

**Shrimp Committee Report
August 27, 2025
Chris Schieble, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab D, No. 1**). The Committee then approved the April 2025 meeting minutes (**Tab D, No. 2**).

Draft Shrimp Amendment 19: Shrimp Permit Moratorium (Tab D, No. 4a)

Council staff reviewed the purpose and need statements and the options in draft Shrimp Amendment 19. Council staff reminded the Committee that if either Option 2 or 3 was selected as preferred, the Council could always remove the moratorium before the ten-year extension or remove the limited access permit program (LAPP). A Committee member noted concerns with the permanence of a LAPP, given potential future changes to the state of the Gulf shrimp industry, and stated that a trigger for reviews of that program in the Gulf shrimp industry may alleviate those concerns. A Committee member noted that, with the Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness E.O., the Council would need to make clear the rationale for either continuing a moratorium or creating a LAPP. He added that the minimum threshold number of Gulf shrimp vessel permits (Shrimp Amendment 17B) should be reviewed, as that number is based on optimum yield and other criteria that are outdated.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, **to modify the language of Option 3 as follows:**

Option 3: Create a federal limited access permit for commercial shrimp vessels in the Gulf. To be eligible for a commercial shrimp vessel permit under the limited access system, vessels must have a valid or renewable federal Gulf commercial shrimp vessel permit on October 26, 2026. Federal Gulf commercial shrimp vessel permits would need to be renewed every year, and all previous renewal, transfer, and reporting requirements would still be in effect. **Reviews of the limited access permit will occur ten years after implementation of this amendment or as otherwise deemed necessary by the Council.**

Motion carried with no opposition and 1 absent.

Next, a Committee member inquired as to the number of Gulf shrimp moratorium permits transferred last year. Council staff responded that Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff will provide that information by Full Council.¹

The Committee recommends, and I so move, **to make Option 3 the preferred option.**

Option 3: Create a federal limited access permit for commercial shrimp vessels in the Gulf. To be eligible for a commercial shrimp vessel permit under the limited access system, vessels must have a valid or renewable federal Gulf commercial shrimp vessel

¹ 87 Gulf shrimp moratorium permits were transferred in 2024, and 57 permits were transferred in 2023.

permit on October 26, 2026. Federal Gulf commercial shrimp vessel permits would need to be renewed every year, and all previous renewal, transfer, and reporting requirements would still be in effect. **Reviews of the limited access permit will occur ten years after implementation of this amendment or as otherwise deemed necessary by the Council.**

Motion carried with 1 absent and 1 abstention.

Protected Resources Bycatch in Shrimp Trawls: A Summary Review of Data for Reinitiation of Section 7 Consultation (Tab D, No. 5a)

Ms. Lee (Protected Resources [PR], Southeast Regional Office) reviewed Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation information about interactions, effects, and projected jeopardy analyses of the Gulf penaeid shrimp fishery on listed protected species like smalltooth sawfish and giant manta ray. A Committee member asked about the estimated post-release mortality for sawfish caught in shrimp nets, noting that in finfish the mortality of releases where their fate is unknown is not often included in discard mortality calculations. Ms. Lee replied that information on disposition at release is used to better inform the fate of released sawfish. Another Committee member asked how the bycatch was extrapolated. The Southeast Fishery Science Center (SEFSC) referred the Committee to supporting documentation which detailed modeling and estimation of bycatch. Council staff noted that the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) did not have adequate time to review the bycatch methodology during its May 2025 meeting. She also added that the Center for Independent Experts desk reviews on the bycatch methodology conducted also referenced management recommendations, which seemed absent feedback on the data available and how they might best be analyzed. A Committee member asked whether there were any data in manta ray interactions before 2018. Ms. Lee's reply did not refute the years of data, but she added that the review and methods were commensurate with other Section 7 analyses. She added that PR is working to incorporate SSC feedback on the Population Viability Analysis for smalltooth sawfish. Another Committee member recalled the SSC discussions, highlighting a need to focus on collecting more data, more cooperative research, and better characterization of range expansion of sawfish northward in west Florida. The Committee member stated a need for additional observer coverage and continued work to improve bycatch estimation methods. A Committee member suggested convening a working group of shrimp industry representatives, protected resources staff, and gear experts to develop recommendations regarding these consultations. The SSC will review shrimp bycatch estimation as it relates to finfish in October 2025; however, another Committee member thought it necessary to get additional SSC feedback on the bycatch estimate extrapolation for smalltooth sawfish and manta ray. SEFSC recommended developing a timeline of all items to be reviewed by the SSC, so they can ensure they can supply the materials in time.

Other Business

No other business.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.