

INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Northern Shrimp

Species Range and Stock Unit

The species is found throughout the North Atlantic Ocean, including Canadian waters. The Gulf of Maine, where ASMFC management is focused, marks the southern end of its range.

Stock Status

The 2021 Stock Assessment Update indicates northern shrimp remains in a depleted condition. Recruitment and biomass indices have remained at or near time series lows since 2013. Trends in environmental indicators suggest that conditions have not been favorable for northern shrimp in recent years. Rising seawater temperatures and sea floor temperatures in offshore shrimp habitat have exceeded the 80th percentile for the majority of the past ten years.



Under Amendment 3, the Section can adopt new, peer-reviewed stock status determination criteria through Section action, as opposed to going through the Addendum process. Allowing for the incorporation of new stock status determination criteria into the specifications process significantly improves the timeliness of responding to the best available scientific information in the management of northern shrimp

Involved States and Jurisdictions

ME, NH, MA

Active Boards/Committees

Northern Shrimp Section, Technical Committee, Advisory Panel, Plan Development Team

Chairs

Section, Chair – Ritchie White (12/2021); Vice-Chair – Senator David Miramant

Technical Committee, Chair – Maggie Hunter (1/2018)

Advisory Panel, Chair – Gary Libby (11/2012); Vice-Chair – Spencer Fuller

Staff Lead

Chelsea Tuohy, ctuohy@asmfc.org

Management Plan History

[Amendment 1 to the Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp \(October 2004\)](#)

The goal of Amendment 1 is to manage the northern shrimp fishery in a manner that is biologically, economically, and socially sound, while protecting the resource, its users, and opportunities for participation by all stakeholders.

The following objectives were selected to support of the goal of Amendment 1:

- Protect and maintain the northern shrimp stock at levels that will support a viable fishery
- Optimize utilization of the resource within the constraints imposed by distribution of the resource, available fishing areas, and harvesting, processing and marketing capacity
- Maintain the flexibility and timeliness of public involvement in the northern shrimp management program
- Maintain existing social and cultural features of the fishery to the extent possible
- Minimize the adverse impacts the shrimp fishery may have on other natural resources
- Minimize the adverse impacts of regulations, including increased cost to the shrimp industry and the associated coastal communities
- Promote research and improve the collection of information to better understand northern shrimp biology, ecology, and population dynamics, including variable natural mortality at age or by area
- Improve understanding of the economics of harvesting and processing northern shrimp
- Achieve compatible and equitable management measures through coordinated monitoring and law enforcement among jurisdictions throughout the fishery management unit

Section 4.6 of Amendment 1 provides a suite of management options that can be implemented through adaptive management (i.e. ASMFC addendum process).

[Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp \(October 2011\)](#)

Amendment 2 includes a new suite of management tools, such as trip limits, trap limits, and days out of the fishery, to control catch rates. The Amendment also modifies the fishing mortality reference points to include a threshold level, includes a more timely and comprehensive reporting system, and allows for the initiation of a limited entry program through the adaptive management addendum process.

[Addendum I to Amendment 2 \(November 2012\)](#)

Addendum I to Amendment 2 provides the Northern Shrimp Section with more tools to slow catch rates of Northern shrimp throughout the season. In addition, the Addendum establishes a set aside harvest for research and details optional gear modifications to minimize the retention of small shrimp.

[Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp \(October 2017\)](#)

Amendment 3 is designed to improve management of the fishery in the event that it reopens. Specifically, the Amendment refines the FMP objectives and proves the flexibility to use the

best available information to define the status of the stock and to set the total allowable catch. Furthermore, the Amendment implements a state-specific allocation program to better manage effort in the fishery; 80% to Maine, 10% to New Hampshire, 10% to Massachusetts. The Amendment also strengthens catch and landings reporting requirements, implements mandatory use of size sorting grate systems to minimize harvest of small (presumably male) shrimp, incorporates accountability measures, specifies a maximum fishing season length, and formalizes fishery-dependent monitoring requirements.

Current Specifications

The Northern Shrimp Section instituted a fishery moratorium for the 2014-2024 fishing seasons to protect the remaining spawning population. In the absence of a fishery, the Northern Shrimp Technical Committee (TC) recommended a limited winter sampling program whereby commercial fishermen would collect samples in the Gulf of Maine during January-March under a research set aside (RSA) quota. The purpose of the RSA is to continue the Technical Committee's time series of samples from GOM northern shrimp fishery catches, estimating the winter size (carapace length) and sex-stage composition of the shrimp stock in traditionally fished areas, and estimating the timing of egg hatch. With Section approval, a winter sampling program was conducted in 2014-2018. The RSA program was suspended in 2019, and has not been implemented since.

Annual Events

- Late July – mid-August: Gulf of Maine Shrimp Trawl survey
- Late September – early October: Technical Committee meets to conduct stock assessment
- Late October: Advisory Panel meets to talk about assessment and make fishery specification recommendations to Section for the upcoming fishing season
- November: Section meets to set season and other specifications
- Mid-November: Staff drafts regulations and gets them signed and notarized by Executive Director and three states
- November – December: States put regulations in place

Other Items of Interest

Each year, the summer Gulf of Maine shrimp survey is coordinated by the NEFSC. A spot on the 'shrimp cruise' is reserved for an ASMFC representative (or two) on at least one of the survey legs. Each leg is about five days at sea. Bring lots of dry clothes, sunglasses and a baseball cap!