

**RI Marine Fisheries Council
 Summer Flounder Advisory Panel
 Meeting Minutes
 September 17, 2008, 6:00 PM
 Corless Auditorium, Narragansett, RI**

There were 52 people in attendance (*primary advisory panel member; ^A alternate member)

David Preble, Chairman	Jerry Carvalho
Ken Ketcham, RIMFC	Ken Court
Stephen Parente, RICRRA	John Gadzik, RICRRA
Bob Beresford, RICRRA	Al Conti*
Jerry Tremblay*, RICRRA	Ed Cook*
Ronald King, RICRRA	Gary Gray
Joe Filipkowski, RICRRA	Stephen A. Arnold
Bill Allen, RICRRA	Robert S. Chopuette
Ian Parente ^A	Patrick Duckworth
Robert Jolie, RICRRA	Greg Duckworth
Joe Harvey	Al Randozza
Charlie Brayton	Lou Storti
Robert Smith	Rich Hittinger
Paul Laflamme ^A , RISAA	Richard Fuka
James Nelson	Chris Brown*, RIFCC
Carl Granquist*	Bill Mackintosh, RICFA
Ralph Pearson	Donald Fox ^A
Dean Pesante*	Tom Hoxsie*
Robert Mattiucci*, RICRRA	Frank Blount*
Robert Morris*, RICFA	David Taylor, Scientific Advisor
Stephen Parente (gillnetter)	Nancy Scarduzio, DEM/DFW staff
There were 10 other people present who did not sign in.	

D. Preble, Chair, went through the membership list and took roll call to determine which voting members were present. He explained the purpose of the meeting, that proposals for the 2009 summer flounder season would be presented, discussed and voted on with recommendations going forward to the RIMFC.

D. Preble briefly went over the history of past summer flounder management and explained the problem had been that the fishery does not reflect what the science appears to reflect. Preble indicated that mortality was a key factor. He also indicated that the results boiled down to a lower biomass target and a permanently reduced total allowable catch (TAC). The TAC that we will be aiming for will now be less than what has been aimed for over the last few years.

Preble stated there were three proposals that were submitted for discussion, two from the RI Commercial Rod & Reel Angler's association (RICRRA) and one from the RI Fluke Conservation Cooperative (RIFCC). He asked for someone from the RI Commercial Rod & Reel Angler's association to present the first two proposals.

Discussion and review of proposals for 2009:

S. Parente, RICRRA, reviewed the first proposal to eliminate the summer flounder call-in requirement for state water fishers operating under the established daily limit. He pointing out that this requirement placed a burden upon the Division of Law Enforcement. Discussion ensued.

B Mattiucci agreed with the proposal indicating that he held a summer flounder exemption certificate and expected to comply with this requirement but felt others on a daily limit did not need to comply with this requirement.

C. Grandquist was in disagreement and wanted to know if it was a burden on Law Enforcement or not. He felt the requirement should remain in place.

Comments from the audience were mixed some in favor of keeping the requirement others felt it should only apply to fishermen with 200 pounds or more or those possessing a summer flounder exemption certificate.

G. Carvalho stated this rule had been declared unlawful by the Court. He claimed Superior Court ruled this to be unlawful by DEM and the ruling had not been over turned. It was being enforced in violation of the court ruling. He claimed people are not required to call in.

D. Preble called a vote on the proposals which was to recommend to eliminate the call-in provision: delete paragraph 7.7.5-1, item C. as it applies to state water fishers unless operating under the criteria of a summer flounder exemption certificate. The proposal passed; (7) seven in favor, (4) four opposed.

S. Parente, RICRRA, reviewed the second proposal pertaining to the 2009 summer flounder quota management plan. The proposal asked to remain at status quo for 2009 and requested the DFW to continue to closely monitor dealer landings and adjust daily quota limits as appropriate in order to insure that the fishery remain open as long as possible. The proposal requested the absolute minimum daily catch limit not be lowered to less than 50 pounds per vessel per day.

D. Preble asked for comments from advisory panel members. B. Mattiucci was in support of the proposal and provided data to support his opinion. C. Brown pointed out that 50 pounds per day was not ideal for those who target larger amounts. There was further discussion between panel members and the audience.

There was clarification as to what was meant by status quo, which was the division between the winter sub-period, summer sub-period and the fall sub-period, as it was divided in 2007 and 2008, not the quota since it had not been established yet.

P. Duckworth suggested the daily limit not be less than 100 pounds per day. He indicated 50 pounds per day was not worth leaving the dock due to increased fuel costs. I. Parente suggested even 75 pounds would be better than 50 pounds.

G. Duckworth was in favor of an aggregate program for the summer I and summer II periods. He indicated that overall it would save fish and be more profitable for vessels.

D. Preble asked for a vote on the proposal which was to recommend to remain at status quo for 2009 and request the DFW to continue to closely monitor dealer landings and adjust daily quota limits as appropriate in order to insure that the fishery remain open as long as possible. The proposal also requested the absolute minimum daily catch limit not be lowered to less than 50 pounds per vessel per day. The proposal passed; (7) seven in favor, (5) five opposed.

Discussion and review of a summer flounder sector allocation proposal presented by the RI Fluke Conservation Cooperative:

C. Brown stated that his sector allocation proposal had been around for a long time. He had worked on trying to educate people about sector allocation and had tried to develop a process for others to follow to form their own sectors. He reviewed why it was necessary to switch management strategies. C. Brown discussed the discard issue and that it needed to be addressed. Brown stated that the State of RI should be attending the Atlantic States and Mid-Atlantic region meetings and bringing this information back so we can manage our fisheries better. The State of RI should be addressing these issues and presenting this information in some type of informational format to keep fishermen updated so they can stay ahead of problems. He estimated that by 2010 that 70 percent of the groundfish fleet would be in sectors with between 70-80 percent of observer coverage. He indicated that sector allocation would reduce the discard problem because of a hard TAC, and vessels would spend less time out fishing. Sector allocation would allow people to control their own financial future and manage their businesses better.

C. Brown had provided various documents for review such as; harvesting rules for 2009, a proposal for a sector allocation pilot program in 2009, operational plan and agreement, and fluke landings data. C. Brown and his cooperative were requesting to be allocated 12.25% of the RI share of the Federal quota of fluke for a 2009 sector allocation pilot program.

C. Brown addressed questions about the sector allocation proposal. B. Mattiucci indicated that if we went to sector allocations then a rod and reel sector would be entitled to roughly 1 percent of the quota. Mattiucci wanted to know why Brown would target fluke when there were so many used groups as opposed to some other species of fish that had less user groups.

Other concerns included; what happened when a vessel in the sector exhausted an individual sector quota. The response was - that vessel would be done for the rest of the

year harvesting fluke or could arrange for a quota transfer from another sector member. The sector would not be targeting fluke but rather fluke would be a bi-catch. Brown explained that the vessels in the sector would not be catching any more fish than they had in the past the formation of a sector would just allow them to fish when they wanted to.

S. Parente, RICRRA, was opposed to the sector allocation proposal. He explained that if the sector allocation was approved he felt there would be a huge shift in effort from the winter I and winter II sub-periods in to the new summer sub-period, and thought the beach would be scraped clean in the summer. He felt this would set them backwards. C. Brown indicated that their proposal would keep them one mile off the beach.

There were some concerns about observer coverage and who would pay for the coverage. C. Brown stated his group was looking for 100 percent observer coverage and they would be looking into sources to cover those expenses. D. Preble indicated that there would be 100 percent observer coverage.

A. Conti suggested making this a pilot program for only the winter periods when groundfish would be targeted. There was more discussion about conducting the pilot program only during the winter months.

D. Preble explained as a point of information, that there were three sectors currently operating in New England and in May 2010 there would be 19 sectors.

D. Preble asked for a vote on the proposal which was to recommend to have the proposed sector allocation one year pilot program go forward to public hearing. The proposal to move forward passed; (8) eight in favor, (4) opposed.

Meeting adjourned