



**MAGNUSON - STEVENS ACT SCOPING DOCUMENT:**

**THE SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL'S  
SHRIMP AMENDMENT 7  
(ROCK SHRIMP)**

**NOVEMBER 2007**

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**Scoping meetings are less formal than public hearings and occur prior to the Council taking any position on a management issue. When the Council is considering the need for management, scoping meetings provide an opportunity for members of the public to make suggestions BEFORE the Council has made any decisions.**

The purpose of this document is to request that the public provide input on possible options that the Council should examine to (a) remove the 15,000 pound rock shrimp landings requirement, (b) reinstate rock shrimp limited entry endorsements/permits lost due to not meeting the 15,000 pound requirement or not meeting the renewal requirement, and (c) require all shrimp permit holders to provide economic data if selected.

## **I. BACKGROUND**

**Shrimp Amendment 1/EA** (January 1996) added rock shrimp to the management unit, prohibited trawling for rock shrimp in the Oculina area with a 100 fathom depth limit, required a dealer permit, required a vessel permit, required a vessel operator's permit, and required dealer reporting.

**Shrimp Amendment 4/EA** (included in the Council's Comprehensive Amendment Addressing Sustainable Fishery Act Definitions and Other Required Provisions; October 1998) included reporting requirements as specified in the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP); included fishing communities; and specified MSY for rock shrimp as 6,829,449 pounds, OY for rock shrimp as equal to MSY, and the overfished definition for rock shrimp as two standard deviations above mean landings for the period 1986-1994.

**Shrimp Amendment 5/EIS** (January 2002; mesh size effective 2/18/03, operator permits effective 5/16/03, limited access endorsement effective 7/15/03, and VMS effective 10/14/03) included the following measures for the rock shrimp fishery:

1. Establish a limited access program for the rock shrimp fishery south of the GA/SC line; owner to receive a fully transferable permit. A limited access permit would be required for harvest and possession of rock shrimp south of the GA/SC line.
  - a. Held a valid rock shrimp permit prior to 12/31/2000.
  - b. At least 15,000 pounds of rock shrimp landings in any one calendar year from 1997-2000.
  - c. If a limited access rock shrimp permit is "not active" during a 48 month period (4 calendar year period; 2004-2007) it will not be renewed. Limited access permitted vessels would have to show documented landings of at least 15,000 pounds of rock shrimp in one out of four calendar years (2004-2007) in order to retain this permit.
  - d. A rock shrimp limited access permit is defined as inactive when the vessel it is attached to has less than 15,000 pounds of documented rock shrimp harvested from the EEZ within the SAFMC's area of jurisdiction in a calendar year.

2. Require vessel operator's permits.
3. Require that the minimum mesh size for a tail bag of a rock shrimp trawl, above the 2 inch rings, be at least 40 meshes of 1 and 7/8 inch stretched mesh at the cod end.
4. Require VMS for all vessels fishing for rock shrimp in SAFMC' area.

The rule was written such that a "Limited Access Endorsement" was required rather than the separate limited access permit identified in Amendment 5. Information included in Amendment 5 estimated that at least 168 vessels would qualify.

**Shrimp Amendment 6/SEIS** (December 2004) (1) transferred authority to make appropriate revisions to the BRD Testing Protocol to NMFS; (2) specified a reduction in the total weight of finfish of at least 30% for new BRDs to be certified; (3) adopted the ACCSP Release, Discard and Protected Species Module as the preferred methodology to monitor and assess bycatch. Until this module is fully funded, require the use of a variety of sources to assess and monitor bycatch including, observers, logbooks, state cooperation, grants, and federal shrimp permits; (4) required BRDs on all rock shrimp trips in the South Atlantic; (5) required federal penaeid shrimp permits; (6) revised status determination criteria for penaeid shrimp; and (7) revised status determination criteria for rock shrimp (MSY/OY is the mean total landings for the South Atlantic 1986-2000 [4,912,927 pounds], overfishing is a rate that led to annual landings larger than two standard deviations above MSY [14,687,775 pounds] for two consecutive years, and overfished is a parent stock size less than 1/2 Bmsy for two consecutive years).

The Council is holding three scoping meetings (locations and dates below) and collecting written comments on potential actions for Amendment 7. **Written comments must be received by 5 pm on January 18, 2008.** Comments can be mailed to the Council at the address on the cover or they can be emailed to: [ShrimpAm7Scoping@safmc.net](mailto:ShrimpAm7Scoping@safmc.net)

This scoping document is being distributed prior to the scoping meetings to give everyone a chance to prepare comments. Copies of the scoping document will also be available at the following scoping meetings (detailed location information is shown later of this document):

**Scoping Meeting Dates and Locations**

Cape Canaveral, FL	November 15, 2007	6 pm
Atlantic Beach, NC	December 3, 2007	7 pm
North Charleston, SC	January 16, 2008	6 pm

## **II. CURRENT SITUATION**

Analyses included in Amendment 5 indicated that approximately 168 vessels would qualify for the South Atlantic Limited Access Rock Shrimp Permit. After implementation and appeals, limited access rock shrimp endorsements were issued to 155 vessels.

Based on data from 1/1/03 through 7/6/07, there are a total of 138 vessels that either have active rock shrimp endorsements (113 vessels) or their endorsements have expired but they are still within the time period to renew them (25).

Of these 138 vessels, it appears that only **80** vessels would meet the 15,000 pound landings (assumed to be heads-on or whole weight) requirement in any given year between 2003 and 2006 (Note: Final numbers will be based on catches from 2004 through 2007.). So, at this time, we can only say that, given current information, it appears that approximately 50% or so of the endorsement holders (active or could still become active) would meet the landings requirements, and thus that 50% could lose their endorsements should the requirement not be eliminated or changed in some manner. Information suggests that this result is based on economic conditions in part, but also on relatively low abundance in one or two of the years being considered.

### **III. PRELIMINARY SHRIMP OPTIONS**

#### **Issue #1. The 15,000 pound landing requirement.**

Alternative 1. No Action.

This would retain the 15,000 pound landing requirement and could result in up to one-half of the permits not being renewed.

Alternative 2. Remove the 15,000 pound requirement.

The Rock Shrimp Advisory Panel supports this alternative. Individuals not on the Advisory Panel have expressed concern about removing the requirement because they have made the effort to have landings and feel that opportunity was available to everyone.

Alternative 3. Extend the time allowed to meet the 15,000 pound requirement for not more than 2 years; this would allow a total of 6 years.

Alternative 4. Allow application for renewal as an inactive permit holder.

This would keep the 15,000 pound requirement but allow those individual that do not meet the requirement to renew as an inactive permit holder.

#### **Issue #2. Permits lost due to not meeting the 15,000 pound requirement by 12/31/07.**

Alternative 1. No Action.

This alternative could result in up to one-half of the permits not being renewed.

Alternative 2. Reinstate permits lost due to not meeting the 15,000 pound requirement.

The Rock Shrimp Advisory Panel supports this alternative.

#### **Issue #3. Permits lost through failure to renew the limited entry rock shrimp endorsement.**

Alternative 1. No Action.

Input received during the Rock Shrimp AP meeting indicated that a number of individuals did not renew their endorsements because it was not as clear to them as it would have been had a separate limited access permit been issued.

Alternative 2. Reinstate permits lost through failure to renew the limited entry rock shrimp endorsement.

The Rock Shrimp Advisory Panel supports this alternative.

**Issue #4. Require all shrimp permit holders to provide economic data if selected.**

Alternative 1. No Action.

This would continue to prevent the Council from conducting the legally-mandated economic analyses. Without such analyses it is difficult to fully understand how proposed management measures would impact shrimp fishermen and dealers.

Alternative 2. Require all shrimp permit holders to provide economic data if selected.

This alternative would allow NMFS to collect economic data for shrimp fishermen and dealers. When such data become available, the Council would be able to conduct the analyses required by the Magnuson-Steven Act and other applicable law. This would also allow the Council to fully understand how proposed management measures would impact shrimp fishermen and dealers.

**SHRIMP AMENDMENT 7  
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING SITES AND DATES**

**Scoping meetings on 11/15/07 and 1/16/08 begin at 6 p.m.; 12/3/07 scoping meeting begins at 7 p.m.**

Thursday, 11/15/07 (6 pm)

Radisson Resort at the Port  
8701 Astronaut Boulevard  
Cape Canaveral, FL 32920  
Phone: 321-784-0000

Monday, 12/3/07 (7 pm)

Sheraton Atlantic Beach  
2717 W. Fort Macon Road  
Atlantic Beach, North Carolina 28512  
Phone: 252-240-1155

Wednesday, 1/16/08 (6 pm)

Hilton Garden Inn Charleston Airport  
5265 International Boulevard  
North Charleston, SC 29418  
Phone: 843-308-9330

**Written comments must be received by 5 pm on January 18, 2008.  
The Council accepts comments sent by mail, fax, or E-mail  
(ShrimpAm7Scoping@safmc.net).**

**What Next?**

Comments should be provided to the Council by 5 pm on January 18, 2008. All comments will be considered by the Council in drafting Amendment 7 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan. There will be a number of opportunities to provide public input as the Council develops this document.

**Timing for Shrimp Amendment 7 (Rock Shrimp):**

- Scoping through January 18, 2008
- Council reviews scoping comments and Options Paper & provides direction to Staff/Team – March 3-7, 2008 meeting in Jekyll Island, GA
- Scientific & Statistical Committee reviews Amendment/Environmental Assessment – June 8-10, 2008 meeting in Orlando, FL
- Council approves Amendment/Environmental Assessment for public hearings – June 9-13, 2008 meeting in Orlando, FL
- Public hearings – August/September 2008 with final one on September 15, 2008 during the Council meeting in Charleston, SC
- Council reviews public hearing input and approves actions – September 15-19, 2008 meeting in Charleston, SC
- Council reviews and approves final Amendment/Environmental Assessment for formal review by the Secretary of Commerce – December 1-5, 2008 meeting in Wilmington, NC; Send for Secretarial Review December 2008.
- Intent to have regulations in place – April 1, 2009



## **APPENDIX A**

### ***South Atlantic Fishery Management Council 2007-2008 Membership***

**The names of the Council Members who serve on the Shrimp Committee appear in bold.**

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