

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
WINTER FLOUNDER MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Westin Alexandria
Alexandria, Virginia
January 31, 2017

Approved February 6, 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Call to Order, Chairman Mark Gibson 1

Approval of Agenda 1

Approval of Proceedings, February 2016 1

Consider Specifications for the 2017 Fishing Year 1

Adjournment 3

INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 1).
2. **Motion to adjourn** by consent (Page 3).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Terry Stockwell, ME, proxy for P. Keliher (AA)	Mark Alexander, CT (AA)
Steve Train, ME (GA)	Lance Stewart, CT (GA)
Doug Grout, NH (AA)	Rep. Melissa Ziobron, CT proxy for Sen. Miner (LA)
G. Ritchie White, NH (GA)	Jim Gilmore, NY (AA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	John McMurray, NY, proxy for Sen. Boyle (LA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)
Sarah Ferrara, MA, proxy for Rep. Peake (LA)	Tom Baum, NJ, proxy for D. Chanda (AA)
David Pierce, MA (AA)	Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Asm. Andrzejczak (LA)
Mark Gibson, RI, proxy for J. Coit (AA)	Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
David Borden, RI (GA)	Alison Murphy, NMFS
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Sherry White, USFWS

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

Ex-Officio Members

Staff

Robert Beal
Toni Kerns

Ashton Harp

Guests

Mike Luisi, MD DNR
Chip Lynch, NOAA
Peter Burns, NMFS
Aaron Kornbluth, Pew Trusts

Zack Greenberg, Pew Trusts
Wilson Laney, USFWS
Arnold Leo, E. Hampton, NY

The Winter Flounder Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Edison Ballroom of the Westin Hotel, Alexandria, Virginia, January 31, 2017, and was called to order at 12:34 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Mark Gibson.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIRMAN MARK GIBSON: I am going to call the Winter Flounder Board into session. My name is Mark Gibson; from Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife, and I am the current Board Chair. We have a relatively brief agenda today, so hopefully we can plow through that and carve out some extra time for lobster and Jonah crab.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIRMAN GIBSON: The first item on the agenda is the agenda itself. I'll ask if there is anyone from the Board who wishes to make alterations or additions to the agenda. Seeing none; are there any objections to approving the agenda as presented? Seeing none; the agenda stands approved by consent.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIRMAN GIBSON: The next item is the proceedings from the February, 2016 Board.

Is there any Board members wishing to offer edits or modifications to the proceedings? Is there any objection to accepting those proceedings as presented? Seeing none; those are accepted by consent.

CHAIRMAN GIBSON: The next item is public comment. No one has signed up for public comment. I'll offer the opportunity for anyone in the public to make comments to this Board to items not on the agenda.

CONSIDER SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE 2017 FISHING YEAR

CHAIRMAN GIBSON: Seeing none; we can move right into Item 4, which is the opportunity for

the Board to address Specifications for the 2017 Fishing Year, which begins May 1st.

The Board under the FMP's addendum can make changes to those specifications by Board action if they choose to do so. I'm not aware of anyone expressing an interest to do that. We'll have a presentation from Ashton on where things stand with the New England Council state waters sub-ACLs and so on.

MS. ASHTON HARP: This is a very quick presentation on the current winter flounder specifications and what the Board can change moving forward for the 2017 fishing year. Just as a review. The Board can adjust for recreational measures the size limit, bag limit and season. For commercial measures the Board can adjust the size limit, season, trip limit, trigger trip limit, and area closures.

The 2016 recreational measures for the Gulf of Maine were eight fish 12 inches, and there was not a specific season that was set; it was just year round. The Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder recreational measures were two fish 12 inches and the season was March 1st through December 31st.

For the commercial measures the size limit remains 12 inches. There are some closures and then for the Gulf of Maine there is a maximum of 500 pounds per trip per day. For the Southern New England stock it is a maximum of 50 pounds per trip per day; which is really intended to be just bycatch of winter flounder. When you kind of stack these up against how the regulations have changed year over year, they haven't really. The measures I just showed you for 2016 have all been in place in its entirety since 2014, and some of these measures go back to even 2005.

Anything in blue is implemented in 2005 via Amendment 1, and yellow is in 2009 implementation. Green is 2012 implementation, and then in red was implemented in February of 2014. The main things about the current management measures, as Mark alluded to the New

England Fisheries Management Council did kind of discuss changes to the state subcomponents.

Those were suggested to the Council and the Council decided that they wanted to keep the status quo state subcomponents, so they are the same as they were last year, the same as when we made 2016 specifications. They stand up for Gulf of Maine winter flounder, the state subcomponent is 122 metric tons; and for Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder the state subcomponent is 70 metric tons.

I did not prepare a slide specifically for that but this is in the briefing document that was submitted in briefing materials; so it's in a Word document and it is on the very first page, there is Table 1. With that I would take questions on any of the current management measures or any questions on the state subcomponent as they are now.

CHAIRMAN GIBSON: Questions for Ashton? Seeing none; my question is, and I can't remember for either Ashton or my Council colleagues. I believe we have a set of operational assessment updates for all the groundfish stocks coming, probably being worked on maybe as we speak; or the working groups are getting organized.

If that is correct, it would seem we would have a stronger informational basis after those reports are received a year from now, in terms of considering changes to our state waters acidification. Terry is that the right schedule, we're going to see results of those in the fall this year and specifications for 2018? Thank you. With that is there anyone wishing to discuss specifications for the 2017 fishing year? Are there any motions to make adjustments? Yes, Doug Grout.

MR. DOUGLAS E. GROUT: No motions, Mr. Chair, but I did want to make a comment that since we're going to be having an operational assessment and the Council will be setting

three-year specifications next year. It might be worth this Board considering, or at least the possibility of setting multiyear specifications; since we really haven't been changing our specifications.

Rather than having to come have this meeting just for the purpose of affirming that we don't want to make any changes; that there is some mechanism that we can put in play that we would set multiyear specifications. It might make us a little more efficient. It doesn't mean we couldn't come back if something drastic happens in between; but just a thought to throw into the heads of the Board.

CHAIRMAN GIBSON: Ashton, could you comment on whether our current addendum allows for that or do we need to initiate an action to allow for that?

MS. HARP: All I was going to say, and Toni might follow up, is that just in Addendum III it allows the Board to make the specifications through Board action. Usually they have to be done by an addendum, a new addendum; so I don't think it would preclude the fact that they could be three-year specifications.

MS. TONI KERNS: I need to double check the language in the document if we have multiple year specifications in there or not. I don't remember off the top of my head. I can get back to you, two seconds.

CHAIRMAN GIBSON: Are you okay with that Doug, we'll look into it and we don't need an answer today, we could consider it next time around. It seems to make some sense and we can check on what allowance we have or if we need to make some adjustments to allow for that. Anything else from the Board? David Borden.

MR. DAVID V. D. BORDEN: Just a comment that I hope that when we get the new specifications that the Commission can make more of an effort to try to align the state and federal regulations. Right now there is a major disconnect; and I just don't think the arrangement is working in the best

interest of the stock. I hope we take that up next year.

CHAIRMAN GIBSON: Is anyone else wishing to comment, yes, Toni.

MS. KERNS: My two seconds are up. You have the ability to do three-year specifications.

CHAIRMAN GIBSON: We have that ability currently, okay that's good to know. Where we are right now is the specification will remain intact for the next groundfish fishing year being May 1st, 2017. We'll receive operational assessment updates later this year. A year from now we'll be in a position to contemplate changes including fixing them for a longer period than one year.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIRMAN GIBSON: That is where we're at, anything else from the Board on specifications or anything on winter flounder in general? Seeing none; I think our business is concluded. Is there a motion to adjourn? Moved and seconded by everybody. We stand adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 12:43 o'clock p.m., January 31, 2017.)