

**Industry Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 22, 2006
Stedman Government Center
Wakefield, RI**

Ken Ketcham, Chair - RIMFC
Stephen Parente, RIMFC
Bob Mattiucci*
Rick Bellavance*
Jim Lowe*
Charles Anmanjian
Jerry Stephens
Robert Smith*
Todd Sutton
Rusty
Greg Duckworth
Pat Duckworth
Elizabeth Kordowski
Lanny Dellinger
Bob Ballou, RIDEM
Brian Murphy, RIDFW
Nancy Scarduzio, RIDFW

* IAC members

Licensing 2007

B. Ballou started the meeting with discussion on the availability of shellfish endorsements in 2007. He stated that the Committee recommended that the Department supports the 3:1 exit-entry ratio recommended by the Committee at the previous meeting. In regards to finfish endorsements, he indicated that data on the activity of renewed restricted finfish endorsements was currently being processed and will be available at a later date. Thirteen fewer restricted finfish endorsements were issued in 2006 and applying a 5:1 exit-entry ratio as was done two years ago would yield two or three new endorsements. He stated that the decision on whether to allow new endorsements is a difficult issue with reduced quotas expected for 2007. The Department will weigh its decision based on results of the data query on the activity of licenses not renewed this year. Several questions were posed in discussion of the issue such as how long a moratorium on finfish endorsements would last since none were made available last year. There 15 restricted finfish endorsements that were not renewed last year and 13 this year. In regards to new endorsements, B. Mattiucci stated that he is an advocate for a free and open fishery but with impending quota reductions it might not be a wise decision to allow new entry into the fishery at this time. There were no objections from the Committee.

Regarding crustaceans, K. Ketcham stated that committee tabled action at the last meeting pending the Directors decision on lobster regulations. B. Ballou stated that there have not been any further developments with the issue. The committee recommended that the Director sign the regulations and deferred any recommendations on lobster endorsements in 2007 until the Director makes a decision.

Committee Recommendation: No new restricted finfish endorsements in 2007.

Review of current gillnet rules and regulations

There was much discussion on whether the Committee would take a vote on a proposal submitted by J. Lowe on behalf of the RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association (RICRRA). K. Ketcham stated that he would not take a vote since it was not on the agenda approved by RIMFC. B. Matticci and J. Lowe disagreed with the decision and both stated that the proposal was specifically requested to be included on the agenda. S. Parente reviewed the minutes of the last RIMFC meeting, which stated that the approved agenda item was a review of current gillnet regulations and there was no reference to the proposal. K. Ketcham, reaffirmed his decision to not take a vote but indicated that the Committee could still discuss the proposal which would be forwarded to RIMFC along with the minutes.

J. Lowe reviewed the proposal. K. Ketcham commented that the marking requirements in the proposal appear to be the same as currently required. J. Lowe responded that the proposal would require additional buoys to be attached to gillnets and larger letters on the buoys. He further stated that gillnets are not being set according to regulation and that some are not correctly marked which is creating a conflict. He stated that federal regulations require hiflyers as markers. There was some discussion over the validity of the statement. K. Ketcham commented that many of J. Lowe's concerns are an enforcement issue not regulatory and should be put on an agenda for the enforcement advisory panel. G. Duckworth, commercial gillnetter, suggested that all gillnetters should not be lumped together because not all are in violation. Problem is with proliferation of small gillnetters many of whom do not follow regulations. Drastic actions should not be taken to penalize a few violators. L. Dellinger, stated that the issue lies with proper enforcement of current regulations. J. Lowe requested that B. Ballou present the issue to the Director as an enforcement issue. In reference to the proposal to remove gillnets at night, T. Sutton stated that it would eliminate any chance of catching fluke. J. Lowe responded that they do in Massachusetts. In reply, several people indicated that there is not much of a fishery for fluke using gillnets in MA. T. Sutton also stated there is a viable monkfish fishery off Block Island using gillnets that would be crippled by the proposal. Much discussion ensued over prohibiting the use of gillnets at night. T. Sutton suggested that it is enforcement issue and anybody can report violations to the Department.

Whelk licensing issue

B. Murphy explained to the Committee that regulations and an assessment are currently in development for whelks and the committee is being asked if participation in the fishery should be limited through licenses. N. Scarduzio elaborated further on the specifics of the regulations. L. Delinger suggested getting advice from active whelk fishermen before the Committee makes any recommendations. N. Scarduzio stated that the issue would also be presented to the Shellfish Advisory Panel. The Committee agreed that more information is needed before making any licensing recommendations.