



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

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DEC 21 2006

F/SER23:SB

Mr. George Geiger, Chair  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
One Southpark Circle, Suite 306  
Charleston, South Carolina 29407-4699

Dear Mr. Geiger:

This letter requests the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) convene its Shrimp Review Advisory Panel (SRAP) to address the condition of the pink shrimp stock. Amendment 6 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the South Atlantic Region established a proxy for a minimum stock size threshold as a parent stock size capable of producing maximum sustainable yield ( $B_{MSY}$ ) the following year. The annual estimates of this  $B_{MSY}$  proxy have been below the threshold value for more than two consecutive years. This situation may require future action by the SAFMC, based on the findings and recommendations of its SRAP.

Penaeid shrimp are considered an annual crop and are highly sensitive to environmental factors. Over the long term, population densities of penaeid shrimp may vary by a factor of five to ten, and can double from one year to the next. Therefore, this apparent reduction in stock size may be influenced more from environmental conditions than from the effects of fishing. In accordance with the procedures outlined in Amendment 6, the SRAP should evaluate the existing data and other relevant information pertaining to this fishery to determine cause, effect, and geographical extent of the problem. Based on its findings, the SRAP should make recommendations to the SAFMC indicating whether fishing mortality rates are influencing the diminished stock size, and if additional management action is required to prevent overfishing.

Amendment 6 establishes the membership of the SRAP to consist of a SAMFC staff member, a NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Fisheries Science Center scientist, a NOAA Fisheries Service social scientist with expertise on the shrimp fisheries in the South Atlantic, a member of the SAMFC's scientific and statistical committee, and a state shrimp biologist from each state in the SAFMC's area of jurisdiction. I suggest the SRAP provide recommendations to the SAFMC during the March 2007 meeting. Thank you for your help in resolving this issue.

Sincerely,

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.  
Regional Administrator

