

Shrimp Advisory Panel Summary
Gulf Council Office
Tampa, FL
March 3, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Corky Perret, Chair
Steve Bosarge, Vice-chair
Kim Chauvin
Julius Collins
Glenn Delaney
Julie Falgout
Frank Helies
Dennis Henderson
Harris Lasseigne
Lance Nacio
Thomas Schultz, Jr.
John Williams

Council Staff

Phyllis Miranda
Morgan Kilgour
Carrie Simmons

NMFS-SERO Staff

Susan Gerhart
Jim Nance
James Primrose
Steve Branstetter

Others present

Sandra Brooke

Council Member

Leann Bosarge

The Shrimp Advisory Panels met on March 3, 2016 at the Gulf Council office in Tampa, Florida. Corky Perret was elected as chair, and Steve Bosarge was elected as vice-chair. The agenda was adopted with one item added under other business. The minutes from the February 19, 2015 meeting were approved with minor revisions.

Biological Review of the Texas Closure

Jim Nance reviewed the Texas closure. The past few years have been slightly below average for landings of brown shrimp because of environmental conditions. The predominant size was 41-50 count shrimp. The brown shrimp size off of Texas were generally larger and less than two percent were in the >67 count size. There were some changes in the shrimp landings distribution in Texas pounds and the increase in pounds yield with the closure was between 0% and 7%. White shrimp catch off of Texas was below average during July and August.

Motion: To continue the Texas closure out to 200 miles in cooperation with the State of Texas closure.

Motion carried unanimously.

Review of the Updated Stock Assessments for Brown, White and Pink Shrimp

Jim Nance reviewed the stock assessment update for brown, white and pink shrimp. None of the stocks are overfished or are undergoing overfishing. The dynamics of each species are very different and the overfished and overfishing estimates are not comparable to each other. The

fisheries are prosecuted differently and all of the values should be looked at as an index and not absolute numbers. There has been a lower CPUE for fishery independent data for the past 4 years, but the stocks are all well above SSB_{MSY} . There was the mention that pink shrimp could possibly be landed as brown shrimp in areas other than Florida, as a main port to unload pink shrimp in Florida is closed. There was discussion about the shrimp fishery being affected because of water diversions in Florida bay. How MSY and OY are calculated in the shrimp fishery and that the fishery is currently operating well below MSY was also discussed.

Status Update on Shrimp Amendment 17A

The AP was notified that Shrimp Amendment 17 was split into two separate amendments, Amendment 17A and Amendment 17B. Amendment 17A has two actions, one that addresses the expiration of the moratorium and one that addresses the royal red shrimp endorsement. The Council's preferred alternatives were to keep the permit moratorium in place for another 10 years and to keep the royal red shrimp endorsement. The AP was notified that the Amendment will be transmitted by the April Council meeting.

Review of Shrimp Amendment 17B

Amendment 17B has six actions including establishing a permit pool. Staff reviewed the purpose and need and actions of the document. Staff also reviewed the outcomes of the Shrimp Aggregate MSY OY Working Group. The outcomes from the working group provide the values for Action 1, Alternative 2 and Action 2, Alternative 2. The group determined OY to be the modeled landings for the year 2009 because the year had high landings, high CPUE, met the turtle bycatch threshold and met the juvenile red snapper bycatch threshold. It was clarified that OY is not a cap, and it can be exceeded. The working group recommended an MSY of 109,237,618 pounds of tails and an OY of 85,368,059 pounds of tails.

There was considerable discussion on how effort is calculated. Landings from all shrimping are included in the CPUE, not just federally permitted vessels, and different areas have different efforts associated with them. It was noted that fisherman could shift where they fish and therefore, the effort in certain zones, such as the juvenile red snapper bycatch zone, could make the fishery exceed its effort thresholds.

The AP discussed how active vessels in the EEZ could be calculated, but there was the clarification that the data collected doesn't differentiate between shrimp landed in the EEZ and shrimp landed in inshore waters. Differentiating landings specific to the EEZ is difficult to do and may not be accurate with current data sources. In the analyses, the number of active vessels is predicted, not the number of active permits; a permit can be used on more than one vessel in any given year.

After discussion, the AP made the following two motions:

**Motion: In Action 1, that the preferred alternative be Alternative 2.
Alternative 2: Aggregate MSY is 109,237,618 pounds (tails)**

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion: In Action 2, to accept the working group's recommendation for setting OY.
That aggregate OY be set at 85,368,059 pounds (tails).**

Motion carried with no opposition.

There was considerable discussion about Action 3. Verbatim minutes for this action are available (**Tab D, No. 6b**). There were two motions that used the same reference year, 2009, but one alternative sets the threshold based on active permits, the other sets the threshold at valid or renewable permits. Rationale for using valid or renewable is to not have further reduction in the shrimp fishery. The AP was reminded that the threshold is not a reduction in the fleet; the number of permits is only reduced if permit holders do not renew their permits. There was discussion on if the number of permits could restrict the fleet's ability to achieve optimum yield and the AP members concluded that using the number of active vessels is unlikely to prevent the fleet from being able to achieve OY. There was concern that adding more permits to the fishery could increase the effort and put the fishery in jeopardy. It was clarified that this OY would not change until either the Council changes it or better scientific information becomes available.

Some AP members want the fishery to be able to grow, and, therefore, wanted there to be additional permits available. Other AP members were concerned with exceeding the turtle threshold or other constraints on the fishery if more permits were available. The AP was notified that NMFS has changed its permits website to show valid and renewable permits and permit holders so that people wanting to enter the fishery can know who has a permit. There was considerable discussion on the constraints of the fishery including vessel documentation, economics, and available permits. Some AP members felt that there should be some sort of buffer to accommodate for the fact that there will always be some permits that are inactive because of various circumstances (boat maintenance, health, etc.). There was concern that allowing too much of a buffer would create a dire situation in the future if economic conditions change and effort suddenly increased above the turtle threshold levels. There are about 20% of inactive permits currently, but it was noted that the permits that are not renewed are likely those that are not actively shrimping. The AP made the following motion:

Motion: In Action 3, that the preferred alternative be Alternative 2.

Alternative 2: Set a threshold number of Gulf shrimp vessel permits based on the expected number of active permitted vessels (those with landings from offshore waters) needed to attain aggregate OY in the offshore fishery (number of permits depends on the preferred alternative for Action 2).

Motion carried 6 to 4.

For Action 4, the AP was not sure if it would be appropriate to determine the permit pool at the current time because the rate of attrition for federal gulf shrimp permits has been slow and it is unlikely to be reached any time soon. It was clarified that the number of permits to establish the permit pool should be valid or renewable. However, the AP felt that the permit pool should be created and to also have a review panel be convened prior to when the number or threshold permits is reached to review the status of the fishery. The AP wanted to be sure that the Shrimp AP would be part of a review panel to review the details of the permit pool.

The AP made the following motion:

Motion: To add a new alternative to Action 4 and that it be the preferred alternative:

Alternative 4: If the number of permits reaches the threshold set in Action 3, any permits that are not or were not renewed within one year of the expiration date on the permit will go into a Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit Reserve Pool. When the number of valid permits reaches 1,300 permits (based on Action 3, Alternative 2), the Council will form a review panel to review the details of the pool and other options. The panel would consist of advisory panel members, SSC members, and NMFS and Council staff.

Motion carried with no opposition.

For Action 5, the AP was reminded that these eligibility requirements were specific to the permit pool permits and that the requirements would not be applicable to existing federal Gulf shrimp permit moratorium permits. The AP also discussed that the wording on Action 4 did not have clarification on the number of permits used to create a permit pool. The AP discussed current regulations for the shrimp fishery including U. S. Coast Guard (USCG) regulations. The certificate of documentation only applies to vessels over five net tons. Vessels under five net tons need a USCG safety inspection. The AP felt that the USCG safety inspection was more appropriate than a USCG Certificate of documentation; a permit still can go to a fishing vessel, but is not limited to only vessels over 5 net tons. The AP discussed that speculators could put their names on the list if it was first come, first served and there were no eligibility requirements. The AP also wanted to ensure that those who got a permit pool permit were actively shrimping. NMFS staff informed the AP that the documentation for eligibility requirements would be signing a document stating that one meets the criteria. The AP made the following motion:

Motion: In Action 5, that the preferred alternative be Alternative 2.

Alternative 2: NMFS will maintain a waiting list for Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permits and notify individuals in the order in which they appear on the list when a Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit becomes available. Once notified, the individual must submit a completed and up-to-date application to NMFS to be issued a Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit. To be eligible for a Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit the applicant must meet the requirements selected below. A Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit may only be transferred to an individual who also meets the eligibility requirements, including:

- **US citizenship or business**
- **USCG safety inspection with fishing activity beyond 3 miles**
- **Proof of shrimp landings through trip tickets or other applicable landing data programs within 12 months of the issuance of a permit**

Motion carried with no opposition.

The AP was presented with Action 6 which was requested from the industry at Council meetings. The AP felt that the transit provision was a reasonable request, but that requiring the detachment of doors from the nets was too cumbersome for fisherman. The AP discussed an additional

alternative that would be stricter than just nets out of the water, but not as labor intensive as the doors detached from gear. After discussion, the AP made the following motion:

Motion: In Action 6, that the preferred alternative be Alternative 2.

Alternative 2: A vessel possessing shrimp may transit Gulf federal waters without a federal vessel permit if fishing gear is appropriately stowed. Transit means non-stop progression through the area; fishing gear appropriately stowed means doors and nets must be out of the water.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Review of Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs)

The AP was presented with the outcomes from the Coral SSC/AP meeting, the Council motions regarding that meeting, and motions that the Reef Fish AP had made about the proposed HAPCs. The AP was also presented with modified boundaries of certain proposed HAPCs that had not yet been presented to the Coral SSC/AP. Sandra Brooke (GMFMC Coral SSC) was available to answer questions. For future meetings with the Coral SSC/AP, there was a request that staff come prepared with areas including a buffer if that is something that the coral scientists will want. After the presentation the AP was also notified that the National Marine Sanctuaries in the Gulf are also looking to incorporate new areas into the sanctuaries. The proposed areas if closed to shrimping would likely end the pink shrimp fishery in Florida. It was clarified that these areas were not proposed by the Coral Working Group and Coral SSC/AP, that the NMS areas were separate. The AP did not feel it had sufficient time to adequately review all of the areas at the meeting, and would like to have more time to meet with the Coral SSC/AP to discuss each area individually and made the following motion:

Motion: That the Shrimp Advisory Panel meet with the Coral Advisory Panel (including Coral scientists), royal red shrimpers, and other appropriate participants to consider the proposed coral areas in the Gulf.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Other Business

There was an announcement the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation has had funds to do some outreach for TED compliance and the timeline and funds will be extended to help industry properly install and maintain TEDs. So far, all gear inspection have had excellent compliance.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Motions that did not pass

Motion: In Action 3, that the preferred alternative be Alternative 7, Option b.

Alternative 7. Set a threshold number of Gulf shrimp vessel permits based on the number of valid permits at:

Option b. the end of 2009 (1,722 permits)

Second substitute motion: In Action 3, that the preferred alternative be Alternative 7, Option d.

Alternative 7: Set a threshold number of Gulf shrimp vessel permits based on the number of valid permits at:

Option d. the end of 2013 (1,501 permits)

Second substitute motion failed.