

**SUMMARY REPORT
FROM THE SHRIMP COMMITTEE MEETING
St. Simons Island, GA
March 8, 2011**

The Shrimp Committee met on March 8, 2011 in St. Simons Island, Ga. Robert Boyles, Committee Chair, asked Charlie Phillips, Vice Chair, to run the meeting given that the State of South Carolina was requesting a shrimp closure. The Council's Shrimp Review Panel met via conference call on March 2nd and reviewed data provided by SC and GA. The Review Panel concluded both states met the criteria of greater than an 80% reduction to be eligible for requesting concurrent closure of the EEZ. Kari MacLauchlin (Council Staff) reviewed the Shrimp Review Panel Report and Robert Boyles described South Carolina's request to close the EEZ off South Carolina. Doug Haymans indicated that GA was not requesting a closure of the EEZ off GA because they felt closure of state waters was sufficient at this time. NOAA GC clarified that the Council could request closure of the EEZ off one state or multiple states.

The committee provided guidance and approved the following motions:

MOTION #1: REQUEST THE NMFS RA CLOSE THE EEZ OFF OF SOUTH CAROLINA OUT TO 25 MILES TO TRAWLING UNTIL JUNE 7TH OR UNTIL THE STATE OF SC OPENS ANY OR ALL PORTIONS OF STATE WATERS TO TRAWLING

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION #2: ASK STAFF TO BEGIN DEVELOPMENT OF AN OPTIONS PAPER FOR THE SHRIMP COMMITTEE TO ALLOW A MORE TIMELY RESPONSE TO COLD WATER EVENTS

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION #3: ASK STAFF TO EXAMINE BETTER DEFINITIONS OF OVERFISHING FOR PINK SHRIMP

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

The following letter was drafted for review during full Council. If the Council approves this request, the letter will be finalized, signed and handed to the NMFS Regional Administrator for implementation.

Draft 3/9/2011

Dear Dr. Crabtree,

On March 8, 2011, in St. Simons, GA, the South Atlantic Council approved a request from South Carolina that the EEZ adjacent to South Carolina state waters be closed to trawling for pink, brown, and white shrimp as soon as possible. Pursuant to regulations in the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Shrimp Fishery in the South Atlantic region, the Council requests that the Secretary implement the shrimp trawling closure approved by the Council.

The FMP specifies that “the Council may consider a state’s request for closure of the EEZ if a drop in catch rate resulting from severe winter weather is indicated during standardized assessment sampling and reveals a reduction of 80 percent or greater of the over-wintering white shrimp abundance as reflected by CPUE.”

The Council’s Shrimp Review Panel met via conference call on March 2, 2011, to address the potential closure of EEZ waters adjacent to South Carolina to protect overwintering penaeid shrimp. The Panel reviewed data supporting the request (attached) and unanimously concluded that the criterion had been met, and recommended that the Council support the request from South Carolina for concurrent EEZ closure.

The FMP specifies that trawling for any species of penaeid shrimp is prohibited in the closed portion of the EEZ. Transit of the closed EEZ with less than 4-inch stretch mesh aboard while in possession of *Penaeus* species will be allowed provided that the nets are in an unfishable condition which is defined as stowed below deck. Stretched mesh size means the distance between the centers of the two opposite knots in the same mesh when pulled taut. Also, this action would establish a buffer zone extending seaward from shore 25 nautical miles, inside of which no trawling would be allowed with a net having less than 4-inch stretch mesh during an EEZ closure. Vessels trawling inside this buffer zone could not have a shrimp net aboard (i.e., a net with less than 4-inch stretch mesh) in the closed portion of the EEZ. In addition, royal red and rock shrimp fisheries are allowed outside the buffer area; however possession of white, brown, or pink shrimp is prohibited.

The EEZ would reopen on June 7, 2011, or when South Carolina moves to reopen any or all portions of state waters, whichever comes earliest.

Thank you for implementing these closures as soon as possible. If you require any additional information, please contact Bob Mahood at the Council office.

David M. Cupka, Chairman

From: [Robert H. Boyles, Jr. \[BoylesR@dnr.sc.gov\]](mailto:BoylesR@dnr.sc.gov)

Sent: Tue 3/8/2011 1:21 PM

To: [Kari Maclauchlin](#)

Cc: [Gregg Waugh](#); [Bob Mahood](#); [Mel Bell](#); [Larry DeLancey](#); [David Whitaker](#);
[Robert H. Boyles, Jr.](#); framtonj@dnr.sc.gov

Subject: RE: SC Shrimp closure request

Kari and Gregg:

As per the SAFMC Shrimp Fishery Management Plan, and based on rapid and unusual declines in water temperatures early this winter, and based on a 100% decline in shrimp CPUEs in our shrimp monitoring program in South Carolina, I would like to request that the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council petition the Regional Administrator to close the Exclusive Economic Zone (from the outer limits of the state's territorial sea out to 25 miles) to trawling in order to protect shrimp stocks. We have evidence that overwintering white shrimp have been negatively impacted by the recent cold water temperatures (see Shrimp Review Panel report), and are interested in taking action to protect whatever white shrimp may remain from exploitation so that these shrimp may spawn for the fall white shrimp crop. We would request that the EEZ closure remain in effect until June 7 or until the State of South Carolina opens any or all portions of state waters to shrimp trawling, whichever comes first.

Thank you for your assistance with this request.

Robert H. Boyles, Jr.
DNR Deputy Director for Marine Resources
P. O. Box 12559
Charleston, SC 29422-2559
(843) 953-9304

Memorandum **To: Mel Bell, Director, Office of Fisheries Management**
S.C. Dept. of Natural Resources
From: Larry DeLancey, Crustacean Monitoring Program, SCDNR
Re: Status of white shrimp stocks in South Carolina
Date: Fe. 28, 2011

Mel, I have attached our catch data from December- February, and a graph of water temperature (Tables 1 and 2, Fig. 1 and 2). As you are aware, our group has collected no live white shrimp since early January. The extended period of cold water temperatures that began in December, 2010, has apparently wiped out the shrimp in inshore waters at least. Reports from the public in January indicated dead shrimp in cast nets, crab pots, and on the bottom during scuba diving. Our staff observed dead shrimp on beaches and stunned shrimp being fed on by sea gulls. We recently had a report of a single live shrimp being taken in whelk trawls offshore. This situation appears to be at least as bad as in 2001, when stocks were depleted by 95+% due to cold temperatures. Based on this data, I do not expect our state waters to reopen until brown shrimp reach a marketable size, usually in June. We will sample again in March, but I do not expect the situation to improve greatly, based on past events.

South Carolina state waters out to the 3-mile beach radar line were closed on Dec. 31, 2010. The remaining state waters between the 3-mile line and the "Scalloped Line" were closed on Jan. 10, 2011.

cc: R. Boyles, D. Whitaker, J. Leffler

Table 1. Number of white shrimp collected in SCDNR 20' trawl around Charleston Harbor, S.C., Dec. 16, 2010- Feb. 14, 2011.

Dec. 16, 2010

Location	Number of White shrimp	Water temperature C
Anchorage	58	8.4
Fort Johnson	671	8.4
Upper Ashley River	14	7.1
Lower Ashley River	478	7.5
Mean	305.3	7.9

Jan. 5, 2011

Location	Number of White shrimp	Water temperature C
Anchorage	0	8.7
Rebellion Reach	0	8.6
Fort Johnson	27	8.6
Upper Ashley River	0	8.5
Lower Ashley R.	11*	8.6
Mean	6.8	8.6

* + one segment from dead shrimp

Jan. 19, 2011

Location	Number of White shrimp	Water temperature C
Morris Island Slough	0	7.8
Anchorage	0	7.5
Fort Johnson	0 (+ 1 dead segment)	7.4
Lower Ashley River	0	7.2
Mean	0.0	7.5

Table 1 (continued)

Feb. 14, 2011

Location	Number of White shrimp	Water temperature C
Anchorage	0	9.5
Fort Johnson	0	9.5
Upper Ashley River	0	9.6
Lower Ashley R.	0	9.6
Mean	0.0	9.6

Percent reduction from Dec. 16, 2010 through Feb. 14, 2011 = $(305.3-0.0)/305.3 = 100\%$.

Figure 1. Water temperature recorded at the Charleston, S.C., Customs House on the Cooper River, Dec. 10, 2010-Jan Feb 28, 2011. 8.3° C considered critical level for white shrimp.

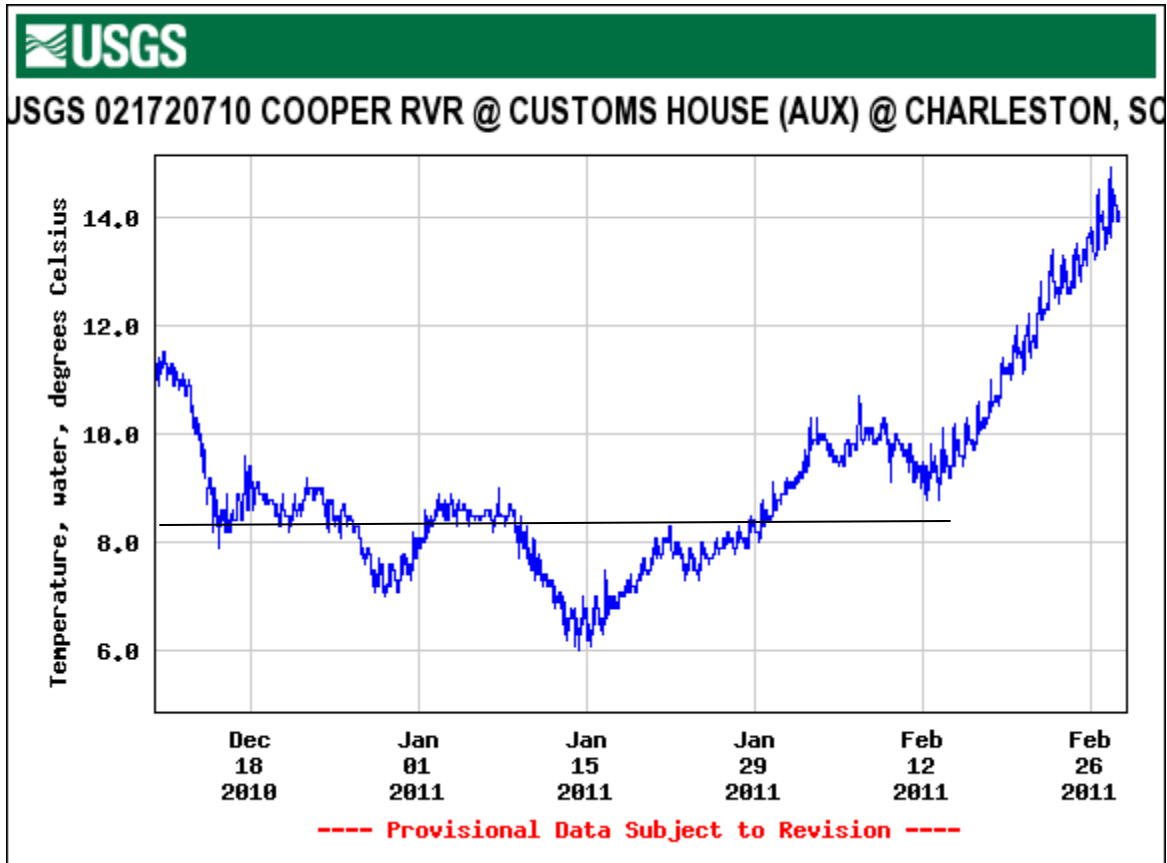


Table 2. Catch rates in South Carolina of white shrimp collected by SCDNR 20' trawl, 2010-11 and 2000-01.

2010-11

Charleston Area	White shrimp number	South of Charleston	White shrimp number
Dec 16	305.3	Dec. 6-9 (n= 19 tows)	1,160
Jan. 5	6.8		
Jan. 19	0	Feb. 16-17 (n=20 tows)	0
Feb. 14	0		

2000-01 (2 Nets) (Last time EEZ was closed)

Charleston Area	White shrimp number	South of Charleston	White shrimp number
Dec. 28	355.3	Dec. 5-6	686
Jan. 5	66.0		
Jan. 24	7.5	Feb. 7-9	0.9
Feb. 14	1.7		

Figure 2. Water temperature in Charleston Harbor, 1950-present average, 2000-01, and 2010-11.

