



## **Gray's Reef NMS Research Area Scoping until April 21, 2008.**

The public comment period on the proposal to establish a research area within Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary is open and will remain open until April 21. The concept of a research area was first introduced in 1999 as part of the early stages of the Management Plan review process.

If established, a research area would be a smaller area within the existing boundaries of the sanctuary. The size and shape of a research area will be determined through this public process where all constituents of the sanctuary are encouraged to participate and offer their views. However an overriding sanctuary goal is that the research area be created in such a way as to best replicate habitats of the entire sanctuary in a smaller area to make sure that it is representative of the sanctuary as a whole.

Full details about the research area proposal and the on-going public process can be found on the Sanctuary's website at <http://graysreef.noaa.gov/researcharea.html> and <http://graysreef.noaa.gov/rascoping.html>.

During this time we want to hear from all our constituents through email, fax, standard mail, or in public meetings. Feel free to contact Stewardship Coordinator Becky Shortland with any questions (912 598 2381; [becky.shortland@noaa.gov](mailto:becky.shortland@noaa.gov)).

It is anticipated that an official proposal in the form of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) may be available in 2009 with more public comment to follow.

- Email - [grnms.researcharea@noaa.gov](mailto:grnms.researcharea@noaa.gov)
- Fax – 912 598 2367
- Standard mail – 10 Ocean Science Circle, Savannah, GA 31411
- Public meetings (all 6-8 p.m.)
  - March 18 - Camden Public Library, 1410 Highway 40 East, Kingsland, GA
  - March 20 - Armstrong Center, 13040 Abercorn St., Savannah, GA
  - March 24 - Statesboro Regional Library, 124 South Main St., Statesboro, GA
  - March 25 - Stevens Wetlands Education Center, 600 Cedar St., Richmond Hill, GA
  - March 27 - Best Western Sea Island Inn, 1015 Bay St., Beaufort, SC