

**DISCUSSION PAPER
MODIFICATIONS TO THE ROCK SHRIMP LIMITED ACCESS PERMIT PROGRAM
JOINT SHRIMP AND DEEPWATER SHRIMP AP MEETING
APRIL 20, 2012**

BACKGROUND: The South Atlantic Rock Shrimp Limited Access Program was implemented in 2003 through Shrimp Amendment 5 in order to manage and limit participation in the rock shrimp fishery. The program included a use-or-lose policy in which permit holders must report 15,000 lbs in one of four consecutive fishing years, but this requirement was removed with Amendment 7.

Currently there are about 100 valid Limited Access permits, but landings data indicate only about 25-35% are actively participating in the rock shrimp fishery. If a permit expires, it can no longer be used by another fisherman. Additionally, new entrants must purchase a limited access permit from another permit holder although not all permits are being used.

In Amendment 5, it is noted that the Rock Shrimp Advisory Panel felt that the rock shrimp industry could support at most 150 vessels. There were 155 original Rock Shrimp Limited Access Permits.

QUESTION 1: HOW MANY VESSELS CAN THE FISHERY SUSTAIN? WHAT IS THE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM NUMBER OF VESSELS? WHAT IS IDEAL?

QUESTION 2: IS IT OK TO HAVE LATENT PERMITS (I.E., WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ALL CURRENT PERMITS BECAME ACTIVE)?

A

Revert unused RSLA permits to be re-issued

This would require three parts: 1) defining “unused” through a participation requirement (such as minimum pounds landed); 2) revoking unused permits, and 3) finding a way to re-issue permits to interested fishermen.

Question: How would you define unused?

Question: Who would be eligible to receive an RSLA through re-issuance? First come, first served; lottery; etc.

B

Maintain a minimum number of RSLA permits

This would require the Council defining a minimum number of permits; stating how and to whom to issue new permits to maintain the minimum number of permits; specify a trigger to issue new permits.

Question: What is the minimum number and what should it be based on?

Question: Who would be eligible to receive an RSLA through re-issuance? First come first served; lottery; etc.

Question: Should there be criteria that would trigger the issuance of new permits? For example, there could be an annual issuance of new permits to replace any permits lost in the previous year, or there could be new permits issued every [X] years to replace lost permits.

C

Facilitate transfers of RSLA permits

Typically, management entities do not interfere with markets for transferable permits but there are some actions that may help facilitate transfers of unused permits. These could include (proactively) providing contact information on unused RSLA permits to interested fishermen on a regular basis; setting up a website to help connect sellers to buyers; buying latent permits and re-selling to new entrants.

Question: Do RSLA permits have value (how much)?

Question: What would be helpful for fishermen wanting to buy an RSLA permit?