

RIMFC Lobster Advisory Panel
November 8, 2006
Jamestown, RI

Lobster AP members (* = primary voting member):

Jody King, Chair

*Lanny Dellinger (Inshore Trap)

*Robert Smith (Inshore Trap)

*Jeff Jordan (Offshore Trap)

*David Spencer (Offshore Trap)

*Albert Christopher (Offshore Trap)

*Kevin Bates (Dealer)

Dennis Ingram (alternate/T. Sutton)

Dr. John Gates (alternate/K. Castro)

Others:

Stephen Parente (RIMFC member)

Thomas Angell (RIDFW)

Peter Brodeur

Scott Olszewski (RIDFW)

Edward Baker

Jerry Shepherd

Meeting convened at 6:05pm.

There were 15 people in attendance.

Chairman J. King announced that Stephen Parente is now the LAP co-chair.

AGENDA:

1. Lobster Advisory Panel membership.

T. Angell reported that he was unable to prepare the information regarding attendance records for LAP members.

T. Angell will have this information prepared for the next meeting.

2. Maximum Gauge Size.

T. Angell described the maximum gauge sizes in the other lobster management areas (LMA).

LMA 1 has a 5" maximum gauge; LMA 4 has a 5-1/4" maximum gauge; LMA 5 has a 5-1/2" maximum gauge; LMA 3 is proposing a 7" maximum gauge with a decrease over time to 6-3/4" maximum gauge.

LAP Discussion:

- L. Dellinger commented that this issue is open for discussion in MA.
- Not many 5" lobsters in Area 2 at the present time.
- Need to approach this issue in conjunction with MA; both should have the same regulation.
- Does this recommendation need to be made by the Area 2 LCMT? Yes, need to work with the Area 2 LCMT. The Area 2 LCMT would be the forum to move this issue through the ASMFC process.

- D.Spencer commented that the maximum gauge size is an element of Amendment 5.
- Needs to be written as an Area 2 regulation.
- This should be a landing regulation (not a possession law) so it does not interfere with different maximum gauge sizes in other areas.
- This should be a **landing regulation**, based upon the lobster management areas that are indicated on the federal permit.
- K. Bates commented that Enforcement should provide their opinion on this issue; need to know how this would affect the lobster dealers.
- Do we need an exemption for lobster dealers? Similar to what was done when there were different minimum gauge sizes a couple of years ago.
- What about non-trap fishermen? Concerns were expressed that non-trap fishers are targeting the larger lobsters. These size lobsters are not seen in traps very frequently, however the draggers do catch them.
- There is a proposal (through NMFS?) to have the non-trap fishers also declare their fishery areas; they would be bound by the most restrictive measures for the areas they have declared.
- A. Christopher commented that the Area 2 maximum gauge size should be the same as Area 3; this would eliminate most of the problems for Enforcement.
- S. Olszewski commented that 7" lobsters are absent from Area 2 sea sampling data and a smaller, more realistic maximum gauge size should be considered.
- L. Dellinger commented that if we have a 5" max gauge, we could eventually protect larger egg-producing lobsters and help the egg production.
- D. Spencer commented that this regulation should be written specifically for Area 2.
- L. Dellinger commented that this would still need to go through the Area 2 LCMT.
- R. Smith questioned if a 5" lobster can get into a trap that is fished in Area 2?
- Need to have discussion of this issue with the rest of Area 2 lobster fishers (i.e., the Area 2 LCMT).

**Discussion of the maximum gauge size issue was tabled until next meeting.
No action recommended at this time regarding maximum gauge size.**

3. Update on ASMFC activities.

Addendum VII:

T. Angell reported that application letters have been sent out by certified mail. RIDFW is receiving and starting to process these applications.

LAP Discussion:

- P. Brodeur commented that the "regression equation" was not sent out with the application letter.
- T. Angell questioned if he meant the "equation" or if he meant the table that shows the number of traps that would be allocated in relation to the poundage.

- T. Angell suggested that this would be sent out with the actual initial allocation letter. The regression table will be sent out with the initial trap allocation letter.
- R. Smith questioned if Addendum VII would be up and running for 2007? Time is running out to get this going for 2007.
- Comments regarding Transferability; there is a federal component to this; it will take NMFS longer to get rules/regulations in place.
- Comment that this should be implemented in conjunction with NMFS. MA is going ahead with this on the state level and let NMFS catch up with them.

Addenda XI and XII:

Addendum XI will address fishing mortality (F) and a rebuilding timeframe.

Addendum XII will address measures to increase lobster abundance.

Public hearings on these addenda are to be held later next year (August-September 2007) with possible action near the end of 2007.

LAP Discussion:

- Discussion about the stock assessment; next stock assessment to be completed by the end of 2008.
- Discussion about the relationship between removal rates, abundance and fishing mortality.
- Some discussion of whale issues and floating/sinking line and buoy lines. We will be held to the same standards as everyone else on whale issues.
- What about the shipping industry?

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.