

Meeting Minutes for the RIMFC Groundfish & Federally Managed Species Advisory Panel Meeting

April 15, 2014 at 6:00pm

URI/GSO Narragansett Bay Campus, Coastal Institute Building, Hazard Room

The following people attended this meeting, including 1 AP member (*).	
1. Aaron Gewirtz* (served as chair for this meeting) 2. Terence Mulvey 3. Greg Duckworth 4. Patrick Duckworth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eric Schneider, RI F&W• Tom Rosa, RI F&W

Groundfish Members Absent: Ken Booth (Chair), Jerry Tremblay, Douglas Kissick, Paul Westcott, Richard Fuka, Luke Wheeler, Ted Platz, Al Conti, Michael Marchetti, John Troiano III, Frank Blount, Jr., Jim White.

Handouts: Agenda

Presentation: (see attached presentation)

Appointment for member to serve as Chair for the meeting

Due to an unforeseen event, the AP Chair (K. Booth) was not able to make this meeting and did not have time to find an alternate RIMFC member to serve as chair. K. Booth and E. Schneider discussed the situation via phone at the scheduled start of the meeting (~6pm) and agreed that (1) since the group had already assembled and (2) given there was not a quorum that K. Booth should ask the only AP member in attendance (A. Gewirtz) if he would be willing to chair the meeting.

- Via phone K. Booth asked A. Gewirtz if he would be willing to serve as chair so that the meeting can be held.
- A. Gewirtz accepted.
- E. Schneider then explained the situation and asked the 3 remaining meeting participants if they were comfortable with A. Gewirtz serving as chair for this meeting.
- There was unanimous agreement that A. Gewirtz should serve as chair so that the meeting could be held.

A. Gewirtz (acting Chair) called the meeting to order at approximately 6:15pm. He noted that he E. Schneider (RI F&W) had a presentation prepared and would lead a discussion on each of the agenda items. He then turned the meeting over to E. Schneider.

E. Schneider noted for the record that K. Booth was not able to attend and that the group had agreed that A. Gewirtz was to serve as Chair for this meeting. He also noted that there was not a quorum, and thus the meeting was informational only.

E. Schneider then welcomed everyone, and began a power point presentation that corresponded to the Agenda. The meeting will be summarized by each Agenda Item.

Agenda Item 1: RI commercial and recreational coastal sharks fisheries

E. Schneider summarized the requirements for compliance ASMFC Addendum III to the Coastal Sharks FMP, which results in a re-grouping of the commercial shark species groups and an increase in the minimum recreational size limit (to 78 inches) for all hammerhead shark species. He noted that this has gone to public hearing and has been discussed at the April RIMFC meeting.

- The group discussed the purpose for the species re-grouping, as well as quotas, possession limits, and fishing season for each (*new*) species group.
- Overall, the group had no objection to the proposed changes.

Agenda Item 2: RI commercial monkfish fishery

- **Begin 15:38**
- **End 1:42:00**

Agenda Item 3: RI recreational Atlantic cod fishery

E. Schneider very briefly reviewed the recreational cod fishery and summarized the expired recreational cod fillet law.

- The group briefly discussed the possession limit and minimum size for the recreational fishery.
- E. Schneider later refocused the discussion to the agenda item regarding the “recreational cod fillet law”.
- The group said that they have no comment because this pertains to the recreational fishery.
- E. Schneider noted that this was specifically added to afford recreational participants an opportunity to discuss this item; however, no-one from the Recreational Sector attended this meeting or offered a comment otherwise (e.g. no email or phone comments).

Agenda Item 4: Other Business

E. Schneider asked if there was any other business.

4.A Summer Flounder

T. Mulvey said that he wanted to suggest that RI mirror the feds and allow 1,000 lbs of fluke per week for all vessels.

- E. Schneider noted that this topic would be better suited for the Fluke AP. He also noted that the Fluke aggregate permit already affords this weekly possession limit, but you need an aggregate permit.
- The group discussed the aggregate program and then agreed to table the discussion of fluke.

4.B Spiny Dogfish

A. Gewritz asked for an update on spiny dogfish.

E. Schneider provided a brief summary of two differing federal possession limit recommendations offered to NOAA by NEFMC and MAMFC. He then explained the process that NOAA will pursue to develop a final rule.

- He also explained that at the next ASMFC Spiny Dogfish Management Board meeting (mid-May) there will be discussion of a proposal by RI Commissioners to revisit the ASMFC spiny dogfish possession limit of 4,000 lbs per vessel per day.
 - In short, given the large underage in harvest of the quota (est. to harvest < ½ quota) RI is requesting the Commission consider increasing the possession limit from 4,000 to 5,000 lbs per vessel per day,

- They are also requesting permission from the board to pursue a Conservation Equivalency to basically turn RI discards into landings by increasing the daily possession limit or initiate a weekly aggregate program in RI state waters.

A. Gewritz noted that the problem with the market is that there is basically no market.

T. Mulvey noted that a possible way to increase the market is to increase product availability, which requires increasing landings.

E. Schneider noted that was exactly the premise for the proposed incremental increase in the possession limit.

- The group discussed possible outcomes regarding potential decrease in price, increasing processing capacity, etc.

A. Gewritz asked E. Schneider if there were any updates about PCB's and is that what's holding back the market.

E. Schneider said he had heard that the European market has reacted to PCB concerns and that there may also be concerns over mercury levels. Although the latter is still under review, but he expects there to be publication of this information soon.

A. Gewritz said if there is no market, the possession limit doesn't matter b/c folks won't bother to retain and land them.

- One participant said they simply throw them away b/c for the price it's not worth their trouble.

G. Duckworth asked what happens if they don't comment.

E. Schneider said they don't have to comment, but are welcome to provide feedback if they want.

- The group briefly discussed where they were last year at this time; trying to get a Regional agreement for an aggregate program or bifurcated season.
- The group said that seemed like ages ago, and since the market has essentially collapsed some fishers that were "dog fisherman" have simply stopped fishing for them.

- In short, the group offered no comment on the proposal other than, please don't do anything that will make it less profitable to land dogfish.

E. Schneider asked if we were done and if so suggested A. Gewritz_ adjourn the meeting.

A. Gewritz said if there is no further business that the meeting is adjourned.