

Approved March 19, 1997

**JOINT MEETING OF THE
ASMFC BLUEFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD &
MAFMC COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS COMMITTEE
12 MARCH 1996
NORFOLK, VA**

PROBLEMS TO ADDRESS IN FMP

MOTION - ADOPT 5 PROBLEMS CONTAINED IN THE BLUEFISH SCOPING / INFORMATION DOCUMENT

ASMFC - COLVIN / SHIPMAN - MOTION CARRIES

MAFMC - COLVIN / WILSON - MOTION CARRIES

MINIMUM SIZE

MOTION - FMP WILL ALLOW FOR MINIMUM SIZES FOR BOTH COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHERIES AND ALLOW FOR CONSERVATION EQUIVALENCY

ASMFC - FOTE / BORDEN - MOTION CARRIES

MAFMC - COLVIN / WILSON - MOTION CARRIES

COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES

MOTION - A, E, H, I, ARE THE PRIMARY MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO CONSIDER FOR COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES, ALL OTHERS EXCEPT ITQS AND MAXIMUM SIZE BE CONSIDERED FOR ADDITIONAL FRAMEWORK.

ASMFC - COLVIN / DRISCOLL - MOTION CARRIES

MAFMC - WILSON / CAPUTI - MOTION CARRIES

DE MINIMUS STATUS

MOTION - CURRENT DE MINIMUS PROCEDURES CARRY OVER IN TO AMENDMENT ONE TO THE BLUEFISH FMP. THE FMP MAY IDENTIFY OTHER AREAS IN WHICH DE MINIMUS STATUS MAY APPLY.

ASMFC CUPKA / COATES - MOTION CARRIES

MAFMC - WILSON / COLVIN - MOTION CARRIES

RECREATIONAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES

MOTION - CONTINUE TO DEVELOP ITEMS 2B. - 2 J., WITH 2F. AS A TARGET QUOTA, AND WITH THE INCLUSION OF 2H, 2I, AND 2J APPLICABLE TO PARTY / CHARTER INDUSTRY, AND GEAR RESTRICTIONS APPLYING TO ANGLING AND SPEAR FISHING.

ASMFC - COLVIN / SHIPMAN - MOTION CARRIES

MAFMC COLVIN / WILSON - MOTION CARRIES

MOTION - DRISCOLL / SPITSBERGEN - ESTABLISH A BIOLOGICALLY BASED TOTAL ALLOWABLE

CATCH APPORTIONED BASED ON HISTORICAL CATCH RATIOS OF THE USER GROUPS. THIS WILL INCLUDE A PROVISION FOR FRAMEWORKING THE PROPORTION BETWEEN USER GROUPS.

MOTION TO AMEND - STRIKE LAST SENTENCE –

COLVIN / WINKEL - MOTION CARRIES WITH PRFC VOTING NO

MAIN MOTION - ASMFC - MOTION CARRIES

MAFMC COLVIN / WILSON - MOTION CARRIES

QUOTA MANAGEMENT

MOTION - USE A QUOTA SYSTEM IN THE BLUEFISH FMP AMENDMENT THAT WORKS THE SAME AS THAT CONTAINED IN THE SUMMER FLOUNDER FMP, AS IT WILL BE MODIFIED IN AMENDMENT 9 TO THE SUMMER FLOUNDER / SCUP FMP

ASMFC - CARPENTER / CUPKA - MOTION CARRIES WITH ONE NO VOTE

MAFMC - COLVIN / WILSON - MOTION CARRIES

MOTION - RETAIN THE CURRENT GEAR RESTRICTION FRAMEWORK

ASMFC - COLVIN / SPITSBERGEN - MOTION CARRIES

MAFMC - WILSON / COLVIN - MOTION CARRIES

HOOK AND RELEASE MORTALITY

MOTION - COASTWIDE HOOK AND RELEASE MORTALITY ESTIMATES WILL BE CHANGED FROM 25% TO 15% AND ALLOW ADJUSTMENT UNDER FRAMEWORK PROCEDURES.

ASMFC - FOTE / CUPKA - MOTION CARRIES

MAFMC - COLVIN / WILSON - MOTION CARRIES

1995 BLUEFISH FMP REVIEW

MOTION - ACCEPT 1995 BLUEFISH FMP REVIEW

BORDEN / COLE - MOTION CARRIES

SCHMITTEN LETTER RE. BLUEFISH FMP

Approved March 19, 1997

Minutes of the

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

BLUEFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD

And

Mid Atlantic Fisheries Management Council's
Coastal Migratory Committee

Norfolk, Virginia

March 12, 1996

ATTENDANCE

Board Members:

Lewis Flagg, proxy for
Robin Alden, ME DMR
Ernest Beckwith, CT Fisheries
David Borden, RI DEM
A.C. Carpenter, PRFC
Phil Coates, MA DMF
Charlie Lesser, proxy for
Rick Cole, De DFW
Bill Cole, USFWS
Gordon Colvin, NYS DEC
Robert Palmer, proxy for
Edwin Conklin, FL DEP
David Cupka, SC DNR

Tom Fote, Gov. Appte. Rep.
Denis Spitsbergen, proxy for
Bruce Freeman, NC DMF
Lance Stewart, proxy for
George Gunther, Leg. Appte. Rep.
Pete Jensen, MD DNR
Rob Winkel, proxy for
Tom McCloy, NJ FG&W
Harry Mears, NMFS
Steve Driscoll, proxy for
John Nelson, NH F&G
Susan Shipman, GA DNR
Jack Travelstead, VA MRC

Other Invited participants:

Kevin Wark, Bluefish AP Chair

Other Commissioners:

Guests: (There may have been others present who did not sign the attendance list.)

Joy Wilson, MAFMC
Bob Palmer, FL MFC
Ron Howey, USFWS
Gary Caputi, MAFMC
Gil Radonski, NC rec. fisherman
Bob Eakes, NC advisor
Dick Schaefer, NMFS
Herb Austin, VIMS
Miwako Aihara, Japan Fisheries Agency
Jim Hayden, CCA of VA

Ed Mitchell, CT advisor
John Wadsworth, CT advisor
Corbin Cogswell RFA
Howard Bogan, United Boatmen
James Kaminsky, F/V Tide III
Timothy Froelich, comm. fisherman
Bill Walker, rec. fisherman
George Geiger, charter fisherman
Lewis Newsy, charter fisherman
Jim Gilford, MAFMC

Staff:

George Lapointe

John Carmichael

CALL TO ORDER / WELCOME / CHANGES TO AGENDA

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda. A letter from NMFS to the MAFMC regarding Federal involvement in the Bluefish FMP was added for discussion. Public comment was solicited.

MR. FROELICK: Do something about water quality. You could stop the commercial and recreational fishing tomorrow, but if the water quality isn't right, when fish spawn, their eggs won't survive.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Kevin Wark will give the Advisory Panel report.

ADVISORY PANEL REPORT

MR. WARK: We came up with some preferred management measures for the commercial fishery: a minimum size, uniform with recreational size limits; a quota; dealer and vessel permits and reporting; de minimis status for states with minimal landings. Except for the ITQ's, the other measures should be retained as framework.

Preferred measures for the recreational fishery include: minimum and maximum size limit; possession limits - only hook and line for recreational and spear-type fishing for divers; target catch limits instead of a quota; restrictions on the sale for recreational; No. 6, dealer and vessel permits and reporting for party and charter boats.

The panel voted to uncouple the commercial and recreational fisheries, and to set appropriate catch levels using biological references and historical ratios. Separate party/charter boat regulations should be an option.

MS. SHIPMAN: Did you discuss allowable gear for the commercial fishery?

MR. WARK: Yes, we think that should be left to the states

MR. BORDEN: Do you have some scheme to uncouple commercial and recreational fisheries?

MR. WARK: Just a general plan to use historical ratios and biological references.

MR. SPITSBERGEN: That keeps them coupled to some extent.

MR. WARK: Yes, but not as much as the current plan. We were thinking of a plan similar to summer flounder.

MR. CARPENTER: Is there any historical information as to the percentage of fish harvested on private recreational boats and charter boats which ultimately get sold?

MR. WARK: In our state they are intercepted.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

MR. CARMICHAEL: The assessment has been updated using the most recent MRFSS estimates and will soon be updated using the latest age key.

The assessment will go through the SAW/SARC process so the results will be available in August. Amendment 1 will need to be completed so the management tools can be applied based on the assessment in August. That means we need to determine management measures before knowing what reductions, if any, may be needed.

One concern is that the North Carolina age key is not applicable to the coastal stock. The Technical Committee is conducting a comparison study of scales and otoliths from each state along the coast. This should be completed in the fall, and show if a regional or coastwide age key is needed.

Appropriate biological references are still being evaluated. Commercial discard information is being pursued.

The Technical Committee voted to recommend a 15 percent hook and release mortality based on recent studies, and to allow framework changes.

This is higher than the 10% shown in studies from New York where fish were caught from boats. The Committee thinks that mortality was likely higher coastwide, since many fish are caught in warmer water and from the surf.

The Committee hoped to get insight into the saddle-shape partial recruitment vector. Either the fish are less available, or they're less sought by the fishermen.

MR. JENSEN: If we listen to the advisory committee, they're saying tie allocations to a biological reference point. I don't see how we're even going to be able to consider that recommendation until the SAW/SARC assessment is updated in August.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: On more than one occasion, both of the committees sitting here today have unanimously said they wanted to move forward with an amendment to the bluefish plan. We know the science is not going to be ready until August for, but we cannot afford to wait until that is available to begin the amendment.

There are problems with the current management plan that can be identified regardless of the stock assessment. Should there be a decoupling of the commercial and recreational fisheries? Do we want a size limit? We make those decisions before the assessment is complete. The goal is to develop a framework plan with measures that will be applied once the assessment is available.

MS. WILSON: Is additional research being sought on interactivity of the species, especially with relation to recruitment?

MR. CARMICHAEL: The Technical Committee is looking at interactions between bluefish and other species, hoping to add to abundance estimates. The difficulty lies in finding sufficient data to qualify the relationships.

MR. BORDEN: My concern is we could need two sets of public hearings; one for the framework measures, then another when regulations are adopted.

MR. SPITSBERGEN: We're not proposing changing procedures, just adding new tools.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Normally there aren't public meetings when framework measures are changed.

MR. KEIFFER: In Mid-Atlantic Council plans, framework measures include a range of values, and recommendations within that range are made every year. This is done at public meetings, but does not require Hearings

MS. SHIPMAN: The standards and procedures require public input under adaptive management using the states' established Public Review Process.

AMENDMENT 1 ISSUES

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Let's move to a discussion of the management measures for the Amendment, and start with the problems to be addressed.

MR. COATES: I'd like clarification of No. 5, nonselective gear needs to be recognized.

MR. CARMICHAEL: There's not a lot of directed fishing for bluefish, so management measures designed for a directed bluefish fishery might not be very effective. This is an aspect of the fishery to consider.

MR. CARPENTER: The issue identified at the public hearings and public meetings of the blurring between recreational and commercial fisheries could be added to the list of problems with the existing plan.

MR. COLVIN moved to adopt the five problems identified in the Bluefish Scoping/Information Document (ASMFC & MAFMC).

MS. SHIPMAN seconded (ASMFC). MS. WILSON seconded (MAFMC).

Motion carried (ASMFC & MAFMC)

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Moving right along, back down to Possible Management Measures, Commercial Fishery, discussion as to minimum size limits, maximum size limits and slot limits, and the concept of conservation equivalency and flexibility. Is there further discussion on this?

MR. SPITSBERGEN: The No. 5 problem addresses multispecies, multi-gear, and nonselective gears. We need to be careful with a minimum size to avoid excessive discarding.

MR. FOTE moved that the Plan allow a minimum size for both commercial and recreational fisheries, and allow conservation equivalency (ASMFC).

MR. BORDEN seconded (ASMFC).

MR. CARPENTER: Do I interpret that to mean that there will be some minimum below which conservation equivalency will not go?

MR. FOTE: That's not what my motion says.

Motion carried unanimously (ASMFC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Is there a similar motion for the coastal migratory committee?

MR. COLVIN: So moved.

MS. WILSON: Second.

Motion carried unanimously (MAFMC).

MR. SPITSBERGEN: If we include a specific minimum mesh size, then we need to refer back to Item 5 where we talked about multispecies and nonselective gears.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Kevin, what were the thoughts of the advisory panel on mesh sizes?

MR. WARK: It wouldn't be wise to have a minimum size smaller than what the nets are capable of catching, but we considered it a state issue.

MR. MASON: The advisory panel recommended A, E, H and I as primary measures, and everything else be available as management alternatives with the exception of G which they removed.

*MR. COLVIN moved that A,E,H,I, be the primary management measures to consider for commercial management measures, all others except ITQs and maximum size are to be considered for additional framework (ASMFC).
MR. DRISCOLL seconded (ASMFC).*

MR. BORDEN: It's my assumption that under Quotas, we're broadly interpreting that to also include a TAC.

MR. BECKWITH: Was there any discussion about closed seasons?

MR. WARK: Yes, but they weren't preferred.

MR. BECKWITH: Closed seasons could make it easier to deal with the snapper fishery.

Motion carried unanimously (ASMFC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Does anyone care to make a similar motion for the

Council?

MS. WILSON: So moved.

MR. CAPUTI: Second.

Motion carried (MAFMC).

MR. PALMER: The Advisory Panel also discussed de minimis.

MR. WARK: Yes, we felt states with low landings should be allowed to avoid extensive reporting requirements.

MR. CUPKA moved that the current de minimis procedures carry over into Amendment 1 to the Bluefish FMP. The FMP may identify other areas in which de minimis status may apply (ASMFC).

MR. COATES seconded (ASMFC).

MR. COLVIN: The current procedures apply to the commercial quota management program. Does this go far enough, if we add other commercial measures?

MR. CUPKA: We may want to consider de minimis for other measures also.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: De minimis has varied by plan, and I think Gordon has made a good point. Does de minimis apply only to the quotas, or to the entire list of measures that we adopted in the previous motion? Maybe de minimis exemptions would apply to the quotas and other measures, but not to the size limits.

MR. COLVIN: Given what I'm hearing, I'm uncomfortable with putting too much definition into this at this time. I would not want the effect of approving this motion to prevent us exploring other ways to elaborate on the applicability of a de minimis designation.

Is the mover willing to clarify the motion so that the plan will identify other areas in which de minimis status may be applied?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: That's agreeable to the mover and the seconder. Any further discussion on the de minimis motion from the Board or public?

(No response elicited.)

Motion carried (ASMFC).

MS. WILSON: I'll move the identical motion for the Council.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: A motion has been made on behalf of the Council committee.

MR. COLVIN: Second.

Motion carried (MAFMC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Kevin, can you point out those measures that the advisory panel recommended so we can start on those as preferred measures for the recreational fishery?

MR. WARK: We went through these and determined the ones that we didn't like. The Panel preferred size restrictions, possession limits, closed seasons should be non-preferred. There was extensive debate over closed areas, but no consensus.

Gear restrictions and limits were a preferred options. We supported restricting recreational harvest to hook-and-line fishing only and eliminating recreational net fishing. There was concern not to eliminate spear fishermen or divers. Nobody really liked the word "quota." They preferred a target catch limit to a quota. With restrictions on sale, we got into another debate with party and charter boats as to where they are classified regarding restrictions for sale. I think that has to be clarified. Prohibiting sale is preferred for the recreational sector. But there's still a debate with the party and charter boats that you're going to have to address. Finally, vessel and operator permits and reporting were preferred for party and charter boats.

MR. SPITSBERGEN: When we implemented the Bluefish FMP, there was a provision allowing a commercial fisherman who has a commercial permit to go out on a charter boat and to commercially fish, as long as he keeps his fish separate from all the other participants. Was this discussed at all during this meeting and how were you going to handle that in light of restriction on sale from charter boats?

MR. WARK: There was debate on this issue, but we did not reach agreement.

MS. SHIPMAN: Back on restrictions of sale, was it if a state licensed that individual to sell their fish, they were considered to be a commercial fisherman?

MR. WARK: Every state is so different, so we leave that to the states.

MS. SHIPMAN: The Panel just said they need to be commercially licensed by the state?

MR. WARK: Yes. The recreational people were adamant that recreational fishermen shouldn't be selling the bluefish.

MR. BORDEN: Does holding a commercial license automatically attribute your catch to the commercial category? When you sell and you have a commercial permit, it will count against the commercial quota?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Yes.

MR. CARPENTER: Would it be useful to divide the recreational fishery at this point, and address the recreational fishery, personal or individual, and then the Party/Charter?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: That is a possibility.

MR. CARPENTER moved that we split this category (ASMFC).

MR. FOTE: I've got problem if you're separating it into two different categories. Different measures are okay, but if we're going to set up a separate category for party and charter boats, then I do have a problem.

MR. BOGAN: A lot of crews on party boats and charter boats have sold fish for many years. They've always done it, and I don't really think at this point they should be restricted from doing it. Whether it means they'd have to get a permit and sell, whatever way you want to keep track of it, there should be some provision that the crews on those boats should still be able to do that.

And as far as the minimum size goes, there are a lot of tackle shops that benefit from the snapper fishery. If you are going to pass a minimum size, there should be some allowance for them to retain some fish at least, even if it's not the full possession limit. At least let the kids bring home something.

MR. COATES: Mr. Bogan, the selling off of a party/charter boat, are these fish caught by recreational fishermen but that are excess to their needs so they are then disposed of by the crew or the operators, or are the fish caught when they're not on a charter?

MR. BOGAN: No. In most cases, the crew will catch fish themselves. People may be giving them excess, but most of the time, the crew catches them. If a guy is chumming, he can fish and catch fish while he's doing his job. There are a lot of boats that let the crew fish and the captain fishes.

MR. LESSER: What category do they get assigned to, as commercial fish or recreational fish?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: It goes back to David's point: if you're going to sell your catch, they need a permit, and it counts against the commercial quotas.

MR. FOTE: We set up a separate category in New Jersey just for this. We have a separate quota. Those people are allowed to catch so much and then they shut down. It's handled as a commercial fishery, and that's why it really shouldn't be a separate category.

MR. BECKWITH: In Connecticut, we have a law that says that charter/party boats can't sell their catch while they're operating as a party/charter boat. If that vessel wants to go out and fish as a commercial fishing vessel, they have to get a commercial fishing license in addition to the charter/party license.

MR. CARPENTER: Every charter or party boat is a commercial enterprise. Although it may not be a commercial fishery, it is a commercial enterprise. It is different from the private individual/pleasure boater who goes sport fishing. It is different from the traditional use of

commercial fishery as we have traditionally called it. I think that the party/charter boat industry needs to have its own set of criteria.

MR. COLVIN: The real issue is whether or not we create a separate category that has separate management measures that are different from management measures that apply to recreational fisheries who are not fishing on party and charter boats. I think we need to discuss that issue a little bit.

Now, clearly Tom has a problem with that.

MR. KEIFFER: That issue is for discussion. If I recall correctly, the advisers voted that they wanted to retain the right to be a separate category. But in my mind, it was a very strange conversation and many of the people who I thought would want the separate category with perhaps differential possession limits or differential size limits opposed that. It seemed that the party and charter operators favored running under the same rules as the anglers.

MR. WALKER: I'm a recreational angler, and I'm also on the advisory committee. I hear the argument about mates making extra money and all, but the analogy I draw is hunting. If you want to go deer hunting, you can go out in the woods yourself and shoot a deer or you can hire a guide. If you hire a guide, you're not going to shoot a deer and then have him say, hey, gee, I think I'll take one and bring it back, too. The hunter is the person with the permit. He's the guy shooting the deer.

The same thing out in party boats and charter boats. It's the anglers catching the fish. They are recreational anglers. We have a network going with a lot of anglers. Every one of them is opposed to the sale of recreationally caught fish.

Now, it's fine if you let the mates take the excess fish. But if they catch extra fish and want to sell them, I think that's commercial catch.

MR. RADONSKI: There really wasn't a clear-cut distinction at the AP meeting regarding the separate categories.

Did you say that according to other FMPs you could not sell recreationally caught fish from those charter boats and party boats?

MR. KEIFFER: Some of the plans have no-sale provisions for recreationally caught fish.

MR. RADONSKI: Can they give them to the mates on charter boats and then they can be sold?

MR. KEIFFER: I don't recall any words prohibiting that.

MR. BECKWITH: Charter/party boat crews should have the opportunity to sell catch that the passengers don't want, assuming it doesn't exceed any creel limits. I'd rather see the fish sold than going into somebody's dumpster someplace.

The other issue is a charter/party vessel carrying people that have commercial fishing licenses, and this is an issue that we currently have the problem with in Connecticut. We have a 500-pound trip limit regardless of the number of people that are on the boat. If you've got a charter/party vessel carrying 20 people, and some people have commercial licenses and are

fishing under that 500-pound limit while others are abiding by a ten fish creel limit, how do you enforce that?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If the fishery is as depressed as they say it is, why should they be allowed to sell their bluefish and put it on the commercial side? It should be a separate category. It shouldn't go on the commercial side. In a fishery where there's only so much to go around, everybody has got their hand out. The guy who needs the money to make a living is getting less and less.

On the charter boats, the mate has got to make some money for being on the boat. If he's got to sell the fish, he should have records on how that fish was part of his income. But don't just let him sell them because it's extra money in his pocket.

MR. FOTE: In a number of plans over the years, we've gotten into the discussion of whether we need a separate category for party and charter boats, and there was lots of support in New Jersey about three, four years ago. But they looked at what happened in the bluefin tuna fishery, and the fluke plan and bluefish plan and they realized that the historical fishing might only be 8 percent of that fishery, and then if the fishery grew, they would have to basically justify allowing more vessels to go into that fishery, and they realized it might be a problem.

That's when a lot of these leaders in the party boat and charter boat industry in New Jersey decided that that's not what they wanted to do, because they realized that once you created a separate entity, they would basically stand out from the rest of the community. As one of the charter boat captains basically was discussing this morning, he said that the fact basically is whether you take the private car or you take the taxi, they're both transportation. Basically you're there to catch fish on it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What we came up with today is that we don't necessarily want to separate the groups now, but we didn't want to throw it out as an option, either.

MR. COLVIN: I would like to see that option available. For an example, if you look at a measure like size limits, there may be real differences. In New York, the charter/party industry does not utilize the snapper resource, and if they were in a separate management category, they could easily accept a minimum length that would be high enough to maintain the kinds of creel limits they need. The other fishermen from shore and private boats may have a different view, and might prefer a lower creel limit to maintain a snapper fishery.

If there were separate management categories, that kind of option would be there for the state to use.

Motion failed for lack of a second.

MR. DRISCOLL: I'd like to address the issue of restrictions on sale. I believe that if you have a possession limit of ten fish per person, whether it's recreational or charter/party, I don't see what difference it makes whether they sell them or not.

MR. COLVIN moved we continue to develop as possible management measures Items 2-B through 2-J with the following further options: One, that 2-F, it would be a target quota, and that items H, I and J would be applicable to the party/charter fishery (ASMFC). MS. SHIPMAN seconded (ASMFC).

MR. COLVIN: I'm not elaborating on restrictions on sale. We've had quite a discussion about it, and I don't sense a clear consensus. I think staff will have to look to develop that further and perhaps identify some options for our further deliberations.

MR. FOTE: On gear restrictions, advisory panel was pretty adamant that they wanted to eliminate a gill net fishery for bluefish, and make it either hook and line or a spear fishery.

MR. SPITSBERGEN: I've got a problem with the gear restriction issue. There may be other states in the same position that we may be in before long. We may have a recreational net license which restricts you to a very small piece of net, and prohibits sale. This provision would put an end to that.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: We have in place in Virginia similar provisions where individuals can license recreational gill nets. If a species is controlled by a bag limit, they're limited to that number of fish taken with the gear, just like a hook and liner would be. But this motion would eliminate that aspect of the fishery.

MR. LESSER: It's a traditional fishery in Delaware and our legislature will not kill it. If you're going to define a commercial fisherman, you've either got to define him by sale or define him by his gear. If you throw both variables in, there's no end to the argument.

MR. WALKER: One comment about recreational sale of fish. I heard the comment made that if a guy catches ten fish, it's his ten fish and let him do what he wants with them. Well, I don't agree with that simply because a guy who is out fishing maybe stops at two or three or four fish to keep for his table and says, hey, I might as well keep on throwing them in the bucket because I want to sell them, rather than keep fishing and releasing. Most of the people I've talked to are adamant on this one, no sale of recreationally caught fish. I don't think it's fair to the commercial guys if they're competing. And that is what's going to happen, people are going to be filling their boxes now. Like 10-pound, 15-pound bluefish, how many can you use? Most guys stop at three or four and now they'll fill the box and sell them. That's one of the things I'm afraid of.

MR. WARK: A lot of the concern was that despite a ten fish bag limit, a piece of net, even though it may be small, in the right place, can catch quite a few more than ten bluefish. The advisory panel was concerned with waste more than anything.

MS. SHIPMAN: Back to the gear issue. I appreciate Dennis' concerns. Let's take it to public hearing like this, and then modify it. This particular motion does remove some of the flexibility to the states.

MR. DRISCOLL: Can't we just add some provision to require that gill nets need to be tended?

MR. PALMER: We did the same thing in Florida. We came up with tending and soak time requirements for commercial gears. We held workshops. We found out that the recreational people weren't able to live with those tending and soak time requirements, so we outlawed those gears.

MS. SHIPMAN: Get rid of gill nets, period.

MR. PALMER: Well, you can see how much good our tending and soak times restrictions did.

MR. STEWART: There's one other little subtle aspect of this which in recreational use and gear type and that's cast nets, and that's for live bait for bluefin tuna. It makes sense to you that bluefish is the prime prey species for bluefin in a very selective way. It falls in the category of tending nets. It broaches the possession limit issue but also brings into play one of the more important, I think, issues that hasn't been addressed by this FMP, is the use of bluefish for bait, whether it's on the large scale for lobsters as a bulk product or as a small snapper.

MS. WILSON: Gordon, did you intend to, as a matter of priority, put closed seasons and closed areas with equal emphasis to all the other management measures, or did you intend to reflect the advisory panel's recommendations, those be included but not as preferred options?

MR. COLVIN: I did not intend to give any of these options a lower status. I agree with the comment made much earlier by Ernie about closed seasons. Notwithstanding the excellent advice that we've gotten from the advisory panel, I think closed seasons may be very important to us.

Motion carried (ASMFC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Is there a motion for the coastal migratory committee?

MR. COLVIN: So moved.

MS. WILSON: Second.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Seconded by Joy. Further discussion?

(No response elicited.)

Motion carried (MAFMC).

(Recess.)

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: The next item is C-2, prohibition on use of bluefish for lobster bait.

MR. LESSER: It's also a very popular blue crab bait in our pot fishery.

MR. CARPENTER: If it's being used for bait, I'm assuming it's being counted in the commercial side. Let the free market dictate the highest value of the fish, whether it be human consumption or bait.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: I would also assume that if there are in fact minimum sizes in the plan, they would apply to all fish, whether they're used as bait or not.

MR. BECKWITH: The issue I have with it, is that people catch a lot of bluefish that's never reported because it doesn't go through any dealer.

MR. STEWART: You have a real control problem. First of all, it can be caught in tremendous volumes and frozen, so you could have carryovers between seasons. Another major problem is the use of racks should be encouraged.

MR. CAPUTI: Some of the comments we just heard concerning the use of bluefish for bait was that we assume it goes through the system. I'd like to find out if there is a way that we can make sure it goes through the system. If it's going to be caught and used as bait and counted within the commercial quota, that's fine.

MR. COLVIN: We may be back here a year from now or six months from now telling hundreds of thousands of people, children, retired people and everybody else that the snapper fishery as they have known it, as it has existed for generations, is no more. If we're going to do that on one hand and allow the sale of this species for bait for lobster and crabs, we can expect a tough discussion.

MR. FLAGG: In Maine, a lot of times there's a large bycatch of bluefish in some of the gill net fisheries. The preferred market is as food fish. If they can't sell them for food fish, they go for bait. Otherwise, they just go over the side. It's a waste issue here, too.

MR. STEWART: I wasn't meaning to promote large-scale menhaden production operations at all, but I think it almost might be self-controlling if you say that those mega-scale directed fisheries on bluefish as bait should be eliminated and then bring it under the control factor that every licensed lobsterman -- usually the commercial lobsterman has to have his fishing permit and has to record commercial fish landings as a means of registering it through the system. The only loop is if you're commercial -- in our state, for example, the 10-pound lobstermen go out and recreationally fish the bluefish for bait. They'd rather turn bluefish flesh into lobster and do it immediately. So it's a mechanism that we really haven't acquired a registered take on the fishery.

MR. FOTE: It's interesting what Lew said, because I heard just the opposite from our bait fishermen that fish for bunker in New Jersey. They claim that they have very little bycatch of bluefish or weakfish or any other species and that it's basically a clean fishery and that's why it should be able to exist, because it doesn't bycatch.

MR. CARPENTER: The plan should not prohibit any commercial use if you're going to allow any commercial use.

Also, if we're going to have a minimum size limit, it's going to apply to all users.

MR. FOTE: If that bait fishery was accounted for in the Maine fishery, would you be a de minimis anymore?

MR. CAPUTI: I think one of the problems we have with this plan is there isn't enough attention made to bycatch and discard.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Other comments on this issue? Do we want to take any formal action on this item relative to the management plan?

(No response elicited.)

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: The next issue is uncoupling the commercial and recreational fisheries.

MR. WARK: The advisory panel didn't discuss this as much as we would have liked to. We wanted to uncouple them but keep the historical ratio, and to set appropriate catch levels using biological references.

MR. DRISCOLL moved that we uncouple the commercial and recreational fisheries in quota management (ASMFC).

MR. SPITSBERGEN seconded (ASMFC).

MS. WILSON: Would you consider amending that motion so it would be clear that the relative allocations of approximately 80 percent/20 percent are the intent?

MR. WARK: That's what we were after exactly.

MR. DRISCOLL: Okay.

MS. SHIPMAN: There should be a framework to allow for future adjustments.

MS. WILSON: Yes.

MR. DRISCOLL: Yes.

MS. SHIPMAN: The modified motion is:

To establish a biologically based total allowable catch, and to apportion into commercial and recreational shares based on historical catch rations. This will include a provision for frameworking the proportion between user groups.

MR. COLVIN: The last sentence means that over time, without amending the plan, decisions could be made to change the proportion of the TAC that is designated for commercial quota or recreational target quota.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: That is correct.

MR. COLVIN: I am very uncomfortable about doing this without some basis by which those kinds of framework decisions would be made.

MR. CAPUTI: I don't like the idea of frameworking the ratio between recreational and commercial.

MR. KEIFFER: The general rule on frameworking is that you can identify the bound of a range. Here you're talking from zero to a hundred and a hundred to zero, and one of those you can go public with in such a vague way, you're just looking for endless public hearings and friction. It would be preferable to pick a number and then if something gets upset over time, you write an amendment to fix it.

MR. COLVIN moved to amend the motion by striking the last sentence (ASMFC). MR. WINKEL seconded (ASMFC).

Motion to amend carried (ASMFC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: That second sentence is now stricken.

Motion, as amended, carried (ASMFC).

MR. COLVIN: Same motion for the committee.

MS. WILSON: Second.

Motion carried (MAFMC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: The Technical Committee has presented pros and cons of various quota management strategies. Does anyone have any preferences?

MR. COLVIN: We should defer this to the Ad Hoc Quota Committee.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Is there any discussion on quota underages and overages?

MR. BORDEN: Why not the same mechanism as the summer flounder plan, with the overage deducted from future allocations?

MR. CARPENTER: I think that works well if you're talking about the commercial quota, but if we're going to a total allowable catch concept, I think there ought to be some equivalency on the recreational side.

MR. BORDEN: My only reservation about quota overages being deducted is that it would have come out of the offending gear type or state.

MS. SHIPMAN: To A. C.'s point on the recreational overage, ideally what you want to do is establish a bag or size limit combination that will keep you within that for the whole year and you won't have to look at any closure or backing out for the next year.

MR. BORDEN: The other point is if we adopt target TAC instead of absolute quotas and then adjust them the following year for any potential overage, it takes a lot of the knee-jerk type reaction out of the system. You still meet your biological objective, that we don't end up shutting fisheries down, just adjust it the year following.

MR. CARPENTER moved that we USE A QUOTA SYSTEM IN THE BLUEFISH FMP AMENDMENT THAT WORKS THE SAME AS THAT CONTAINED IN THE SUMMER FLOUNDER FMP, AS IT WILL BE MODIFIED IN AMENDMENT 9 TO THE SUMMER FLOUNDER / SCUP FMP: For the sake of simplicity as we get further and further down, more and more plans, if we have a system that works on summer flounder, I'd move that we incorporate the same system with the bluefish to address this issue of overage and underage. MR. CUPKA seconded.

MR. SPITSBERGEN: We may be looking at some changes in the summer flounder system over the next year.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: The commercial quota will be a specific quota with provisions for penalties for overages. The recreational quota will be a target with a future provision that's being developed under summer flounder/scup for penalties there as well.

Motion carried with one abstention (ASMFC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: A like motion from the committee Made by Gordon Colvin; seconded by Joy Wilson.

Motion carried (MAFMC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: The current management plan has gear restriction provisions. Are there any other restrictions?

MR. COLVIN moved to retain the current provision on gear restrictions (ASMFC). MR. SPITSBERGEN seconded (ASMFC).

MR. KEIFFER: The current system triggers on rates of increase in the commercial catch. We would presumably be out of those percentage triggers using this new decoupling business, so we may need to create new triggers.

MR. JENSEN: I'm not sure why we want to do this. If we have quotas, then it becomes a state allocation issue. What we're structuring now, a TAC, seems to me obviates the need for all this.

MR. COLVIN: For purposes of going to public hearing, I'm uncomfortable without having this in as a proposal.

Motion carried (ASMFC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: A similar motion from the committee moved by Gordon Colvin, seconded by Dennis Spitsbergen.

Motion carried.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: We need to discuss recreational discard mortality estimates.

MR. BORDEN moved to incorporate a coastwide hook-and-release discard mortality estimate of 15 percent and allow adjustment under a framework procedure (ASMFC).

MR. COLVIN seconded (ASMFC).

Motion carried (ASMFC).

MR. COLVIN: Do we need the same motion for the committee?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Yes.

MR. COLVIN: So moved.

MS. WILSON: Seconded.

Motion carried (MAFMC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: The next item is a review of the '95 FMP review.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The Board needs to approve this document.

MR. BORDEN moved we accept the report (ASMFC).

MR. COLE seconded (ASMFC).

Motion carried (ASMFC).

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: We do not need a similar motion from the Council on that. That moves us to Other Business and the letter to Mr. Gilford.

MR. KEIFFER: We know that Mr. Saxton is holding a hearing on the first of April on the bluefish plan in Toms River, New Jersey.

MR. FOTE: Congressman Saxton wants to hold a hearing to find out what's going on. I didn't request it. We're just looking at management items.

MR. BORDEN: That next to the last paragraph of the letter says that the plan can be removed and suggests that we have alternative mechanisms to adopt regulations in federal waters. Have there been any analyses under the new act that would lend credence to the conclusion that we can adopt regulations consistent with the new act that will be simpler than the current regulations? It seems to me that that's embodied here, but I'm not sure it's a proven conclusion.

MR. COLVIN: Specifically to address the board members, you should be aware that a letter has also been sent to me as chairman of the Commission by Rollie Schmitten that is similar to this letter. It addresses the actions taken both with respect to bluefish and lobster, and clearly that letter demands a response by the Commission. I think it's been our intention to have some at least preliminary discussion of the issues that that letter raises in our mind at our Policy Board meeting on Thursday, and if we are able to develop a proposed response at that time, so be it. If not, we may require some further -- perhaps a preliminary response at this time and some further thought and discussion as we approach our May meeting. We'll just have to see. But there is in fact correspondence addressed to the Commission on this issue as well.

The broader issues such as the issue that Dave raised may well be appropriate for discussion at the Policy Board level. I have talked to Jim Gilford and to David Kieffer about the issues specifically with respect to bluefish. I have not had an opportunity to talk to folks in the New England Council yet about lobster. It is our intention to proceed with the development of a joint amendment to the jointly developed and adopted fishery management plan. The sending of this letter by the Service doesn't alter our agenda and our course of action and our course of conduct.

MR. KEIFFER: The Council has not met since that letter came out. In the interim, because of this meeting, I spoke with my chairman and vice chairman, and we decided that the only responsible action would be to proceed as if the letter never happened, have this meeting and keep rolling as hard as we could on Amendment 1.

MR. GILFORD: When the Council meets, we will be taking this matter up. I am concerned that we don't talk this to death. If the Council and if the Commission wish to take a position that looks at all of the aspects of what this means to fisheries management, then I think we should do so and do so as quickly as possible and not let it get buried by time.

From my own point of view, there's a good deal of concern over the implication of the letter. There's concern over the basic motivation not being directed at better fisheries management.

I suggest that the Council and to the Commission take a positive action in directing a joint letter to the Secretary of Commerce, advising him and providing a strong rationale as to why this particular move is not in the best interest of fisheries management.

MR. SCHAEFER: Let me try to explain how we got where we are. It's no secret to anybody in the room that there's a concerted effort in government, both by the Congress and the Administration, to downsize, and it impacts a number of areas.

Vice President Gore, a little over a year and a half ago, started what's called the national performance review. The conclusion of his review team was that we should try to achieve a goal of reducing the number of regulations that impact our federal regulations that impact on our society to about half of what the numbers currently are as identified in the Federal Register.

And there are three basic approaches to that, three component parts. One is the elimination of unnecessary regulation; the second is consolidation of existing regulation; and the third is what can other governments, i.e., state and local governments do, which the federal government now does. In other words, how do we divest regulations from the federal sector down to lower government levels?

Now, as a part of that exercise, about a year ago, we were asked by the Office of Management and Budget acting on behalf of the President to identify existing federal regulations under the Magnuson Act and what regulations might better be dealt with by state and lower-level government. One of the things that we looked at was what fisheries occur or are prosecuted predominantly in state waters as opposed to the EEZ. We identified roughly a half a dozen fisheries nationwide that, in our opinion, fit this criteria, among them being bluefish and American lobster.

In the response to the White House noting these particular fisheries, we also commented that in as much as these fisheries were currently managed under the Magnuson Act which required the Councils to prepare the management mechanism and plans for those fisheries, clearly it behooved us to sit down and discuss any further attempt to reduce these regulations with the Councils and the Commission.

With respect to the elimination and consolidation of other regulations, we started to complete those actions with a due date sometime later in this calendar year. About three weeks ago, we got a letter from the General Counsel of the Department of Commerce who told us we now have to meet a target of June the 1st of this year for achieving the targets of elimination and reduction of federal regulations, including the six or seven management plans and the regulations that accompany them.

As a result of this pushed-up deadline, we have had no opportunity whatsoever to sit down and discuss this matter with the Councils and the Commission. I personally apologize to everybody in this room for that. We certainly did not intend to move forward without such advanced discussions, and I'm not surprised by the reaction I've heard at this table today.

Now, in direct response to Dave Borden, I don't have an answer to your question. Our assumption is that it would probably be no net gain or loss, hopefully less. But I agree, there's been no analysis and we haven't looked at that. But our feeling was that bluefish and American lobster, given the nature of the fisheries and the landings, would probably be better managed by the Commission structure under the Atlantic Coastal Act; and therefore, you have received the letters that have been referred to in the discussion of today. Thank you.

MR. JENSEN: I think this probably falls in the category of be careful of what you ask for, you might get it. I think we've all been asking for this for a lot of years and now we've got it. I personally don't have any problem with it. I think it's entirely appropriate. The courts even agree with us, that if we want something done in the EEZ, we put it in our plan. And I think this is nothing more than a simple invitation from Rollie Schmitt to say put it in the plan. Now, that does not preclude us from consulting with the Councils. Obviously we would. If we put something in our plan, we'd go consult with the Councils.

MR. RADONSKI: We're coming into a new era of fishery management with the passage of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Fishery Management Act, and it has caused duplication. Unfortunately, we never did anything to reduce duplication. You are now being sent a message that you are going to do something. The bluefish plan, but the bluefish plan is one of the plans that really does stand out as being in the gray areas as far as the Magnuson Act and the Coastal Fishery Management Act.

MR. CUPKA: I'd like to make a comment relative to the other portion of this letter which deals with regulatory reform. At the Council chairman's meeting last June in Alaska, we

were told by Gary Matlock that NMFS was undergoing this regulatory reform and that they would be getting back to us with comments and all. That was never followed up on, and now, all of a sudden, we've got an April 1 deadline. I'm a little disappointed that there never was any follow-up.

MR. SCHAEFER: The intent was there.

MS. SHIPMAN: If we went through the Atlantic Coastal Act, the Secretary would still have to promulgate regulations.

MR. SCHAEFER: That's correct.

MS. SHIPMAN: To me, this is all cosmetic. I don't see that we save anything as far as regulation.

MR. SCHAEFER: The primary reason is it's an interstate fishery and therefore the states, through the Commission in this case, should be the primary planning body.

MR. LAPOINTE: Notwithstanding the questions of philosophy over whether bluefish should be managed by the states or federally, there are some procedural things that staff has talked about. First, we have been working with Council for well over a year rebuilding the cooperation and the communication between our two organizations, and this action doesn't help with that.

Second, if in fact the bluefish plan was transferred to the Commission on the 1st of July, we don't have the staff to handle it.

The last thing is that lobster and bluefish are entirely different because both the Council and the Commission have been asking for this transferring to take place on lobster. That's not the case with bluefish.

MR. GILFORD: I have a couple of responses to Pete and to Gil. This may be the way to go. I don't know that this is the way to implement it though. And I would hope that the decisions on how fisheries management is to be done aren't always coupled to a situation in which there's a political motivation to achieve something else that's got nothing to do with fisheries management.

Secondly, to say it's a turf issue is kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy, I guess. Yes, the Council is looking at bluefish, and if it doesn't do bluefish, so what? It's not necessarily a turf issue. And yes, I think the Council recognizes there may be a new day coming in fishery management. I think we're seeing this in some of the management plans that the Commission and the Council have already been working on.

It's not a perfect system, we know that. But it's not going to be made any more perfect by the two things that this letter recommends or by the two things the letter says is going to happen. One is the condensation of all the fisheries management plans into one federal unit. That is going to be a tremendous chore. I wonder if, when that's done, we have the same kind of management plans that we started off with and if in fact the fishermen will have an opportunity to even understand it.

There are a lot of things at stake here, and I don't think it's a personal issue. What it boils

down to is whether or not the Commission or Council believes that this is the way the Secretary should proceed to manage the fisheries under his jurisdiction, regardless of whether the Commission does it or Council does it or who has the lead. Fisheries management has become a political ball being tossed back and forth under this particular arrangement. If the Commission or Council stand back and debate it, do nothing about it, Pete's absolutely right and so is Gil. There's a lot more at stake here than just bluefish and who does it or who doesn't do it.

MR. COLVIN: I see the blueprint for a future fishery management program for bluefish which is not dissimilar from the fishery management program that we have in place for fluke and one that we will hopefully very soon have in place for scup. And I cannot conceive of managing those fisheries without federal regulations, without substantive federal regulations that deal with issues such as gear restrictions in the EEZ and the implementation of a commercial quota system. If that is the case with bluefish, then I think we have to pay careful attention to the comments that Susan made. And it's difficult for me to see in that context how an objective of eliminating unnecessary federal regulations is achieved by this action. Maybe some other objective is achieved, but that one I'm having a hard time envisioning.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Will the Policy Board be looking for a recommendation on this issue from these two groups here today?

MR. COLVIN: Not necessarily. It might be helpful for the bluefish board to communicate how this particular proposal might affect the management program for bluefish. I think the Policy Board is going to have to come to grips on its own with the broader issues.

MR. COLVIN: The lobster situation is different. It is quite different. Although the Commission has accepted a major responsibility to develop a lobster management program, it is very clear to me, both from the state in which I sit and in my discussions with representatives of other states with the lobster resource, that the maintenance of certain specific federal regulations on lobsters is absolutely critical. And I am somewhat dismayed that that need to maintain those regulations which has been communicated very directly to the leadership of the National Marine Fisheries Service within the last six months is not apparent in this action.

MR. SCHAEFER: I can't give you a specific date for when this will be published in the Federal Register. We would invite public comment. We do not want any regulatory void in the EEZ while we're making this change.

MR. CARPENTER: If the Secretary were to withdraw the bluefish plan, would that mean that the Council would stop writing the plan and the staff that we have dedicated to this would be removed?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Yes.

MR. CARPENTER: Then this Board does need to go on record as saying that the regulatory void which Dick just spoke of will certainly happen if the Secretary withdraws June the 1st. I don't see where the ASMFC staff and this Board is going to have Amendment 1 ready by June 1st.

MR. SCHAEFER: We have to meet certain requirements for the production of final rules that would withdraw certain kinds of regulations. The letter says we're providing the Commission and Council our intent to publish a notice of withdrawal. That will invite public comment. Based on the public comment, we will probably go forward with some sort of proposed rulemaking. We'd invite further public comment. This is not going to happen June 1st.

MR. FOTE: My concern is that we lose the Council's expertise, and an opportunity for public input.

MR. BORDEN: Assuming that NMFS were to implement this just the just way it is, what prescription here would force the Mid-Atlantic Council to stop? They could still continue to perform all the functions.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: They might only be involved in an advisory capacity.

MR. KEIFFER: I put my staff on what the Council tells me to put it on. There is a difference between reviewing proposals and taking the lead in developing an FMP.

MR. GILFORD: It's not a question of turf. If the bluefish plan can best be done by the Commission with support from the Council, that's fine. But what we're really talking about is no lessening of the work that has to be done. They're not really coming up with a new way to better manage the fishery.

MR. COLVIN: The leadership of the Council could have reacted in a lot of different ways when that letter came, and I very, very much appreciate the response that we got from Jim and Tony and Dave. The response and the today's meeting suggest that we've been working at strengthening the partnership between the two organizations; it's showing here. I hope that we can get by this and get this situation turned around and get on with Amendment 1.

MR. JENSEN: We have to address the dilemma we have here in the Atlantic Coastal Management Act, where we all strongly supported the statement that the states are the principal managers of the fisheries along the coast and Congress has adopted that. They've appropriated a lot of money for us to do it. There's also a provision that says the National Marine Fisheries Service should generate programs to help us out. I still believe that the Atlantic Coastal Management Act was the right way to go. I think it's the way things are going to go in the future.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Moving on then, a calendar was passed out, and I want to ask staff to comment.

MR. CARMICHAEL: This to show the effect of the delays caused during December and January of this year by the federal government difficulties and the cancellation of our meeting. I attempted to show how meetings could get moved back to allow for ample time between meetings and still meet the deadlines that were established when this was originally accepted. The dates are more wishful than accurate. I attempted to get A.P. and management board meetings lined up with the ASMFC and Mid-Atlantic Council meeting weeks, but the technical

committee meetings will probably get sort of juggled about to fit people's schedules.

MR. COLVIN: I would ask the staff to go back and supplement this with an implementation schedule as well.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Is there any further business or comment from the public. Hearing nothing, is there a motion?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: George has an announcement.

MR. LAPOINTE: We have an official from the Japanese Fisheries Agency here, Ms. Miwako Aihara. I encourage people to spend some time with Ms. Aihara. She's trying to understand our fishery management process.

As I was explaining the state and federal jurisdictions, joint plans, migratory species, and highly migratory species, her interpreter said "It's like many things in America. We don't know quite why it works, but it works pretty well."

(The meeting adjourned.)