

SUMMARY REPORT
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Via Webinar
January 23, 2026

The Council approved the agenda and the Joint Habitat and Ecosystem and Shrimp Committee Minutes from December 2025.

NOAA General Counsel provided a refresher on the rules and regulations regarding financial conflicts of interest, disclosure, and recusal under the Magnuson Stevens Act. The Council had no questions regarding the topic.

Coral Amendment 11 and Shrimp Amendment 12

Staff reviewed the final draft amendment, including the updated economic and social description of the rock shrimp fishery.. Staff explained that the updated information did not result in changes to the expected biological, economic, social or administrative effects of the proposed action. The Council had no questions regarding the amendment updates.

The Council received to public comments during the public comment session. As during in-person meetings, commenters were given 3 minutes to provide comments to the Council. Those unable to comment or wanting to provide additional input not covered during the allotted 3 minutes were informed that written comments are also accepted.

During subsequent discussion of the proposed action, Council members noted the long history of Council attention to the proposed action, which began during the final phase of Coral Amendment 8 in 2014. Coral Amendment 8 implemented the northern extension of the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern, erroneously encompassing an area that had been previously accessible to the rock shrimp fishery. Since that time, the Council has attempted to correct the error, developing and submitting Coral Amendment 10. The National Marine Fisheries Service did not approve Coral Amendment 10 due to insufficient information (see disapproval letter [HERE](#) for more detail). Council members reiterated their intent to return access to a historic fishing area to the rock shrimp fishery noting that recent studies have shown no coral (standing, dead, or coral rubble) present in the proposed Shrimp Fishery Access Area (SFAA) and there is enough distance between known coral pinnacles and the SFAA to prevent damage to living coral from sediment deposition caused by trawling activity. Council members maintained that recommending implementation of the SFAA is the best compromise to balance the shrimpers' need for access with protection of areas where deepwater coral is known to exist.

MOTION 1: APPROVE CORAL AMENDMENT 11 SHRIMP AMENDMENT 12 TO THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CORAL AND LIVE HARDBOTTOM HABITAT OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION AND THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE SHRIMP FISHERY OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION, RESPECTIVELY, FOR FORMAL SECRETARIAL REVIEW AND DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE. GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT/CODIFIED TEXT AND GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS AND REDEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL