

Title:

S-100: Support redefining the Port of Miami anchorage zone to remove four areas with reported coral from the existing anchor zone, reduce anchor damage currently being caused by ships anchoring zone which includes some coral reef.

Background:

- This recommended management action relates to reef resources within the Port of Miami commercial anchorage in Miami-Dade County.
- This recommended management action is being put forth because it has been five years since the Florida Coral Reef Protection Act was passed and four years since the report: *A Study to Minimize or Eliminate Hardbottom and Reef Impacts from Anchoring activities in Designated Anchorages at the Ports of Miami and Palm Beach* by Dr. Brian K. Walker was published. Nonetheless, there is still a designated commercial anchorage located over approximately 700 acres of coral reef. Currently, a new design has been presented and an implementation process is underway to modify the present Port of Miami anchorage configuration. This process will take considerable time as it includes public meetings and agency review. This recommendation supports that effort.

Objective:

- The intended outcome of this action is to reduce anchor damage to existing coral reefs through the designation of a new commercial anchorage for the Port of Miami. This will also help improve vessel safety and ensure successful Port operations which rely to some extent on the availability of safe anchorage zones. This recommended action would ensure the area designated is indeed more ideal for anchoring (i.e. has sand for anchors to dig into rather than hardbottom which can cause slippage).

Intended Benefits and/or Potential Adverse Effects:

- Benefits of implementation of this recommended management action include reducing impacts to reef resources and providing a commercial anchorage that is safer than the one currently in use.
- An anticipated negative impact associated with this recommended management action is that the current redesign proposal will still impact reef resources.
- The duration of the benefits of this recommended management action is 1 - 2 years.
- If this recommended management action is not implemented there will be continued impacts to the reefs, vessels will continue to be at risk of slipping anchors, and large vessels would be at risk of grounding within the anchorage.

Agencies/ Organizations:

- The lead agency for implementation of this recommended management action would be the United States Coast Guard.
- Other potential agencies or organizations who could be involved include National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) (chart updates), Miami-Dade County Dept. of Regulatory and Economic Resources, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Port of Miami, Miami River Authority, and NOAA National Marine Fisheries protected species and habitats divisions.
- The key stakeholders for this recommended management action would be the shipping

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community.

- No legislative considerations were indicated for this recommended management action.

Permitting/ Enforcement Requirements of RMA:

- There are permitting requirements associated with this recommended management action. Since hardbottom remains in the current proposed design, it will require a permit for the potential take of several threatened species of coral and an exception in Florida's Coral Reef Protection Act.
- Enforcement requirements for this recommended management action include the current effort by Florida's Coral Reef Conservation Program to monitor the new anchorage and report vessels that are not anchoring in the correct area. If vessels are anchored outside of the designated area the potential exists to enforce Florida's Coral Reef Protection Act.
- A measurable way to show success with this recommended management action is through the successful re-charting of the current anchorage.

Cost:

- The estimated direct cost of implementing this recommended management action is zero dollars.

Time Frame & Extent:

- The anticipated timeframe for implementation of this recommended management action is 1 - 2 years.

Miscellaneous Info:

- This recommended management action is not linked to any other recommended management action.
- Uncertainties or information gaps were not indicated in this action.
- Supporting and relevant data include many studies which show that anchors do damage to benthic resources.
- Currently the United States Coast Guard, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the Port of Miami anchorage working group have been conducting research and working with partners to develop the best, new anchorage design. A new design has been presented and is moving forward in the implementation process.

Goals/ Objectives to be achieved:

Refer to the [SEFCRI Coral Reef Management Goals and Objectives Reference Guide](#)

- SEFCRI LAS MICCI Issue 1 Goal Obj. 3.