

**DRAFT**  
**SUMMARY REPORT**  
**HABITAT AND ECOSYSTEM COMMITTEE**  
**SHRIMP COMMITTEE**  
**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

Cape Canaveral, FL

June 12, 2025

The Committee approved the Habitat and Ecosystem and Shrimp Committee minutes from the March 2025 meeting and the agenda for this meeting.

**Coral Amendment 11 and Shrimp Amendment 12**

In 2021, the Council submitted Coral Amendment 10, which proposed establishing a shrimp fishery access area (SFAA) within the northern extension of the Oculina Habitat Area of Particular Concern (OHAPC) where trawling for rock shrimp is currently prohibited. In 2022, the Council received a letter of disapproval. Among the reasons for disapproval, NMFS stated that the amendment did not include adequate analysis to ensure that the proposed action would minimize adverse effects of fishing on essential fish habitat (EFH) and minimize bycatch. In September 2024 staff were directed to develop a joint amendment to the Coral and Shrimp FMPs to propose establishing a SFAA within the northern extension of the OHAPC and incorporate updated information including a recent mapping study. Staff reviewed a decision document including three alternatives, preliminary analyses, and the next steps. Staff also discussed the VMS ping rate requirement of 1 ping every 5 minutes that was established in Coral Amendment 8. The committees agreed that maintaining the current ping rate for federally permitted rock shrimp fishermen who use the proposed SFAA is preferred because it enhances the ability of the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard to track those vessels and recommended that the IPT integrate language to clarify the required ping rate in the SFAA.

The Committees approved the following motions:

**MOTION 1: APPROVE MODIFICATIONS TO THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS**  
**APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this action is to reinstate access for vessels with a valid Commercial Vessel Permit for Rock Shrimp South Atlantic EEZ (Limited Access) to a historically important fishing area where the commercial rock shrimp fishery operated by creating a shrimp fishery access area along the eastern edge of the northern boundary of the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern, while also minimizing impacts to deepwater coral.

**Need for Action:** The need for this action is to achieve optimum yield in the rock shrimp fishery while minimizing negative impacts to deepwater coral.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

**MOTION 2: APPROVE THE MODIFICATIONS TO ALTERNATIVE 2 AND ALTERNATIVE 3.**  
**APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**Action 1.** Establish a shrimp fishery access area (SFAA) along the eastern edge of the northern Oculina HAPC boundary.

**Alternative 2.** Establish a shrimp fishery access area along the eastern edge of the

northern extension of the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern, that is 16.61 NM2. Allow a shrimp vessel with a valid Commercial Vessel Permit for Rock Shrimp South Atlantic EEZ (Limited Access) to bottom trawl for rock shrimp within the established area bounded by the following coordinates.

**Alternative 3.** Establish a shrimp fishery access area along the eastern edge of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern that is 24.16 NM2. Allow a shrimp vessel with a valid Commercial Vessel Permit for Rock Shrimp South Atlantic EEZ (Limited Access) to bottom trawl for rock shrimp within the established area bounded by the following coordinates.

**Note:** Council staff confirm that the coordinates of both **Alternative 2** and **Alternative 3** match what was originally proposed in Coral Amendment 10.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

**MOTION 3: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR ACTION 1.**

**APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE**

**Action 1.** Establish a shrimp fishery access area (SFAA) along the eastern edge of the northern Oculina HAPC boundary.

**Alternative 2.** Establish a shrimp fishery access area along the eastern edge of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern, that is 16.61 NM2. Allow a shrimp vessel with a valid Commercial Vessel Permit for Rock Shrimp South Atlantic EEZ (Limited Access) to bottom trawl for rock shrimp within the established area bounded by the following coordinates.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

PUBLIC INPUT: Shrimpers provided public comment and suggested choosing alternative 2. The increased distance to coral pinnacles under Alternative 2, as well as the shrimpers' practice of not trawling along the edge of the HAPC boundary but instead maintaining a .75 mile buffer from the boundary line, should decrease damage to EFH caused by sediment plumes. Technology has improved, and shrimp boats are able to maintain a consistent distance away from coral pinnacles, that helps limit direct or indirect impacts to Oculina coral. Additionally, this amendment responds to EO 13921 by reducing regulatory burden and enhancing economic strength. THE COMMITTEE ALSO RECEIVED PUBLIC INPUT FROM CONSERVATION COMMUNITY IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED SFAA.

**MOTION 4: APPROVE CORAL AMENDMENT 11/ SHRIMP AMENDMENT 12 FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE**

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

**DIRECTION TO STAFF**

- 1 online webinar meeting
- 1 in person (Cape Canaveral)
  - Consider having in-person public hearings closer to Jacksonville as suggested by rock shrimp fishermen.

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Note: Council staff drafts the timing and task motion based on Committee action. If points require

clarification, they will be added to the draft motion. The Committee should review this wording carefully to be sure it accurately reflects their intent prior to making the motion.

**Timing and Tasks:**

**MOTION 5: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:**

- Continue the development of Coral Amendment 11 Shrimp Amendment 12.
- Host two public hearings between June – August 2025; one virtually and one in person.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL