



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

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Charge to Peer Reviewers for Johnson's Seagrass Peer Review Plan- ID426

Description:

The manuscript from *Frontiers in Marine Science* provides rationale that the seagrass species previously thought to be the unique taxon *Halophila johnsonii* is actually a clone of the broadly distributed Indo-Pacific species *H. ovalis*. Research published in this paper was funded by NMFS-SERO and results will likely lead to a change in the Endangered Species Act listing status of *H. johnsonii*.

Charge statement to Peer Reviewers:

- 1) Are the genetic methods (laboratory and statistical) used in this research appropriate and sufficient?
- 2) Does the research provided in this paper constitute the best available scientific (in this case, genetic) information on Johnson sea grass?
- 3) From a genetics perspective (i.e., without additional information on taxonomy), do the data support that *H. johnsonii* is synonymous with *H. ovalis* (i.e., a population of, rather than a separate species from, *H. ovalis*)

