

Golden Crab Data Report

May 2015

Background: At the March 2015 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting in St. Simons, Georgia, the Council gave direction to staff to research what data might be available to inform a discussion regarding the opening of additional areas as part of the Northern Golden Crab Allowable Fishing Zone (NGCAFZ).

Data sources: The Southeast Fishery Science Center was contacted in April of 2015. They reported that they had no specific information on historic golden crab research that would contribute to understanding whether or not opening additional areas in the NGCAFZ is prudent.

Members of the Golden Crab AP have reported they could get records showing where previous golden crab fishermen had fished in areas that are currently closed as part of the current Miami-Stetson Terrace HAPC.

There are two reports from the same research project completed by SC DNR in the mid-1980s (Wenner and Ulrich, 1986; Wenner and Ulrich, 1987) that systematically fished for golden crab in an area that encompasses part of the current Miami-Stetson Terrace HAPC. These data points captured depth, catch rate, and sediment type. Wenner and Ulrich's research documented the depths and bottom types where golden crab traps were most likely to encounter the highest concentration of crabs. Data were collected at 97 different locations, some inside the HAPC. Some sites had no golden crab landings.

There were no other data sources identified that could be used to help inform absence or presence of golden crab in or near the NGCAFZ.