

Shrimp Advisory Panel Summary
Gulf Council Office
Tampa, FL
February 16, 2017
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
Gary Graham
Harris Lasseigne
Lance Nacio
Thomas Schultz, Jr.
John Williams

Council Staff

Doug Gregory
Morgan Kilgour
Bernadine Roy
Camilla Shireman
Carrie Simmons

NMFS-SERO Staff

Mike Barnett
Roy Crabtree
Frank Helies
Mike Travis

Council Member

Dale Diaz

The Shrimp Advisory Panel met on February 16, 2017 at the Gulf Council office in Tampa, Florida. The agenda was adopted with one item added under other business. The minutes from the March 3, 2016 meeting were approved.

Biological Review of the Texas Closure

Dr. Hart reviewed the Texas closure. The past few years have been slightly below average for landings of brown shrimp due to less favorable environmental conditions. The brown shrimp size off of Texas were generally larger and less than one 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 13%. White shrimp catch off of Texas was below average during July and August. The group discussed how fishing has changed in Texas and how some of the differences observed in this year can be explained by poor environmental conditions and some vessels not fishing and landing in Texas in 2016 (e.g. some of the fleet moved from alternate ports to Palacios). It was clarified that the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department determines the timing for the TX closure.

Motion: To recommend to the Gulf Council to continue the closure in conjunction with the state of Texas out to 200 nautical miles for 2017.

Motion passed unanimously.

The AP discussed when the last economic analysis was completed and was informed that it had been many years. The AP discussed that economic analysis was in general ambiguous and that

economic yield should be used to describe the analysis with regard to either maximizing revenues or maximizing economic profits as outcomes of the analysis.

Motion: To request NMFS to estimate economic yield for the fishery from the Texas closure.

Motion passed unanimously.

The AP also discussed that different countries/regions have different managing strategies such as using seasonal closures. Though not all AP members were in favor of a closure, they were interested in seeing an analysis of what would happen if the seasonal closure was extended to include different states and different areas. Other AP members felt that the shrimp fishery is already well managed and no new closures are needed. A previous analysis concluded that there is not a benefit by extending the closure to the EEZ off of LA. After discussion the AP made the following motion:

Motion: Request an updated analysis to examine a closure in statistical area 13 through 21, the Texas closure, with and without the adjacent state closure.

Motion passed.

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

Dr. Hart reviewed the stock assessment update for brown, white and pink shrimp. None of the stocks are overfished or are undergoing overfishing. The group discussed that the graph for white shrimp shows reference points below the overfished definition in previous years. It was clarified that these reference points did not come into effect until 2015, and that white shrimp have not been declared overfished because of this. However, there was concern that the SSB_{MSY} was getting close to the overfished threshold for white shrimp (see Figure 1). Staff highlighted the discussion section of Shrimp Amendment 15 (which defined status determination criteria for penaeid shrimp) that stated that it was unlikely that an overfished condition would extend for a time period in which a response could be implemented. The AP was concerned that there could be a potential designation of overfished should the trend continue. Staff clarified that the aggregate MSY and OY (addressed in Shrimp Amendment 17B) would not be used to determine status of the shrimp fishery.

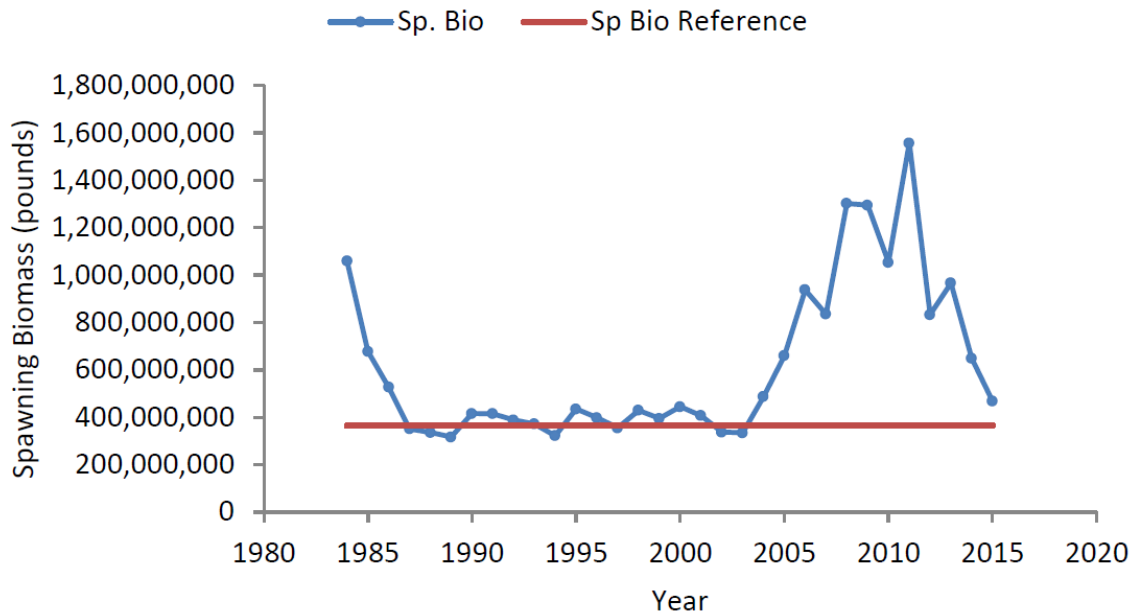


Figure 1. White shrimp spawning biomass estimates, 1984-2015 (from White Shrimp Stock Assessment Update 2015).

Update on New Proposed TED Rules

Mr. Barnette summarized the public hearing presentation on the proposed rule regarding TEDs. A brief overview of the issues were presented including an increase in the number of skimmer trawls, and increase in sea turtles in nearshore areas, documented sea turtle bycatch, and issues with tow time limits. Several different configurations of TEDs were tested in skimmer trawls and shrimp loss averaged 6.21%. The current preferred alternative would “Amend the existing TED regulations to require all vessels using skimmer trawls, pusher-head trawls, and wing nets (butterfly trawls)—with the exception of the Biscayne Bay wing net fishery prosecuted in Miami-Dade County, Florida—to use TEDs designed to exclude small turtles.” TEDs outlined in the proposed rule would be required within 6 months of final rule publication. Also, the tow time definition would change to the following “For a trawl that is not attached to a door, the tow time begins at the time that the entire net enters the water and ends at the time that the entire net is removed from the water.” There was considerable discussion on the number of turtles and nests required for down-listing turtles. There was also a discussion regarding what the definition of “effort” for skimmer trawls was, and it was clarified that this was primarily based on the number of permits. There was also discussion about using alternative funding sources, such as NFWF or RESTORE Act money, to produce TEDs for the industry.

Review of Shrimp Amendment 17B

Staff provided an overview of Shrimp Amendment 17B and the Council’s preferred alternatives. Staff reviewed the slight wording change that clarifies the minimum threshold number of permits in Action 3. Staff also reviewed the Council’s change to Alternative 4

in Action 4 and Alternative 2 in Action 5.

Motion: In Action 4, to make alternative 4 the AP's preferred alternative

Preferred Alternative 4. When the number of valid or renewable shrimp moratorium permits reaches 1,175, the Council will form a review panel to review the details of a permit pool and other options. If the number of permits reaches the threshold set in Action 3, any permits that are not renewed within one year of the expiration date on the permit will go into a Gulf Shrimp Vessel Permit Reserve Pool. The panel would consist of Shrimp AP members, Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) members, NMFS and Council staff.

Motion passed.

Motion: In Action 5, to make alternative 2 the AP's preferred alternative.

Preferred 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.

Motion passed.

Other Business

Staff provided the locations of the public hearings for Shrimp Amendment 17B. The AP felt that there should have been additional locations selected for Louisiana.

Motion: To recommend to the Council that future public hearings for Shrimp include Abbeville, LA and Belle Chasse, LA in addition to Houma, LA.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned.