



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

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F/SER24:SG

Dr. Michelle Duval
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405

Michelle

Dear ~~Dr.~~ Duval:

This letter is to inform you of the need for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (Gulf and South Atlantic Councils) to implement accountability measures for the spiny lobster fishery. Recent landings received from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission show that landings of spiny lobster have exceeded the annual catch target (ACT).

Amendment 10 to the Fishery Management Plan for Spiny Lobster in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic set an annual catch limit (ACL) of 7.32 million pounds and an ACT of 6.59 million pounds for spiny lobster. The ACL was set equal to the acceptable biological catch (ABC), which was based on the Gulf Council's ABC control rule, where the ABC is equal to the mean landings during the 2000/2001-2009/2010 fishing seasons plus 1.5 standard deviations of the mean. The ACT was set at 90 percent of the ACL. All harvest parameters are for both the commercial and recreational sectors combined.

The ACT was also established as the accountability measure for the spiny lobster fishery. If the ACT is met, the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils are expected to convene a review panel to assess whether or not corrective action is needed to prevent the ACL from being exceeded. If the review panel determines corrective action is needed, an amendment may be developed to implement management measures intended to limit harvest below the ACL or to adjust the harvest parameters themselves. A review panel was convened February 9, 2015, because the landings for the 2013/2014 fishing season exceeded the ACT; however, no recommendations for additional management measures were submitted by that panel.

For the 2014/2015 fishing season, commercial and recreational landings were 6,976,474 pounds. Thus, landings have again exceeded the ACT and the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils should convene another review panel. I request that you consider beginning the process of creating the panel at your next meeting.

Sincerely,

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator

