

Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic – Florida Shrimp Fishery Improvement Project (FIP)

The warm-water shrimp harvesting industry in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (GSA) region represents the most economically important component of all of the domestic commercial seafood harvesting sectors in the United States. Shrimp landings in the GSA represent less than 10% by volume of the total world landings of shrimp, but represent over 86% of the total U.S. shrimp landings of both warm- and cold-water species.

(http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/fish_files/EShrimpBusinessOptions.pdf)

The three species, white shrimp (*Litopenaeus setiferus*), pink shrimp (*Farfante penaeus*) and brown shrimp (*Penaeus aztecus*), made up approximately 97 percent of the shrimp harvested in the Gulf of Mexico with total volume of 227 million pounds landed in 2016.

https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/pls/webpls/MF_ANNUAL_LANDINGS.RESULT .

In 2016, Florida harvested 12 million pounds of pink shrimp, 6 million pounds of white shrimp, 2 million pounds of brown shrimp, .8 million pounds of rock shrimp and 83,000 pounds of Royal Red shrimp. Pink shrimp accounts for 90% of Florida west coast landings. For the state, landings of pink shrimp totaled more than 12 million pounds and were valued at more than \$32 million.

https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/pls/webpls/MF_ANNUAL_LANDINGS.RESULTS

- **[NOAA Fisheries](#) and the [South Atlantic](#) and [Gulf of Mexico](#) Fishery Management Councils manage the pink shrimp fishery, and state resource management agencies are responsible for inshore state waters.**
- **In the South Atlantic, managed under the [Shrimp Fishery Management Plan](#):**
 - **Permits are needed to harvest shrimp in federal waters.**
 - **Fishing trip reports must be submitted for each fishing trip.**
 - **Observers must be carried aboard vessels if selected, to collect data on catch, bycatch, fishing effort, and fishing gear.**
 - **Managers set catch levels based on historic harvest amounts and fishing rates, rather than abundance because pink shrimp are short-lived and heavily influenced by environmental factors.**
- **In the Gulf of Mexico, managed under the [Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery Management Plan](#):**
 - **Permits are needed to harvest shrimp in federal waters. Currently no new permits are being issued to prevent an increase in the number of boats participating in the fishery.**
 - **Electronic logbooks must be installed and fishermen must submit trip reports for each fishing trip.**
 - **Observers must be carried aboard vessels if selected, to collect data on catch, bycatch, fishing effort, and fishing gear.**
 - **Each year all shrimping in federal waters off Texas is closed from approximately mid-May to mid-July to protect brown shrimp populations.**

Gear types, habitat impacts, and bycatch:

Commercial fishermen harvest shrimp with trawls towed near the ocean floor. The nets are wide in the front and taper toward the back.

Shrimpers using otter trawl gear in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico are required to use sea turtle excluder devices (TEDs).

Shrimp trawlers must also install bycatch reduction devices behind the TED, to reduce finfish bycatch.

Trawlers in the Gulf of Mexico must have a weak-link in the tickler chain, which hangs in front of the net and drags along the ocean floor to stir up shrimp from the bottom into the net. This weak-link allows the tickler chain to drop away if it gets hung up on natural bottom structures.

Fishermen do not trawl in areas with coral reefs and other known areas of high-relief to avoid damage to their nets.

Pink shrimp migrate between coastal estuaries and offshore waters during their life cycle and are harvested in both areas. Through this migration, they cross boundaries between state and federal waters; as a result, both state management agencies and federal authorities (NOAA Fisheries and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council) are responsible for managing shrimp fisheries. Pink shrimp's biological characteristics make them fairly resilient to fishing pressure. In general, management focuses on maximizing the volume and value of shrimp harvests in addition to reducing the impact of the shrimp fishery on other species, such as finfish and sea turtles, and bottom habitats.

Species:

- Brown Shrimp (*Penaeus Aztecus*)
- Pink Shrimp (*Farfante Penaeus*)
- White Shrimp (*Litopenaeus Setiferus*)
- Royal Red Shrimp (*Pleoticus Robustus*)
- Rock Shrimp (*Sicyonia Brevirostis*)

FIP Coverage Area:

Florida State and Federal waters in the US Gulf of Mexico and US Atlantic Ocean

Sustainability Information:

FishSource

- Northern brown shrimp, Gulf of Mexico, Florida state and federal waters; https://www.fishsource.org/fishery_page/1755
- Northern brown shrimp, NW Atlantic, Florida state and federal waters: https://www.fishsource.org/fishery_page/1759
- Northern pink shrimp, Gulf of Mexico, Florida state and federal waters: https://www.fishsource.org/stock_page/835
- Northern white shrimp, Gulf of Mexico, Florida state and federal waters: https://www.fishsource.org/fishery_page/4084

- Northern white shrimp, NW Atlantic, Florida state and federal waters: https://www.fishsource.org/fishery_page/1771

Ratings - <http://www.fishchoice.com/seafood-supplier/captains-fine-foods-llc>

Management Entities:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) , US Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC)

Assessment Entities:

NOAA Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC)

Shrimp Amendment 17B: Yield, Permit Threshold, and Transit Provisions - Amendment 17B defines the optimum yield for shrimp, determines the appropriate number of permits to achieve optimum yield on a continuing basis, considers measures to maintain the appropriate number of permits for the federal Gulf shrimp fishery without increasing bycatch, and develops provisions for non-federally permitted.

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/shrimp/2017/am17b/Documents/shrimp_17b_fon_si.pdf

ANALYSIS

Strengths

Once an overcapitalized fishery, shrimp fishing effort in the US Gulf of Mexico has considerably declined since the early 2000s. Current fishing mortality estimates are far below the overfishing limit; spawning biomass is at high levels and well above the limit that defines an overfished condition. Measures to reduce the bycatch of juvenile red snapper led to the mandated use of better performing bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) in federal waters. NOAA has implemented a fleet-wide turtle excluder device (TED) performance standard that requires an 88% TED effectiveness rate, which is monitored through tri-annual reviews of inspection records. The US shrimp fleet has improved TED compliance, meeting this performance standard during every 4-month monitoring period since mid-2014.

Weaknesses

There are still limited data on the benthic impacts of shrimp trawling in the Gulf of Mexico (though most of the trawling does take place over resilient muddy and sandy bottoms).

STOCK ASSESSMENT

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/shrimp/index.html

FISHERY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
CAPTAIN'S FINE FOODS, LLC

Recommended Solutions

Reduce bycatch by educating vessel captains and crews – For new vessels to the FIP, each crew will be instructed by the FWC or SeaGrant to ensure that the fishermen know how to tune the BRDs and TEDs to operate correctly and at optimum efficiency.

Inspection of BRD and TED use and Compliance - Each Vessel will schedule regular State, Federal and Third Party inspections. This will ensure that gear is properly tuned and that the crews are using the education of what was learned. All gear inspection, pass or fail, will be documented and made public as part of this FIP.

Roles for Captain’s Fine Foods, LLC and Others

Captain’s Fine Foods will work with shrimp vessels owners requiring regular inspection of TED and BRD.

TOPIC/ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	DEADLINE	STATUS
IP participant	Place FIP on www.captainsfinefoods.com Add FIP to http://fisheryprogress.org/	March 2018	Completed
Analysis of observers data	Analysis of data & report on www.captainsfinefoods.com	January 2017	Completed
Selective gears	Inspection of gear		Completed
	Training for live bycatch release		Completed
Improvements on the Water	Verifiable improvement on the water		Ongoing
MSC certification (optional)	Pre-assessment http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/shrimp_task_force/39893-February%203,%202016/msc_la_shrimp_pre-assessment_jan_20161.pdf http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/MSC-2016-Pre-Assessment-Report-TX-State-and-Fed-Shrimp-fisheries_final-report.pdf		Ongoing