

RIMFC Lobster Advisory Panel
June 28, 2006
Jamestown, RI

RIMFC Members:

Jody King, Chairman

*Jeffrey Jordan (Offshore trap)

*David Spencer (Offshore trap)

*Lanny Dellinger (Inshore trap)

Dennis Ingram (alternate for Todd Sutton / Inshore trap)

Brian Thibeault (alternate for Robert Smith / Inshore trap)

RIDFW Staff / RIMFC Members:

Mark Gibson, Deputy Chief

Scott Olszewski, DFW

Thomas Angell, DFW

Stephen Parente, RIMFC

Others:

Richard Allen

Elizabeth Kordowski, OTF

Chris Anderson, URI

Meeting convened at 7:00 pm by Chairman Jody King.

There were 13 people present.

This meeting did not follow the normal RIMFC procedure for convening advisory panel meetings; needed to move fast on issue in order to get it promulgated as soon as possible; want to get the regulation in effect to conserve on resource gains made through the North Cape Lobster Restoration V-Notching program.

AGENDA:

1. Review draft ASMFC Addendum VIII.

- Discussion of management strategies to reach new biological reference points; recent advice from ASMFC Lobster Technical Committee.
- Consideration of regulatory changes to V-Notch definition ("Zero Tolerance) and voluntary/mandatory v-notching of egg-bearing lobsters.

Mark Gibson reviewed the status of Addendum VIII and what it means for Area 2.

- Addendum VIII has been adopted by ASMFC; mandatory monitoring/data collection and new biological reference points for assessing the lobster stocks; moving from F10% reference point to median abundance reference point (interim); developing combination of removal rate and abundance reference points (new).

- There is a target and a threshold; want to stay away from the threshold and move toward the target; using interim reference points until replaced by new reference points.
- Don't know what to tell the Area 2 LCMT to do to try and meet the new interim reference points; not enough guidance from ASMFC Lobster management Board (LMB) to convene an Area 2 LCMT meeting, but the RIMFC Lobster AP can look at other issues in the meantime.
- Additional measures will be needed, but we don't know how fast we need to get them in place; also need to know where the starting point is.

Advisory Panel comment and Discussion:

There was general discussion back and forth regarding the efficacy of convening an Area 2 LCMT meeting. There was also discussion regarding proposed changes to the V-Notch definition; The LAP reviewed the current RI and ME v-notch definitions and a proposed MA v-notch definition.

- Should we hold an LCMT meeting anyway? Before the August LMB meeting? May not be able to have an LCMT before we get guidance.
- Comments that it may be better to be proactive and not wait until something gets forced on the LCMT.
- Industry would be more comfortable if they could see the results of their efforts more quickly (in terms of stock assessments, etc.)
- Don't want the LMB to start Addendum 9 at the August meeting.
- Suggestion to convene a meeting of the Area 2 LCMT to address the V-Notch definition and Maximum Gauge Size.
- Comment that ASMFC Amendment 5 may have a coast-wide uniform v-notch definition as part of the amendment.
- Questions regarding how much longer the lobsters would be protected under each of the v-notch definitions being reviewed.
- Under current definition, only get 1 molt until v-notch protection disappears; not sure how much extra protection the current ME definition provides (interpretation problems?); proposed MA definition will get you through nearly 2 molts; proposed RI / "Zero Tolerance" definition will provide maximum protection.
- Suggestion for a compromise definition using proposed MA definition with the addition of part of proposed RI / "Zero Tolerance" definition; add "For the purpose of this policy, a naturally regenerating right tail flipper is also considered a v-notch" to proposed MA definition.

There was also some discussion regarding a Maximum Gauge Size for Area 2.

- MA is looking at 6" or 6-1/2" for a maximum gauge size.
- Comment that Maximum gauge should be a landing regulation rather than a possession regulation.
- Comment – Why do you want a Maximum Gauge Size? Only makes you less efficient; spend more money to throw lobsters back.

**Motion by D. Ingram to recommend convening an Area 2 LCMT for the purpose of exploring consistency of V-notching definitions and maximum gauge sizes in Area 2.
Second by B. Thibeault**

Voted: 5 - yes / 0 - no / no abstentions.

The motion passes unanimously.

This must be coordinated and synchronized with MA.

Motion by Lanny Dellinger to recommend to the RIMFC to tighten up the v-notch definition and be consistent with MA in terms of the definition and implementation date.

Second by B. Thibeault.

Voted: 5 – yes / 0 – no / no abstentions

The motion passes unanimously.

RIDFW will work with MADMF to work out the new v-notch definition.

Motion by Lanny Dellinger to recommend to RIMFC to endorse a maximum gauge size to be consistent with MA in terms of size and implementation date, with a maximum gauge size no smaller than 5 inches.

Second by D. Ingram

Voted: 5 – yes / 0 – no / no abstentions

The motion passes unanimously.

M. Gibson reiterated his earlier comments that he did not want to lose an opportunity to maintain the gains made through the v-notching restoration program; events are happening fast in the lobster fishery and we need to act quickly.

2. OTHER BUSINESS:

- Vent-less Trap Survey:
 - Comments that the sampling locations that have been chosen have problems; located in dragger grounds, shellfishing areas, etc.; several locations need to be moved.
 - Concerns expressed that certain areas did not have any sampling locations; deep water areas in the East Passage.
 - Sampling design is a random-stratified design.
 - RIDFW will consult with ASMFC Lobster Technical Committee regarding selection of sampling locations.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.