

Frequently Asked Questions

Amendment 9 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 9) June 2013

What actions are contained in Amendment 9?

- Streamline the process for a South Atlantic state to request a simultaneous closure of federal waters to penaeid shrimp (white, brown, and pink shrimp) fishing when state waters close. The closure would protect shrimp from directed fishing pressure during cold weather events.
- Add a temperature threshold that could be used for states to request closures of federal waters to shrimp harvest during cold weather events, in lieu of, or in addition to, the current 80% or greater reduction in white shrimp abundance criterion.
- Update the biological reference point that helps determine whether pink shrimp are undergoing overfishing or are overfished.

Why does the closure process need to be streamlined?

- The current process for a state to request a closure of federal waters to protect overwintering white shrimp is a lengthy multi-step process.
- The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) is concerned this long process may hinder protections for shrimp affected by cold weather because of the length of time it takes to implement a closure of federal waters to shrimp harvest when needed.
- To remedy this problem, Amendment 9 would allow a state to request a closure of federal waters to shrimp harvest via a letter to NOAA Fisheries' Regional Administrator containing the scientific data that would show a closure threshold had been reached.
- Streamlining this process may accelerate rebuilding of the population after cold weather by protecting the few remaining spawners that survive a freeze, and increasing summer and fall production.

What is the temperature threshold states may use to request a closure of federal waters to shrimp fishing?

- The Council has chosen to add a 9°C (48°F) temperature threshold criterion to the current 80% reduction in white shrimp abundance threshold to request concurrent closure of federal waters when state waters are closed to penaeid shrimp fishing.
- Adding a temperature threshold as one of the criteria that can be used for a state to request a concurrent closure of federal waters adjacent to state waters that have been closed to penaeid shrimp fishing to protect shrimp from directed harvest after cold weather events gives the states more flexibility by being able to use the criterion that is most appropriate for their state's monitoring efforts.

When will the actions in Amendment 9 become effective?

- The final rule for Amendment 9 was published in the *Federal Register* on June 13, 2013.
- The rule will become effective on July 15, 2013.

Where can I get more information in Amendment 9?

- Amendment 9 is available online at The NOAA Fisheries Web site <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SAShrimpHomepage.htm>, or at the Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>.
- The contact person for Amendment 9 is Kate Michie of NOAA Fisheries Office of Sustainable Fisheries. She may be reached at: (727) 824-5305, or by e-mail at Kate.Michie@noaa.gov.