

Summary minutes - American Eel Technical Committee Meeting May 18, 2000 2:15 pm

H. Stirratt explained the budget cuts that affected ASMFC and that the \$9,000 allocated for American eel by ASMFC will be saved for workshops and the stock assessment sub-committee, and that there would be more conference calls and e-mail than in previous years to save money.

V. Vecchio motioned that implementation plans from the following states be approved outright because they met the requirements listed on the implementation plan matrix: Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, and Virginia. This motion was seconded.

Review of the plans not already approved followed.

Georgia

No technical committee member currently exists for Georgia, and as the TC was not anticipating Georgia's representation, discussion began on their plan.

V. Vecchio: recreational regulations are not in compliance, and they have no plans to implement any because they want de minimus status.

Aside: de minimus rules

V. Vecchio:

Recall: Last TC meeting, voted no confidence in coastwide landings. Vic told the Board this and explained the TC believed there was no way to determine de minimus eligibility due to the paucity of data. Vic conveyed TC recommendation that two years of data should be collected and then the issue of granting de minimus could be revisited using the new data. The Board is already able to confer de minimus based on their own opinion of the state's regulations and data.

H. Stirratt: Could let Pennsylvania and D.C. have de minimus because they have no fishery.

V. Vecchio: Disagreed, said he thought the board should decide on a case by case basis which states should be de minimus.

S. Gephard: There are different situations where de minimus might apply. In some cases, there is no fishery and it is prohibited by law. In other cases, the state can demonstrate that the fishery is minimal. And some states do not know how large their fishery is, but assume that it is low. Perhaps these different situations can be considered when de minimus is requested.

Georgia (cont.)

V. Vecchio: Georgia didn't have plans for future recreational regulations. They should have described how they would implement such regulations, and then requested de minimus from the Board under separate cover.

H. Stirratt: Landings are often not broken down by life stage. Georgia is trying to request de minimus for adults only.

Consensus: Georgia is out of compliance because they have no recreational regulations or any plans for any. De minimus status is a separate issue.
Georgia should be disapproved with a recommendation for remedy.

Recommendation to Georgia:

-submit de minimus request under separate cover to Board.

-implement requirements for recreational fishery unless de minimus is approved by Board.

New Hampshire

Claire McBaine: NH is making traps for YOY survey now and they are on the road implementing it.

Discussion of NH's record keeping methods followed, including harvest permit.

Lewis G.: If fishery started up, how would you know it?

Claire: Harvesters send in reports every month, must record eels if they catch any, have effort data also from reports. A lot of information is required of the permit holder about what species is targeted, what gear is used, how much, how often, where gear deployed, and so on.

Vic: Motion to approve implementation plan, de minimus request should be submitted separately to Board. Seconded by J. Weeder.

District of Columbia

Ira Palmer was present and answered questions about DC's fishery and regulations.

DC now has a YOY survey, they have no commercial fishery, and recreational fishing regulations are in place. They are requesting de minimus.

V. Vecchio motioned to accept DC's implementation plan, and Gail Wipplehauser seconded.

Discussion: Should recommend to Board that de minimus status be granted to DC., especially because Pennsylvania's request was also seen favorably by the TC (their plan was approved without debate) and they have similar regulations in place and YOY survey plans.

South Carolina

Vic: SC has no recreational measures in place or planned.

Discussion: They have a legal elver fishery, but it is limited to 10 permits, and only a couple of the permits show any activity. Also, A permit is needed for using eel pots to catch adult eels, but there have been very few requests. There is a potential for a fishery for adults, but the cost is prohibitive.

Vic: Recreational fishery regulations should be planned for implementation, Motioned that SC's plan be disapproved pending the Board's decision on their de minimus request, which must be submitted under separate cover to the Board. S. Gephard seconded and W. McCord abstained but the rest of the participants voted unanimously to approve the motion.

North Carolina

There was no representative for NC present.

NC is moving toward implementation of the YOY survey. G. Wipplehauser made a motion to approve their plan, this was seconded by W. McCord and the vote was unanimous.

Florida

Florida's plans for recreational regulations are unclear, and their YOY survey protocol are not consistent with that required in FMP. A motion was made to disapprove their plan, with the following remedies: Clarify recreational regulations, and clarify YOY survey protocol, specifically addressing the length of time of the survey, the frequency of trap tending, and the use of lift nets.

Future meetings

An ageing/sexing workshop is planned for October or November 2000. Budget issues were discussed, as were possible meeting sites, and a subcommittee of V. Vecchio, J. Weeder, and G. Wipplehauser was formed to work with H. Stirratt to plan the meeting.

Virginia and Maine were recognized for their eel management efforts that extend well beyond the scope of what is required in the FMP. Virginia has conducted extensive elver surveys this spring, and has carried out intensive fishery-independent sampling of eels for many years. The Maine legislature limited their elver fishery which required persistence and commitment.

Meeting adjourned.