

FGBNMS NEWS UPDATES
FOR HOUSTON AREA DIVE CLUBS

OCTOBER 2018

1. HI-A-389

- In July 2018, Partial Removal of HI-A389A was completed by W&T
- Platform was mechanically cut at 70 ft below the surface. Structure and associated marine community remains intact from 70 ft to 410 ft.
- An “aid to nav” buoy is place. Will soon be replaced with a std Sanctuary buoy.

2. EXPANSION PROCESS

- The process to expand the Sanctuary by adding 15 banks to the three currently protected banks is moving forward. Several steps remain to complete. Earliest finish could be late 2019.
- The Advisory Council accepted the recommendations from the Expansion Work Group on “revised boundaries” for the new banks. The Sanctuary will expand from current 56 sq. mi to 206 sq. mi. This expanded area is a reduction from the 383 sq mi recommended by the Sanctuary. Push back on boundary sizes mainly by Offshore Energy interests.

3. MASS MORTALITY

- Uncertainty remains in identifying the cause of the July 2016 mass mortality on a portion of the EFGB reef.
- Low oxygen level is the most likely “contributor” (not necessarily the cause) to the mortality.
- Monitoring and studies remain ongoing.

4. REQUEST TO DIVERS TO DISINFECT YOUR DIVE GEAR

- A “coral disease” detected in the FL Keys reefs in 2014 rapidly spread across 200 linear miles of FL reefs leaving thousands of colonies of coral dead.
- Marine scientists still don’t know what caused it but there is great concern that may be a contagious pathogen that could be carried in wetsuits and other dive gear.
- The FGBNMS is now asking divers to disinfect their dive gear before diving in the FGBNMS. The Sanctuary has provided Fling Charters with disinfectant.
- Disinfectant is a chlorhexidine solution, eg. Dynahex, Beta Sep, Durvet. An alternate is Odo Ban sold at Walmart. (5 oz per gallon, rinse for 10 mins).
- Better safe than sorry! PLS HELP TO PROTECT THE REEF. SANITIZE YOUR GEAR!