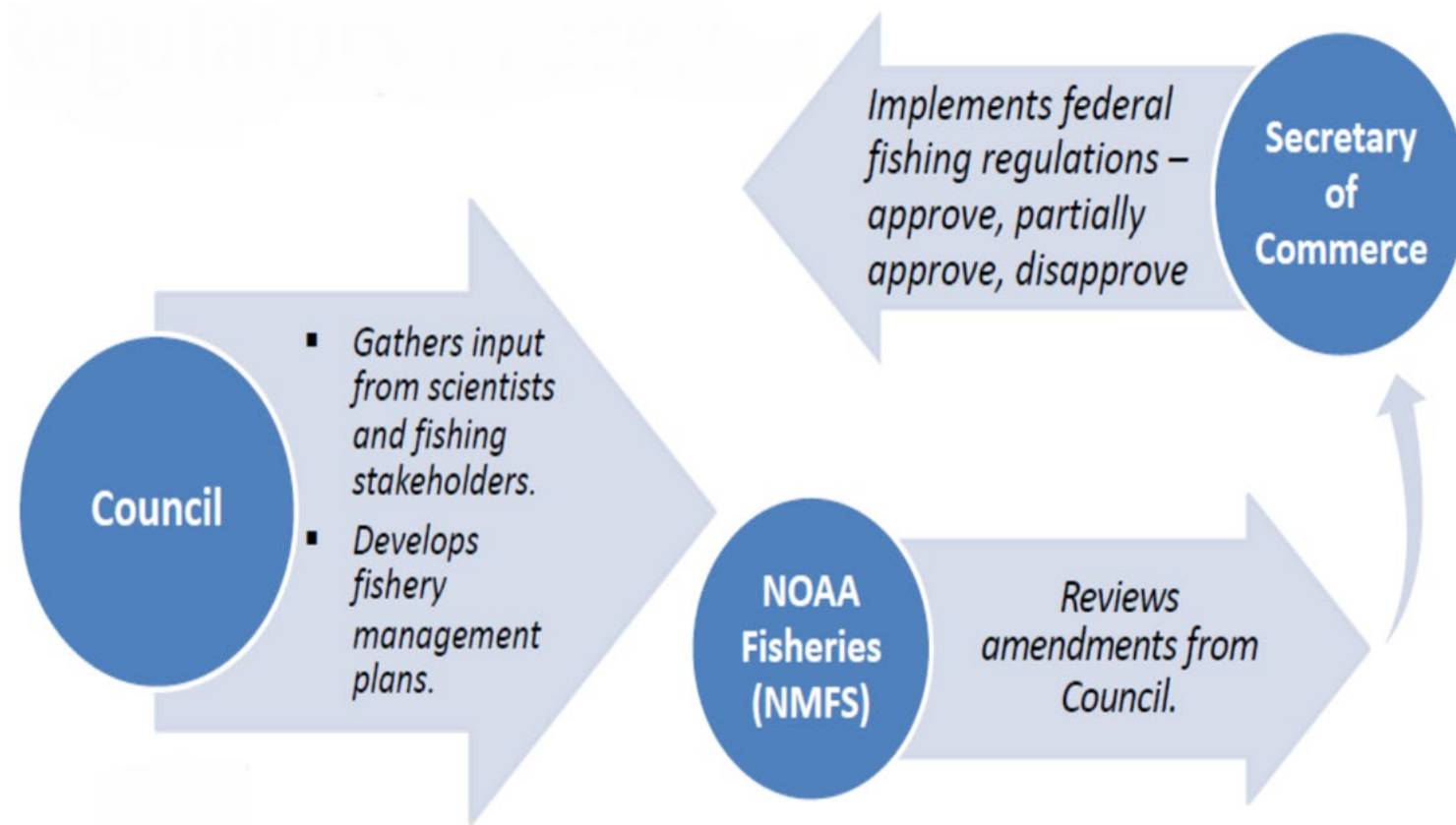
Public comments:

- Support for actions
- Frustration with more regulations

Advisory Panel comments:

- Snapper Grouper AP approved of actions
- Law Enforcement AP raised concerns about enforcement

Council approved amendment during June 2020 meeting



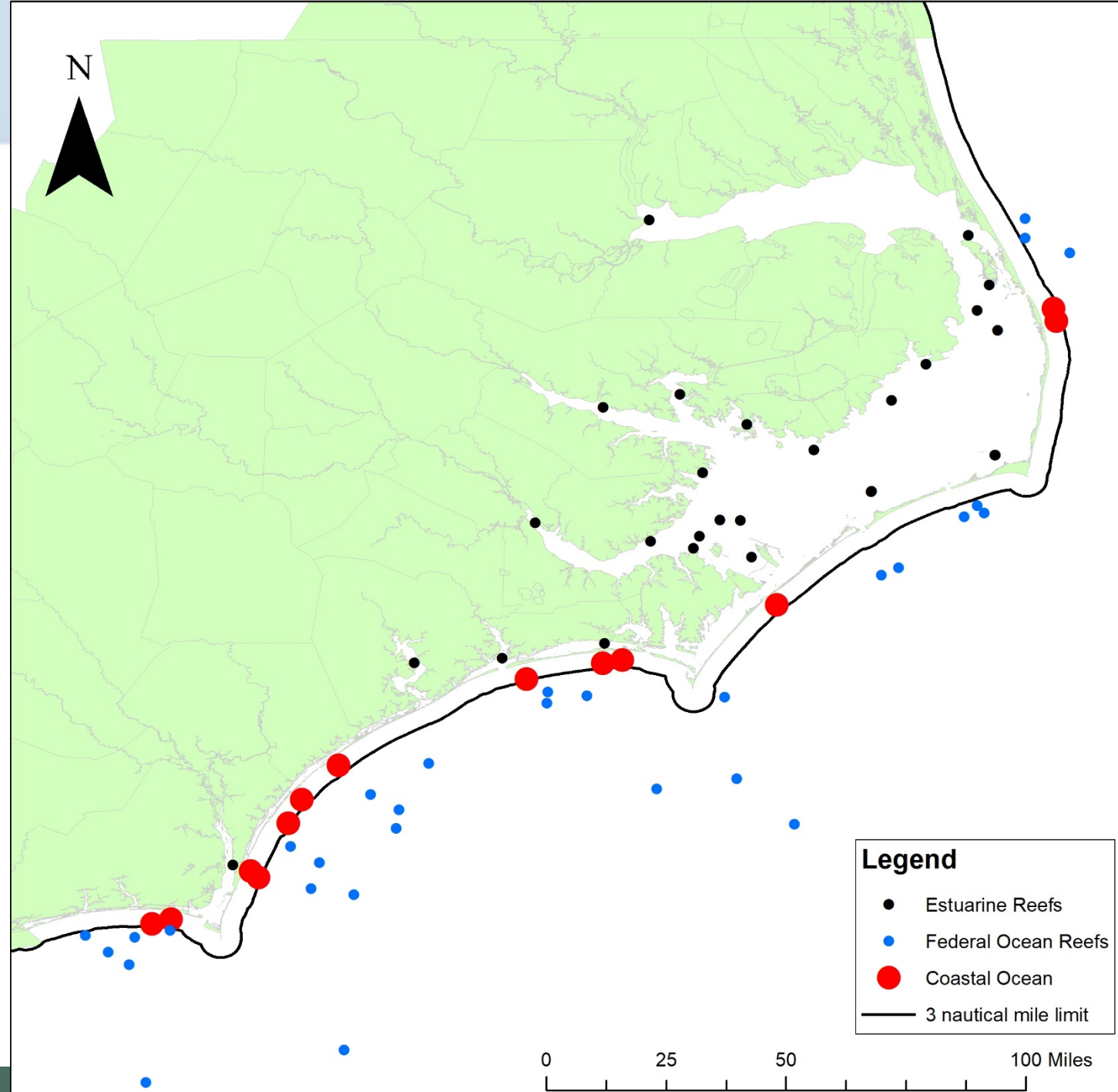


## North Carolina's Artificial Reefs

Program manages 68 reefs

- 25 estuarine
  - Includes Oyster Sanctuaries
- 13 coastal ocean (0-3 nm)
- 30 offshore (>3 nm)

Provide fishing and diving opportunities throughout coastal North Carolina



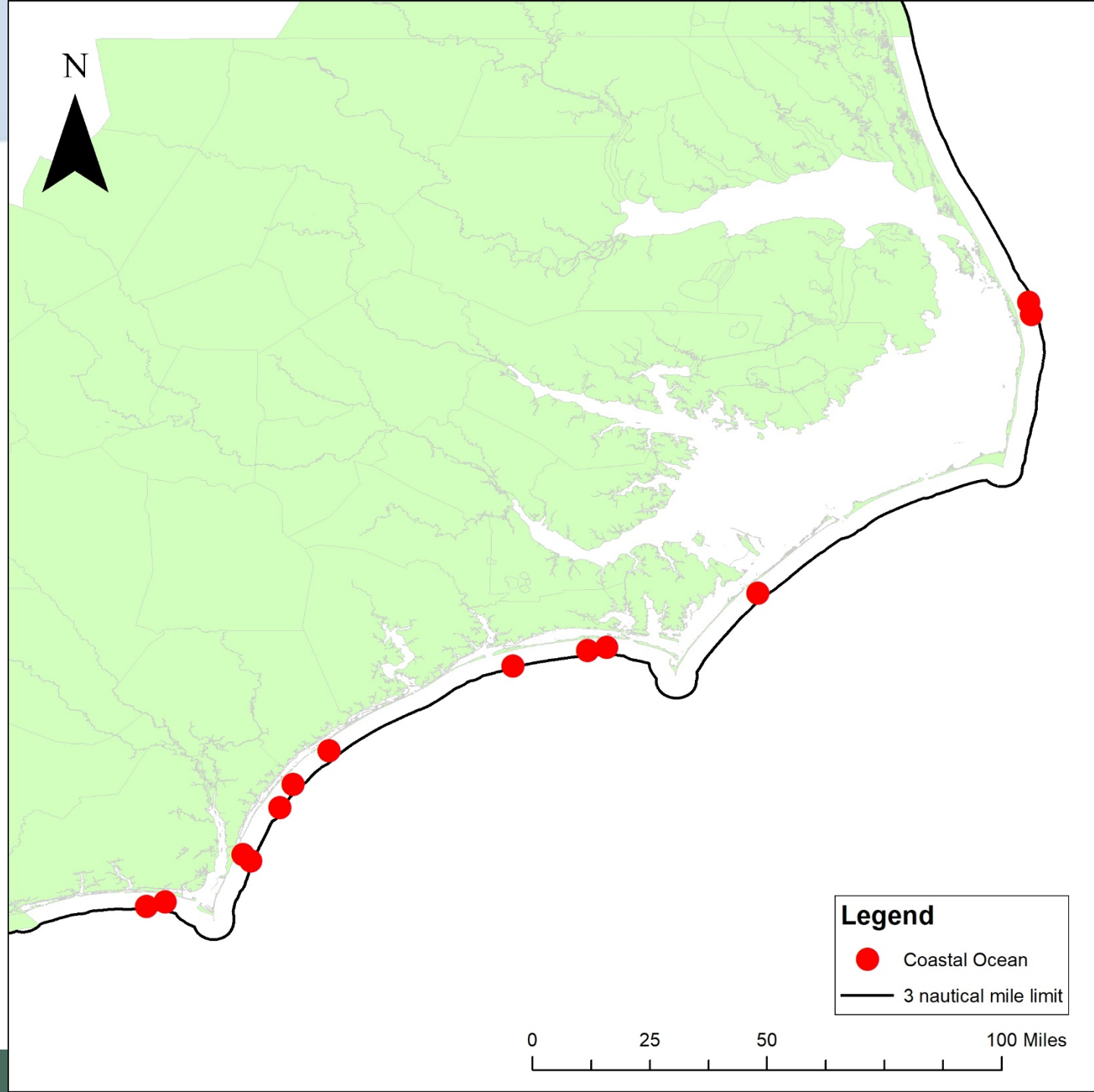
# North Carolina's Artificial Reefs

Coastal Waters

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## Expensive to build

- Vessels \$100k-\$300k
- Concrete pipe \$65-\$90 per ton
- Millions of dollars invested in reefs

## AR-165

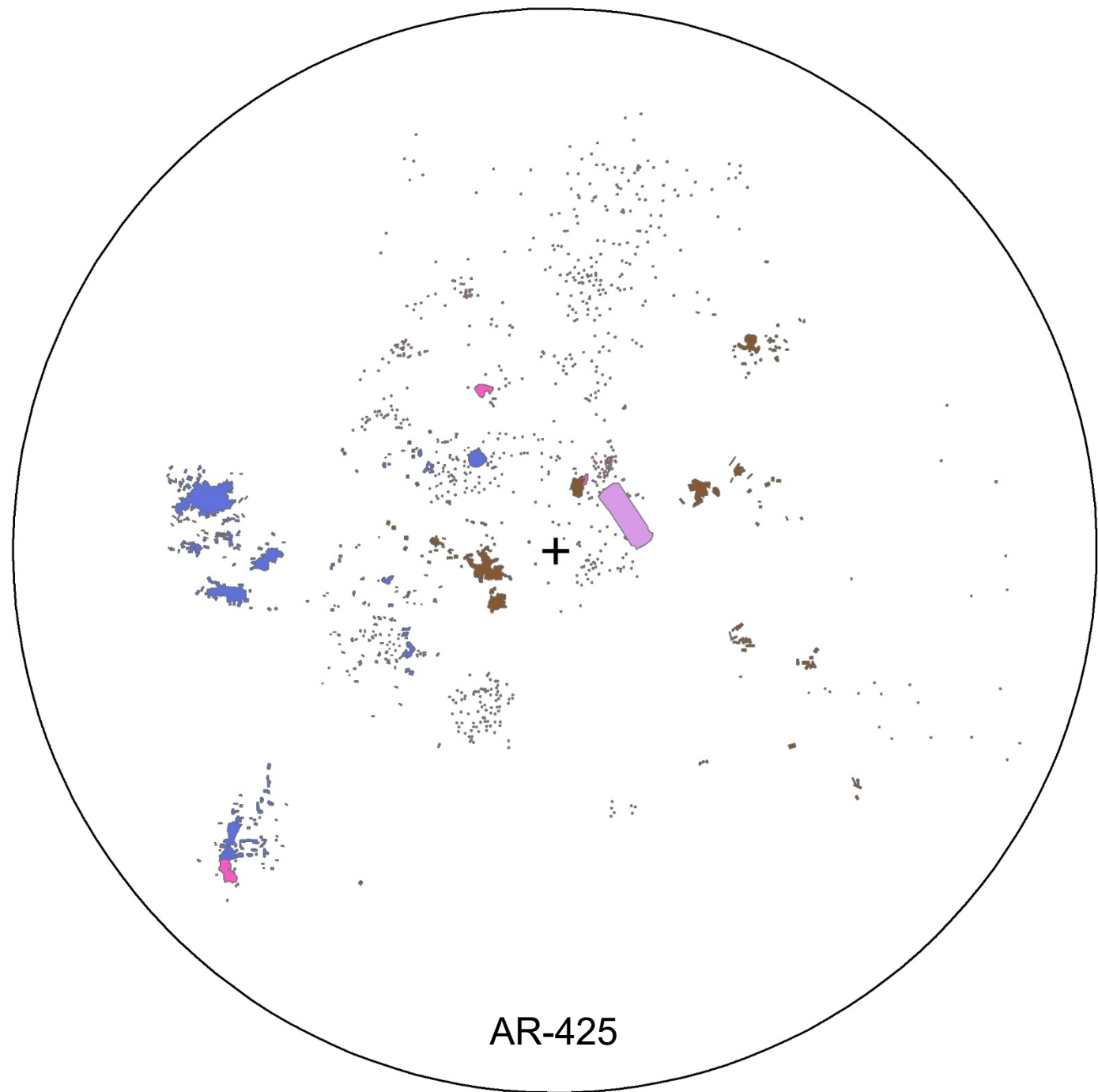
- \$882,000 from CRFL
- 3 tugboats
- 7,000 tons concrete pipe





## *Fishing gear on Artificial Reefs*

- Reefs were constructed to provide fishing opportunities
  - Fish concentrated in small, manmade areas
  - Structure oriented
- Highly efficient gears can remove large numbers of fish
  - Reduces fishing opportunities for other users
- Federal permitting and entanglement issues





# *Special Management Zones on Artificial Reefs*

## Coastal Waters



- SAFMC rule specifies allowable gears (Federal waters)
- If similar restrictions are pursued for reefs in coastal fishing waters, it will require a rule change
- Reef boundaries recently updated with permitting agencies (NCDCEM and USACE)

