



New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116

E.F. "Terry" Stockwell III, *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEETING SUMMARY

Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab PDT Webinar

August 17, 2016 at 9:30

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Jessica Joyce (Chair), Toni Chute (NEFSC), Allison Murphy (GARFO), and Danielle Palmer (GARFO). Council Staff Chris Kellogg and Michelle Bachman also participated.

KEY OUTCOMES:

- The PDT discussed the recommendations from the SSC meeting on August 10, 2016.
- The PDT planned the preparation of specifications and other materials for the September Council meeting.

AGENDA ITEM #1: DISCUSS THE SSC'S OFL AND ABC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATLANTIC DEEP-SEA RED CRAB (2017- 2019)

Following the Red Crab PDT presentation, the SSC members discussed the use of an alternate model to the Depletion-Corrected Average Catch (DCAC) model used by the 2008 Northeast Data Poor Stocks Working Group for red crab. Specifically, they inquired about the non-equilibrium surplus-production model utilized by Imam Syuhada in his PhD dissertation on 'The Biology and Population Ecology of Deep-Sea Red Crabs, *Chaceon Spp.* in the North Atlantic Ocean'.

The SSC will discuss the potential to use a new model in the long-term, and will include the surplus-production model in this discussion. The SSC will likely make a recommendation to the Council to address this topic in their upcoming five-year research priority setting process since there isn't a red crab committee.

There was also a brief question from the SSC around the need for observer data to determine sex ratios and information on egged females, to be able to inform discussions around this topic and the potential for female harvest, which was previously explored during an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP).

Jon Williams commented that he supports Dr. Syuhada's work, which was 100% industry funded and would like the SSC to provide incentives to the industry to fund more research through utilizing the findings in management decisions.

Chris Kellogg mentioned that the SSC is also interested in applying a data-limited toolbox to this resource. The toolbox was developed in the Pacific to deal with data poor stocks. Toni has access to this toolbox and will review the potential application for red crab. There is also a Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC) working group to look at how to apply this toolbox without an operational assessment. It has been used in the mid-Atlantic for black sea bass.

The SSC accepted the PDT's analysis as support that there have not been any signs of depletion in the red crab fishery, and recommended not exceeding the status quo ABC of 1,775 mt.

There was a question from the SSC about landings per unit effort (LPUE) in Region 3 from 2013-2015, and if it was lower than other regions because of market conditions. At the SSC meeting, Jon Williams mentioned that they were targeting larger crabs in Georges Bank (Region 1) for market demand, and focused more fishing effort in regions 1 and 2 over Region 3 during this period.

AGENDA ITEM #2: Specifications Package and Review Schedule

The specifications package will continue to be prepared as a Supplementary Information Review (SIR) as the SSC has recommended the status quo ABC of 1,775 mt and there hasn't been any significant new information or circumstances that change the impacts from those analyzed in the environmental assessment for Amendment 3 to the Red Crab FMP (2011).

The SIR has been updated with fishery and protected resource information, and Jessica Joyce will update several other sections. Michelle Bachman will be providing habitat impacts and the social and economic sections need to be updated with new data, as does the Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, which Barbara Rountree will prepare.

Timeline – working backwards from submitting the documents to the Council by Sept. 9, if new analysis can be prepared as soon as you are able, but no later than Sept. 1st or 2nd, the information will be incorporated and the full draft version will be distributed to the PDT for review. Unfinished sections can be updated after the Council meeting, before the completed draft is submitted to NMFS for official review.

Preparation of documents for the September Council meeting

Jessica will prepare a decision document in the form of a PPT presentation for the Council meeting. The draft SIR will also be submitted to the Council, along with this PDT meeting summary and the SSC recommendations for red crab.

There is no need for another PDT meeting prior to the Council meeting, and the Chair will assess the need after the September Council meeting.

Other business

Jon Williams sent a letter about the NMFS List of Fisheries (LOF), which is used in the context of estimating potential interactions with protected species (mammals, turtles, etc.). He suggested that the data support shifting from Category II to III, and asked if the red crab fishery might have its own gear designation rather than being lumped in with the 'Atlantic mixed species trap/pot'. The letter mentions that there have been no known protected species interactions with the red crab fishery in its 40-year history.

While his request is likely to go through NMFS Protected Species Division, the letter was raised in the event that NMFS requests the Council/Red Crab PDT to conduct any analysis in the future.

There was a discussion around the type of data used to make the designation for the NMFS LOF. GARFO uses information such as the stock assessment reports for the protected species, data from observers, injury determination reports, bycatch estimation reports, disentanglement network data, fisher self-reports (*i.e.*, MMPA reports), and stranding information (see the LOF for additional information; <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/08/15/2016-19346/list-of-fisheries-for-2017#h-9>). NMFS is working on how to better determine what fishery is implicated in the take of a protected species, including whether it is a US or Canadian fishery to refine their analysis.

NMFS recently released the 2016 LOF. Danielle will send Jon William's letter to the staffer in charge of the LOF to learn more about the process of separating out an individual fishery and will distribute this information to the PDT.

There was a question about less potential for interaction between the red crab fishery and whale sightings/habitat because the fishery operates in deeper waters. It is expected that there is less potential; not that whales don't migrate through those deep offshore areas, but that they are focused on foraging closer inshore. The likelihood that they would run into gear is higher on the continental shelf (*i.e.*, relative to deep waters, in shallower, nearshore, continental shelf waters there is a higher co-occurrence of fixed gear and whales). However, it is difficult to determine the extent of interactions in some fisheries, including red crab, because of the lack of observer coverage. Thus, they've been relying on other sources of information, such as disentanglement and stranding data (for additional information, see the most recent paper on serious injury and mortality determinations for baleen whales; <http://nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/crd1510/crd1510.pdf>)

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:05 a.m.