

Shrimp Advisory Panel Summary

Gulf Council Office
4107 W. Spruce Street, Suite 200
Tampa, FL 33607
March 21, 2019
8:30am – 5:00pm

Members Present:

Corky Perret, Chair
Steve Bosarge, Vice-Chair
Thu Bui
Kim Chauvin
Glenn Delaney
Gary Graham
Andrea Hance
Harris Lasseigne, Jr.
Lance Nacio
Franklin Parker
Thomas Schultz, Jr.
John Williams

Council Staff:

Matt Freeman
John Froeschke
Jessica Matos
Carrie Simmons

NMFS Staff:

Rick Hart
Frank Helies
Michelle Masi
Kevin McIntosh
Mike Travis

Council Member:

Leann Bosarge

The Shrimp Advisory Panel met on March 21, 2019. Corky Perret was reelected as Chair; Steve Bosarge was reelected as Vice-Chair. The agenda was adopted with two items added under Other Business and with minor changes to the order of the agenda. The minutes from the April 5, 2018, meeting were approved.

Biological Review of the Texas Closure

Dr. Michelle Masi provided a biological review of the Texas closure. For 2018 in Texas, inshore brown shrimp catch in May-August was below the historical average; 51% of the catch during those months occurred in May. For 2018 in Texas, offshore brown shrimp catch in May-August was also below the historical average. Brown shrimp catch increased after the Texas closure, particularly in the larger sizes. Some changes in distribution of landings occurred for 2018: increase in landings at Port Chambers and Galveston, with decreases at other upper Texas ports; decrease in landings for all middle Texas ports; increase in landings at Aransas, with decreases at Brownsville and Port Isabel for the lower Texas ports. Jefferson and Kemah contributed the largest percentage of total Texas landings from May-August for the upper Texas ports; Palacios provides the largest percentage of Texas total landings from May-August for the middle Texas ports; Brownsville contributes the largest percentage of Texas total landings from May-August

for the lower TX ports. White shrimp catch off Texas from July-August was below average again for 2018.

Following Dr. Masi's presentation and Dr. Hart's presentations on stock assessments and juvenile red snapper effort threshold, the AP then made the following motion:

Motion: To continue the Texas closure for the coming year in conjunction with the state of Texas closure out to 200 miles for 2019.

Motion carried with no opposition.

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

Dr. Rick Hart reviewed the stock assessment updates for brown, white, and pink shrimp for 2017. None of the stocks are overfished or undergoing overfishing. While pink, brown, and white shrimp spawning stock biomasses are above the overfished reference points, pink and brown shrimp spawning stock biomasses have decreased in the past few years, and Dr. Hart will be further investigating. Dr. Hart noted that the brown shrimp stock assessment model is parameterized as an annual model with seasons. The pink and white shrimp stocks are modeled in monthly intervals, with the months modeled as years within the assessment framework. The AP inquired about including the Louisiana East shrimp surveys similar to what is being done on the west side. Dr. Hart responded that the stock's response to the eastern surveys was not as indicative as it is on the west side, according to the model. Dr. Hart also reviewed CPUE and the juvenile red snapper effort threshold. CPUE in 2017 is still high in all three stocks. Effort in the juvenile red snapper zone, 10-30 fathom of statistical zones 10-21, was reduced by 67.03%, slightly more than the 67% required reduction.

NMFS SERO Permits Office Presentation

In response to questions and discussion from the Shrimp AP's meeting in 2018, Mr. McIntosh provided a presentation regarding renewal of federal Gulf of Mexico shrimp permits using the web-based Southeast Fisheries Permit system. The AP conveyed that this online system has a much greater ease of use as compared to the previous paper form system.

Unique Identifier and Related Data Issues in the Gulf Shrimp Fishery

Dr. Travis provided a presentation regarding unique identifier and related issues in the Gulf shrimp fishery landings data. Dr. Travis discussed several issues, such as an inability to accurately identify vessels, dealers, and fishermen/businesses across states, as well as inaccurate or missing size data. These issues have had multiple implications, such as an inability to use recent years of landings data for the Amendment 18 analysis and annual economic reports, be responsive to the Council's request for an economic analysis of the Texas Closure, and reduced accuracy in the stock assessments. Suggestions to address these issues included requesting the

Council to apply current federal dealer and electronic dealer reporting requirements to Gulf shrimp dealers, improved coordination between Fisheries Information Network (FIN) partners to improve data quality, and encourage FIN partners to move towards a data management system comparable to the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP).

Following a discussion, the AP made the following motion:

Motion: To have the Science Center develop a presentation on ACCSP data reporting and sharing mechanisms relative to the Gulf shrimp industry and that the Gulf Council will convene a shrimp data workshop with the appropriate stakeholders represented.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Note: The AP provided Council staff with editorial authority on the motion.

Review of the Shrimp Amendment 18

Dr. Freeman presented the final draft of Shrimp Amendment 18, including the Council's current preferred options. After discussing the options in Action 1, the Shrimp AP noted that while Option c would provide additional days to fish, which would be an economic benefit to the shrimp industry, in the spirit of compromise, Preferred Option b would be acceptable. The AP then made the following motion:

Motion: In Action 1, preferred option b be the preferred.

Action 1, Preferred Option b: Modify the target reduction goal for juvenile red snapper of shrimp trawl bycatch mortality from 67% less than the benchmark years of 2001-2003 to 60%.

Motion carried with no opposition.

The Shrimp AP asked for clarification on the term 'ABC' in the Preferred Option. Council staff clarified that only royal red shrimp has an ABC and that language can be added to the discussion to note that. It also makes the language standardized for all framework procedures. The Shrimp AP asked if allowing changes for the target reduction goal for juvenile red snapper mortality through the open framework documentation process could potentially bring about both reductions as well as increases in the target reduction goal more quickly. Council staff noted that either type of change could occur, but the Shrimp AP also noted that these changes would likely happen through the amendment process regardless of how quickly it may happen. The AP then made the following motion:

Motion: The Shrimp AP supports Action 2, provided the AP has an opportunity to provide input to the Council before final action is taken.

Motion carried with no opposition.

The Shrimp AP noted that, compared to other amendments, the Purpose and Need section does not address optimal yield and asked why. The AP felt that optimal yield should be in this

section. One member of SERO staff noted that the document is a Categorical Exclusion and that the document may not need a Purpose and Need; another member of SERO staff disagreed with this.

Other Business

Monitoring and Research Priorities Review

Dr. Simmons presented the Monitoring and Research Priorities Review from 2015-2019 and asked for recommendations for the upcoming grant cycle from 2020-2024. Council staff provided an overview of how frequently these research and monitoring priorities are updated as well as how they are utilized by state and federal funding agencies and research funding opportunities. The AP suggested updating section d. Estimation of Bycatch as well as section e. Estimation of Discards, especially with regards to recreational red snapper management changes (i.e., minimum size limits and seasons) and the various state data collection programs. It was noted that the correct estimation of commercial discards and discard mortality rates by gear was equally important. The AP also suggested research into whether Gulf restaurants label seafood products as domestic or international and quantification of restaurant labeling accuracy.

Discussion on Artificial Reef Zones in Federal Waters

The AP discussed that two artificial reef zones are being proposed in the Exclusive Economic Zone off the coast of Mississippi, which would be placed in areas of high shrimp effort and would negatively impact the shrimp industry. They noted that there seemed to be little to no public hearings or notices. An AP member stated that the shrimp industry is losing fishing grounds due to placement of certain artificial reefs. The AP inquired why the Council was not notified of this. Council staff stated that it appeared from the maps and materials presented that this proposed placement of artificial structures should have triggered an essential fish habitat (EFH) consultation. Following a discussion about how to proceed, the AP then made the following motion:

Motion: The AP is concerned about the potential placement of artificial reef zones in federal waters off Mississippi that are proposed in historically productive shrimping grounds. That the Council take action with the appropriate federal agencies, including sending a letter to the relevant federal authorities expressing their concerns.

Motion carried with no opposition.

New TED Tag System in Louisiana

The AP discussed the new Louisiana Sea Grant TED tag program which was implemented in 2019. This program provides a visual notification (tag) that, on that date, a LA Sea Grant agent found everything in terms of TEDs to be in compliance on a vessel. The tags have no authority

with any regulatory or enforcement body, but are intended for marketing purposes. Tags have serial numbers, which Louisiana Sea Grant notes along with which vessel to which the tag gets attached. This idea came from Louisiana Sea Grant responding to an issue that shrimpers had raised.

The AP meeting adjourned at 4:25pm.