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
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

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
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
• 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 (NCDCM and USACE)