

# OVERVIEW

## Limited Access Privilege Program Committee

December 1, 2008  
Hilton Wilmington Riverside  
301 N. Water Street  
Wilmington, NC

At this meeting of the Limited Access Privilege Program Committee, the Committee needs to: (A) hear a report from the Golden Tilefish LAP Workgroup; (B) discuss consideration of a LAP program for the Golden Crab fishery; and (C) discuss modifications to the Wreckfish IFQ program.

### **A. Report from the Golden Tilefish LAP Workgroup (Attachments 1 & 2)**

Six of the seven commercial golden tilefish fishermen that comprise the Golden Tilefish Limited Access Privilege (LAP) Workgroup met on October 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in North Charleston to discuss management of the commercial sector of the fishery. The fishermen developed two fairly detailed draft management programs they would like to see implemented under various circumstances. Under status quo management, the Workgroup members would like to see a gear specific golden tilefish endorsement program implemented that would exclude fishermen that do not have historical landings in the fishery. The longline gear sector representatives would like to include fishermen that have harvested at least 2,000 pounds of golden tilefish between 2005 and 2007 from targeting golden tilefish in the South Atlantic. The hook and line sector created two eligibility options for the purposes of analysis. The hook and line representative suggested including fishermen with at least 500 or 1,000 pounds of golden tilefish landings on average between 2001 and 2005 using the three best of each individual's five years. The endorsement program would also specify a change in the fishery start date from January 1<sup>st</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup>. The change in the start date would allow South Carolina fishermen to start fishing at the same time as the Florida fishermen and for hook and line fishermen to participate in the fishery. In recent years, the commercial quota has been met before hook and line fishermen were able to focus effort on golden tilefish (usually in September) due to their participation in other fisheries.

The second program developed was a LAP program. According to some Workgroup members, the second program the Golden Tile LAP Workgroup developed was only considered to have potential for success if the golden tilefish commercial quota was about 480,000 pounds or greater. Others felt LAPs would be successful at a lower commercial quota. However, they did not feel that a LAP was a viable option at the currently projected commercial ACT levels specified in the Amendment 17 materials (between 196,455 and 276,265 pounds whole weight). The current commercial quota is 331,000 pounds whole weight. The LAP program developed included separate gear sector quotas for longline and hook and line. The program had different

eligibility requirements for initial allocation for longline and hook and line quota. All other details developed for the LAP program were applicable to both gear users.

Further details are contained in the Draft Golden Tilefish LAP Workgroup Report.

**REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:** Take action deemed appropriate to consider changes to management of the golden tilefish fishery.

### **B. Consideration of a LAP program for the Golden Crab Fishery**

The Golden Crab Fishery Management Plan went into effect beginning on August 27, 1996 and established three golden crab fishing zones. The Northern Zone is defined as the EEZ north of 28 degrees N. latitude. The Middle Zone is contained within the EEZ between 25 degrees North and 28 degrees North latitude. The Southern Zone extends south from 25 degrees North latitude within the South Atlantic Council's EEZ. Federal permits are issued for a specific zone and fishing is allowed only in that zone for which the permit is issued.

#### Number of Participants

In recent years, only 5 to 6 vessels have landed any golden crab (**Table 1**). The majority of vessels currently fishing for golden crab have Middle Zone permits. In 1997, 1998, and 2000, there were more vessels fishing for golden crab with Southern Zone permits than Middle Zone permits. Only in 2006 and 2007 have vessels with Northern Zone permits participated in the fishery.

**Table 1.** Numbers of active permit holders and vessels landing golden crab, 1996-2007.  
Source: SEFSC, 2008.

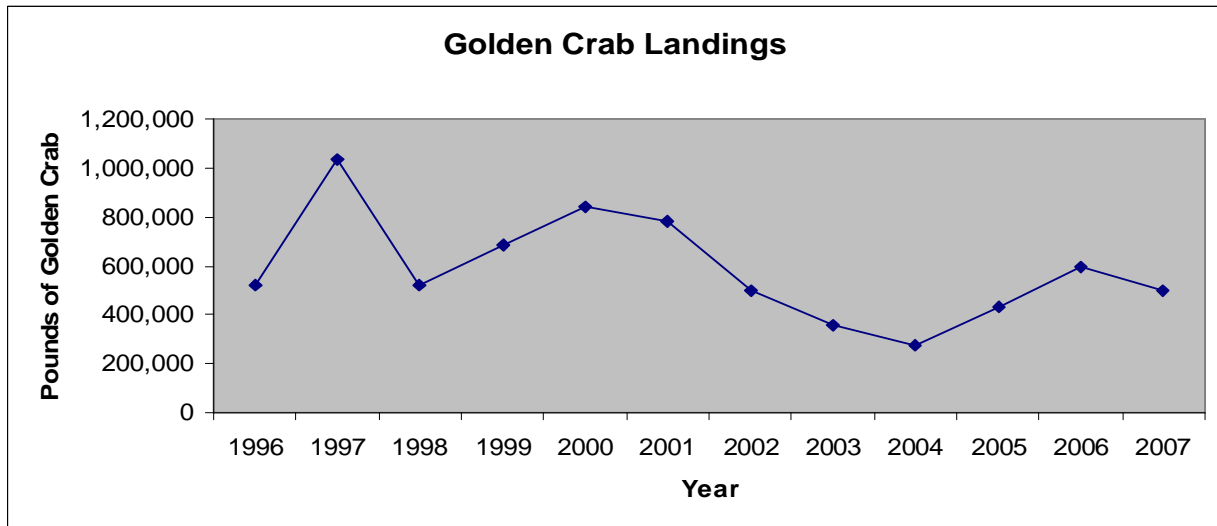
<b>Year</b>	<b>Permit Holders</b>	<b>Vessels Making Landings</b>
<b>1996</b>	34	4
<b>1997</b>	35	14
<b>1998</b>	29	14
<b>1999</b>	11	8
<b>2000</b>	10	10
<b>2001</b>	8	6
<b>2002</b>	12	7
<b>2003</b>	14	6
<b>2004</b>	12	5
<b>2005</b>	11	5
<b>2006</b>	12	6
<b>2007</b>	11	6

#### Annual Landings

Total landings and landings by zone of golden crab are shown in **Table 2**. Golden crab landings reached a peak of over 1 million pounds in 1997. Since then, landings have averaged about 550,000 annually. However, the trend shows an average of 665,000 pounds from 1998-2002 and 355,000 pounds from 2003-2006.

**Table 2.** Annual landings of golden crab, 1996-2007.  
Source: SEFSC, 2008.

Year	Total
1996	523,160
1997	1,034,447
1998	518,316
1999	682,224
2000	841,747
2001	781,138
2002	500,774
2003	359,087
2004	278,336
2005	432,846
2006	599,374
2007	502,292



**Figure 1.** Landings of Golden Crab, 1995-2007. Source: SEFSC 2008.

Golden crab landings have varied widely from month to month over the past 5 years. In general, more golden crab are landed from May to December than in the first half of the year due to Keys fishermen entering the fishery in the second half of the year after the spiny lobster season winds down. On average, from 1996 to 2007, 45% of total golden crab landings were made between January and May while 55% of landings were made between May and December.

Antozzi (1997) concluded that the market for golden crab is inhibited from expanding due to a supply constraint. He attributes this lack of production to the difficulty and cost of operating in this fishery, which requires a sizable investment in specialized gear including on-board holding facilities that keep crabs alive. This fishery takes place in deep water and this can result in lengthy trips under adverse sea conditions. Some industry members have stated that vessels larger than 50 feet are needed to cope with rough sea conditions offshore and to provide the stability needed for trap deployment and retrieval.

In recent years, ex-vessel price has ranged from \$1.25 to \$1.55 per pound (personal communication, Howard Rau 2008). An average value of the fishery across the past three years is estimated at \$716,105.

Antozzi, W.O. 2002. Economic status of the golden crab fishery (SERO-ECON-01-06). NMFS Southeast Regional Office. St. Petersburg, Florida.

**REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:** Take action deemed appropriate to consider changes to management of the golden crab fishery.

**C. Modifications to the Wreckfish IFQ**

In September 2008, the LAP Committee was given an update on the Wreckfish IFQ program. At this meeting, the LAP Committee has the opportunity to consider management changes to the Wreckfish IFQ program.

**REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:** Take action deemed appropriate to consider changes to management of the Wreckfish IFQ program.