



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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OVERVIEW

Spiny Lobster Committee Meeting

June 10, 2008
 Renaissance Orlando Airport Hotel
 5445 Forbes Place
 Orlando, Florida

The Spiny Lobster Committee needs to: (A) review the Import Amendment 4/8 (CFMC Lead), choose preferred alternatives, and approve for public hearings; (B) receive a status report on lobster management changes in Florida; and (C) discuss issues and timing for Amendment 9 (GMFMC Lead).

A. Spiny Lobster Amendment 4/8 (CFMC Lead) (Attachment 1)

The Notice of Intent to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Assessment was published in the Federal Register on July 26, 2007; comments were due by 8/27/07. The Councils held a scoping meeting on January 24, 2008 in Islamorada, Florida. All letters and comments plus minutes of scoping meetings were reviewed at the March 2008 committee/Council meeting.

Current regulations that are anticipated to be modified by this amendment are as follows:

Regulation	GMFMC/SAFMC/FL	CFMC
Minimum Carapace Length	3.0 inches (7.62 cm)*	3.5 inches (8.9 cm)***
Minimum Tail Length	5.5 inches (13.97 cm)	
Minimum Tail Weight		
Berried Lobsters	No possession; can't strip eggs.**	Can't possess on vessel; Can be kept in trap; can't strip eggs.
Clipped fins	No possession; can't clip fins.**	No possession; can't clip fins.
Tail meat		

*Does not apply to use of shorts as attractants. **Applies to spiny & slipper lobsters.

***Lobsters must be kept whole until landed.

The Public Hearing document outlines the following potential actions:

4.0 MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

4.1 Action 1: Minimum Size Limits for Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*) Imported into the United States

Alternative 1 – No Action – Do not establish restrictions on spiny lobster imported into the U.S.

Alternative 2 - No person in the U.S. would be allowed to import a spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*):

- 1. Less than 5 ounces tail weight (5 ounces is defined as a tail that weighs 4.2 – 5.4 ounces).**
- 2. 3.0 inches (7.62 cm) or less carapace length if the animal is whole.**
- 3. Less than 5.5 inches (13.97 cm) tail length if only the tail is present.**

In Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, no person would be allowed to import a spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*):

- 1. Less than 6.0 ounces tail weight (6 ounces is defined as a tail that weighs 5.9 – 6.4 ounces).**
- 2. Less than 3.5 inches (8.89 cm) carapace length if the animal is whole.**
- 3. Less than 6.2 inches (15.75 cm) tail length if only the tail is present.**

Alternative 3 - No person may import spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) into the U.S.:

- 1. Less than 5 ounces tail weight (5 ounces is defined as a tail that weighs 4.2 – 5.4 ounces).**
- 2. 3.0 inches (7.62 cm) or less carapace length if the animal is whole.**
- 3. Less than 5.5 inches (13.97 cm) tail length if only the tail is present.**

4.2 Action 2: Other Import Restrictions

Alternative 1 – No Action - Do not have other restrictions on the importation of spiny lobster.

Alternative 2 - Do not allow the importation of spiny lobster tail meat which is not in whole tail form with the exoskeleton attached; and do not allow the importation of spiny lobster with eggs attached or importation of spiny lobster where the eggs, swimmerets, or pleopods have been removed or stripped.

Alternative 3 - Do not allow the importation of spiny lobster tail meat which is not in whole tail form with the exoskeleton attached

Alternative 4 - Do not allow the importation of spiny lobster with eggs attached or importation of spiny lobster where the eggs, swimmerets, or pleopods have been removed or stripped.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:

1. Review the public hearing document and provide guidance to staff/Team on any necessary changes.
2. Choose a preferred alternative for public hearings.
3. Approve the Import Amendment for public hearings.

Timing for this amendment is as follows:

Item	Proposed Dates (Kimmel)	Anticipated & Actual Dates
Letter designating CFMC admin. lead		7/20/07
NOI for DEIS published in FR		7/26/07; comments due by 8/27/07
Scoping (public comments)	Oct – Dec 2007	Thru Jan 2008
CFMC approves for scoping		8/14-15/07
GMFMC approves for scoping		10/29-11/1/08
CFMC final scoping meeting		11/13/07
SAFMC approves for scoping		12/2-7/07
CFMC Meets		12/11-12/07
Joint SA/GM Scoping – Marathon, FL		1/24/08
TEAM named & writes document		1/30/08
CFMC approves for PH		3/26-27/08
GMFMC approves for PH		6/2-6/08 TX
SAFMC approves for PH		6/8-13/08 FL
DEIS Published	May 2008	June or July 2008
Public Hearings	June 2008	July 2008
Councils review & approve	Aug-Oct 2008	
CFMC reviews & approves		8/14-15/08
GMFMC reviews & approves		8/4-7/08 MS
SAFMC reviews & approves		9/15-19/08 SC
Final Document sent to Secretary		10/1/08
FEIS Published & Proposed Rule		
Final Rule Effective	End of Feb 2009	

B. Status Report on Potential Changes from Florida

The committee will receive an update on potential actions and timing for changes from the State of Florida.

C. Amendment 9 (GMFMC Lead) (Attachment 2)

The Gulf Council and the South Atlantic Council need to prepare an amendment to address the new requirements of the MSA. The timing for work on this amendment will also be described. The following items are to be included (**Attachment 2**):

1. Tailing permit
2. Federal 50-short rule
3. The northern fishery
4. Updating the Council/State of Florida process
5. Annual Catch Limits & Accountability Measures

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide staff guidance on items to include and on suggested Amendment timing.