

Shrimp Committee Report
January 30, 2017
Dale Diaz, Chair

Public Hearing Draft for Shrimp Amendment 17B

Staff presented the public hearing draft of Shrimp Amendment 17B. Action 1 defines an aggregate MSY for shrimp species.

The Committee recommends and I so move: In Action 1 to make Alternative 2 the preferred alternative.

Alternative 2: Establish aggregate MSY using the method developed by the Shrimp Effort Working Group (SEWG). For the federal commercial Gulf shrimp fishery, aggregate MSY = 112,531,374 lbs of tails.

Motion carried.

Action 2 defines an aggregate OY for shrimp species.

The Committee recommends and I so move: In Action 2 that the preferred alternative be Alternative 2.

Alternative 2: For the federal shrimp fishery, aggregate OY = 85,761,596 lbs of tails which is aggregate MSY reduced for certain ecological, social, and economic factors.

Motion carried.

Action 3 sets a minimum threshold limit for the number of valid and renewable shrimp permits. This threshold is to ensure that if permits reach this low number, the Council will review the status of the fishery and can take action. It was emphasized that the Council is not actively reducing permits. The number of permits in each of the alternatives is based on the predicted number of active vessels which includes all offshore effort (even that in state waters). The predicted number of active vessels includes vessels that do not have a federal permit (state permitted vessels). These numbers (of predicted active vessels) are used to set the threshold. But, the threshold will apply to a value that NMFS can actually monitor, which is the number of valid or renewable permits. Though the rationale used to set the threshold is based on a predicted number of active permits, the threshold will be applied to the valid or renewable permits. Staff will add language to the public hearing presentations and clearly define valid and renewable permits versus predicted active permits.

The Committee recommends and I so move: In Action 3 that the preferred alternative be Alternative 2.

Alternative 2: Set a threshold number of valid or renewable Gulf shrimp vessel permits equal to the predicted number of active permitted vessels (those with landings from offshore waters) needed to attain aggregate OY in the offshore fishery. Aggregate OY accounts for relatively high CPUE and landings while reducing the risk of exceeding sea turtle and juvenile red snapper bycatch (for Action 2 Alternative 2: 1,072 permits).

Motion carried.

Action 4 lays out the response of what happens when the valid and renewable permit threshold is met. The Committee discussed why the number was set at 1300 in Alternative 3. There was discussion that the projected passive reduction in permits would take about 15-20 years at the current rate of non-renewal and that the current permit moratorium would expire before then. The Committee felt that there should be a metric in place should the threshold be met.

The Committee recommends and I so move: In Action 4 that the preferred alternative be Alternative 4, changing the number of shrimp moratorium permits from 1300 to 1175.

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 carried.

Action 5 addresses a transit provision for non-federally permitted vessels through federal waters. The Committee discussed the differences between Alternatives 2 and 3.

The Committee recommends and I so move: In Action 5 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 trawl doors and nets must be out of the water and the bag straps must be removed from the net. 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.

The Committee recommends and I so move: That Shrimp Amendment 17B be sent out for public hearings.

Motion Carried.

Other Business

Three items were discussed under other business. Dr. Ponwith provided some updated effort estimates for the shrimp fishery which were still below the juvenile red snapper bycatch thresholds. Mr. Diaz discussed the upcoming TED rule and expressed that the new definition of tow times and the requirement for TEDS in skimmer trawls could be problematic as there could be an initial delay in obtaining TEDs because of demand. Dr. Crabtree noted that NMFS is aware of these two issues and is looking into the matter. Ms. Bosarge discussed the GOMRI report and climate change findings; some species have evidence of distributions moving north, and the Council should be aware that management may need to adapt.

Madam Chair this concludes my report.