

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT – SPINY LOBSTER COMMITTEE
March 3, 2015
St Simons, GA

Members

Jessica McCawley, Chair
Ben Hartig, Vice-Chair
Chester Brewer

Jack Cox
Roy Crabtree

The Committee adopted the agenda and approved the minutes of the March 2012 meeting.

Status of Spiny Lobster Catch vs. ACL

Jack McGovern of SERO reviewed spiny lobster landings for the 2014-15 year, and for the 2013-14 year when landings exceeded the OFL.

Spiny Lobster Review Panel

On February 9, 2015, the Spiny Lobster Review Panel convened in Key West, FL. The Panel is comprised of staff from the Gulf Council, South Atlantic Council, SERO, and FWC/FWRI, in addition to representatives from the Gulf Spiny Lobster AP, South Atlantic Spiny Lobster AP, and the South Atlantic SSC. The Panel was convened because spiny lobster landings in 2013-14 had exceeded the ACT. The Panel reviewed landings and other factors that may affect spiny lobster catch, and provided recommendations to the Councils. The Panel did not recommend revising the ACT, ACL or OFL at this time, but also recommended that the Councils pursue an exemption from the ACL and be managed with another method. Council staff reviewed the Panel recommendations with the Committee. At this time, the Committee decided to not take any action and further monitor spiny lobster landings.

MOTION: THE COUNCIL SEND A LETTER TO THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR REQUESTING THAT SPINY LOBSTER NOT BE SUBJECT TO AN ACL, WITH THE REASONS OUTLINED BY THE SPINY LOBSTER REVIEW PANEL.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

Spiny Lobster Bag/Possession Limits North of the GA/FL Line

Michelle Duval raised an issue brought up by a North Carolina representative on the Spiny Lobster AP about the bag and possession limit for spiny lobster north of the GA/FL line. The limit was established in Amendment 4 (1994), and the language specified that the limit is two lobsters per trip until the Councils address multi-day trips (see underlined):

Action 1. Modify the recreational season and bag limits: Allow the harvest of two lobsters per person per day for all fishermen all year long but only north of the Florida/Georgia border. This measure will be added to the framework procedure in the next amendment so that future potential changes to the limit would not require a plan amendment. The prohibition on retention of berried lobsters (lobster with eggs) remains

in effect and the reference to two lobsters per person per day above is in effect two lobsters per person per trip because the Councils have not made provision for multi-day limits in the spiny lobster fishery.

The Committee discussed creating a multi-day trip limit similar to the one in place for snapper grouper and coastal migratory pelagics, for which the regulations specify that a trip more than 48 hours will allow an individual to possess twice the bag limit, but not for spiny lobster. The Committee felt that the bag/possession limit north of the GA/FL line could be raised.

The Committee passed the following motion:

MOTION: DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT TO INCREASE THE BAG LIMIT AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR SPINY LOBSTERS NORTH OF THE GA/FL LINE, WITH ALTERNATIVES FOR 3/PERSON AND 4/PERSON; AND ALTERNATIVES FOR MAX VESSEL LIMIT OF 8, 12 AND 16.

Approved by Committee.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT TO INCREASE THE BAG LIMIT AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR SPINY LOBSTERS NORTH OF THE GA/FL LINE, WITH ALTERNATIVES FOR 3/PERSON AND 4/PERSON; AND AN ALTERNATIVE FOR MAX VESSEL LIMIT OF 12. **MOTION FAILS AT COUNCIL.**

MOTION: DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT TO INCREASE THE BAG LIMIT AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR SPINY LOBSTERS NORTH OF THE GA/FL LINE, WITH ALTERNATIVES FOR 3/PERSON AND 4/PERSON; AND ALTERNATIVES FOR MAX VESSEL LIMIT OF 8, 12 AND 16. **MOTION FAILS AT COUNCIL.**

Task and Timing Motion:

MOTION: ADOPT THE TIMING AND TASK ITEM AS PRESENTED:

1. DRAFT A LETTER TO SEND TO RA REQUESTING THAT SPINY LOBSTER NOT BE SUBJECT TO AN ACL, WITH THE REASONS OUTLINED BY THE SPINY LOBSTER REVIEW PANEL.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL.