

**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Spiny Lobster Committee and Full Council Motions Report
Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel
Bon Secour Ballroom
Mobile, Alabama
February 1 and 2, 2012**

Gulf Council Committee Members:

Chair	Crabtree/Steele/Branstetter
Simpson, V. Chair	Perret
Fischer	McCawley

The agenda was adopted as written. The minutes from the October 26, 2011 Gulf Spiny Lobster Committee were adopted without modification (**Tab F, No. 2**).

Dr. Simmons summarized the South Atlantic Council meeting report from the December 2011 (**Tab F, No. 3**). Ms. Muehlstein summarized both the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils public hearings and written comments (**Tabs F, No. 4 a and b**). Dr. Simmons gave an overview of the changes in Amendment 11 since the committee reviewed it in October. She also summarized the staff meeting with industry representative Mr. Kelly, director of the Florida Keys Commercial Fishing Association in November. During this meeting Mr. Kelly requested that some of the proposed closed areas under Preferred Alternative 3 be reviewed closely to determine if some of them could be reduced in size by splitting them into smaller areas. There were three areas: 2, 15, and 30 that staff had prepared to present to the committee for their consideration based on the distance between the elkhorn and staghorn colonies and the understanding that no other coral species were in the larger areas that needed protection.

Based on public testimony Mr. Simpson ask Mr. Kelly to comment on the additional areas 14 and 48 that had also been recommended during public hearings to split into smaller areas. He stated that those areas were not discussed during the industry meeting with staff and were currently not part of the group's recommendation. The committee discussed splitting these larger areas (i.e., 2, 15, and 30) into smaller areas and the fact that the draft proposed rule they had in front of them did not reflect these changes. Mr. Grimes reminded the committee the same proposed rule deemed by the Gulf Council would need to be deemed by the South Atlantic Council. Dr. Branstetter informed the group that proposed rule could reflect the changes the committee was considering by full Council and the 56 closed areas would be renumbered for a total of 60 closed areas.

The committee recommends and I so move: **to subdivide proposed closed area into 2 closed areas, proposed area 15 into 3 closed areas, and proposed closed area 30 into 2 closed areas.**

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.

APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL.

The committee discussed the preferred alternatives in Action 1 and 2. There were no modifications to the current preferred alternatives. There was a short discussion about closing the proposed areas to all lobster fishing, but the committee made no changes to their Preferred Alternative 3, Option a.

Mr. Grimes and Dr. Crabtree expressed some concerns about the trap rope marking requirements remaining status quo. They ask that Ms. McCawley comment on the cooperative research program that had been initiated with Florida FWC and the spiny lobster trap industry in Marathon. She stated they had a plan to initiate testing of several different methods of trap rope marking.

The committee recommends and I so move: to send Spiny Lobster Amendment 11 to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation.

Modified Motion: The committee recommends and I so move: **to send Spiny Lobster Amendment 11 to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation and deem the regulations as necessary and appropriate.**

Motion carried by roll call vote.

APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL.

Mr. Simpson reminded the committee that Florida FWC had now taken over the role of stone crab species and their hybrids.

The committee recommends and I so move: **to disband the Stone Crab Advisory Panel and to change the name of the Special Spiny Lobster/Stone Crab SSC to the Special Spiny Lobster SSC.**

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.

APPROVED BY FULL COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report.