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FISHERIES**



Tab D, No. 7

# Update on the Reinitiation of ESA Section 7 Consultation on the Authorization of the Southeast U.S. Shrimp Fisheries

**August 19, 2024**

Jennifer Lee  
Fisheries Biologist, Protected Resources/Fisheries Liaison  
Southeast Regional Office (SERO)  
Protected Resources Division (PRD)

# Presentation Overview

- The 2021 Opinion Background and Reinitiation Request
- Progress Addressing Data Needed For Reinitiation
  - Effort Data
  - Updated Bycatch Estimates
  - Best Available Science
  - Population Viability Analyses
- Consultation Timing Update



# Background

- April 2021: SERO issued new ESA biological opinion and incidental take statement on the implementation of the sea turtle Conservation regulations (TED regs) under the ESA and the authorization of the southeast U.S. shrimp fisheries in federal Waters under the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act.
- June 2023: SERO, Sustainable Fisheries Division (SFD) requested SERO Protected Resources Division (PRD) reinstate Section 7 consultation on U.S. shrimp fisheries and giant manta rays and smalltooth sawfish.
  - Reinstatement was required to address unanticipated observed lethal incidental take of giant manta rays and new information revealing effects of southeast shrimp fisheries on smalltooth sawfish and giant manta rays not considered in the 2021 Shrimp Opinion.
  - No other reinstatement triggers were met so reinstatement scope was limited to addressing only those two species.



# Background

- Information is required to initiate formal consultation (see [§ 402.14\(c\) and \(d\)](#))
- Data needs Identified for reinitiation of this consultation included:
  - Trawl effort data.
  - Revised bycatch estimates based on the recent observer data (and effort data).
  - Evaluation of the best available data on giant manta rays and smalltooth sawfish, the nature and the extent of the lethal trawl interactions.
  - Completion of smalltooth sawfish and giant manta rays SEFSC population viability analyses for understanding the impact of Southeastern shrimp fisheries on these species.
  - Assessment of any new proposed management actions by the Councils, including any taken in response to new information as it becomes available.
- Presentations on reinitiation and related information to date:
  - [August/September 2023](#) - Presented to GMFMC Shrimp Committee/ SAFMC.
  - [October 2023 /March 2024](#) - Presented to GMFMC Shrimp Aps.
  - [April 2024](#) - Presented to SAFMC Shrimp Aps.
  - [June/Now:](#) - Presented to SAFMC and GMFMC Shrimp Committees.



# Obtaining Trawl Data

- Shrimp effort estimates are needed to extrapolate observed bycatch data to southeast shrimp fisheries.
- Annual South Atlantic effort data (via trip tickets) generally QA/QC'd and ready by end of September of the following year.
- Current manual submission process of SD cards and compliance issues delay Gulf shrimp effort estimates availability.
  - Data available through 2022 since March 2023; expect to have 2023 data ready sometime this fall.
- We will proceed with initiating consultation with data through 2023.



# Bycatch Estimate Developments

- [In March 2024](#), SERO requested a number of analyses for the initiation package including updated bycatch estimates for giant manta ray and smalltooth sawfish.
- SEFSC has completed initial sawfish and giant manta ray bycatch and observer coverage analyses using observer and effort data through 2022;
  - Estimates were generated using two methods (delta lognormal and a bayesian approach).
  - Working to incorporate species distribution models to reduce uncertainty and 95% confidence intervals.
- SERO will be evaluating the information and and additional requests needed.



# Assessing Best Available Science

- SERO PRD is:
  - Updating its giant manta ray and smalltooth sawfish “Status of Species “ sections, incorporating information from publications that SERO previously has shared with the Council that not available for the last consultation.
  - Updating the smalltooth sawfish recovery plan; the revised plan is now under review; expect notice of availability and draft plan sometime early next year.
  - Completing a new publication: Distribution and trends in relative abundance of juvenile smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) in Charlotte Harbor, Florida, in SERO & Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Review.



# Population Viability Analyses (PVAs)

- Sawfish PVAs
  - December 2023 - Dr. Carlson published updated PVA for sawfish:  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989423003803>
  - March 2024 - Dr. Carlson presented the updated PVA to GMFMC Shrimp AP: [https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/10.-Population-viability-Analysis-Presentation\\_Carlson.pdf](https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/10.-Population-viability-Analysis-Presentation_Carlson.pdf)
  - Next step - Consideration of incorporating updated bycatch estimates and the sawfish mortality event.
- Giant Manta Ray PVAs
  - August 2024 - SEFSC completed draft new manta ray PVA; working to finalize report.



# Consultation Timing Update

- SERO is in the pre-consultation or technical assistance phase, but we've made a lot of progress!
- We will continue to keep the GMFMC and SAFMC engaged. Council Meeting Future Key Presentations will include:
  - SEFSC: Updated bycatch estimates, observer coverage level evaluation, and new and/or updated PVAs.
  - SERO: Summary of reinitiation package/biological assessment.
- SERO will need to consider any proposed Shrimp FMP-driven actions and any shrimp actions the Gulf or South Atlantic Councils consider in response to key data as it becomes available.
- SERO anticipates completing the consultation package early 2025. pending any proposed action changes.



# Where Can I Get More Information?

- Information posted on our website:
  - [2021 Shrimp Biological Opinion](#)
  - [Smalltooth Sawfish](#) and [Giant Manta Ray](#) Species Profiles
    - Species Overview, Conservation and Management, Science, and Resources
  - [ESA Section 7 Consultation Species Frameworks](#)
    - Guidance on evaluating effects from federal action for each listed species
- Information YOU Want to Share? Questions? Other Needs?
  - Reach out to me and I'll listen, help or connect you to a Protected Resources specialist who can! [Jennifer.Lee@noaa.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Lee@noaa.gov)

