

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
SPINY LOBSTER COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Atlantic Beach, NC
December 4, 2017

The Committee approved the agenda. The Committee approved minutes from the June 2017 meeting.

Status of Commercial and Recreational Catches v. ACLs

Council staff presented an overview of 2016/2017 landings (commercial and recreational) for spiny lobster, through October 2, 2017. The landings from the 2016/2017 fishing season are 6,889,543 pounds, which exceeds the current annual catch target of 6.59 million pounds. The proposed rule package for Spiny Lobster Regulatory Amendment 4 is underway with a proposed annual catch target of 8.64 million pounds.

Spiny Lobster Amendment 13

Staff presented an options paper for Spiny Lobster Amendment 13 which contains actions that would update federal regulations to align with State of Florida bully-net regulations, and update the protocol and procedure for enhanced cooperative management. The Committee reviewed a table of inconsistent regulations between the State of Florida and the Code of Federal Regulations. Items that could be updated in the codified text next time spiny lobster is revised and items that would require Council action were discussed. The Committee also reviewed motions made by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at their October 2017 meeting. The following motions were approved:

MOTION # 1: ACCEPT THE IPT's RECOMMENDED WORDING FOR PURPOSE AND NEED.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

The purpose of this action is to conform federal regulations for spiny lobster that apply to the exclusive economic zone off Florida with recently adopted Florida state regulations, and to re-establish the procedure for the protocol for an enhanced cooperative management system.

The need for this action is to establish consistent state and federal regulations to effectively manage and enforce the harvest of spiny lobster off Florida to prevent overfishing while achieving optimum yield.

MOTION # 2: ACCEPT THE IPT's RECOMMENDED WORDING FOR ACTION 1, ALTERNATIVES 1 THROUGH 2.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Action 1 – Establish an endorsement, marking, and gear prohibitions for bully net gear in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off Florida

Alternative 1: No Action. Do not establish an endorsement for bully net gear or regulations related to bully nets for spiny lobster commercial harvesters in the EEZ off Florida in the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) and the South Atlantic.

Alternative 2: Establish an endorsement for bully nets and align federal regulations to be consistent with Florida regulations for spiny lobster commercial harvesters using bully net gear by implementing the following:

- Require commercial bully net vessels in the EEZ off Florida to have a bully net endorsement from Florida
- Require that the vessel be marked with the harvester’s bully net endorsement number using reflective paint or other reflective material
- Prohibit commercial bully net vessels from having trap pullers onboard
- Prohibit the simultaneous possession of a bully net and any underwater breathing apparatus (not including dive masks or snorkels) onboard a vessel used to harvest or transport spiny lobster for commercial purposes.

MOTION # 3: MODIFY ACTION 2, ALTERNATIVE 2 TO COMBINE BOTH THE PROTOCOL AND THE PROCEDURE INTO ONE DOCUMENT.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION # 4: INCORPORATE BAG LIMITS, DEGRADABLE PANELS IN TRAPS, AND DEFINITION OF ARTIFICIAL HABITATS INTO SPINY LOBSTER AMENDMENT 13.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Direction to staff to ensure the technical edits to the CFR as noted by FWC are made to the CFR.

MOTION # 5: APPROVE SPINY LOBSTER AMENDMENT 13 FOR SCOPING.
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 # 6 ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

- Revise language of the enhanced cooperative management protocol and procedure to reflect how the State of Florida currently promulgates regulations.
- Combine the enhanced cooperative management protocol and procedure into one document for Action 2, Alternative 2.
- Work with Gulf Council staff to incorporate the following in Spiny Lobster Amendment 13: bag limits, degradable panels, and the definition of artificial habitats.

- Conduct scoping webinars for Spiny Lobster Amendment 13.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL