

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
1400 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MINUTES
ISFMP POLICY BOARD MEETING
THE HOLIDAY INN GOVERNOR'S HOUSE AND
RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE CONFERENCE ROOM
WASHINGTON, DC
JUNE 4-5, 1991

The following were present:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Bill Brennan, ME
Philip G. Coates, MA, Vice Chairman
Robert A. Jones, CT
Bruce Freeman, NJ, proxy for
Robert McDowell
Paul Massicot, MD
Bill Hogarth, NC
A.C. Carpenter, PRFC
Jim Weaver, FWS
Dick Schaefer, NMFS

Edward W. Spurr, NH
Gordon Colvin, NY
Edward Miller, PA
Bill Wagner, DE
Jack Travelstead, VA, proxy for Bill Pruitt
Duane Harris, GA, Chairman
Ed Joseph, SC
Mickey Newberger, FL
Ira Palmer, DC Fisheries
John A. Stolgitis, RI

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Al Goetze, MD
Bonnie Brown, VA
Jennifer DiLorenzo, proxy for
Owen Johnson, NY

Tom Fote, NJ
David Cupka, SC, proxy for James Timmerman
Dick Allen, RI

STAFF:

John H. Dunnigan, Executive Director
Laura C. Leach, Assistant Director
Paul Perra, Program Coordinator
Joe McGurrin, Assistant Program Coordinator
Richard Christian, Council Liaison
Linda M. Schwab, Administrative Assistant
Dianne Stephan, Striped Bass/
SEAMAP Coordinator

GUESTS:

Harry Mears, NMFS-NE
Pete Jensen, MD Fisheries
Rich Seagraves, DE DFW
Bill Cole, FWS, Region 4
Chris Moore, MAFMC
John C. Barnes, AMPRO

Dean Parsons, NMFS
Mike Street, NC
Dick Roe, NMFS-NE
Victor Crecco, CT
James W. Peck, MD
Bill Goldsborough, CBFBF

Guests, continued:

Bob Dorazio, FWS-Leetown
Eldon Greenberg, EHTBA
Rick Bennett, FWS-DC

Ellyn Ferguson, Gannett News
Paul Jacobson, Versar

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Duane Harris (GA) called the Policy Board meeting to order at 9:33 a.m., June 4, 1991. The Executive Director called the roll; all states were present, constituting a quorum. The minutes of November 13, 1990 were approved as presented.

BOARD REPORTS

SUMMER FLOUNDER/SCUP/BLACK SEABASS - Gordon Colvin (NY) reported on the activities of the Summer Flounder Board. The Board efforts on Summer Flounder/Scup/Black Sea Bass plan development are in concert with the Mid-Atlantic Council. A recent stock assessment for summer flounder has found that recent fishing effort is 1.4 with F max at .23. Gordon moved that the Policy Board adopt the management measures contained in the May 31 FMP document prepared by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council for public hearing this summer. Bruce Freeman (NJ) seconded. The motion carried. The plan is envisioned to be completed this fall and implemented from North Carolina through Maine.

WEAKFISH - Bill Wagner (DE) reported on activities of the Weakfish Board (attachment 1). A two-step process for reaching the FMP goal was explained. He then moved that Option #3, with its size limits, restrictions, and bycatch reduction, be approved as an amendment to ASMFC's Weakfish FMP. Gordon Colvin seconded. After much discussion, the motion was defeated. Further discussion ensued, after which, Bill Wagner moved that Amendment #1 to the Weakfish FMP be put out for vote by mail ballot for approval. Phil Coates (MA) seconded. After further discussion, the motion was tabled.

Bill Wagner moved that the overall strategy adopted by the Weakfish Board be adopted by the Policy Board. Bruce Freeman seconded. The motion carried. The participating states for developing direct weakfish regulations should be MA - NC. They will be solicited for specific weakfish regulations which meet the requirements of the draft amendment developed by the Weakfish Board. Regulatory proposals should be prepared and submitted to the Weakfish Board by September 1, 1991. Bycatch of weakfish in shrimp trawls should be addressed in South Carolina and Georgia.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN - Bill Hogarth (NC) reported on Board and AMAC activities, including the menhaden video which has been distributed. The menhaden FMP will be delayed until 1992 and will include an administrative process to maintain industry participation.

RED DRUM - Bill Hogarth reported that the 1991 amendment to the Red Drum FMP will be ready in the fall and stated that the fishery is heavily overexploited.

SOUTH ATLANTIC BOARD - Bill Hogarth reported that the Spanish mackerel review team met at the recent South Atlantic Board meeting. During this meeting, Jane DiCosimo (SAFMC) was asked to update Spanish mackerel statistics, and Joe McGurrin (ASMFC) was asked to research the status of all state regulations pertaining to Spanish mackerel. All members of the review team were asked to update the status of research and monitoring for Spanish mackerel.

WINTER FLOUNDER - Gordon Colvin gave the report for Chairman Eric Smith (CT). He said the Winter Flounder Board would be meeting in July and would have a draft plan ready in the fall, with a final plan ready for adoption in the spring of 1992.

NORTHERN SHRIMP

Ted Spurr (NH) reported that there has been no activity of the Northern Shrimp Section.

ATLANTIC HERRING

Ted Spurr reported that the Section had met once to review the modified New York regulations for IWPs, and these were approved with conditions. The Section is working with the New England Fishery Management Council on a joint plan for Atlantic herring. New Jersey has requested membership in the Atlantic Herring Section. The Section will meet in late July or early August to consider this request.

SHELLFISH TRANSPORT

Paul Perra (ASMFC) reported that since there are no funds available, there has been no activity in this area. An application for an S-K grant has been made to carry out the work outlined in the plan.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Mike Street (NC-Chairman, Advisory Committee) reported on the activities of the Advisory Committee, which consisted of in-depth information on summer flounder, RecFIN, management plan reviews, as well as associated committee reports. The Commission and Advisory Committee will be examining IWP procedures to expand stock status guidelines and improve consultation procedures. New species priorities for the ISFMP were presented and approved as follows: Black Drum, Blue Crab, Mullet, Eel, and Southern Flounder. The long-range plan was adopted, with thanks to Eric Smith for his diligent work. The 1992 action plan is to be prepared at the fall meeting.

IWP

The Board discussed New Jersey's IWP request and reviewed ASMFC's IWP Policy. Bill Brennan (ME) informed the group that the Herring Section has voted to approve requests for fisheries once a year (each fall). He also stated that the Magnuson Act should be amended so that states have to take into account resource status when approving IWP requests. It was decided that the Advisory Committee would assist ASMFC staff in developing an IWP framework for IWP procedures. A September 1st application date was approved for herring IWPs, consequently eliminating the current October 15 application date. ASMFC staff was also directed to work with Congressional staff to fix the Joint Venture "loopholes" in the Magnuson Act which are making comprehensive management planning very difficult.

STRIPED BASS

Vic Crecco (CT-Chairman of the Striped Bass Technical Committee) gave the Striped Bass Technical Committee report. The Committee felt that striped bass stocks are in an early recovery stage and that no relaxation of current fishing regulations should be made at this time. Several requests for changes to state regulations were reviewed by the Technical Committee and recommendations on approval or denial were made to the Policy Board (attachment #2).

Al Goetze (MD) asked if the Technical Committee was still concerned about bycatch problems. Crecco replied that the Technical Committee is still working on this and is focusing also on estimating illegal harvest rates.

Bob Jones (CT) reported on Striped Bass Policy Committee activities. Chairman Harris reviewed last fall's Policy Board transcripts and the activities of the Striped Bass Policy Committee regarding Maryland's request

for changes of regulations and found that they were in keeping with the Policy Committee's charge. Several board members stated that a standard time period for approving changes to fisheries is needed. Tom Fote (NJ) said he had concerns that a five-member committee was making policy decisions on striped bass. Lengthy discussions ensued over the role of the Policy Committee and its usefulness. Ted Spurr moved that the Policy Committee be abolished. Bruce Freeman seconded. The motion carried and the full Policy Board will now handle striped bass issues as they arise. Jim Weaver (FWS) said he was uncomfortable with the review of regulations with apparently no definition of what is a minor or major modification to a state's proposal. Jennifer DiLorenzo (NY) suggested that state proposals should only be reviewed at ASMFC spring and fall meetings which would give the L/GAs the opportunity to comment on them. Staff was charged with developing specific guidelines for timely submission of proposals.

PROPOSALS FOR STRIPED BASS REGULATION CHANGES

Proposals for changes in striped bass fisheries were reviewed for the following: Massachusetts, Maryland, Virginia, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, North Carolina and New York. It was decided that New York's proposal needed no review since the proposed changes were already more conservative than required in Amendment #4.

The Board adjourned at 5:45 p.m. and reconvened Wednesday morning at 8:30 a.m., June 5, 1991.

After detailed review, all other striped bass proposals for change were approved. Tom Fote was concerned that, although the Technical Committee had recommended no changes, new fisheries could result in about 450,000 lbs of striped bass being landed. He questioned Crecco about increases in Maryland's quota of about 300,000 lbs. Crecco said the Technical Committee had endorsed Maryland's harvest control model and felt that these increases in Maryland can be allowed under the guidelines of the plan and model which are keyed to mortality rates. He was very concerned, however, that approval for fisheries in New York, and for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission which were not approved by the Technical Committee could result in increased harvest rates under the guidelines of Amendment #4 and that approval of these fisheries would slow the fisheries recovery rate. Several of Board members felt that the New York and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission proposals provide stronger conservation measures than initially proposed in ASMFC's Amendment #4 and, therefore, were approvable. Paul Perra stated that even though regulations may be in compliance with Amendment #4, states' monitoring programs still need to be reviewed and approved by the ASMFC. Bob Jones was concerned over the reduction of the size limit requested by New York, which could result in reductions in size limits in other New England states. Bruce Freeman requested that the Technical Committee should revisit size limits at a later time. Gordon Colvin said the Maryland harvest control model needs a thorough review and wondered if a summary description of the document could be distributed to managers and fishermen. Paul Massicot (MD) said this would be done. Phil Coates (MA) was concerned that in the face of caps on other commercial fisheries, Maryland continues to increase its catch. Richard Novotny (MD Saltwater Sportsmen's Association) said the Maryland proposal had been reviewed by Maryland's fishermen, has strong support, and is viewed as a very conservative fishery. Jim Weaver (FWS) voiced concern about fishing mortality rates and worries that a 300,000 lb. increase is a dangerous message to send to the public. Bob Jones moved to form a group to serve as bridge between Technical Committee and Policy Board, the motion failed. Mike Street suggested that a layman's type of report on ASMFC's striped bass management be developed so the public could more easily understand the Commission's management process. Bruce Freeman voiced concern about the overall 400-500,000 lb increase in striped bass landings and suggested that the Technical Committee be charged with strengthening the Striped Bass plan.

ATLANTIC STURGEON

Bruce Freeman reported that New Jersey has discovered a gill net fishery for Atlantic sturgeon in the ocean off

Page 5
Policy Board minutes
June 4-5, 1991

its coast. The fishery has grown from several thousand pounds to about 190,000 pounds in a few years. Steps have been taken to prohibit further entry into the fishery and an investigation is underway for a program to monitor and tag sturgeon. After two years, the data gathered will be provided to ASMFC.

OTHER BUSINESS

Bob Jones moved that ASMFC's Lobster Board and Technical Committee be reconstituted to provide assistance and advice to the New England Fishery Management Council for lobster management (attachment 3). Phil Coates seconded the motion. Motion carried.

There being no further business, the Policy Board meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.