

**Shrimp Committee Report
June 1, 2026
Chris Schieble, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab D, No. 1**) and approved the April 2026 meeting minutes (**Tab D, No. 2**).

Presentation: Update on Working Group for Shrimp Bycatch Methodology for Finfish Species (Tab D, No. 4)

Council staff presented an update on the Working Group from its May 11-12, 2026, webinar meetings. He noted that the Working Group's recommendations and findings would be presented to the Standing and Special Shrimp SSCs at its July 2026 meeting, and he solicited feedback on the possibility of convening the Working Group for another meeting to address bycatch estimation for king mackerel that will be integrated into the next king mackerel stock assessment. A Committee member recommended convening the Working Group again for this purpose. A Council member inquired if king mackerel constituted much of shrimp bycatch. Dr. Walter (SEFSC) stated that shrimp bycatch of king mackerel is common enough that it needs to be accounted for in the king mackerel stock assessment.

Council staff stated that the Working Group found the proposed approach of using observer data for estimating red snapper bycatch to be acceptable. He added that the Working Group also reviewed the proposed approach of using lane snapper as a proxy species for gray triggerfish to estimate bycatch from the Gulf shrimp industry. He noted the working group questioned the use of a proxy species. A Committee member asked for more information on the Working Group's discussion on the use of lane snapper as a proxy for gray triggerfish bycatch. Council staff responded that a perfect option does not currently exist, but better data will exist for future stock assessments, as the observer program began characterizing gray triggerfish bycatch in 2025. Dr. Walter noted that several strategies are being used to account for uncertainty in use of a proxy for gray triggerfish bycatch as a source of mortality by the shrimp fleet.

Discuss Work Plan and Membership: Working Group to Address Interactions and Bycatch of Protected Resources in Shrimp Trawls (Tab D, No. 5)

Council staff presented the draft work plan and membership for the Working Group to address protected resources interactions with Gulf federal shrimp trawls. For the draft Working Group membership, Council staff inquired if the Committee had interest in expanding industry representation for shrimpers that target pink shrimp. A Committee member stated that a pink shrimp industry representative from the Fort Myers area would be beneficial. A Committee member suggested potentially having more researchers on the Working Group, as is the case with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Working Group on this topic. Council staff responded that they perceived the role of those individuals as presenters, rather than serving on the Working Group. Council staff stated that they would bring additional industry representative names to full Council for membership consideration.

A Committee member stated that the Council had previously been told by NMFS that the clock was ticking and inquired how quickly the Working Group needed to conclude. A Committee member responded that the Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation will be initiated by the end of this year, regardless of whether the Working Group has concluded or not.

Draft Options – Status Determination Criteria for the Penaeid Shrimp (Tab D, No. 6)

Council staff reviewed the Purpose and Need and actions and alternatives. He noted that the Council's motion from its April 2026 meeting requested that this amendment address not only status determination criteria but also the minimum threshold number of shrimp permits. The Council has requested SEFSC provide an updated, multidisciplinary analyses of the minimum threshold number of federal Gulf shrimp permits from Shrimp Amendment 17B, and staff are awaiting completion of these analyses to further develop an action in the document. In Action 4 (Modify the Overfished Threshold for Penaeid Shrimp), a Committee member confirmed that Alternative 2, which sets the minimum stock size threshold (MSST) equal to the biomass at maximum sustainable yield (B_{MSY}), was consistent with SSC's recommendation. In Action 4, Council staff noted that Alternatives 3 and 4, which respectively set the MSST at 90% and 80% of B_{MSY} , are presented for the Committee's consideration, since they would accommodate a modest reduction in stock size that could be expected with normal fluctuations in environmental conditions without triggering an overfished condition for the stock. Staff will continue working on the amendment.

Council staff inquired how often NMFS would re-run the stock assessment model to update the status determination criteria values for white and brown shrimp. Dr. Walter reminded the Committee that SEAMAP indices are the primary input in the model and stated that the model could be updated if the Council requests updated advice for management.

Other Business

No Other Business.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.