



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Northern Shrimp Section

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Northern Shrimp Section Webinar
December 6, 2019

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Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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NORTHERN SHRIMP SECTION (DECEMBER 6, 2019)

Meeting Summary

The Northern Shrimp Section met via webinar on Friday, December 6th to discuss the 2019 summer shrimp survey results, receive an update from the summer survey work group, review the 2019 Stock Assessment Update Report, and elect a Vice Chair.

Pete Chase (Northeast Fisheries Science Center or NEFSC) presented the results of the 2019 summer shrimp survey. Largely a success, 83 out of 84 planned towing stations were completed over the four weeks in July that the survey was conducted. Only two days were lost to bad weather. Furthermore, no mechanical issues hindered the research vessel. New bathymetry data on the bridge helped to improve scouting for towable seafloor at stations. A strict 1-hour time limit was enforced when scouting at primary stations, and alternate towing stations were used when necessary. To date, 39 paired tows have been completed to calibrate for the transition from Portuguese to new Bison trawl doors. The data will be analyzed this winter to determine if additional calibration tows are needed. These data will be used to derive a calibration coefficient that can be applied to the time series data should differences in catches between door types become apparent.

Patrick Campfield (ASMFC) presented the summer survey work group's progress in three areas tasked by the Section.

1. Improving survey operations and station success rate
Industry fishermen were contacted prior to the survey for advice on station selection regarding towable ground. No comments were received. Industry fishermen were invited and scheduled to participate on the survey, but later advised NEFSC that they were unable to attend.
2. Assess the consequences of transitioning the shrimp survey to a commercial vessel
Daily cost estimates for fishing vessels were collected, ranging from \$3,700 - \$10,000 per day, compared to the R/V Gloria Michelle's current cost of \$4,400 per day. In addition, substantial in-kind support is provided to run the survey. Switching to a state agency operation on a commercial boat may incur additional personnel costs. Lastly, a vessel change would require paired calibration tows to avoid starting a new survey time series.
3. Understanding the data needs of other species from the survey
Data collected in the shrimp summer survey are currently used in stock assessments for 7 species. The summer survey also catches species not represented well in the Spring or Fall NEFSC bottom trawl surveys, filling a key information gap for several stocks.

Maggie Hunter (ME DMR) presented the findings of the 2019 Stock Assessment Update Report to the Northern Shrimp Section. Now in its sixth year of a fishery moratorium, the stock continues to show poor trends in abundance, biomass, and recruitment. Abundance and biomass indices derived from the summer shrimp survey, spring ME-NH inshore survey, and fall Bigelow survey are all at or near time series lows. Recruitment failure has been observed in six of the past nine years, while the other three year classes were below average. While environmental conditions remain poor, such as high predation pressure and high seafloor temperatures, large recruitment events that would allow the stock to

rebound are less likely. A copy of the Data Update can be found here - http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5dee9a69NShrimpAssessmentUpdateReport_2019.pdf.

Ritchie White (NH) was elected Vice Chair of the Section. The Section joined Toni Kerns in thanking Steve Train (ME) for his two years of service as Chair. Ray Kane (MA) is the new Chair of the Section.

For more information, please contact Dustin Colson Leaning, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at dleaning@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to nominate Ritchie White to Vice Chair.

Motion made by Mr. Abbott and seconded by Mr. Train. Motion approved by consensus.