

SEA HARVEST NEWS

MASGP-05-006-02

February 2, 2005

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Moratorium Proposed for Federal Shrimp Permits

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is proposing a number of changes (Amendment 13) to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico. Recall that the Council required all vessels harvesting shrimp in federal waters to have a permit by December of 2002. This requirement was followed by an announcement that the Council may consider management measures to limit entry into the shrimp fishery and that no vessel could be guaranteed entry into the fishery after December 6, 2003 (control date). Now, the Council is proposing to establish a shrimp vessel permit moratorium. The proposed alternatives are:

Alternative 1: No action – Continue to issue non-transferable commercial shrimp vessel permits.

Alternative 2: Establish a 10-year moratorium on the issuance of commercial shrimp vessel permits. To be eligible for a commercial shrimp vessel permit under the moratorium, vessels must have been issued a valid commercial shrimp vessel permit by NOAA Fisheries prior to and including December 6, 2003.

Alternative 3: Establish a 10-year moratorium on the issuance of commercial shrimp vessel permits. To be eligible for a commercial shrimp vessel permit under the moratorium, vessels must have been issued a valid commercial shrimp vessel permit by NOAA Fisheries prior to and including May 18, 2004.

Alternative 4: Establish a 10-year moratorium on the

issuance of commercial shrimp vessel permits. To be eligible for a commercial shrimp vessel permit under the moratorium, vessels must have been issued a valid commercial shrimp vessel permit by NOAA Fisheries during the 365-day period prior to and including the date of publication of the final rule implementing this amendment.

NOTE: Prior to the implementation date of this amendment, commercial shrimp vessel permits are non-transferable. Following the implementation of this amendment, commercial shrimp vessel permits are freely transferable either with the sale of the vessel or to another person (corporate or otherwise). However, during this non-transferable period, the following shall apply for vessels and owners that met the criterion under either Alternative 2 or 3:

(1) An owner (corporate or otherwise) who sells his vessel, has his vessel repossessed, or otherwise loses or loses the use of his vessel (through damage, sinking, unaffordable repairs, etc.), but obtains a valid commercial shrimp vessel permit for the same vessel or another vessel that is equipped for offshore shrimp fishing and is at least 5 net tons prior to the date of publication of the final rule implementing this amendment shall be eligible to renew such permit under the moratorium.

(2) Other than as described in “1”, only those vessels that met the preferred criterion as established in Alternatives 2, 3, or 4 shall be eligible to renew a commercial shrimp vessel permit under the moratorium.

Other proposed actions in Amendment 13 include:

1. Requiring a royal red shrimp vessel shrimp permit.
2. Technical adjustments to language that defines overfishing for royal red, brown, white, and pink shrimp.
3. Establish by-catch reporting methodologies and improve collection effort of shrimping

method data.

- (a). Require all federally permitted shrimp vessels to complete a log book.
- (b). Require only selected shrimp vessels to submit log books.
4. Establish electronic log books to improve efficiency of data collection.
5. Utilize observers to standardize by-catch reporting.
6. Require completion of a Gulf shrimp vessel and Gear characterization form.
7. Require reporting of landings during the vessel Permit moratorium.
 - (a) Keep the current system.
 - (b) Require all vessels to report and certify landings to the National Marine Fisheries Service.

These proposals will be aired at public hearings around the Gulf Coast. The two hearings in Alabama and Mississippi start at 7:00 p.m. at:

Monday, February 14, 2004

Holiday Inn I-10 Bellingrath Gardens
5465 Highway 90 West
Mobile, Alabama 36619

Tuesday, February 15, 2005

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Drive
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530
228.374.5000

Copies of Amendment 13 (194 pp.) can be obtained by calling the Council at 813-228-2815. In addition to the hearings, the Council is soliciting public comments by mail and e-mail and these comments must be received on or before March 4, 2005. Send comments to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, The Commons at Rivergate, 3018 North U.S. Highway 301, Suite 1000, Tampa, Florida 33619-2272, E-mail: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org.

Commercial Shrimp Fishermen Survey

NOAA Fisheries (National Marine Fisheries Service) is continuing to collect financial and

social information on shrimp fishermen. This information is needed to improve management decisions and is necessary to meet the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Selected shrimpers are asked to participate in an in-person survey conducted by trained interviewers. Interviewers are employed by MRAG Americas, Inc. under contract with NOAA Fisheries. One of the purposes is to provide accurate data about the state of the shrimp fishing industry. If contacted, NOAA Fisheries would greatly appreciate your participation. The report will portray group results (i.e. no individual's information will be released), and the report will be available for review by the vessel owners prior to its publication. If you have questions contact: Oleg Martens, (813) 639-9519, or oleg.martens@mragamericas.com, or: Michael Travis, NOAA Fisheries, (727-570-5335), or Mike.Travis@noaa.gov.