

DRAFT



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1444 Eye St., NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

MEETING SUMMARY

Tautog Advisory Panel
Wednesday, February 13, 2002
3:00 PM

Participants:

Heather Stirratt
Paul Piavis

Patrick Donnelly
Bill Lister

Robert Rogean
John Mihale

Dean Delle Donne
Greg Jackson

Motions:

No motions were presented during the meeting.

Summary:

Review and Comment on Draft Addendum III

Following review of the draft Addendum by ASMFC staff, the Advisory Panel was asked to provide comment to the Tautog Management Board on draft Addendum III. The Panel offered the following comments by Section:

Section 2.1 (Overfishing Definitions)

The Panel was divided on which option to select. Some members of the Panel clearly wanted to maintain status quo while other members of the Panel noted that Option 2 looked interesting. The Panel did not feel comfortable with selecting Option 2 without additional information about how a F based reference point, which is based on yield or SSB, would change in the future years to come.

Section 2.2 (Stock Rebuilding Program)

The Panel discussed at length the status of Tautog stocks according to the 2001 stock assessment. Specifically, the Panel noted differences between the scientific information provided and personal observations on the water. A consensus was reached in support of Option 6, which would take no action during 2002. The Panel noted that additional information in the next stock assessment should be used to determine what action is necessary in years to come.

Section 3.1 (Assessing Annual Recruitment, Spawning Stock Biomass, and Fishing Mortality)

Given that the Panel did not believe the results of the 2001 stock assessment, they agreed that more information should be collected to provide more resolution in the decision making process. As such, the Panel prefers a combination of Options 1B2 and 2, which would require a redefined regional assessment in concert with a tagging program for Tautog.

DRAFT

Section 3.2 (Summary of Monitoring Requirements)

To support the Panel's preferred option for assessing annual recruitment, spawning stock biomass, and fishing mortality at the redefined regional level, the Panel recommends that states collect the necessary age and length samples as identified under Option 13C. Given that the Panel also recommended a tagging program, the Panel recommends that states tag the appropriate number of fish by state per year as outlined under Option 2.

Section 4.1 (Management Measures)

In order to maintain historical utilization patterns by harvesters, the Panel prefers Option 2.

Sections 4.1.1/4.1.2 (Recreational/Commercial Fisheries)

The Panel agrees that the reduction tables should be revised to incorporate the latest catch data. As such, the Panel supports option 1 under both sub-sections.

Section 5 (Recommendations for Actions in Federal Waters)

In order to avoid differences between states and federal management programs, the Advisory Panel recommends adoption of Option 1.

Advisors Comments (General in Nature)

1. Each Advisor commented on feelings that the stock assessment was out of touch with observations on the water. Everyone felt as though abundance was much greater than estimated in the latest stock assessment.
2. The Panel questioned the basis for selecting $M=0.15$. The Panel agreed that complete scientific confidence should surround the number selected for natural mortality.
3. The Panel also raised concerns about the selection of $M=0.15$ by questioning whether it reflects observed increases in bird predation. The Panel noted that increases in natural mortality have resulted in increases in total mortality, which are not fishery related.
4. The Advisors indicated that Tautog should be managed regionally, given that the species doesn't migrate.
5. The Panel discussed management measures that would include establishment of a maximum size to protect spawning Tautog.
6. Panel members commented that the illegal fishery for live fish probably accounts for all of the reduction needed to reach the final plan target. Panel members fully support continued enforcement, along with stricter penalties for non-compliance.
7. The Panel agreed that the Advisors should be more proactive in responding to management concerns. Panel members agree that ASMFC management decisions should be based upon good science and not politics as usual.