

**Summer Flounder Advisory Panel  
Meeting Minutes  
June 21, 2006  
Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Jamestown, RI**

There were 16 people in attendance (\*primary advisory panel member; ^ alternate member)

David Preble, Chairman  
Ken Ketcham, RIMFC  
Stephen Parente, RIMFC  
Jerry Carvahlo  
Jim Low\*  
Al Conti\*  
Chris Brown\*  
Damon Isi  
Ed Baker  
Ed Cook\*  
Trip Whilden  
Robert Mattiucci^  
Nancy Scarduzio, RIDFW  
Jason McNamee, RIDFW  
Brian Murphy, RIDFW

*Review and discussion on RI Fluke Exemption Permit regulations*

The overall consensus was that residents should not be denied fluke harvest but opinions on how to deal with the exemption program differed. Several points of view were discussed, which can be grouped into three categories. The first is to modify the program to allow individuals who currently do not have permits to lease them from another individual. The second is to eliminate the program entirely and the third is status quo. Discussion over the impact of eliminating the program led to several conclusions. Elimination of the program would allow more people to harvest fluke at possession limits greater than 200 pounds, which is primarily during the winter and spring. This increase in effort would lead to smaller possession limits and shorter seasons, which in turn could lead to an increase in discards, although there was some disagreement over the extent of the impact on discards. There was concern that eliminating the program would allow too many new participants. A leasing program was suggested because it would not allow as many new entrants. One suggestion that eliminating the program should only be pursued if a provision limiting the quota to just RI residents was also enacted. Discussion ensued concerning the impact of eliminating the program on the fishery as well as the population. It was suggested that the greatest impact would occur during winter and spring months when possession limits are over 200 pounds. Those in favor of status quo commented that it is not a good idea to change regulations at this point in time because the population is in a decline, which will result in lower quotas and also because of federal initiatives to reduce effort on groundfish.

**The panel took a vote on eliminating the program. 4 people were in favor of status quo and one in favor of eliminating the program.**

**A second vote was made on whether or not a leasing program should be created. The proposal was to allow leasing of permits which would be restricted between vessels that are similar in size. There was 1 in favor and 3 against and 1 abstention on whether a leasing program should be created.**

### *Possession Limits*

The panel agreed to open informal discussion on current possession limits even though it was not on the agenda. The reason for this discussion was opposition to the current possession limit of 50 pounds, which was implemented to prevent a closure during the current sub-period. Data identifying the gear type used to land fluke during the current period was requested for the meeting but only half the landings were categorized. There was discussion on raising the possession limit back to 100 pounds. The consensus among attendees was that the possession limit should not drop below 100 pounds. Increasing the limit to 100 pounds however would lead to an overage during the current sub-period, which the Division would not do intentionally. Another alternative discussed was reallocation of August – September sub-period quota into the current sub-period. This could not be accomplished without a public hearing and could only be pursued through emergency action.

**In regards to data collection the panel made a vote recommending that regulations be modified to require identification of gear type used for landings. Five panel members were in favor and none were opposed.**