

Overview

Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panel Meeting

Hilton Garden Inn, Charleston, SC

April 16, 2015

1. Review of the NMFS Shrimp Biological Opinion (Attachment 1a - 1b)

Jenny Lee, NMFS Protected Resources, will present an overview of the findings of the NMFS Biological Opinion (BiOp) for the Southeast Shrimp Fishery that was released in 2014. The BiOp covered paenaid shrimp fisheries in the South Atlantic and the rock shrimp fishery. Through a consultation to review the shrimp fishery and management actions by the NMFS, it was determined that the shrimp fishery was not likely to jeopardize any Endangered Species Act (ESA)- listed species or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat. The BiOp stated the amount of allowed incidental take of listed species as well as terms and conditions for the shrimp fishery to continue to operate under the Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The incidental take of turtles could not be estimated using the available data; therefore, estimates of trawl effort and TED compliance will be used to determine if consultation needs to be reinitiated. The baseline for the effort in the South Atlantic is 2009 when 13,464 trips were reported. The baseline for TED compliance is 88%. If effort is exceeded or TED compliance is less than 88%, then NMFS must decide if consultation must be reinitiated and if rule making is needed to address the increased effects. For Atlantic sturgeon and smalltooth sawfish, estimated takes and mortalities were calculated based on shrimp trawl trip effort and reductions due to TEDs. The allowable catches of Atlantic sturgeon and smalltooth sawfish are 285 captures with 27 expected mortalities and 288 with 105 expected mortalities every three years, respectively. Several reasonable and prudent measures to minimize the take of listed species (Section 9.3 of the BiOp), terms and conditions to implement the reasonable and prudent measures and to be exempt from Section 9 of the ESA (Section 9.4 of the BiOp), and conservation recommendations to minimize or avoid adverse impacts (Section 10 of the BiOp) were developed in the consultation for the shrimp trawl fishery. The AP should discuss reasonable and prudent measures and terms and conditions of the BiOp.

2. Review of the SEDAR Shrimp Procedural Workshop (Attachment 2a - 2b)

Julia Byrd, SEDAR Staff, will review the findings of the SEDAR Procedural Workshop. The SEDAR Shrimp Procedural Workshop was designed to discuss two topics: shrimp stock assessment and bycatch estimation of managed species in shrimp fisheries for use in stock assessments. The meeting was held in July 2014 with participants from state and federal agencies, ASMFC, SAFMC SSC members, and SAFMC/SEDAR staff. The meeting included presentations on shrimp monitoring and management in the South Atlantic, the SEFSC Shrimp Observer Program, assessment methods used for shrimp, and methods used to estimate bycatch in shrimp fisheries. After the presentations, the participants were divided into three different working groups: Life History/Environment, Fishery Statistics, and Indices. Each working group developed a list of overall recommendations.

The working group panels reconvened to discuss some take home points on shrimp stock assessments and shrimp bycatch estimation.

- Recruitment overfishing was unlikely to occur with the current management strategies in place by the states to protect juvenile shrimp in estuaries and federal management to close the white shrimp fishery based on temperature.
- Overfishing was still possible if unlimited fishing effort occurs on the spawning stock.
- Growth overfishing could occur with significant harvesting of small shrimp and methods could be explored to determine optimal yield for area-specific shrimp management. It was noted that shrimp productivity would continue to vary spatially and temporally to due environmental factors, disease, and fishing mortality.
- The timing of the assessment and management of shrimp will need to be considered to determine the best product for management.
- Bycatch per unit is the preferred method for estimating bycatch. If needed, fishery independent data could be used to supplement observer bycatch work.

The AP should discuss potential ways shrimpers could become involved in filling the knowledge gap for the shrimp fishery.

3. Update on the Oculina Evaluation Team Report

Chip Collier, Council Staff, will present discussion points in the Oculina Evaluation Report. The SAFMC established the *Oculina* Evaluation Team (OET) as part of its Evaluation Plan for the *Oculina* Experimental Closed Area (OECA). The team – comprised of law enforcement representatives, research scientists, resource managers, commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen, outreach experts, and non-governmental organization representatives – was charged with reviewing and providing recommendations for the ongoing outreach and education, law enforcement, and research and monitoring components of the Evaluation Plan. The recommendations will assist the SAFMC in completing a required 10-year evaluation of the OECA.

The team convened in 2014 and did not recommend any changes to the regulations, size, and configuration of the OECA. The OET recommended continuing the information and education efforts with directed outreach in specific areas; this was considered very beneficial to communicating to the public the uniqueness and importance of the *Oculina* Banks. The team recommended more engagement with fishing clubs and organizations to describe the details of life histories of snappers and groupers and the impact of fishing on spawning aggregations. For law enforcement, the team suggested “smarter patrols” utilizing better communication among partner agencies, patrolling on days when fishing activity was likely, and potentially using other technology such as acoustic pingers. The team also recommended moving Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s (FWC) *C/T Randall* to Fort Pierce; however, the FWC had already reorganized their offshore patrol vessels to provide better service for patrolling the OECA. For research and monitoring, the team was given an update on research that has been conducted in the OECA since 2007 including continued mapping of the OECA (which is the highest priority), comparison of species diversity and abundance inside and outside the OECA, and estimation of larval dispersal from the OECA. Mapping of the OECA will be completed by 2018.

The Oculina Evaluation Report will be presented to the Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting in April 2015 for approval as best science. In June, the report will be presented to the Council. The AP should discuss the findings of the Oculina Evaluation Team and make recommendations as appropriate.

4. Status Update of Coral Amendment 8

Chip Collier, Council Staff, will give a status update of Coral Amendment 8. Publication of the Final Rule for Coral Amendment 8 is still pending. The economic analysis of the regulation change for the increased ping was revised. It was discovered that the VMS units did not have to be replaced to comply with the increased ping rate. Final publication will occur after the economic analysis is completed.