



## **Recommendations to the Council from the 75<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific and Statistical Committee**

### **Ecosystem & Habitat**

Council Office Conference Room  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
10-12 October 2000

#### Draft Coral Reef Ecosystem FMP/DEIS

The SSC reviewed a summary of the Council's current preferred alternative for management measures in the draft Coral Reef Ecosystem FMP. Differences from the last SSC's recommendations were noted. One major difference was that the Council changed most of the PRIA to no-take MPA, while the SSC recommended them as low-take MPAs in May.

Following discussion of various interests in Palmyra Atoll (The Nature Conservancy, USFWS, a private fish transshipment operation and commercial and recreational fisheries), **the SSC concurred with the Council's proposed no-take MPA from 0-50 fm at Palmyra as the preferred alternative in the Coral Reef Ecosystem FMP. Regarding a proposed 50 mile longline closure around Palmyra, the SSC was aware of no evidence to support a closure at this time. The SSC requested an inventory of the marine and wildlife resources of Palmyra.**

Coral reef research activity and needs for the region were reviewed (as detailed in Appendix VII of the Coral Reef Ecosystem FMP). **The SSC offered the following comments regarding research needs: 1) economic impacts and long-term feasibility, as well as ecological impacts, of ecotourism should be analyzed; and 2) abandoned infrastructure and materials on remote islands should be studied in terms of potential negative impacts (e.g, PCBs, lead, entanglement) and options for mitigation.** Additional research priorities for American Samoa will be sent to the Council by a SSC member.

The SSC was provided with an update of the President's vision for NWHI coral reefs. Recommendations from the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior are still in draft form while attempting to achieve more consistency. Options being considered include making the NWHI a national monument or a marine sanctuary. The Council's draft Coral Reef Ecosystem FMP is also being considered as a possible component. An announcement from the President is expected within a few weeks. The SSC had no comment.

A review of bioprospecting activity and potential was presented and discussed. It was suggested that a policy for field extraction and laboratory synthesis of bio-active products, with economic provisions, could be developed for the Coral Reef Ecosystem FMP.

#### Other Issues

The SSC was briefed on the scheduled CO<sub>2</sub> ocean sequestration experiment. Aspects of the project were discussed. **The SSC suggested that the Council write a letter noting the following concerns: 1) the “ice” plume at depth could catastrophically transform into a gas; 2) the resultant increased acidity of the water could kill most of the infauna for a few hundred meters; 3) local fishing grounds could be affected; 4) rationale of using this method as opposed to other methods for CO<sub>2</sub> removal is not clear; and 4) a cost-benefit analysis should be conducted on this proposed project.**

(75sscE&H)