



The Shrimp e-Advocate

Fishery Closure Questions

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The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is a non-profit alliance of members of the U.S. shrimp industry in eight states committed to preventing the continued deterioration of America's shrimp industry and to ensuring the industry's future viability. SSA serves as the national voice for the shrimp fishermen and processors in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

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Fishery Closure Questions

Given that NMFS can now close an area in the EEZ to seafood harvesting with a 24 hr notice, several concerns immediately surfaced that may have a severe impact on the shrimp industry. From these concerns, I recently posed two questions below to NMFS

Question: If a vessel is determined to be harvesting shrimp in a closed area and was not aware of the closure due to the 24 hr notice, what enforcement actions will be taken against that vessel?

Answer: It is something that will be addressed on a case by case basis according to the specific facts associated with each violation.

Question: If a vessel is found to be harvesting seafood in a closed area and is not aware of the closure due to the 24 hr notice of closure, what happens to his or her catch?

Answer: It is something that will be addressed on a case by case basis according to the specific facts associated with each violation; however, it is possible that the entire catch would be seized, especially given the public safety concerns implicated, so vessels should make sure they are monitoring any changes to the closure areas very closely to avoid the possibility of losing an entire trip's worth of effort.

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Given these questions and answers, it is imperative that all fishing vessels monitor as closely as possible the openings and closings of fishing grounds relevant to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

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