SUMMARY REPORT

Joint Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panel Meeting
April 20th, 2012
Charleston, SC

The Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panels (APs) met in Charleston on Friday, April 20th to discuss two main agenda items: measures included in Shrimp Amendment 9, and expansion of Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (included in Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3). The APs were to receive a remote presentation from NMFS Protected Resources Division staff on the listing status of Atlantic sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act and the Biological Opinion for South Atlantic shrimp fisheries, however technical difficulties with the webinar service precluded this from occurring. Below is a summary of APs discussions, including motions developed during the meeting.
('*' denotes the Action and Alternative language from an amendment)

MOTION #1: APS APPROVE THE AGENDA
APPROVED BY APS

MOTION #2: APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES
APPROVED BY APS

SAFMC Process and Advisory Panels' Role
After a presentation by Kim Iverson on the SAFMC process and the role of APs, the groups had considerable discussion about the public scoping process and solicitation of AP input prior to development of scoping materials. The following motion pertains to this discussion:

MOTION #3: SHRIMP APS RECOMMEND ANY AP BE INVOLVED ON ANY MEASURES RELATIVE TO THEM PRIOR TO PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS
APPROVED BY APS

Shrimp Amendment 9
The APs discussed the measures that are currently being developed in Shrimp Amendment 9, including specifying additional criteria that triggers states ability to request a concurrent closure of the penaeid shrimp fisheries in adjacent EEZ waters during severe winter weather; modifying the process for a state to request such a concurrent closure; and revising the overfished status determination criteria (B_{MSY} proxy) for the South Atlantic pink shrimp stock.

MOTION #4: APS SUPPORT ALTERNATIVE 3 (ACTION 1) AND OPTION B (UNDER ACTION 2, ALTERNATIVE 2)
APPROVED BY APS
*Action 1. Specify additional criteria that triggers states' ability to request a concurrent closure of the penaeid shrimp fisheries in the adjacent EEZ during severe winter weather.

Alternative 3. A state may request a concurrent closure upon providing information that demonstrates an exceeded threshold for water temperature. Water temperature must be 8°C (46°F) or below for at least a week.

*Action 2. Modify the process for a state to request a concurrent closure of the penaeid shrimp fisheries in the adjacent EEZ during severe winter weather.
Alternative 2. A state requesting a concurrent closure would send a letter directly to NOAA Fisheries Service with the request and necessary data to demonstrate that criteria have been met.
Option b) Data would be submitted directly for review by NOAA Fisheries Service.

The intent with the APs motion above is to recommend temperature threshold criteria (as identified in Action 1, Alternative 3) as the required criteria a state must demonstrate to request a concurrent closure, not in addition to current criteria requirements (as identified in Action 1, No Action).

MOTION #5: APS RECOMMEND THE DEVELOPMENT BY THE SHRIMP REVIEW PANEL OF ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS OF OVERFISHED LEVEL FOR PINK SHRIMP AS APPROPRIATE; AND SUPPORT THE IDENTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF SHRIMP ABUNDANCE DATA TO EITHER SUPPLEMENT OR REPLACE THE SEAMAP SURVEY
APPROVED BY APS

Regarding the previous motion, the following recommendations were brought forth by John Williams and Richard Vendetti for the Shrimp Review Panel's discussion on the overfished proxy for pink shrimp:

1. Any new MSST definition for pink shrimp must achieve the objective of preventing the triggering of statutory requirements to rebuild stocks through fishing mortality controls whenever fishing mortality is not the cause for the pink shrimp stock abundance to fall below the MSST.

2. Any proposed MSST definition for pink shrimp must be submitted for review and comment by the Shrimp AP and the public at large prior to final Council consideration.

3. Consider whether the current definition of MSY for pink shrimp is appropriate and if a revision of the MSY definition should be part of the process to redefine MSST.

4. Consider and, if appropriate, incorporate new modeling methodologies developed by the NMFS SEFSC for pink shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico which were specifically designed to address a similar problem.

5. Ensure that data used for determining annual pink shrimp abundance relative to the MSST includes the full range of the stock and is otherwise of sufficient quantity and quality to achieve the objective set forth in item 1 above.

Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3

The APs discussed the measures in CE-BA 3 that consider expansion of the Oculina Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC), Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC, and Cape Lookout Coral HAPC. For the alternatives to expand the northern Oculina HAPC boundary (Action 1 alternatives), the APs developed an additional recommendation that would allow for a shrimp fishery access area within a portion of the existing Oculina HAPC in the southern area where it is considered by the APs to be muddy bottom and productive rock shrimp habitat. During discussion of the transit provision alternative for Oculina HAPC (Action 1, Alternative 4) the APs recommended modifications to the alternative language based on feasibility of stowing gear while in transit. The APs discussed the measure that considers expansion of Cape Lookout Coral HAPC, but no specific recommendations were made for this Action.

The following motions were made:

MOTION #6: NO ACTION
NOT APPROVED
*This motion refers to APs endorsement of Action 1, Alternative 1 as preferred for this measure. (Action 1 would expand the boundaries of Oculina Bank HAPC.)

Following the meeting, the APs further clarified their intent with the above motion:
The APs are in support of having a No Action alternative available as a viable alternative, but chose not to designate it as their preferred at the time. The APs presented data at the meeting that indicates where shrimp trawling occurs. The APs stated that areas where trawling does not occur is the area containing structure, reliefs and coral formation that is not conducive to rock shrimp production. The APs stated that choosing No Action for this measure would not endanger existing Oculina coral from the shrimp fishery because they will only fish where they have fished in the past.

MOTION #7: SUPPORT MIKE MERRIFIELD'S RECOMMENDATION TO FOLLOW NORTH TO SOUTH METERS THE FOLLOWING WESTERN BOUNDARY MODIFICATION: 70 TO 90 METERS (NORTH TO SOUTH). NORTHERN BOUNDARY IS 29 DEGREES 43.5 MINS; SOUTHERN BOUNDARY IS 27 DEGREES 30 MINS. (THIS ALLOWS FOR A SHRIMP FISHERY ACCESS AREA IN EXISTING SOUTHERN BOUNDARY)
APPROVED BY APS AS PREFERRED

Following the meeting, the APs further clarified their intent with the above motion. The list below reflects the APs preferred measures for extension of Oculina Bank HAPC with the addition of a transit provision as identified in Motion #10.

1. For the Oculina HAPC northern boundary proposed extension:
   Use a modified set of points collected from various captains that have fished the areas for decades to accomplish both protection of Oculina corals and structural habitat and preservation of traditional, highly productive rock shrimp fishing areas. The proposed extension is represented by the following coordinates:

2830.000N 08004.000W
2832.462N 08004.876W
2841.279N 08005.071W
2844.230N 08005.434W
2846.251N 08006.124W
2849.262N 08006.596W
2852.996N 08007.520W
2855.000N 08007.466W
2855.995N 08007.848W
2904.742N 08010.200W
2909.533N 08011.786W
2929.454N 08014.978W
2936.711N 08015.884W
2936.705N 08013.982W
2928.432N 08012.780W
2912.494N 08009.242W
2910.999N 08008.653W
2906.671N 08008.252W
2901.113N 08007.206W
2858.642N 08006.492W
2853.984N 08005.438W
2847.093N 08004.090W
2839.008N 08002.872W
2836.570N 08002.344W
2830.000N 08001.039W

2. For the Oculina HAPC western boundary proposed extension:
The area between the two Oculina satellite sites has not had any rock shrimp fishing activity however, there are historical rock shrimp production areas in both sections, with substantial production to the south of the southern satellite in the western extension. The APs feel that the area within the proposed extension of the western boundary might be a candidate for a Shrimp Fishery Access Area.

3. Existing Oculina HAPC:
The APs are interested in development of a Shrimp Fishery Access Area from the north end of the Oculina HAPC, following the 90-100 meter contour to the west and the 140 meter contour to the east, to the south end of the Oculina HAPC. This would connect highly productive rock shrimp bottom south of the Oculina HAPC to that which exists to the north of the CHAPC. This would restore the contiguous rock shrimp fishing area that existed prior to creation of the Oculina HAPC and still protect the coral and structured habitat bottom that exists within the Oculina HAPC for which it was intended.
The proposed Shrimp Fishery Access Area is represented by the following coordinates:

2730.000N 07958.074W
2746.193N 07957.396W

2753.000N 07957.600W
2807.166N 07958.547W
2815.721N 07959.270W
2819.377N 07959.663W
2823.307N 08000.196W
2830.000N 08001.042W
2830.000N 07958.660W
2824.100N 07957.930W
2805.300N 07956.030W
2753.200N 07955.500W
2730.000N 07955.560W

MOTION #8: ACTION 1, SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2B
NOT APPROVED
*This motion refers to APs endorsement of Action 1, Sub-Alternative 2b as preferred for this measure. (Action 1, Sub-Alternative 2b would modify the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank HAPC. The west and east boundaries would follow the 70 meter and 90 meter depth contour lines.)

Following the meeting, the APs further clarified their intent with the above motion:
The APs would like to use Action 1, Sub-Alternative 2b as a baseline from which to create their preferred alternative. The APs appreciated the work by Council staff to present various options for the northern expansion of the Oculina HAPC. The APs pointed out the VMS activity as presented was not a good indicator of overall value of an area represented as a percentage of total VMS activity but did indicate, of these alternatives, which eliminated the most/least activity. The APs considered Action 1, Sub-Alternative 2b to be a good baseline from which to develop a preferred option that preserves valuable rock shrimp production areas. All other sub-alternatives encompassed large areas of soft substrate, highly productive, rock shrimp bottom.

MOTION #9: FOR THE NEXT ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, RECOMMEND THAT MIKE MERRIFIELD BE PRESENT TO REPRESENT APS DISCUSSION
APPROVED BY APS

MOTION #10: APS ENDORSE TRANSIT PROVISION ALTERNATIVE 4 AS AMENDED: STOWING MEANS DOORS IN RACKS AND NETS OUT OF WATER; MAINTAIN A MINIMUM SPEED OF 5 KNOTS; IN THE EVENT MINIMAL SPEED IS NOT SUSTAINABLE, VESSEL MUST COMMUNICATE TO APPROPRIATE CONTACT
APPROVED BY APS

Following the meeting, the APs further clarified their intent with the above motion:
A transit provision must be included in any expansion proposal that extends the Oculina HAPC. The AP has concerns about safety and fuel efficiency issues among others that require transit capability to be in place.

MOTION #11: APS RECOMMEND ALTERNATIVE 3 (ACTION 2) AS PREFERRED, WITH THE ADDITION OF A TRANSIT/DISABLED VESSEL PROVISION
APPROVED BY APS
*Action 2. Expand Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC to incorporate a Lophelia site off Jacksonville.
Alternative 3. Modify the Coral AP recommendation for expanding Stetson-Miami Terrace HAPC to include area of mapped habitat within the expansion, and exclude areas of royal red fishery activity based on VMS data.

South Atlantic Royal Red and Rock Shrimp Fisheries
Council staff provided a presentation to the APs on the royal red shrimp fishery, including a briefing on landings and participation. The presentation had also been provided to the Shrimp Committee at the March council meeting and the Committee requested additional information from the APs on any vessels harvesting royal red shrimp that may not have VMS. Several members of the APs reported that there were no royal red vessels that did not also harvest rock shrimp, and therefore all royal red vessels had VMS. In regards to Gulf vessels, AP members reported that all known Gulf vessels that harvest royal red shrimp have Rock Shrimp Limited Access (RSLA) permits. The overall AP position is that all royal red vessels harvesting in the South Atlantic have VMS.

The APs also received a presentation on the limited entry program in the rock shrimp fishery, including a description of limited entry permits and potential latent permits. This presentation was also provided to the Shrimp Committee at the March council meeting. The APs discussed some of the issues with latent permits and potential mechanisms to address the decreasing number of RSLA permits. At this time, the APs did not make specific recommendations but will continue to monitor the limited entry program and discuss ways to modify provisions to maintain availability of RSLA permits.

Other Business
Following the meeting, in email discussion among the APs, a request was made that the next meeting of the joint Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs be held in conjunction with the Coral Advisory Panel, with a preference in locale of Florida near the Cape Canaveral area.