

Request for Participants: Test Tows for 2016 Cooperative Sampling Program for Northern Shrimp

Introduction

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the states of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts are seeking four shrimp trawling vessels and captains to collect northern shrimp samples in four regions of the Gulf of Maine (Eastern Maine, Mid-coast Maine, Western Maine, and Massachusetts/New Hampshire region), beginning in mid to late January, 2016, fishing approximately once every two weeks, until the shrimp are no longer carrying eggs, probably during March.

There is a total of \$10,000 available to pay the four project participants. Each participant will be required to conduct five research trips in one region, and will be compensated \$500 per trip. Participants will also be allowed to land and sell up to 1,800 pounds of northern shrimp per trip.

Purpose

The purpose of the project is to collect northern shrimp samples during the winter period when the shrimp are in inshore waters, to collect data on the timing of the egg hatch, and the size, gender, and developmental stage of the shrimp. Samples will attempt to mimic those that would have been collected if there had been a commercial fishery.

Location

Four vessels will be selected, one to fish in each of these four regions: Northern Massachusetts to Boon Island (MA/NH area), Boon Island to Small Point (Western ME), Small Point to Monhegan Is. (Midcoast ME), and Monhegan to the US/CAN border (Eastern ME). A vessel is not expected to cover the entire region; instead the fishermen/women should fish on traditional grounds where they would normally fish for shrimp; the fishing locations within the region will be chosen by the captain.

Vessel and Gear

The vessels and captains must have experience fishing for northern shrimp in the region for which they apply. Vessels must have a current US Coast Guard Fishing Vessel Safety Decal and must show proof of liability insurance. The gear should be typical legal (for northern shrimp) trawl gear with a standard or combination grate.

Schedule

The selected vessels and captains will collect samples beginning **in January 2016** as soon as funds for this project become available, and then about once every two weeks. For example, there will probably be one or two trips in January, two in February, and one or two in March, or until the shrimp eggs are hatched off. The captains and their state ASMFC Technical Committee (TC) members will work together to develop the schedule, which will depend on the rate of egg hatch as the season progresses, and will vary from west to east.

Sample Collection

During each trip, the trawler should conduct at least three tows, in different locations if possible. The captain should attempt to fish in locations in which he/she would normally fish for shrimp. Two 2-kg samples (about 4.5 lbs each) should be collected from each tow's shrimp catch, for a total of six samples each day. The samples should be chosen at random (blind) from the catch. All other shrimp catch may be kept or sold up to a limit of 1,800 lbs per day. Each sample should be bagged and labeled with name, date, and tow number (1,2,3 etc.) for the day.

Data Collection

For each tow, the captain should record the date, the tow number (1,2,3 etc.), the GPS coordinates of the tow, the tow start time, the tow duration (hours and minutes), the depth (fa), and an estimate of

the number of pounds of shrimp caught. Captains will be supplied with data sheets by their state TC member. These data will be made public, and will not be confidential.

Sample and Data Delivery

For Maine boats, the six samples (frozen) and data sheets should be delivered to a mutually agreed upon location at a mutually agreed upon time. For Massachusetts or New Hampshire boats, an observer on the boat will collect the samples and data sheets.

Contract and Payment

Captains will sign a contract with the ASMFC and submit bills to the ASMFC. Work will be performed under a special license or Letter of Authorization issued by the state where you plan to land. Any violations of the special license terms and conditions will result in an immediate revocation of the special license or LOA and ineligibility for any future special licenses, LOAs, or RSA projects.

Vessel Selection

To qualify, applicants must supply the information listed below. If there is more than one qualified applicant per region, one will be picked through random selection. Applicants may apply for more than one region, but will only be chosen to fish in one region. Applications will be reviewed by state marine enforcement personnel, and a history of marine resource violations will disqualify applicants.

To Apply

Anyone interested in applying for this project should send a letter or e-mail to [Maggie Hunter](#) at:

Maggie Hunter, DMR
PO Box 8
W. Boothbay Harbor ME 04556
or margaret.hunter@maine.gov

Your letter or e-mail should briefly describe:

- Your experience fishing for shrimp in the region for which you are applying, and any other fishing experience
- Your vessel and gear, including the date of your USCG safety decal
- Your ability to provide proof of insurance
- The region (MA/NH, Western ME, Midcoast ME, or Eastern ME) for which you are applying, and the general location(s) within that region in which you would fish
- Your plan for avoiding fixed gear
- For MA and NH boats, your willingness to have an observer on board
- Your understanding of the project and your willingness to sign a contract with ASMFC
- Your ability to be flexible in timing the trips to capture shrimp at the beginning (or as close as our estimated start time of January 20 allows), middle, and end of egg hatch, and your willingness to work with your state TC member to set a mutually agreeable fishing schedule
- Whether you plan to sell your catch, and who your buyer would be – Maine buyers must have a DMR shrimp permit or special license to participate

Deadline

Letters or e-mails must be received by 5pm, Monday, January 4, 2016.