

**FINAL  
SUMMARY REPORT  
SPINY LOBSTER COMMITTEE MEETING  
Jekyll Island, GA  
March 6, 2017**

The Committee approved minutes from the December 2016 meeting, and also approved the agenda after adding an item under Other Business to discuss new Florida regulations for the commercial spiny lobster bully net fishery, and updating federal regulations for spiny lobster to align with Florida regulations.

**Spiny Lobster Regulatory Amendment 4**

Council staff reviewed a decision document for Spiny Lobster Regulatory Amendment 4. The Committee approved the following motions:

**MOTION #1. APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED.  
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

***Purpose and Need***

The purpose of this amendment is to modify the maximum sustainable yield, status determination criteria, and catch levels for spiny lobster based on updated information and revised scientific recommendations, and to consider restrictions on the use of traps for recreational harvest.

The need for this amendment is to ensure that the maximum sustainable yield, status determination criteria, and catch levels for spiny lobster are based on the best scientific information available and to ensure overfishing does not occur, and to minimize negative effects of recreational traps in the South Atlantic. The proposed actions will contribute to increased social, economic, and biological benefits through sustainable and profitable harvest in accordance with provisions set forth in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

***Action 1-1***

**MOTION #2. UNDER ACTION 1-1, APPROVE THE LANGUAGE IN ALTERNATIVES 1 AND 2.  
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.**

**MOTION #3. UNDER ACTION 1-1, SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS THE PREFERRED.  
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.**

***Action 1-1: Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) and Overfishing Threshold (Maximum Fishing Mortality Threshold [MFMT])***

**Alternative 1:** No Action - The MSY proxy and MFMT are equal to the previous overfishing limit (OFL) as set by the Gulf and South Atlantic SSCs using the mean landings from the years 2001/2002-2009/2010 plus two standard deviations (7.9 mp).

**Gulf Preferred Alternative 2:** The MSY proxy and MFMT will be equal to the revised OFL as recommended by the Gulf and South Atlantic SSCs using the mean landings from the years 1991/1992- 2015/2016 plus two standard deviations (10.46 mp).

*Action 1-2*

**MOTION #4:** UNDER ACTION 1-2, SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS THE PREFERRED. APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

***Action 1-2: Modify the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) and Annual Catch Target (ACT) for Spiny Lobster***

**Alternative 1:** No Action – The current ACL is equal to the ABC recommended by the Gulf and South Atlantic SSCs using the mean landings from the years 2001/02-2009/10 plus 1.5 standard deviations (7.32 mp). The ACT is 90% of the ACL (6.59 mp).

**Gulf Preferred Alternative 2:** The ACL is equal to the ABC as recommended by the Gulf and South Atlantic SSCs using the mean landings from the years 1991/92-2015/16 plus 1.5 standard deviations (9.6 mp). The ACT is 90% of the new ACL (8.64 mp).

**\*Note: A review panel will be SHOULD convened if there are two consecutive years of low landings, i.e., landings below 5.3 mp.** The South Atlantic Spiny Lobster Committee approved the language in Action 1-2, with the edit in the \*Note to clarify that it is not an accountability measure.

*Action 2*

**MOTION #5:** APPROVE THE WORDING IN ALTERNATIVES 1 AND 2. APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**MOTION #6:** UNDER ACTION 2, SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS THE PREFERRED. APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

***Action 2: Prohibit the Use of Traps for Recreational Harvest of Spiny Lobster in the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)***

**Alternative 1:** No Action – Traps are prohibited gear for recreational harvest of spiny lobster in the EEZ off Florida waters, but are not prohibited for recreational harvest of the species in other parts of the South Atlantic EEZ. Traps must comply with requirements for vessel and gear identification, trap construction, and harvest limits as specified by [50 CFR Part 622](#).

**Alternative 2:** Prohibit the use of traps for recreational harvest of spiny lobster in the South Atlantic EEZ.

Other Business

Committee Chair Jessica McCawley briefed the Committee on recent changes to Florida regulations for commercial harvest of spiny lobster with bully net that will be effective May 1, 2017, which include:

- Creating an open-access commercial bully net lobster endorsement available to commercial fishers who hold a crawfish endorsement.
- Requiring commercial bully net vessels be marked with the harvester’s bully net endorsement number using reflective paint or other reflective material.
- Prohibiting trap pullers on commercial bully net vessels.
- Prohibiting the simultaneous possession of a bully net and any underwater breathing apparatus (not including dive masks or snorkels) aboard a vessel used to harvest or transport lobster for commercial purposes.
- Updating the definition of “commercial harvester” to include the bully net endorsement.

FWC staff have reviewed federal regulations, and will work with Council and SERO staff to develop a list of potential updates for federal regulations to align with Florida regulations. These changes will be made via amendment or technical correction, as determined by NOAA General Counsel.

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**MOTION #7. ADOPT THE TIMING AND TASK MOTION. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.**

**TIMING AND TASK**

Move to direct staff to:

- 1) Work with Gulf Council staff to prepare Spiny Lobster Regulatory Amendment 4 for web-based public hearings and for the June meetings of the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils.
- 2) Hold a webinar public hearing for Spiny Lobster Regulatory Amendment 4.
- 3) Work with FWC staff on potential changes to federal regulations to align with Florida regulations, which will be presented to the Committee in June 2017.