

(Tab B, No. 10a)

Shrimp Management Committee

SSC Presentation

- Dr. Mike Travis (SERO) presented on Gulf royal red shrimp landings from 1962-2020. Landings peaked in the mid- to late-1990s.
- Since royal red shrimp is not an annual crop species, the fishery has an ACL = 337,000 lbs of tails, and an accountability measure.
- Not a year-round fishery; participants usually harvest penaeid shrimp in addition to royal reds.

- Dr. Travis reviewed shrimp imports from Argentina, which tripled from 2015-2020.
- Most are warm-water shrimp, which may compete with domestic Gulf royal red shrimp.
- Dr. Travis next reviewed the number of valid permits and the number of active permits for 2015-2019.
 - Both groups of permits have declined some over that timeframe.

- Dr. Travis discussed the economic performance of the Gulf shrimp fishery from 2014-2019, with the note that this information would be incorporated into the current draft shrimp framework action.
- The 2015-2019 average landings may be more indicative of baseline data, as performance declined after 2014 (shrimp price and fuel price were both high and had decreased following 2014).
- Dr. Travis explained that, for amendments, baseline economic data is needed for analysis.
- Council staff stated that the Shrimp Advisory Panel had concurred with the idea of 2014 being an outlier in the data.

Reef Fish Committee

Review of SEFSC Analysis of Historical Red Grouper Stock Assessments using
Alternative Marine Recreational Information Program Landings Data

- SEFSC reviewed an analysis which applied MRIP-FES adjusted recreational catch and effort data to the SS model used in the SEDAR 42 (2015) stock assessment for Gulf red grouper.
- Corrections needed to update the SEDAR 42 model:
 - Corrected for an identified error related to the model's initial conditions (virgin total and spawning stock biomass, and virgin recruitment)
 - Updated the estimate of red tide mortality from 2005
- Recreational landings data informed by MRIP-FES were then used to replace the MRIP-CHTS data used in the approved SEDAR 42 assessment model.

- Catch limits for these three versions of the SEDAR 42 model were then projected and compared:
 - SEDAR 42 (2015) with CHTS
 - SEDAR 42 (2015) corrected, with CHTS
 - SEDAR 42 (2015) corrected, with FES
- Generally, the corrected versions of the SEDAR 42 base model estimated a lower SSB compared to the original.
- The updated version incorporating MRIP-FES data estimated an SSB level below the original model, but above the corrected version of SEDAR 42 model using CHTS data.
- The SSC discussed the projection of the catch limits for the model variants, understanding that the intent was to explore the effects of MRIP-FES on the catch limits as parameterized under SEDAR 42.

- During discussions the SSC noted that assessment functions like selectivity, retention, and discards are largely affected by sector allocations.

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Reef Fish Committee

Discussion of Goliath Grouper Closure and Federal Catch Limits

- Council staff reviewed the management history of goliath grouper.
- Amendment 18B included a rebuilding plan for goliath grouper, based on the then-pending results of the SEDAR 6 (2004) stock assessment.
- When the SEDAR 6 stock assessment was not accepted for use in management, the development of Amendment 18B stopped.
- Successive SEDAR assessments of goliath grouper (SEDAR 23, 2010; SEDAR 47, 2015) were also not accepted for informing fisheries management.

- Dr. Luiz Barbieri (FWRI) summarized recent management-related developments concerning goliath grouper.
- With an OFL set at 0, any harvest, even in state waters, could be seen as an overfishing action on that stock.
- SERO indicated that the FWC state waters limited harvest of goliath grouper is outside of the federal management purview.

- Dr. Barbieri summarized a limited harvest program for goliath grouper in state waters that was approved by FWC in the spring of 2022:
 - Only 200 harvest permits will be issued.
 - Each harvested fish must be tagged.
 - Permits awarded via lottery, and tags are limited to one per person per year.
 - One permit begets one tag, and tags must be immediately attached to each fish.
 - Permit holders may only harvest goliath grouper between 24 - 36 inches TL.
 - Targets sub-adults and avoids larger, older goliath grouper in federal waters.

- Dr. Barbieri recounted that the previous stock assessments on goliath grouper have not been successful, and as such, the stock status has not been able to be revised or new catch limits established.
- SSC discussed exploring what modeling approaches maybe feasible for goliath grouper, as it may be informative not only for goliath grouper management, but also for other species which have been closed to harvest for extended time periods.
- Dr. Barbieri replied that the South Atlantic SSC came to a similar conclusion.

- An SSC member asked whether it would be productive to form a working group between the Councils' SSCs to further consider this issue.
- The SSC discussed the formation of a joint workgroup to look at establishing a method for evaluating catch limits for federally managed species currently closed to harvest, including goliath grouper.
- Dr. Judd Curtis (South Atlantic Council Staff) noted that the South Atlantic SSC has been charged with looking specifically at stocks which have OFLs that are currently set at 0 lbs, or are otherwise undefined.

Motion: For the Council to consider adding representatives from the Gulf SSC to the South Atlantic SSC workgroup in an effort to develop a cooperative workgroup focused on establishing a method for evaluating catch limits for federally managed species currently closed to harvest, including southeastern U.S. goliath grouper.

Motion carried without opposition and with one absent.