

Rhode Island Groundfish/Federally Managed Species Advisory Panel Meeting
Minutes of Meeting
January 22, 2008
Stedman Government Center, Government Center Courtroom
4808 Tower Hill Road, Wakefield, RI

Chairperson: Dave Preble

F&W Staff: M. Gibson, J. McNamee, M. Burnett

Public: 24 people attended

1. Review Advisory Panel Function and Procedures:

Chairman Preble called the meeting to order. He went through his expectations of the new advisory committee and what he intends to focus attention on. He explained how the species at hand are especially important for commercial harvesters due in part to changes at both the federal and state level. He described how it is vital to get input from industry to properly manage these species. D. Preble described his intention to have this meeting as formal as possible and that all future meetings will be taped due the contentious nature of these issues.

2. Priorities:

D. Preble stated that these meetings should be driven by industry, and requested that all issues that need to be discussed should be brought to his attention. He also stated that all subsequent meetings will be held as needed, and he requested that any proposals be formalized in writing and submitted to DEM staff. D. Preble then acknowledged two priority topics that were to be discussed, monkfish and codfish. He stated the NEMFC is working on the cod issue and that there may not be time to discuss cod that evening. He went on to explain how monkfish was the issue at hand, and that any proposals submitted that night would go directly to public hearing next month and would be on the agenda for the March RIMFC meeting. He mentioned that Director Sullivan (RIDEM) is willing to push the monkfish agenda through expeditiously.

3. Review monkfish stock status: and ***4. Monkfish season and daily limits:***

D. Preble described some of the monkfish fisheries' current status and history. He explained the weaknesses of the stock assessment and discussed how it is difficult to get actual numbers with no long-term time series of data. He proceeded to call the monk fishery a "data-poor" stock due to lack of adequate data. He added that the new 2007 monkfish assessment established new reference points. According to the new assessment the fishery was not considered overfished. D. Preble explained how this assessment was not particularly reliable and that this wouldn't result in any management changes to the fishery or the TAC. D. Preble then stated that Massachusetts is going out to public hearing for commercially daily possession limits of 50 lbs. of tail or 166 lbs. of whole

fish. He asked for questions and comments and then asked for any proposals to be set forth and discussed.

D. Preble proceeded to go through proposals.

Proposal 1: Monkfish Proposal

Submitted by T. Platz

1. That the RIFMC immediately establish a control date for monkfish in state waters.
2. That the RIFMC not consider any increase in landing limits or effort until the state of RI secures an allocation from the TAC for the federal monkfish management plan based on state waters landing history.
3. That the RIFMC not consider any increase in monkfish landing limits or effort until the federal monkfish management plan is no longer in a rebuilding mode and has return to its baseline effort (450/550 X 40 DAS).
4. That the RIFMC not consider any increase in monkfish landing limits or effort until RI has established a working VMS system for all state water vessels over 24 feet in length.

Comments and Discussion: A comment was made by R. Fuka that the RI Fisherman's Alliance is against consolidation or disenfranchisement of state fishing vessels.

Proposal 2: Request for an experimental state of RI directed monkfish fishery

Submitted by G. Duckworth

Please see attached document for details.

Comments and Discussion: Some clarification from the Duckworth proposal regarding 'overages' was necessary. G. Duckworth explained the 'overage' is actually a shrinking allowance and is a common practice. B. Mackintosh stated that this could potentially put RI over the TAC. Another statement was made that RI has never met *de minimus* status. D. Preble then went on to give all State only and Federal pounds landed in 2006 and 2007 from data provided by RIDEM. G. Hall commented that an experimental fishery should not just be open to just a few harvesters, and should be open to all. T. Sutton stated that there are plenty of fish in State waters. T. Platz then stated that he thinks monkfish should be under one plan, and that the State plan should be under the federal plan. B. Mackintosh stated that it should be limited to existing boats and that allowing new boats into the fishery will cause more to come out of the TAC. G. Duckworth believed that only current boats would be involved because they are the ones with adequate gear to catch monkfish. T. Sutton wanted clarification on why the State can not match federal limits and why federal boats can not fish in State waters after meeting their quota. D. Preble explained that you could legally transit State waters after landing in federal waters just as long as all gear is stowed and the boat is not actively fishing. M. Gibson added that federal boats could transit for the purpose of landing and explained that the State has a joint enforcement agreement with the federal government that mandates the more restrictive rule be followed. D. Preble suggested that this issue be brought up at another

time rather than address it during the meeting. J. Jarvis stated that no more gillnet endorsements were being issued at this time. J. Shelley then stated that he didn't think either of the proposed plans would work. He then stated his alternate proposal of 200 lbs. of tails and 600 lbs. of whole fish, with 11" or 12" mesh in State waters. J. Shelly then provided a hand-written proposal to J. McNamee. There was some confusion regarding the TAC. J. McNamee and M. Gibson explained how the landings data was teased out for the data that D. Preble presented. K. Ketcham then stated that any fish caught over this years TAC will be taken off the 2008 TAC in the Southern Management Area. D. Preble suggested that a few changes may be warranted before the package goes to Council.

Proposal 3: Cod and Monkfish management plans for 2008

Submitted by R. Fuka on behalf of the Rhode Island Fisherman's Alliance

The following recommendations are made for the RI state waters commercial fisheries for cod and monkfish.

1. No possession limit for both cod and monkfish.

- RI has maintained a *de minimis* status in the coast wide landings of both cod and monkfish rendering state possession limits unnecessary. RI State waters landings pose no threat to species conservation and have no measurable effect on the biomass.
- State caught landings have been an important financial contributor to the small boat fishery.
- The RI public is best served by maintaining daily access to these fresh caught marine resources.
- Federally permitted vessels are not negatively affected.

2. Sector allocation proposals should be limited to state by state allocations only.

- Sector allocation of commercial access should be limited to a State of RI allocation only. This policy will ensure to RI fishermen equal access to these resources and prevent the loss or sale of access rights to other states.
- Every effort should be made to encourage out of state caught fish to be landed in RI ports. This will maximize a RI history in the establishment of an allocation management plan.
- The RI public is best served by a history of landings with these species and by maintaining the public ownership and distribution of access.

Comments: R. Fuka acknowledged that *de minimus* status is not applicable to RI and would have to be modified along with possession limits. D. Preble mentioned that the last day anything can be put in the public hearing document is Friday January 25, 2008. D. Preble stated that some fisheries are using sector management and ITQs for fisheries management. M. Gibson suggested that a range of reasonable possession limits would be

helpful before going to public hearing. D. Preble echoed M. Gibson's statement and required it be submitted by Friday January 25, 2008. K. Ketchem stated that as a council member, an unlimited number of days would be unreasonable. T. Platz referred to an email he received from the Chairmen of the monkfish plan development team who was hesitant to make changes to the fishery based on these new findings. D. Preble stated that there is a danger in making changes to federal limits based on the new assessment and no federal action is being taken at this time. D. Preble closed this topic and moved onto the topic of cod.

5. RI State codfish seasons and daily limits:

D. Preble asked if anyone had any proposals on state cod limits. He then stated that RI is not going to get far with cod is because the numbers are not yet available. J. Shelly put forth a proposal for 300 lbs. B. Loftes put forth a proposal of 1000 lbs. Both proposals could be placed on the public hearing document, but is not on the docket for the February 26th hearing. I. Parente mentioned that this fishery was a state fishery prior to it becoming a federal fishery. T. Mulvey was in favor of the federal limit of 1000 lbs. A comment was made to find out exactly what the federal limit is; whether it is 800 lbs. or 1000 lbs. D. Preble stated that when the data from GARM 3 becomes available this will all be subject to change. J. McNamee stated cod will not be on the February public hearing document, but can be put on the March public hearing document. I. Parente suggested going with the 1000 lb. limit.

D. Preble asked if there were any further comments regarding these proposals. J. McNamee stated again that the notice for the Feb public hearing is complete, and cod was not included in that document.

Chairman Preble adjourned the meeting.

Attendees:

John Shelly	Gregory Duckworth
Richard Fuka*	Patrick Duckworth
Brian Loftes	Todd Sutton
Gerry Carvalho	Ian Parente
John Gadzik ^A	Douglas Kissick *
Frank Blount *	Terence Mulvey
Gary Hall	Luke Wheeler *
Ted Platz *	William Mackintosh
Dean Pescante	Mark Lambert
Stephen Arnold ^A	Kevin Sullivan
Michael Marchetti *	Jason Jarvis
Rick Bellavance *	
Ken Ketcham	

* Advisory Panel Member

^A Alternate Advisory Panel Member