

Tautog Technical Committee
Draft Minutes of the 11/14/02 Conference Call

Attendance

Paul Piavis MD, Chairman
Paul Caruso MA, Vice Chairman
Lydia Munger ASMFC Plan coordinator
Chad Boyce VA
Peter Himchak NJ
Jeff Tinsman DE
Alice Weber NY
Naji Lazar RI
Bob Answorth NMFS

The Chairman asked the Committee if there were any questions from committee members regarding the revised DE and NY proposals. He stated he had checked the math and that the proposals were technically sound. The Committee consensus was that the were recommended for approval.

Paul P. mentioned Bruce Freeman's memo with questions regarding the use of a 25% cut in exploitation vs. a 29% reduction in F and questioning TC acceptance of catch curve and VPAs now but not in the past.

Paul P. will present the Board with an explanation of the allowance of exploitation reductions at the meeting by explaining that the tables based on the MRFSS data are set up for harvest reductions and that a reduction in exploitation (harvest) 25% equates to the needed 29% reduction in F.

He didn't know how the Board will deal with the procedural aspects of reviewing/accepting the unilateral assessment approaches but the TC document states that the majority felt that the assessments were technically ok and the minority not but took no position on the suitability of allowing unilateral management.

As for unilateral assessments Paul C. stated that the past positions of the TC were because of the quality of previous assessments and committee reservations regarding transboundary stock/regulatory effects and that we don't know how the board will deal with the shift in approach by states at this point.

Peter and Alice both expressed that they had lingering issues regarding the validity of the unilateral assessment approach to management of tautog.

Jeff Tinsman had questions regarding the sample size adequacy of the VA catch curve.

Alice felt that the minority had questioned that point as well.

Chad replied that the sampling was opportunistic in nature but random and felt that the catch data was an unbiased samples of Virginia catch frequencies.

Alice expressed reservations regarding the opportunistic nature of the sampling and the sample size.

Peter stated he was not supportive of the unilateral approach given all the work and history behind the coast-wide assessments.

Paul P. stated he was not sure how the Bard will view the assessments but felt the Committee majority had supported the technical merits of the assessments from RI and VA.

Alice felt that being the case that the majority should support their views of the two assessments with additional language regarding the strengths of those approaches.

Jeff asked why a coast-wide VPA approach has been carried forward given the localized nature of tautog stocks.

Naji stated that at that time a coast-wide VPA was the only reasonable option given the limited data, and was appropriate at that time.

Paul P. asked Naji about the source of the age data for the RI assessment.

Naji replied that the Northern Region age/length key was used.

Paul C. asked about the catch length frequency data used for the catch at age.

Naji stated that the RI MRFSS data was augmented by ALS and voluntary catch report data.

Peter questioned the procedure for peer review given the last minute questions regarding the data and the precision of the VA and RI assessment information.

Naji replied that the RI VPA precision was better than Coast-wide but with some reservations regarding the reading on overall fit because it is easier to fit a limited suite of indices than entire coast's worth of data

Peter stated he was having difficulty with resolving the language in the addendum vs. regarding the quality of the assessments provided. He didn't feel that they are as precise as the SARC reviewed assessment.

Naji stated that the VPA update was not SARC reviewed but that the variance and residuals were smaller for the RI VPA.

Peter reiterated that he still favored the coast-wide assessment approach and didn't feel that there was adequate guidance to the TC from the Board as to acceptability of localized assessments.

Naji stated that the RI harvest is low, and is confident that the existing regulations are adequate at this time. Also he felt that the addendum clearly allows for state demonstration that localized F 's may be below target. He felt that the majority stated that the VPA was technically sound and that it is up to the Board to decide on acceptability from a procedural standpoint.

Alice asked if the TC was endorsing the concept of unilateral assessments and management by the majority decision.

Naji stated no - but the plan specifically allows that flexibility to the states if technically sound. He said that we have a coast-wide vpa only because of lack of data and way to get a read for other states without the ability to do unilateral assessments.

Alice stated she does not agree with that approach since tautog stocks are not totally discrete within state borders, but are more regionally discrete. She takes issue with Dr. Hoenig's comments regarding fish in a pond and that the recent TC majority opinion looks like the committee is favoring a unilateral approach to management.

Lydia stated that Bruce Freeman was essentially questioning that approach in his memo.

Naji stated he felt that the approach was sound only if management has been effective and that this approach needs to be available since there no process exists to hold individual states to a coastal standard as evidenced by some states landings. Some have increased dramatically.

Chad replied that Dr. Hoenig's comments re: a pond referred to the inshore offshore movement of tog off VA not the whole coast and it doesn't imply no movement between states.

Paul C. felt that the majority and minority opinions were adequately stated in the document and that the only TC sticking point at this time is procedural - and that it was up to the Board to decide that issue.

Paul P. asked if the minority wished to add additional comments to the minority report.

Naji asked if the other proposals had already been reviewed.

Paul C. stated yes.

The Chairman asked if there was anything else to discuss.

Peter stated there was no mention in the report on the NJ commercial proposal review.

Lydia stated that the report specifically only addressed recreational proposals except in the footnote.

Paul C. stated that the review of NJ's commercial proposal was stated in the draft minutes.

Paul C. asked Lydia about the revised submission from MA missing in the briefing documents.

Lydia stated some things got misplaced in the transfer from Heather and to please re-send the two additional reviewed proposals.

Paul C. stated he would do so immediately.

Paul P. mentioned that the CV memo will be presented but asked the committee if any part of it applied to the proposals reviewed.

Alice asked if we were abandoning those recommendations.

Paul replied -no- but they just were not applicable to this round of reviews, i.e. they did their intended job.

The Chair again asked if there was other business.

None was mentioned

The call was adjourned.