

**SUMMARY REPORT
FROM THE
SHRIMP COMMITTEE MEETING
Charleston, SC
September 13, 2011**

The Shrimp Committee met on September 13, 2011, in Charleston, SC. Fred Dockery (Chair of the Shrimp AP) and Steven Wilson (Vice-Chair of the Deepwater Shrimp AP) also participated in the committee meeting. Mr. Dockery presented the report from the Joint Deepwater Shrimp and Shrimp AP meeting, including the recommendations on several items under consideration for Shrimp Amendment 9. The AP meeting report is attached.

The Committee reviewed the potential items for Amendment 9, including adding royal red shrimp to the Fishery Management Unit; removing the limited access program for the rock shrimp fishery; modification of the process for the concurrent EEZ closures during severe weather events; revise the MSST for pink shrimp; and develop measures to reduce takes of smalltooth sawfish. The Committee decided to begin development of Amendment 9 with two specific actions:

- modifying the process for concurrent EEZ closures by allowing states to request closures directly from the Regional Administrator if certain environmental and shrimp abundance criteria are met;
- have staff develop options to improve the method used to determine MSST for pink shrimp.

The Committee made the following motions:

MOTION 1: Move to include an option for Shrimp Amendment 9 which would authorize the RA, at state request, to close the EEZ off the state or states requesting to the South Atlantic shrimp fishery. Staff should consider using the following criteria as possible triggers: 1) water temperatures inshore 2) duration of water temperatures inshore, 3) during the months of December, January or February, and 4) state samples reflect high mortality of the stock.
MOTION APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.

MOTION 2: Move that staff examine options to improve the method to determine the MSST for pink shrimp.
MOTION APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.

At this time, the other potential items will not be included in Amendment 9, but the Committee requested briefings on the royal red shrimp fishery and the rock shrimp limited access permits at the next committee meeting. A options paper/scoping document will be presented at the December council meeting.

Bonnie Ponwith addressed questions and provided clarification on information presented at the AP meeting on Monday in regards to the sea turtle take estimates. Sea turtles will be addressed along with smalltooth sawfish in the forthcoming Biological Opinion.

**Deepwater Shrimp AP and Shrimp AP
Joint Meeting Report to the Shrimp Committee**
Sept 13, 2011

The Deepwater Shrimp AP and Shrimp AP met on Sept 12, 2011. Attendees included:

Shrimp AP:

Fred Dockery, Chair
Janie Thomas, Vice-Chair
Scott Baker
Scott Cook
Nancy Edens
Richard Vendetti

Deepwater Shrimp AP:

Steven Wilson, Vice-Chair (acting Chair)
Michael Merrifield
Laurilee Thompson
John Williams

The AP members received a review of the current process for concurrent EEZ closures after severe weather events and an update on the South Carolina shrimp fishery after this year's closure. Next the group heard presentations on bycatch levels and monitoring; scoping for the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for sea turtle bycatch and mortality; and results of the economic survey of the South Atlantic Shrimp Fisheries.

The Council is considering a new amendment to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan, and the AP members reviewed items that may be included in Amendment 9. The list below outlines each of these items and points of discussion, questions, and recommendations from the AP:

1) Add Royal Red Shrimp to the Fishery Management Unit and develop MSA parameters for Royal Red Shrimp.

- As at the previous AP meeting, there was a consensus that royal red shrimp should not be added to the fishery management unit.

Motion: Recommend to not add royal red to the FMU in Amendment 9.

MOTION APPROVED BY APs.

2) Remove the Limited Access program for the rock shrimp fishery.

- AP members felt that there were too few boats in the fishery, and the limited access permits are a barrier to new entrants. Although permits can be bought, many fishermen cannot afford them.

- There should be options for shrimpers, including rock shrimp.

- There are many permits not in use.

- The limited access program involves a burdensome paperwork process.

- The AP passed a motion to have staff conduct research on current limited entry permit holders.

Motion: Recommend that staff look into options with regard to increasing the number of permits in the rock shrimp fishery.

MOTION APPROVED BY APs.

3) Modify the protocol for concurrent EEZ closures during severe weather events.

- SC representatives expressed interest in developing a process by which the state could directly request a closure from NMFS without having to wait for the March council meeting.
- The APs supported amending the FMP to allow the state to make a direct request to NOAA fisheries and eliminate council review of the request.
- The council and AP should still be notified of the request so they can participate in any review at the federal level.
- SC representatives also would like to use environmental conditions such as temperature, water temperature, and possibly a predictive model.
- The APs supported using environmental criteria, and one AP member noted that shrimp survey data is extremely important and should be reviewed in conjunction with environmental data.
- At the March 2010 joint committee/AP meeting, the committee passed a motion to include in an amendment a modification to the process by which states could request directly to NMFS based on critical water temperatures.
- The AP passed a motion for staff to develop an options paper on the process.

Motion: Recommend that staff develop options based on Robert Boyles' motion from last meeting.

MOTION APPROVED BY APs.

4) Revise MSST for pink shrimp
The APs had no specific recommendations at this time.

5) Develop measures to reduce take of smalltooth sawfish.

- The APs recommended not to take further action until there is more information on smalltooth sawfish takes, which will be a part of the Biological Opinion in development for the South Atlantic shrimp fisheries.

Motion: Delay any action until there is further information about smalltooth sawfish.

MOTION APPROVED BY APs.

Additionally, the APs had questions and concerns about the turtle bycatch presentation and the economic survey. In general, concerns about sea turtles were focused on external factors that affect sea turtles, an increase in turtle populations, and the data. For the economic survey, AP members expressed concern about the data as well. The general tone among panel members is that the data do not reflect the reality of the shrimp fishery, for both the sea turtle report and the economic survey results.