

Shrimp Committee Report
October 17, 2016
Dale Diaz, Chair

Update on NMFS Turtle Excluder Device (TED) rule

Mr. Hoffman presented the current compliance rate and a status update on the TED Rule. The alternatives for the rulemaking include: the status quo, required use of modified TEDs in skimmer trawls, required use of modified TEDs by all shrimp trawl vessels, and other potential alternatives. The DEIS on the proposed rule is expected by the end of the year. Mr. Hoffman also presented the compliance policy and compliance threshold. Mr. Hoffman stressed that the closure of the shrimp fishery due to poor TED compliance is a last-resort action that would occur only after education/outreach and enforcement activities failed to remedy poor compliance.

Risk Assessment for Threshold Permit Numbers Relative to Sea Turtle Incidental Take Restraints

Dr. Hart presented the information provided in the risk assessment for threshold permit numbers relative to sea turtle incidental take restraints. The Committee was also presented with the SSC report on this document. It was noted that the relative risk table available in the document was a risk relative to the other alternatives and that the SSC highlighted the caveats identified in this analysis. The caveats include the following: 1) not all latent effort can be realized, 2) economic and biological factors drive effort in the shrimp fishery rather than the number of federal permits, 3) federal and state effort cannot be partitioned, and 4) moratorium permits only limit effort in the EEZ, thus only federal effort is limited.

Revised Options Paper for Shrimp Amendment 17B

The Committee was presented with the revised draft options paper of Shrimp Amendment 17B. The document now includes data from 2014, thus some of the values have changed slightly for Actions 1, 2, and 3. The Committee discussed the threshold values for Action 3. With the information from the risk assessment, the Committee discussed eliminating Alternative 6 in Action 3 which is the only alternative that has a threshold greater than the current number of valid permits. There was concern about eliminating the only alternative that is based on the number of valid permits and not based on the number of active permits. It was noted that with the current rate of attrition of permits (through non-renewal), the threshold values would not be reached for five to ten years. Thus, it was discussed that it would be inappropriate to recommend Reserve Pool Permit requirements at this time. The Committee made the following motion:

The Committee recommends and I so move: To move Action 3, Alternative 6 and Action 5 to Considered but Rejected.

Action 3 – Minimum Threshold Number of Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permits

Alternative 6. Set a threshold number of valid or renewable Gulf shrimp vessel permits equal to the number of valid permits at:

Option 6a. the end of 2013 (1,501 permits)

Option 6b. the end of 2014 (1,470 permits)

Option 6c. the end of the initial moratorium, October 26, 2016 (number of permits unknown).

Action 5 – Issuance and Maintenance of Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permits

NOTE: This action only considers eligibility requirements for Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permits, if established in Action 4. It does not affect federal Gulf shrimp moratorium permits.

Alternative 1. No action. Individuals must submit a completed application to NMFS to be issued a Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit. Applicants with complete applications will receive a Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit Reserve Pool permit if one is available.

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 requirement. **AP Preferred**

Option a – no eligibility requirements

Option b – be a U.S. citizen or business

Option c – assign the permit to a vessel with a valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) Dockside Safety Exam for fishing activity beyond 3 miles

Option d – after receiving a Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit, the permit holder must show proof of shrimp landings from the Gulf associated with the vessel through trip tickets or other applicable landings data programs within 12 months of the initial issuance of the permit or the permit will not be renewed or approved for transfer

Alternative 3. The Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permits will be available from NMFS *once per year* and will be issued to applicants in the order in which applications are received after the availability of permits is announced. Individuals must submit a completed application to NMFS to be eligible for 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 requirement.

Option a – no eligibility requirements

Option b – be a U.S. citizen or business

Option c – assign the permit to a vessel with a valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) Dockside Safety Exam for fishing activity beyond 3 miles

Option d – after receiving a Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit, the permit holder must show proof of shrimp landings from the Gulf associated with the vessel through trip tickets or other applicable landings data programs within 12 months of the initial issuance of the permit or the permit will not be renewed or approved for transfer

Alternative 4. The Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permits will be available from NMFS *once per year*. If the number of applicants is greater than the number of Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit, NMFS will conduct a lottery to determine which individuals may be issued the available permits. Individuals must submit a completed application to NMFS by the published deadline to be eligible for the lottery. 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 requirement.

Option a – no eligibility requirements

Option b - be a U.S. citizen or business

Option c – assign the permit to a vessel with a valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) Dockside Safety Exam for fishing activity beyond 3 miles

Option d – after receiving a Reserved Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit, the permit holder must show proof of shrimp landings from the Gulf associated with the vessel through trip tickets or other applicable landings data programs within 12 months of the initial issuance of the permit or the permit will not be renewed or approved for transfer

Motion carried 7 to 2.

The Committee then discussed Action 6- Transit Provisions for Shrimp Vessels Without a Federal Shrimp Permit. The Committee felt that Alternatives 2 and 4 could be combined for clarity. It was noted that this would be changing the AP's Preferred Alternative and staff informed the Committee that the AP was not presented with Alternative 4 but would likely be amenable to the change. The Committee discussed that Alternative 3 would be cumbersome to fishermen and could be a safety issue. The Committee made the following motion:

The Committee recommends and I so move: In Action 6, to change Alternative 2 to read as follows and remove Alternative 4.

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 trawl doors and nets must be out of the water and the bag straps must be removed from the net.

Alternative 4. 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 a trawl net may remain on deck, but the bag straps must be removed from the net.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Other Business

Dr. Hart presented the 2015 Gulf of Mexico Commercial Shrimp Fishing Effort Estimate. In 2015 the fishing effort in the 10-30 fathom zone of statistical areas 10-21 was equal to a 71.1% reduction from the baseline effort which is more than the 67% reduction required for juvenile red snapper bycatch mortality.

This concludes my report.