

**Industry Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 26, 2006
Stedman Government Center
Wakefield, RI**

Ken Ketcham, Chair - RIMFC
Stephen Parente, RIMFC
Christopher Brown*
Bob Mattiucci*
Mike McGiveney*
Rick Bellavance
Ed Baker
Larry Blas
Elizabeth Kordowski
Lanny Dellinger
Bob Ballou, RIDEM
Brian Murphy, RIDFW
John Lake, RIDFW
Nancy Scarduzio, RIDFW

The meeting was convened to discuss licensing recommendations for the finfish, crustacean, and shellfish sectors in 2007.

Shellfish

According to licensing data from the Department, 47 fewer quahog endorsements for Principal Effort Licenses and 58 fewer Multi-Purpose licenses were issued in 2006 compared to 2005. In 2005, 43 new quahog endorsements were made available to holders of a basic commercial fishing license based on a 3:1 exit-entry ratio. M. McGiveney commented that the Division was concerned in past years that the open access nature of the student shellfish license could cause an increase in effort. The data shows that this has not occurred. M. McGiveney suggested staying with the same exit-entry ratio to determine the number of new endorsements available in 2007. There were no objections. In discussing the status of the quahog population, B. Murphy stated that the assessment has not been updated with the most recent data. However, based on 2005 commercial landings and dredge survey index, there does not appear to be any major changes in the resource. Landings have declined over last decade, biomass is holding steady and fishing mortality is below that needed to sustain the resource. B. Mattiucci questioned why the fishery was not opened completely since the resource is in good shape. The response was that there is no need to change the management since effort levels are sustainable. Open access might invite too much effort.

Committee Recommendation: New quahog endorsements available in 2007 for basic commercial fishing licenses based on a 3:1 exit-entry ratio for principal effort licenses with quahog endorsement.

Finfish

The committee opened with discussion on SAFIS and in particular the lack of data on landings by gear type. Identifying the type of gear used to catch fish is currently not a required field. The issue had been discussed in the past but no action was taken to make it a required field because logbooks were going to be implemented. Discussion ensued concerning the process by which an individual can obtain a license to commercially fish for fluke and striped bass. Regarding the availability of new endorsements, the number made available is based on whether commercial quotas are increasing or decreasing. For 2007, the commercial quotas for fluke, scup, and black sea bass are going to decrease. Due to the reduced quotas, C. Brown recommended that no new restricted finfish endorsements be made available. All were in favor of no new endorsements.

Committee Recommendation: No new restricted finfish endorsements for 2007.

Crustaceans

The committee agreed that no action should be taken until the Director makes a decision on the lobster regulations, which implement the ASMFC management plan for Area 2.

Committee Recommendation: No recommendations pending Director's decision on ASMFC lobster management plan.