

**SUMMARY REPORT
SPINY LOBSTER COMMITTEE
June 16, 2016
Cocoa Beach, FL**

The Committee adopted the agenda and approved the December 2015 meeting minutes. Next, Council staff provided a review of landings for spiny lobster in recent years, including the preliminary landings for the 2015-16 fishing year.

Review Panel and Advisory Panel Recommendations

In the 2013-14 and 2014-15 fishing years, landings for spiny lobster have exceeded the annual catch target (ACT), which required that the Spiny Lobster Review Panel convene. In March 2016, the Spiny Lobster Review Panel convened to discuss landings and if corrective action was necessary. Council staff reviewed the recommendations from the 2016 Review Panel meeting.

Additionally, the Gulf and South Atlantic Spiny Lobster Advisory Panels (APs) met jointly in Key Largo on April 25, 2016. Council staff reviewed the AP report and recommendations. Bruce Irwin, Chair of the South Atlantic Spiny Lobster AP, provided more information on the AP recommendations and also discussed the current conditions of the fishery.

The Gulf Spiny Lobster SSC met in June 2016, and concurred with the Review Panel and AP recommendation to calculate the ABC based on landings from 1991-92 through 2014-2015. On June 8, 2016, NMFS notified the Councils that landings for 2015-2016 also exceed the ACT, and also recommended that the Council follow the recommendations from the review panel, pending South Atlantic SSC review.

The committee discussed these reports and agreed with the recommendations that the ACL should be reconsidered based on the fact that the original ACL was based on a low period in the fishery. The years proposed by the AP for recalculating the ACL are based on a longer time series landings and are likely more appropriate for the calculation. These years are also more reflective of what has been happening in the fishery in response to the live market, but are not the highest landings years.

The committee also discussed having an evaluation tool to indicate that reconsideration of quota may be necessary. The AP recommended using 3 seasons with the lowest landings over the time period.

FWC Study on Lobster Traps in Closed Areas

Tom Matthews (FWC/FWRI) provided a presentation of the results of a study conducted by FWC on compliance of closed areas. The study compared the number of spiny lobster traps inside three types of areas designated as no-fishing zones: Pennekamp State Park, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and protected areas for ESA- listed corals that were designated by the Council in 2012.

Trap Regulations outside of Florida

In April 2016, NMFS issued specifications for gear marking for recreational harvest of spiny lobster with traps outside of Florida to an individual who had made a request to conduct this activity off of North Carolina. SERO staff briefed the Committee on the specifications for the gear and the letter issued to the individual.

The committee expressed concern about the use of traps for recreational harvest. Traps are not currently an allowable gear for recreational harvest in Florida, but are not explicitly prohibited outside of the state. There were a number of questions about the commercial trap specifications in Florida and questions about the Florida bullynet fishery for spiny lobster.

The Committee voted on the following motions as recommendations to the Council:

MOTION 1. Direct staff to start work on an amendment to revise the ACL, including an option based on the Review Panel recommendation (1991-92 through 2015-16).
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

Spiny Lobster Review Panel Recommendation: Calculate the ACL based on the landings from 1991 through the most recent landings (2015-2016).

MOTION 2. Include the AP recommendation for the low-landing monitoring measure in the amendment.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

Spiny Lobster AP recommendation: There be a lower landing trigger based on the average of the three low landings years (2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2003-2004) that would initiate a review panel, if below this average for two consecutive years (5.3 mp total catch).

MOTION 3. Include an action to prohibit recreational traps in South Atlantic EEZ.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

Direction to staff:

- Have the SSC review the motions made by the committee
- Include range of alternatives with prohibition and restrictions
- Include recreational traps on AP agenda.
- Follow up with NC fisherman using traps

[DRAFT] TIMING AND TASKS

Move to direct staff to:

- 1) Have the SSC review the motions made by the committee at their October meeting
- 2) Work with Gulf Council staff to prepare an options paper for Spiny Lobster Amendment 13
- 3) Coordinate with FWC for a presentation on spiny lobster regulations in Florida at the next committee meeting.

MOTION 4. ADOPT THE TIMING AND TASK MOTION.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.