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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

26 October 2015

ATN: Robert Beal, Exec. Director

Re: American Eel - Comments for November Annual Meeting

Dear Bob,

For five years I have watched your Commission and its Eel technical committee struggle with insufficient data, an unwarranted endangered species claim and Maine operate a 2 month US\$ 4 million elver fishery.

Caribbean countries today annually export 30,000 lbs of live elvers while Addendum 4 asks a State to do an expensive time consuming life cycle survey if they intend to harvest over 750 lbs.

State of the art eel aquaculture business' operate successfully in Asia and EU while U.S. imports over US\$ 200 million of eel products.

Most Atlantic States have history harvesting eel. Today South Carolina is afraid to be out of compliance with ASMFS, does not amend its antiquated regulations, authorize research fishing or work with its fishermen to develop a plan and an Eel farm in North Carolina continues to be unsuccessful getting permission to fish in its own state.

Rostrata eel are found throughout our Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. They are not endangered. They are underutilized. A closely monitored glass and adult eel fishery - will only help document a biomass and justify a future quota and management system.

Time is of essence. We would like to see some formal discussion at your annual meeting which results in a motion that gives States flexibility to authorize a reasonable amount of eel fishing again.

Sincerely,

W.C. Quinby

Encl: 4 August corresp.



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August 4, 2015

Robert E. Beal, Executive Director  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland Street  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Amercian Eel. Summer meeting agenda

Dear Bob:

This is more of a plea than a request for ASMFC to give their blessing for States to have more flexibility to deal with the eel resources within their jurisdiction.

Today the Dominican Republic and Haiti harvest over 10 tons of glass eel. The U.S. annually imports over US\$ 200 million of eel products while ASMFS and USFWS continues to deal with an inappropriate endangered species claim from a California based environmental group.

I assume that members of your technical committee are familiar with the 2014 ICES eel working group 200 page report done by 44 experts from 20 countries. In 2007 the EU's eel resource was 'in decline'. Over the past 3 years their recruitment index has increased.

The more we learn about this Catadromous species the more interesting eels become. State fisheries managers are not doing their constituents any favors. ASMFS and USFWS have been using incomplete and outdated data for too long. States are using this situation as an excuse not to authorize even research fishing.

We can agree that the health and sustainability of our Rostrata Eel resource is not so much the quantity coming from the Sargasso but more of a habitat issue. Today there are tools to have real-time monitoring. Please be ready at your November meeting to authorize interested States to do research and conduct their own eel fisheries.

Sincerely Yours,

William C. Quinby

# **Former NOAA Administrator Hogarth Calls For Responsible Fisheries Management**

by [News Editor](#) / Newsroom Ink on October 19, 2015

If the fishing industry had a CEO, Dr. Bill Hogarth, Director of the Florida Institute of Oceanography, would have had him fired a long time ago. Photo: Ed Lallo/Newsroom Ink

*by Ed Lallo/Gulf Seafood News Editor*

If the fishing industry had a CEO, Dr. Bill Hogarth, Director of the [Florida Institute of Oceanography](#) (FIO), is convinced he would not last a month. He firmly believes the operating pattern for the whole industry needs to be re-examined and the industry needs to start stepping up to the role of a multi-billion dollar economic powerhouse.

“Fishing is a huge, huge business and we don’t really operate it as the big multinational business that it is, in my opinion,” Hogarth told Gulf Seafood News while sitting in his St. Petersburg office. “This state is known for its citrus industry, but fishing revenues dwarf citrus. The fishing industry in Florida alone it is a \$30 billion industry. That is more than citrus, cattle, space, and ranching industries put together; double that. Is one of the top 10 industries in the state, it drives both the tourism and restaurants.”

While head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Fisheries Service, Hogarth shows his catch after a Alaska fishing trip with Senator Ted Stevens. co-author of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Photo: NatGeographic

Dr. Hogarth, a member of the [Gulf Seafood Institute](#) (GSI), knows that of what he preaches.

In 2001 Dr. Hogarth was appointed by President George W. Bush as the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries at the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA). There he oversaw the management and conservation of marine fisheries and the protection of marine mammals, sea turtles and coastal fisheries habitat. He also served as the Commissioner and Chairman for the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna and the Commissioner and Chairman for the International Whaling Commission.

An accomplished marine research scientist with decades of experience in marine fisheries management, he has been in his current position at the FIO since January 2011. Located on the Campus of the [University of South Florida](#), his office is an Academic Infrastructure Support Organization for all Florida universities and is responsible for bringing together different expertise. It operates two research vessels, as well as research lab in the Florida Keys.

## **Small Town Boy**

One of four children, Dr. Hogarth is a product of Jarratt, a small Virginia town of 600 located an hour and a half from Virginia Beach. He was one of twelve students in his senior class; 8 girls and 4 boys. “We had all 12 classes in the same building,” he said.

Being pushed by family to study medicine, he was admitted to University of Richmond.

Hogarth (left) spends a day inspecting fish collected for study while serving as director of North Carolina’s fish policy in the 1980s. Photo: Bill Hogarth

“I was ill prepared for college. I had very bad study habits,” said Dr. Hogarth. “The Dean of Students at the University of Richmond made all new students take his class. After just six weeks he came to me and asked ‘why I was there?’ I answered my family wants me to go to medical school, to which he replied ‘at the rate you are going you will never make it’.”

With the Dean’s recommendation, he entered the Army Reserves, to get “some discipline”. After six months he rejoined his classmates at the school with a warning from his Army Reserve Commander not to let his grades fall.

Upon reentering university life, Dr. Hogarth also changed his major from medicine to marine studies. Upon graduation he received funding for his master’s doing research in the Chesapeake Bay on striped bass. He received his Master’s degrees from the University of Richmond in Virginia and a Ph.D. from North Carolina State University where he studied wahoo, a prized sports fishermen known for its speed and high-quality flesh.

## **Life in Fishery Management**

Prior to his NOAA appointment, he served as the Director of the North Carolina Division

Hogarth’s office is an Academic Infrastructure Support Organization for all Florida universities and is responsible for bringing together different expertise. It operates two research vessels, including the research team onboard the Weatherbird II. Photo: Florida Institute of Oceanography

“In North Carolina I had a great job, I would go to marinas and check vessels to see what fish they caught. When I got to Florida I found it to be an entirely different situation,” he explained. “People fish 24-hours a day from bridges, from the side of the road, as well as from boats. The game is completely different here.”

The fisheries expert has been in the business almost 50 years and he is seeing the same issues now that he did back when he started. “Back when I started, fish had a better chance; fishermen didn’t have the sophisticated equipment that everybody has now,” he said.

“Commercial fishermen used to keep a record of depths and temperatures where they found fish. Equipment now will take a fisherman exactly to the temperature, exactly to the drop,” said the GSI Board Member. “This is available to all size vessels and all types of fisherman so they can immediately go to where the fish are. Put it simply, fish just don’t have much of a fighting chance anymore.”

Dr. Hogarth sees today's affluent society rapidly increasing the number of recreational fishermen, especially in Gulf waters. He says he really learned this lesson when he came to Florida where so many people are living on the water and it seems there is a boat by every backdoor.

## IFQs

The Florida marine expert is a firm believer in Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQ). He realizes that he is often perceived by the recreational sector as a commercial fishing supporter, but in fact he doesn't consider himself anything other than a resource person. For him it is all about taking care of the resource while at the same time getting the most economic benefit, especially in the Gulf of Mexico.

According to Hogarth, the heavily regulated commercial fishing industry keeps exacting records and trip tickets to know exactly what and where a fish is caught. Photo: Ed Lallo/Newsroom Ink

"The Gulf, like all our coastal waters, is a public trust resource," he said sitting back in his office chair. "People in Iowa have just as much right to enjoy fish like red snapper just as much as those living in Louisiana or Florida."

According to him, the heavily regulated commercial fishing industry keeps exacting records and trip tickets to know exactly what and where a fish is caught. He feels it is time for the recreational industry to step up and put in place some sort of accountability measures.

"I know there is tremendous disagreement between recreational and commercial fishermen. Saltwater fishing is kind of the last frontier, so to speak," he said. "It used to be people could fish with no regulations. Now it is one of the most regulated areas in the country and fishermen are resistant to change. The problem remains, the saltwater fishing population continues to grow."

During a recent St. Petersburg meeting, Dr. Hogarth chats with Lee Crockett, director of fish policy at The Pew Charitable Trusts. Photo: Pew Charitable Trusts

The commercial fishing industry is heavily regulated. Trip tickets show exactly what fish is caught and where enforcement of commercial fishing regulations is strict and effective. However, with tens of thousands of recreational fisherman the job of policing the regulation is much more difficult. He feels the commercial sector has to continue to thrive because it is invaluable in providing fish to the restaurants and markets across the country.

His believes IFQs offer the industry a working business management model.

"Before IFQs there used to be an eight-day season for red snapper. No matter what the weather fishermen would risk life and limb to go out and fish that first day," he explained. "By the end of the first day snapper would drop in price from \$4-5 a pound, to ten to twenty cents a pound because so much was harvested. Markets would fluctuate wildly; there was not a steady supply of fresh seafood except for six to eight days a month. It was no way to run a business."

IFQs allow fishermen to make better business decisions. He says if a fisherman has 10,000 pounds of fishing rights he can sell the fish to suppliers when, and in the amount, needed. The result is a constant supply of fresh fish, with fishermen not having to risk their life to harvest.

Hogarth believes the same model will work for the charter-for-hire sector, and is a strong supporter of the new federally-funded voluntary electronic logbook program for data collection for the Gulf's federally permitted charter-for-hire fishing fleet. Photo: Ed Lallo/Newsroom Ink

He believes the same model will work for the charter-for-hire sector and is a strong supporter of the new federally-funded voluntary electronic logbook program for data collection in the Gulf of Mexico for the federally permitted charter-for-hire fishing fleet. With a majority of Florida's 42% share of the country's recreational fishing being in the Gulf, this program sponsored by the [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#), the Gulf Seafood Institute and [CLS America Corporation](#) would be an asset for the state's economy.

This two-year volunteer data collection program utilizes a wireless satellite connection to an Android tablet provided for use on any fishing vessel. A captain can enter both catch and discard data on all fish caught; most importantly, those that are commonly targeted like amberjack, grouper, snapper and triggerfish.

"A fisherman with a charter or head boat should be given an amount of fish and it should be up to him to decide how he can make the most money with the allotment," said Dr. Hogarth. "It is important to separate those who are making money off the resource and make them a business. Then you have to manage the private recreational anglers differently, but it will take a big public education effort to make this sector work better"

Will a phone app work? Can we use tags? Are more in-season adjustments needed? Is it possible to go to a three day a week season instead of 7 days a week to prolong the season? Should slot limits be put in place? These are all questions he ponders as he searches for answers to recreational accountability and ways to extend the recreational seasons. Ten-day seasons are not acceptable to fishermen.

## Managing Recreational

"We have to look at managing recreational differently than we do commercial, it is a lot more wide open and much more efficient to manage," he said scratching his head. "We don't do a good job at estimating the catch because we don't have a timely reporting system. We've tried lots of things but none of it has really worked well."

Dr. Hogarth thinks the recreational sector needs to learn from other successful wildlife management schemes.

He explained it is important to learn from existing wildlife management models.

"We can learn from the management of recreational hunting and inland fishing," he said. "Bass is one of the most successful fisheries in the country, but look how they operate with tags and other restrictions.

We seem to think that salt water fishing is entirely different and that you can't learn from anybody else, but in my opinion recreational needs to learn from other successful wildlife management schemes."

Dr. Hogarth got involved with GSI because he felt this is the one group with the expertise to find solutions for fishery issues facing the Gulf of Mexico. "This group works together without being radical on either side. We have to get the radicals neutralized so sane minds can find real solutions. We have to find a way to bring all parties together and GSI does that," he said.

In January of year next Dr. Hogarth's 50-year career will transition once again as he retires from his current post. He said he will still continue to "piddle" somewhere in fishery issues.

In January of year next Dr. Hogarth's 50-year career will come to an end as he retires from his current post. He said he will still continue to "piddle" somewhere in fishery issues and remain an active member of GSI.

"I have had a great life," said the director from his office overlooking the water. "Fisheries very controversial, but it is also too valuable to the economy. I really don't think politicians realize how important it is to the economy. People look at the Gulf and our oceans see how big and vast they are and how much seafood they produce; they just don't realize how fragile they are. The fishing industries need a good responsible CEO to take care of them."