

# **PROPOSED REPEAL OF THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE STONE CRAB FISHERY OF THE GULF OF MEXICO**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

*SEPTEMBER 2011*

### **What does repeal of the FMP mean?**

Repeal of the FMP means that all federal management of this fishery will end. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, if a fishery is not managed under an FMP, state agencies can extend their regulations into adjacent federal waters.

### **What do the states intend to do?**

The federal FMP is only for federal waters adjacent to Florida waters. Therefore, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama have always had the option to extend their regulations, but have chosen not to do so. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) established regulations to extend Florida regulations into adjacent federal waters during their June 2011 meeting.

### **When will the change take place?**

The final rule repealing the FMP is effective October 24, 2011.

### **How will regulations change?**

FWC will exclusively manage vessels registered in the state or returning to a port in that state. FWC will maintain the same regulations as were in place under the FMP and fishery participation using the same gear and methods is expected to remain at or near its current level.

### **Will the closed areas established under the FMP remain in effect?**

The shrimp/stone crab separation zones and a southwest Florida seasonal trawl closure established in the stone crab FMP to prevent gear conflicts with the shrimp fishery are also established in the FMP for the Shrimp Fishery in the Gulf of Mexico, and will remain in the federal regulations. State regulations also control trap deployment and trawling in these zones.

### **Why does NOAA Fisheries Service believe repeal is the right thing to do?**

In the process of developing new federal regulations, NOAA Fisheries Service and the Council reviewed all FMPs to determine which species are in need of federal management. National standard guidance lists criteria to consider in deciding whether a fishery needs federal management, including if the fishery could be or already is adequately managed by states. The action will promote management of the stone crab fishery in the most efficient manner, while maintaining conservation of the resource and the ecosystem and properly conforming to National Standard Guidance under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act.