

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
SPINY LOBSTER COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Stuart, FL
June 10, 2019

The Committee approved minutes from the October 2018 meeting and the agenda.

Status of Spiny Lobster Catch vs. ACL

Council staff presented an overview of 2018/2019 commercial landings for spiny lobster. Recreational landing estimates for 2018/2019 were currently unavailable due to competing work priorities. The landings report also included a summary of hurricanes that have made landfall in Florida during or directly before spiny lobster seasons from 1992 through 2018.

Status of amendments under formal review

SERO staff briefed the Committee on the status of Spiny Lobster Amendment 13 which was submitted for formal review on November 19, 2018. The proposed rule published on April 18, 2019 with comments due on May 20, 2019. Spiny Lobster Amendment 13 will re-establish a procedure for an enhanced cooperative management system and will align several regulations in federal waters off Florida with those in Florida state waters, including the earlier trap soak period recently approved for Florida state waters (now beginning each year on the Saturday following the recreational mini season). SERO staff indicated that the rulemaking process for Spiny Lobster Amendment 13 was on track to have the new regulations in place prior to the earlier soak period.

Spiny lobster commercial trip limit for vessels with snapper grouper and spiny lobster permits

At the March 2019 meeting the Council passed a motion requesting options for vessels with a snapper grouper unlimited permit (SG1) and a spiny lobster tailing permit (LT) to be able to retain commercial quantities of spiny lobster (excluding federal waters off Florida). Council staff presented an options paper with information on current spiny lobster trip limits, permitting, and gear restrictions relevant to both spiny lobster and snapper grouper. The Committee clarified that the intent of the amendment is to allow for an increased vessel limit for the diving component of the spiny lobster fishery only. Additionally, the vessel limit would only apply to federal waters off North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Currently, the daily possession limit is two spiny lobster per person. An increased vessel limit would allow dive fishermen with an SG1 and LT permit on their vessel to supplement their snapper grouper trips with a commercial amount of spiny lobster.

MOTION #1: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL START WORK ON A REGULATORY AMENDMENT TO CREATE A COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT FOR VESSELS HOLDING A SNAPPER GROUPE UNLIMITED AND SPINY LOBSTER TAILING PERMIT OFF OF NC, SC, AND GA.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

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 Task(s)

MOTION # 2. ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

1. Begin work on an amendment that will address spiny lobster trip limits for commercial vessels holding a snapper grouper unlimited permit and a spiny lobster tailing permit.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL