

Workshop Meeting of the Golden Crab Advisory Panel

Fairfield Inn & Suites
Dania Beach, Florida

January 23, 2015

The Golden Crab AP met in workshop format to discuss potential modifications to the Allowable Golden Crab Fishing Zones. Present at the meeting were:

AP Members present:

Brad Whipple, Vice-Chairman
Nuno Almeida
Chip Bethel
Theresa Coppa
Randy Manchester
David Nielsen
Howard Rau
Glenn Ulrich

AP Member not present:

Robert Palma, Chairman

Council Staff present:

Brian Chevront

Others in Attendance:

Bill Kelley, Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association

The AP met to discuss and make recommendations to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council regarding potential modifications to the golden crab fishing zones. The AP members discussed which zones they wanted the Council to consider for modifications and made suggestions for modifications within the zones.

AP recommendations:

- Modifications should only be considered for the Northern Zone at this time. The AP recommends not considering modifications to the Middle Zone, or the Southern Zone at this time.
- Modification recommendations being made by the AP are based on areas that have been historically fished, or may have potential for being good golden crab fishing areas.

- AP members stressed that they wanted to stay out of any areas where there might be bottom structures such as coral mounds because getting golden crab fishing gear in these areas could result in costly gear damage.
- One AP member wanted to point out that the Northern Zone at one point was the largest of the fishing areas, but currently is the smallest, limited to an area between Latitudes 28 and 29. Gear conflicts have been reported between permit holders in the Northern Zone.
- The AP recommends opening areas to golden crab fishing within the Miami-Stetson HAPC to all areas less than 2400' in depth while avoiding known coral structures.
- AP members said that while the maps they viewed showed areas that had been mapped, there are some other areas where it is known whether corals are present or not. Ideally, they would have liked to see maps with this additional information, as well, as depth contour information on top of the mapped areas.
- The AP would like to see mapped areas where other golden crab research (e.g. Wenner & Ulrich, 1986; 1987) shows the presence of golden crab within the Miami-Stetson HAPC where there were no bottom structures encountered. AP members reported that prior to the Miami-Stetson HAPC, golden crab fishing did occur in Northern Zone areas now currently closed.

Several of the AP members stated they are planning to attend the SAFMC Golden Crab Committee meeting at the March 2015 Council meeting.