



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 8, 2015

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

Moratorium on Northern Shrimp Commercial Fishing Maintained for 2016 Season

Portsmouth, NH – In response to the depleted condition of the northern shrimp resource, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s Northern Shrimp Section extended the moratorium on commercial fishing for the 2016 fishing season. The 2015 Stock Status Report for Gulf of Maine (GOM) Northern Shrimp indicates abundance and biomass indices for 2012-2015 were the lowest on record for the 32-year time series. The stock has experienced failed recruitment for five consecutive years, including the three smallest year classes on record. As a result, the indices of fishable biomass from 2012-2015 are the lowest on record.

Recruitment of northern shrimp is related to both spawning biomass and ocean temperatures, with higher spawning biomass and colder temperatures producing stronger recruitment. Ocean temperatures in western GOM shrimp habitat have increased over the past decade and reached unprecedented highs in 2011 and 2012. While 2014 and 2015 temperatures were cooler, temperatures are predicted to continue to rise as a result of climate change. This suggests an increasingly inhospitable environment for northern shrimp. The Northern Shrimp Technical Committee considers the stock to have collapsed with little prospect of recovery in the immediate future. The 2015 Stock Status Report is available at <http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5666017a2015NorthernShrimpAssessment.pdf>.

To maintain the time series of data collected from northern shrimp commercial fishery catches, a cooperative winter sampling program was approved with a 22 metric ton research set aside quota. The goal of the program is to continue the winter time series of biological data (e.g. size composition, egg hatch timing) collected from GOM northern shrimp fishery catches in the absence of a fishery. Four trawl vessels will be contracted to fish four regions with a maximum trip limit of 1,800 pounds, and two trappers with a weekly trap limit of 40 traps and a 600 pound per week limit. Participating trawlers and trappers will be able to sell their catch. Trawlers will also be compensated \$500/trip.

“Considering survey indices are the lowest on record, with an unprecedented five consecutive years of weak recruitment and continuing unfavorable environmental conditions, the Section maintained the moratorium in 2016,” stated Northern Shrimp Section Chair Mike Armstrong of Massachusetts. “The Section is committed to protecting the remaining spawning biomass and allowing as much reproduction to take place as possible.”

For more information, please contact, Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mappelman@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

NOTE: If you would like to receive the Commission’s press releases via email, please contact us at info@asmfc.org (Subject line: Subscribe PR). PR15-40

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

**Northern Shrimp Section Motions
December 7, 2015
Urban Forestry Center, Portsmouth, NH**

Motion to extend the moratorium to 2016.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Adler.

Motion to postpone until after motion on the RSA.

Passes unanimously.

Move to remove the postponed motion from the table.

Motion made by Mr. Abbott and seconded by Mr. Stockwell. Motion carries unanimously.

Motion to extend the moratorium to 2016.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion passes unanimously.

Motion to have an RSA/Cooperative winter sampling program for 2016, with 4 trawl vessels and four regions, and a trip limit with 1800 lbs per trip, and a total RSA of 22 mt, and payment allocated equally among all trawlers. For the two trappers there would be a weekly trap limit of 40 traps and 600 lbs limit per week.

Motion made by Mr. Abbott and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion passes unanimously.

Move that the Northern Shrimp Section request that ASMFC Staff develop a request for interest for an alternative shrimp survey.

Motion made by Mr. Stockwell and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion passes unanimously.

Motion for Steve Train elected as Vice Chair.

Motion made by Mr. Abbott and seconded by Mr. Adler. Motion passes unanimously.