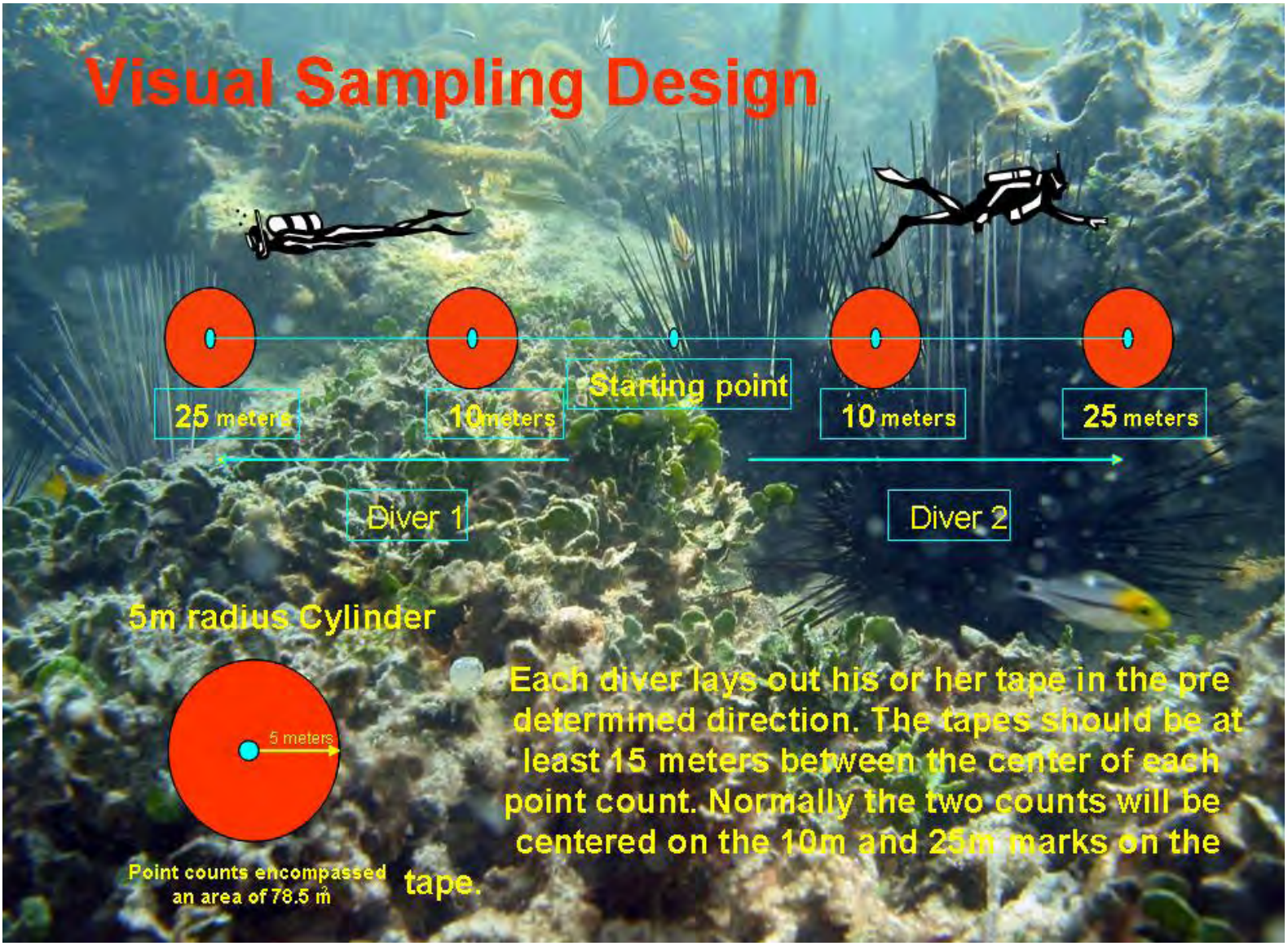


Development of a comprehensive coral reef ichthyofauna research plan

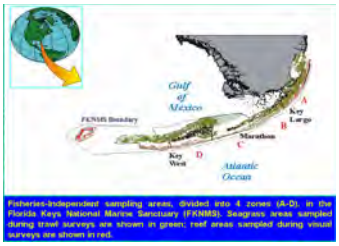
Introduction:
There is a considerable need to evaluate the status of coral reef-associated ichthyofauna given the well-documented decline of the coral reef in South Florida. Several coral reef fish monitoring programs are currently underway in South Florida using various methods. Differences in methods used in these programs make it difficult to integrate the results and at a large spatial scale such as South Florida.

Objectives:
The objectives of this proposal are:

1. To review and evaluate the existing FWRI reef fish program and other coral reef fish monitoring programs, and
2. Develop a comprehensive sampling strategy for monitoring coral reef fish species in South Florida.

Approach:
The determination of an appropriate sampling design for a reef fish monitoring program in south Florida will be an iterative process. First, data collected by different research programs will be reviewed and compiled. Second, a workshop convening all the entities monitoring reef fishes in south Florida will be organized to review existing projects and to discuss the integration of sampling programs. After completion of the analyses, results will be disseminated among participants and independent reviewers, and a comprehensive sampling strategy for monitoring coral reef fishes in south Florida will be developed.

Benefits:
We will develop an effective approach to sampling reef fish in south Florida suitable for tracking relative changes in fish size and abundance between years that can be used by all monitoring programs.



Fisheries-Independent sampling areas, divided into 4 zones (A-D), in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS). Seagrass areas sampled during trawl surveys are shown in green; reef areas sampled during visual surveys are shown in red.

Location:
Our project is located in the Florida Keys, but the results will be relevant to any location monitoring coral reef fishes.

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