

OVERVIEW

Joint Meeting of the Shrimp Committee and Advisory Panel and the Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panel

March 2, 2010
Jekyll Island Club Hotel
371 Riverview Drive
Jekyll Island, Georgia

The Shrimp Committee will, in a joint meeting with the Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panels: (A) elect a chair and vice-chair for the Shrimp AP; (B) receive a presentation on the new economic survey for federal South Atlantic shrimp permit holders; (C) review recommendations of the Shrimp Review Panel on (1) possibly requesting closure of EEZ waters adjacent to SC and GA to protect overwintering white shrimp and (2) whether management action is required to address low abundance of pink shrimp; and (D) receive a briefing on the reinitiation of ESA Section 7 consultation on the shrimp fishery due to smalltooth sawfish bycatch.

Economic Survey of Shrimp Permit Holders

Starting March 2010, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center will begin mailing a two-page economic survey to selected holders of federal South Atlantic penaeid shrimp and rock shrimp permits. The survey will be sent annually to a random sample of 20% to 33% of permitted shrimp vessels. The information will be used to assess trends in the financial and economic state of the fishery, and to determine the economic and social effects of regulations and other factors affecting the South Atlantic shrimp fishery.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: None anticipated

Shrimp Review Panel Recommendations

1. The Shrimp FMP allows for a concurrent closure of the EEZ adjacent to those South Atlantic states that have closed their waters to the harvest of penaeid shrimp to protect overwintering stocks when they have been depleted by cold weather. As specified in the FMP, “the Council may consider a state’s request for closure of the EEZ if a drop in catch rate resulting from severe winter weather is indicated during standardized assessment sampling and reveals a reduction of 80% or greater of the overwintering white shrimp abundance as reflected by CPUE.” South Carolina and Georgia closed their waters to shrimp harvest in mid-January and may request that the Council recommend concurrent closure of the EEZ off those states.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide a recommendation to the Council on whether to request that NOAA Fisheries Service close the EEZ to penaeid shrimp harvest until state waters reopen or upon receiving a request from the state(s) if shrimp stock status during sampling warrant an earlier opening of the EEZ.

2. Amendment 6 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the South Atlantic Region established a proxy for a minimum stock size threshold (MSST) as a parent stock size capable of producing maximum sustainable yield (MSY) the following year. According to SEAMAP sampling data the stock of South Atlantic pink shrimp has been below the threshold (0.461 shrimp/hectare) for the past two years.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide a recommendation to the Council as to whether management action is needed to bring the pink shrimp stock back above the MSST.

Reinitiation of Section 7 Consultation

On May 1, 2009, the Southeast Regional Office Sustainable Fisheries Division requested reinitiation of ESA Section 7 consultation on the South Atlantic shrimp fishery and its effects on smalltooth sawfish because the authorized incidental take of one smalltooth sawfish in that fishery had been exceeded. During a March 5-9, 2009, fishing trip in the South Atlantic EEZ, three smalltooth sawfish takes were observed in waters off the Florida Keys where shrimpers target pink shrimp. The Protected Resources Committee met during the December 2009 Council meeting and made a motion to forward this issue to the Shrimp Committee for consideration.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: NOAA Fisheries would like the Council to consider initiating the scoping process for an Amendment to its Shrimp FMP to reduce smalltooth sawfish bycatch in shrimp trawls off the Florida Keys.