

RIMFC Lobster Advisory Panel
November 14, 2007
Jamestown, RI

Meeting Attendees:

RIMFC Lobster Advisory Panel (*= primary voting member):

Jody King (RIMFC, Co-Chair)
Stephen Parente (RIMFC, Co-Chair)
*Lanny Dellinger (Inshore Trap)
*Peter Brodeur (Inshore Trap)
*David Spencer (Offshore Trap)
Jeffrey Jordan (Offshore Trap)
*Dr. John Gates (Scientific)
Dennis Ingram (alternate / T.Sutton)

Others:

Mark McSally
Alan Eagles
Scott Olszewski (RIDFW)
Thomas Angell (RIDFW)

Meeting convened by Co-Chair J. King at 6:05 pm.
There were 12 people in attendance (see list above).

AGENDA:

1. Lobster Management Update.

- ASMFC activities; Addendum XII (Transferability and “Most Restrictive”)

ASMFC Lobster Management Board (LMB) met in October; initiated draft addendum (Addendum XII) on trap transferability; establishment of protocols for the consistent application of trap transferability programs for all management areas and to provide for fair implementation of individual trap transferability (ITT) programs that allow for flexibility to the fishery, meet the conservation objectives of the plan, and ensure that effort does not increase as a result of trap transfers.

LMB also approved initiation of draft Addendum XIII which will propose replacement of the Outer Cape Cod Management Area effort control plan with the plan that has been modified, adopted, and implemented by Massachusetts.

ASMFC will be re-considering their interpretation of the “most restrictive” rule; wants to revert back to the NMFS interpretation; most restrictive will mean most restrictive.

- NMFS Rules for Area 3
NMFS finally getting up to speed with ASMFC; implementation of gauge increases, increase in escape vent size, reduction of trap cap from 2,200 down to 2,000.

LAP Discussion/Comments:

- NMFS “most restrictive” rule is not justified
- “Most Restrictive” rule is attempting to stop increases in effort.

2. Proposed revision to regulation 15.14.1; recommendation to RIMFC.

This applies uniquely to one RI individual who has a federal Area 3 trap allocation and a state license trap allocation for RI state waters.

Proposal to add “Area 2” in 3 places in 15.14.1-1,(5)

LAP Discussion/Comments:

- Will this create a loophole for other vessels with an Area 3 declaration to come in and fish in RI state waters?
- The Panel noted that regulation 15.14.1 was created prior to the adoption of the Area 2 Effort Control Plan, which was originally intended to prevent vessels from deploying/fishing both federal lobster trap tags and state waters lobster trap tags from the same vessel.

Motion by D. Ingram to modify language in 15.14.1-1,(5) and add “Area 2” in 3 places.

Motion seconded by L. Dellinger

Voted – 5 YES, 0 NO

The motion passes; recommend to RIMFC to modify language in 15.14.1-1,(5) as indicated below.

Proposed revision to 15.14.1-1,(5):

No licensees owning/partnered/incorporated in vessel(s) holding a Area 2 Federal Lobster Permit shall be permitted to deploy, place, set, tend, haul, lift, raise, supervise, or maintain lobster traps from said Area 2 federally-permitted vessel(s), or to catch/take American lobster within the jurisdiction of the State of Rhode Island from said Area 2 federally-permitted vessel(s), unless the lobster traps are tagged with federally-designated lobster trap tags that includes a Lobster Fishery Management Area 2 declaration, issued to said federally-permitted vessel(s).

3. 5-1/4” Maximum Gauge Size for Lobster Fishery Management Area 2; recommendation to RIMFC.

LAP Discussion/Comments:

- Will this effect fishermen in other areas other than Area 2? Yes, this will be implemented in the Lobster Fishery Management Areas in the Southern New England stock unit (Area 2, Area 4, Area 5 and Area 6).
- Will this be a possession law?
- This is an ASMFC compliance issue.
- This will also effect “non-trap” fishermen.

Motion By J. Jordan to accept/adopt the 5-1/4” maximum gauge size for the Area 2 lobster fishery.

Motion seconded by D. Ingram.

Voted – 4-YES, 1-NO

The motion passes. Recommend to RIMFC to adopt and add to regulations.

4. Trap Tag Effective Date (May 1 or June 1).

LAP Discussion/Comments:

- Official NMFS trap tag effective date is May 1st, however they have made a policy decision to recognize June 1st based on language found in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NMFS and the states.
- Most other states use June 1st as the effective date for lobster trap tags, in accordance with ASMFC lobster management plan.
- Will this cause any problems for Enforcement?

Motion by L. Dellinger to recommend changing the trap tag effective date to June 1.

Motion seconded by D. Spencer.

Voted – 4-YES, 0-NO, 1 ABSTAIN

The motion passes. Recommend to RIMFC to change the lobster trap tag effective date to June 1st; trap tags would be valid from June 1st to May 31st.

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OTHER BUSINESS:

What is the process to get an item on the meeting agenda?

Concern expressed about Escape Vents as a management tool; not getting enough credit for legal-sized lobsters that can escape from a 2” rectangular escape vent.

Would like to see an additional study on this issue.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.