



Rhode Island
Department of Environmental Management
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
3 Fort Wetherill Road
Jamestown, RI 02835

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SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A public hearing was held on **March 25, 2014** at 6:00 PM in the Coastal Institute Building Auditorium, URI Narragansett Bay Campus, South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI. Approximately 15 – 20 persons from the public were present.

Hearing Officer: M. Gibson

DEM Staff: M. Gibson, L. Mouradjian, G. Powers, N. Lengyel, S. Olszewski, T. Rosa, T. Angell, P. Duhamel, D. Costa

Public comments were solicited on the following twenty one items:

1) Amendments regarding management for recreational Summer Flounder:

- *S. Medeiros: representing RI Saltwater Anglers Assoc., commented that he supported option 1, status quo;*
- *M. Bucko: supported option 1, status quo.*

2) Amendments regarding management for recreational Winter flounder:

- *M. Bucko: representing RI Bait and Tackle shops, commented that he supported option 1, to liberalize season as proposed.*

3) Amendments regarding management for recreational Tautog:

- *M. Bucko: representing RI Bait and Tackle shops, commented that he supported option 2; change opening date from April 15 to April 1, and offered that data he reviewed showed that this earlier opening date would result in either none or very minimal increased effort in the fishery.*
- *S. Medeiros: supported option 2;*
- *J. Donahue: supported option 2.*

4) Amendments regarding management for commercial Tautog:

- *A. Eagles: recommended an increase in possession limit to 40 fish/vessel/day.*

5) Amendments regarding management for recreational Scup:

- *No comments were made for this hearing item.*

6) Amendments regarding management for recreational Black Sea Bass:

- *No comments were made for this hearing item.*

- 7) Amendments regarding management for Coastal Sharks:
 - *No comments were made for this hearing item.*
- 8) Amendments to Part VII - Minimum Sizes of Fish/Shellfish, in their entirety, for general editing; to remove duplicative language; to add and/or correct statutory citations; and to add general provisions regarding possession limit changes, transiting, reporting requirements, penalties and appeals
 - *No comments were made for this hearing item.*
- 9) Amendments regarding management for recreational Striped Bass:
 - *No comments were made for this hearing item.*
- 10) Amendments regarding management for commercial Striped Bass:
 - *J. Macari: commented that he supported option 1.*
- 11) Amendments regarding management for commercial Striped Bass floating fish trap:
 - *J. Macari: commented that he supported option 1 regarding addition of the rollover provision language as proposed.*
- 12) Amendments to Part XII – Striped Bass, in their entirety, for general editing; to remove duplicative language; to correct statutory citations; and to add general provisions regarding possession limit changes, penalties and appeals
 - *No comments were made for this hearing item.*
- 13) Amendments to correct two technical errors delineating the borders of the Bristol Harbor Shellfish Management Area (Part IV – Shellfish):
 - *No comments were made for this hearing item.*
- 14) Amendments to Part IV – Shellfish, regarding management of Conch:
 - a. Commercial and Recreational Season:
 - *K. Murgo: commented that he supported option 1, status quo, as the AP recommended option.*
 - b. Minimum sizes and schedule:
 - *K. Murgo: commented that he supported the AP recommended option, a 1/8” increase in length for this year and then to revisit the following year in order to review new data.*
 - c. Proposal to add a provision regarding a Fishery Closure due to Eminent Public Health Risk (Bio-toxins):

- *A. Eagles: commented that the specifics of the levels of bio-toxins that would result in a closure, and the methods for monitoring should be known before proceeding with this language.*
- d. Revision/clarification of general provisions for Unauthorized Hauling of Conch Pots, Un-authorized Possession and/or Transfer of Conch Pots, and Hauling or Setting Conch Pots at Night, to be specific to Conch Pots:
- *No comments were made for this hearing item.*
- e. Commercial Possession limits:
- *K. Murgó: commented that he supported option 1, status quo, as the AP recommended option;*
 - *A. Eagles: supported option 1, status quo.*
- e. Commercial Conch Quota – proposal to add an Annual Catch Limit:
- *No comments were made for this hearing item.*
- 15) Amendments to Part IV - Shellfish, in their entirety: to re-format numbering/lettering of sections; to remove duplicative language; for general editing; to add and/or clarify descriptions of Shellfish Management Areas; to add and/or correct several statutory citations; and to add general provisions regarding penalties and appeals
- *No comments were made for this hearing item.*
- 16) Amendments to Part III – Marine Fisheries Council, to remove the section regarding the description of Shellfish Management Areas:
- *No comments were made for this hearing item.*
- 17) Amendments to Part III – Marine Fisheries Council, in their entirety, for general editing; and to remove duplicative language
- *No comments were made for this hearing item.*
- 18) Amendments to Part XI – Commercial Fisheries, regarding a commercial fishing prohibition in designated experimental artificial reef locations in the Narragansett Bay Marine Life Management Area:
- *T. Kutcher, representing Save the Bay: In support of this proposal*
 - *S. Medeiros: In support of this proposal.*
 - *2 members of the audience: commented that wanted locations of before proceeding.*
- 19) Amendments to Part XI – Commercial Fisheries, regarding general editing; to remove duplicative language; to correct statutory citations; to clarify descriptions of Marine Life Management Areas; and add general provision for penalties and appeals:

- *No comments were made for this hearing item.*

20) Amendments regarding commercial Menhaden fisheries:

a. Option 1 – Proposal to allow for a possession limit of 6,000 lbs per vessel per day once the marine life management area closes:

- *M. Bucko: In support of option 1; support of this proposal;*
- *John Gardner: In support of this option;*
- *J. Macari: In support of this option;*
- *Rick Sousa from Arc-Bait: commented that wanted to be sure that transiting was allowed*

b. Option 2 – Proposal to add language for clarification regarding non-directed fisheries:

- *J. Donahue: In support of this option*
- *J. Macari: In support of this option*
- *M. Bucko: In support of this option*

b. Option 3 – Proposal to add and end date for the Episodic Event Set Aside Program:

- *M. Bucko: In support of this option*

21) Amendments to Part XVI – Menhaden, regarding general editing; to remove duplicative language; to correct statutory citations; and to add general provision for penalties and appeals.

- *No comments were made for this hearing item.*

M. Gibson closed the public hearing at approximately 6:35PM.

List of Exhibits:

1. Exhibit 1: Affidavit of Publication/Posting and Public Notice
2. Exhibit 2: Copy of Public Notice and annotated regulations.
3. Exhibits 3 - 13: Written comments received

Prepared by P. Duhamel