

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION  
WEAKFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**Crowne Plaza - Old Town  
Alexandria, Virginia  
February 5, 2014**

**Approved November 3, 2015**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Call to Order, Chairman Russ Allen..... 1**  
**Approval of Proceedings, October 2012 ..... 1**  
**Public Comment..... 1**  
**2013 Stock Status Update ..... 1**  
**Consider Delaware's Conservation Equivalency ..... 6**  
    **Proposal Review ..... 6**  
    **Technical Committee Report ..... 7**  
    **Consider Delaware's Alternative Management Proposal ..... 8**  
**Election Of Vice-Chair ..... 9**  
**Adjournment ..... 9**

## INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Motion to approve agenda by Consent** (Page 1).
2. **Motion to approve proceedings of October, 2012 by Consent** (Page 1).
3. **Move to approve Delaware's request for conservation equivalency** (Page 7). Motion by Louis Daniel; second by Pat Augustine. Motion carried (Page 8).
4. **Motion to adjourn by Consent** (Page 8).

## ATTENDANCE

### Board Members

David Pierce, MA, proxy for P. Diodati (AA)	(LA)
Jocelyn Cary, MA, proxy for Rep. Peake (LA)	Tom O'Connell, MD (AA)
Rick Bellavance, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Rob O'Reilly, VA, proxy for J. Bull (AA)
David Borden, RI, proxy for B. McElroy (GA)	Kyle Schick, VA, proxy for Sen. Stuart (LA)
Mark Gibson, RI, proxy for R. Ballou (AA)	Louis Daniel, NC (AA)
Dave Simpson, CT (AA)	Bill Cole, NC (GA)
Pat Augustine, NY (GA)	Robert Boyles, SC (LA)
James Gilmore, NY (AA)	Ross Self, SC, proxy for Sen. Cromer (LA)
Russ Allen, NJ, proxy for D. Chanda (AA)	Spud Woodward, GA (AA)
Roy Miller, DE (GA)	Pat Geer, GA, proxy for Rep. Burns (LA)
John Clark, DE, proxy for D. Saveikis (AA)	Jim Estes, FL, proxy for J. McCawley (AA)
Bernie Pankowski, DE, proxy for Sen. Venables	Wilson Laney, USFWS
	Martin Gary, PRFC

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

### Ex-Officio Members

#### Staff

Bob Beal	Marin Hawk
Toni Kerns	

#### Guests

Stew Michels, DE DFW	Derek Orner, NMFS
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The Weakfish Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Presidential Ballroom of the Crown Plaza Hotel Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia, February 5, 2014, and was called to order at 1:25 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Russ Allen.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIRMAN RUSS ALLEN: You all have an agenda in front of you. Are there any changes to that agenda, additions or anything of that nature? Seeing none; we will consider that approved.

### **APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS**

The last meeting was in October 2012 of this board. The proceedings were sent to you. Are there any changes or comments to those? Seeing none; we will consider the minutes approve.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

This is where we open it up to public comment for anything that is not on the agenda. We have no one signed up; but if there is anyone in audience that wishes to speak. Seeing none; we will move on.

### **2013 STOCK STATUS UPDATE**

I will now turn it over to the technical committee chair, Joe Cimino, and we will talk about the stock status indicators for 2013.

MR. JOE CIMINO: The technical committee has been tasked with providing these updates on an annual basis. I believe the last time I was before you, we were considering these potential stock indicators and now we've moved on to these are ones that we feel that are both hopefully tracking the abundance of fishery but also ones that are easy enough to update on an annual basis.

We have three adult indices that have been around and been through peer review now. These were included in the last peer-reviewed assessment; the recreational catch-per-unit effort from the private/rental mode; the Delaware

Trawl Survey; and the New Jersey Trawl Survey. I wish I had some good news for you guys.

This is a standardized index based on the two fisheries-independent surveys and the recreational catch-per-unit effort. You can see in recent years that both the Delaware Survey and the recreational catch-per-unit effort have kind of flatlined, although it does seem that the New Jersey Trawl Survey has been tracking some small increase in abundance, in biomass.

One other thing that we have been updating annually and that has also been around since the last peer-reviewed assessment is the proportional stock density. This is something that is fairly easy to calculate. It is based on our two fisheries-independent indices that we use. It quantifies the length frequency, meaning it is using actual sampled fish and giving a proportion of those fish that are eight inches and above to those fish that are a little over thirteen inches and above.

I think the real take-home message for the PSD isn't necessarily a good one. It is that even though we still have a biomass out there, albeit low, for the past years it has been stable at about 3 to 4 percent of an unfished biomass. You see since about 2006/2007 that the proportion of those fish that are seen in the trawl surveys is very small; that none of the fish being sampled are over that 13-inch size limit are recruiting into the fishery.

Relative F was the primary determinant that was accepted by the Peer Review Committee to give at least some trends in this non-equilibrium fishery. Relative F is calculated based on our total removals and the recreational CPUE. As far as the total removals are concerned, you can see that they have also tanked even prior to Addendum IV to Amendment 4 when the hundred pound commercial trip limit and one fish recreational bag limit was put in place.

You could see that even in the years prior to that the landings were extremely low. I have that as a breakdown of the commercial and recreational

fisheries going through the time series. Where recreational estimates are available, these landings are in pounds and in millions of pounds. You can see that in more recent years, well, the scale is very low, but also that the magnitude of the commercial and recreational fisheries have sort of come in line.

And just shortening that time series to when MRIP estimates existed, it allows us to look at a finer scale, and these landings are in thousands of pounds. You can see that over a few years the commercial and recreational fisheries have actually flip-flopped; but overall very low. We really started coming down right after 2002.

Coastwide we were coming in under 5 million pounds for the first time; and now we're around a half million pounds contributing between the two. There should be a big asterisk next to 2013 here. That is just a big weakfish there. These data, of course, are preliminary but in all honesty I kind of cobbled this together at the last minute, calling states to get commercial landings.

As you know, MRIP estimates are preliminary. The reason I did it was because there was an uptick in 2012, and this was a 2012 summary for you. However, I was very curious whether to see if that was just blip on the radar or maybe we're going somewhere with this. It looks like the MRIP estimates have come back down some in 2013; but overall coast-wide commercial landings are up again.

We're back around where we were in 2009; and again that is prior to the hundred pound trip limit. In that same MRIP time period I just included releases as well as harvest; and you can see that releases have bounced around a little bit. I'm not sure what the one-fish bag limit has meant to the harvest-to-release ratio. You can see that it has even bounced around some there.

With that presentation on removals and on the biomass, we can look at relative F, which what we've been doing is using a two-year mean of the recreational CPUE. Our relative F estimate only goes back as far as 2011. However, just

using the straight mean, relative exploitation was calculated; and as you can see and as you would expect with that uptick in harvest in 2012, relative exploitation is also increasing somewhat, but still well below the time series average.

Most of you have seen this plot before. This is just an attempt to look at the response of the stock both, I guess, to fishing pressure and possibly to the regulations. Starting off in '81 with the time series, you can see relative fishing mortality and relative F was an extreme increase through the late eighties. The stock's response was a massive decline. At that low abundance, however, as fishing mortality decreased, the biomass did not have much of a response.

At that time Amendments 2 and 3 were put in place; and in that period prior to 2002 we did see some rebuilding of the stock. That is the green triangles there. However, since that time and since Amendment 4, despite ever decreasing fishing mortality, we really haven't seen any response from the stock.

At the time of the last peer-reviewed assessment, the juvenile indices still looked pretty good. There was a lot of inter-annual variability. We are fortunate to have quite a few states that are able to generate indices through sampling. They don't necessarily all tell the same story; but you can see there that on that standard format, that the grand mean did show some nice consistent pattern.

However, as were moving into the stock assessment, we noted concern at that time that since 2006 through I believe data through '08 or '09 that things looked a little more troubling. That trend continues. As you can see there, that grand mean has not moved much; and it is a low point in the series.

In summary, like I said, since Addendum IV the estimated biomass has not moved much. It was at 3 percent of an unfished biomass at that time; well below the 20 percent threshold that was set. We're looking at the latest 2012 estimate at about 4 percent of an unfished biomass. I think

that chart with the proportional stock density shows a real concern that what biomass is there is one-year-old fish. There really is a concern over what the productivity is for the stock that exists.

One target that has been discussed is attaining levels back in the mid-nineties. One other thing that I did want report on was compliance with the 100-pound commercial trip limit. I believe at the time that the addendum was put in place, this was also looked at as a possible indicator of where the stock was.

It was mentioned several times that if there were a lot of trips and it were able to max out this hundred pound trip limit, then in a way that would be a good thing as far as the stock response. At that time with no baseline on what this would mean, we really didn't know where to go with it. We have a few years under our belt now.

States were required to have this put in place by May 2010. You can see here that on the 2012 harvest we do have some states combining either over a hundred pounds or right at the hundred pound trip limit, that around 10 percent of their overall harvest is at or above the hundred pound trip limit.

Like I said, we have never really set any sort of high mark for what would be a consideration to move forward with this. One note here is that North Carolina put in place the 100-pound trip limit for November, so this is November and December only for North Carolina. I think that's it.

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: Thank you very much for that uplifting report, Joe. Are there questions for Joe? John.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Joe, I was just curious whether the technical committee – if there has been any progress made. The last assessment found that it was an increase in natural mortality that was preventing weakfish from recovering. I haven't heard of anything coming out that would indicate what the cause of that is. Do you have any clues?

MR. CIMINO: No, John, there really hasn't been much exploration into that. We have continued to update some of the predator/prey models that we have. There is an element of best fit in one of the models that has a striped bass to menhaden ratio in it. Going forward, that is as far as we've gone with it.

MR. ROB O'REILLY: Joe, I've got two questions. One is with relative F, it used to be just the Mid-Atlantic component of MRFSS; and your slide suggested that probably at some point that changed to the full geographical range. I'm not sure.

MR. CIMINO: Actually you're right in that the slide did suggest that, but it is still the Mid-Atlantic component. That does bring an interesting question, I suppose, because some of the southern states have had a higher catch.

MR. O'REILLY: Yes; I was going to say that, that a few years ago it was the more southerly states which were showing a sort of different pattern with the CPUE. I also noticed it looked like from here, anyway, that it was 1981 forward on one of the relative F slides. I am wondering not so much whether that is correct, but I'm wondering with the MRFSS switch to MRIP what are we really looking at there?

MR. CIMINO: Yes; it was '81 and that was on the stock response slide. Looking at weakfish MRFSS to MRIP estimates, I don't think we saw any strong biases at the state level or coastwide.

MR. O'REILLY: One more and I'm out, Mr. Chairman. I also protest so I'm going to continue to protest about this juvenile abundance indices graph that you showed us. My concern is we have a weighted or an unweighted mean and all the state-specific indices are standardized. Many years ago with one of the assessments – I don't remember the exact number of the assessment – it was pointed out that it would be better to look during the period where there was truncated stock, which there definitely is now, to look at the core area.

This is something that Jack Musick brought forward in one of the previous assessments. When I see this slide, I don't really know what is going on as far as the trend; because if it is unweighted does that mean every state from Georgia to Rhode Island has – it is just unweighted and lumped together; and is that informative as much as the typical producer areas being shown? What I would suggest in the future is at least let's have a table or a graph for the states to see how things are going so we can discern maybe some importance here.

The reason is that John Clark just mentioned the natural mortality; and if it is a situation where there is this proverbial bottleneck where recruitment has been fairly stable, although it shows a little bit of a downturn recently, then we need to know exactly how recruitment is doing since we're not going to be able to find out, apparently, about the bottleneck, which we assume is predation but we really haven't had anything more definitive.

Again I would make a suggestion that this be developed a little bit more. Anyone who sees this figure now, this Figure 5, just is left with none really being informed about the stock and about the past distribution and everything else. Thank you.

MR. CIMINO: I fully agree, yes, and it is something that the technical committee is going to look at. I agree that I wouldn't know – I certainly have concerns on how to interpret that as well; and looking at that would certainly help.

MR. ROY MILLER: Joe, just to explore those ideas that Rob mentioned just a little more; in looking at Figure 5 – I don't want to put too much faith in, I guess, but our dealings with utilities over the years, which are sources of potentially large entrainment and impingement mortality that can affect weakfish stocks, they always pointed to, yes, entrainment and impingement is going on, but look at your juvenile indices for weakfish.

They bounce up and down a little bit, but there is no long-term discernible trend. When you look

at Figure 5, if you go back to the 1980's, there doesn't appear to be a discernible trend other than, as Joe pointed out, maybe in the most recent years. Yet when you look at the natural mortality from Figure 7, there is a great elevation of M in the most recent years.

Under the assumption that the juveniles are being produced at a fairly steady rate each year, it begs the obvious question of what is happening to them, you know, what is preying on them or what is the source of that mortality, that high natural mortality. I just wish we had – maybe Joe can help. Do you have any additional insights on that? Thanks.

MR. CIMINO: I would have had a better slide for you. I think that is a challenge that the technical committee and the stock assessment subcommittee do need to look at. For better or worse, I mentioned that we were fortunate to have this much information on juvenile indices. Even though this is a coast-wide stock, you get very different answers from each of these individual surveys.

Even within the Chesapeake Bay, I've had that discussion with Uphoff, who updates this every year, on how different Maryland and Virginia could be. What the variability coastwide means has been difficult. What we're coming down to now is also – I think it is hard to say, but going back to what I said earlier, at least addressing this current trend, if all we're looking at is spawning one year olds and two year olds, the stock is somewhat unique to others that you deal with in that we're considering age one-plus to be part of the spawning stock biomass; but if they're the only part of the spawning stock biomass, I think that suggests we're in trouble.

DR. LOUIS B. DANIEL, III: Just a couple of comments, observations and then a question. Last year I received tremendous numbers of phone calls on the discards that were occurring in the commercial fishery in North Carolina; some folks saying as high as a thousand to 2,000 pounds a trip with the numbers of fish that we're seeing at home; and legal fish, so nice-sized fish.



We had a pretty epic recreational fishery this year with tremendous numbers of discards and releases in that fishery. I'm not sure that we're picking all that up. I think we're having an extraordinary amount of unquantified discard mortality in our fishery; and it seems to be right at that Cape Hatteras Line, which continues to suggest that there is something going on different north and south of Hatteras.

We don't have the genetic integrity to prove they're separate stocks; but from what we're seeing from the recruitment event that occurred this year, the six- to eight-month-old weakfish that we were seeing were off the charts in terms of the numbers. With that said, I'm just curious because what doesn't make sense to me about the relative F graph is with the catches being constrained at a hundred pounds, how do removals really mean anything in terms of trying to track the status of the stock?

MR. CIMINO: I agree again personally; and not to be unfair to the technical committee or the report, but discards have been somewhat glossed over. Going to the one fish and 100-pound trip limit, we've completely changed the nature of this fishery. I don't know what has happened with discards. It has always been difficult to estimate discards.

Jeff Brust spent a lot of time doing that for the last assessment; and since then, we had started with just the step-wise approach; and then once we got to the most recent restrictions, we've just kind of been in a holding pattern and leaving discards at one flat-level estimate. It is not the best way to do things, but it is something we need to explore.

DR. DANIEL: Just a real quick followup; because after many calls from the Outer Banks predominantly, I asked my technical committee member to talk to other technical committee members. It doesn't sound like anybody north of us is seeing the numbers of fish and the amount of discards and bycatch that we're seeing in North Carolina. It just makes it even more difficult because, well, if everybody else is seeing this, maybe we can start looking at

allowing a little more harvest to at least account for these discards, but it sounds like it is pretty unique to us.

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: We are in the process of initiating the next stock assessment; so maybe we can get to the bottom of some of that stuff. Pat.

MR. PATRICK AUGUSTINE: You mentioned predator/prey; and is that an ongoing study or is that just something that has been looked at in the past? We really need to address that one. It sounds like – talking to John Clark and the folks over there; it looks like Delaware is having a great increase in I guess black drum; and the Chesapeake is having a great increase in black drum, also.

If they're moving up along the coast, we're back to predator/prey. It used to be striped bass and now it is something else. I'm not sure how you can address that or can you help me with that to give us some clarification as to what you think we should do with predator/prey and should we ask you folks to start looking at that a little more closer? Use your opinion, Joe, and forget the technical committee.

MR. CIMINO: That just in part and if it is something that we could get through a peer review, which I think the predator/prey modeling that was done really as early as the 2004 assessment and then presented in the 2009 peer review assessment, the peer review didn't feel that comfortable with drawing the connections made from something as simple as having another species there as a function of the decline of weakfish. That is how we ended up with relative F being the one truly endorsed situation. I don't know that any information exists for us to move forward with making that attempt again on a strong enough connections as far as the stock declines.

MR. AUGUSTINE: Thank you for that. Well, it is just like when we started talking about winter flounder and it ends up as natural mortality. No matter what we've done, the stock doesn't seem to be coming back; and that is forgetting what is happening up in the Gulf of

Maine, but the rest of it seems to consistent. It is there for a month or two, they spawn out and the bottom is covered – the bays are covered with little winter flounder; and within a month of six weeks they're gone.

Yet you look at the predator/prey relationship and you say to yourself something is eating them or they're just dying. If we keep kicking the can down the road on this one, I think we're going to have another one of those species that is going to be we don't know. I'm not sure how we can make management decisions based on not knowing. Mr. Chairman, I don't know if you want to put some pressure on or suggest that we start looking at a predator/prey situation or not. I'll leave to you and the technical committee to come up with a recommendation.

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: Well, since I was part of that last stock assessment for weakfish with the technical committee, I know what they've gone through trying to come up with something for that. That is about as good as it is going to get. Maybe they can do some more on this one. I will put some pressure on Joe. We will take him in the back room and take care of that and see what we can do. Tom, did you have a comment?

MR. THOMAS FOTE: Yes; if I remember right, black drum eat mollusk and clams. That is why they used to blow them in the 1900's in Barnegat Bay because they were eating all the clams in the clam beds. I never heard of them eating weakfish. It has always been disappointing to me that we did everything right and weakfish should be a lot different than it is right now.

It should be a success story because we did all the right things and it is not. I think the more you look at it, the more you're going to have to look at what is going on in the bays and estuaries where they spawn. When some of the studies they did in New York on winter flounder when it was 17 to 1 and 16 to 1, 15 to 1 female-to-male relationship because of all the, as we say, the endocrine disrupters that are in the bays

coming out of the sewers, I think that could be a problem.

I'm not sure where to place the blame but it is some place and I think we just spin our heads and we've been spinning our heads on it for the last ten years and we still haven't come up with an answer. We have just got to stay the path and see what happens unless we're going to do like stop the power plants and the nuclear power plant in Delaware Bay from killing 50 percent of the bay anchovies; maybe that is a problem.

They used to suck the weakfish into their intake valve, that is a problem; or we change the ecology of the bays and Barnegat Bay and the hot water from Oyster Creek, and they still have impingement and water being sucked at an unusual rate. That is not just nuclear power plants; it is all the other ones, coal-fired plants and everything else. Until we start changing the system we put in the seventies and the eighties and started using the bays and estuaries as our sewers and a hot water intake or a cold water cool-down systems; there are going to be a lot of problems with the resource.

### **CONSIDER DELAWARE'S CONSERVATION EQUIVALENCY**

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: Okay, if there are no other questions for Joe, we're going to move on to the next agenda item, considering Delaware's Conservation Equivalency Proposal. I will turn that over to John and then we will have the technical committee report on that, also.

### **PROPOSAL REVIEW**

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chair, I will try to make this fast because I know we've doing a lot sitting around here. Thank you to the board. I would just like to briefly go over our proposal again that I think you've all seen already. Just looking at our logo there reminds me that we were talking yesterday during the summer flounder deliberations about each state having a signature fish; and for us in Delaware it is weakfish.

That is one of the reasons that we chose net closure days that I will go into here next. We

had huge recreational and commercial weakfish fisheries in Delaware Bay in the seventies and eighties. Delaware Bay was probably the epicenter of weakfish abundance at that time. When the weakfish population declines in the late eighties and into the nineties and management actions were taken, we went to net closure days as the way to meet our reduction in fishing mortality for weakfish because this way we'll keep nets out of the water on the weekends during the peak recreational weakfish fishing period and still allow netters to catch a lot of weakfish and thereby preventing gear interactions between gill netters and recreational fishermen.

In addition, Delaware already had a law on the books banning gill netting on weekends during the peak weakfish season, which I'll get to. Our FMP compliance that we used, since '97 we have required nets to be out of the water for a week a May, a week in June and all weekends in May and June to meet the Amendment 3 compliance requirements.

In our regulations we have defined weekend as Friday through Sunday. We have done this once again at the time to reduce those interactions as Friday through Sunday were our biggest days for recreational fishing for weakfish. Those are the 34 closure days had in 2013. There is our code that requires us to have all nets out of the water from Saturday through Sunday starting on May 10<sup>th</sup> and going through September 30<sup>th</sup>. As I said, we already had that in the code.

The weakfish plan added 17 closure days in 2013 to the state-mandated closure days that we already had due to this law. As the weakfish catches, as Joe has just pointed out, have declined precipitously, our commercial landings between '98 and 2008 declined by 99 percent, our netters have started looking to other species that they can try to make a living off of.

Black drum are in Delaware Bay in May and June; and the closure days limited the ability of netters to pursue black drum because our closure days have netting closed for 34 days. Atlantic menhaden is in high demand in May in

Delaware as bait for striped bass, particularly on weekends; but with our weekend defined as Friday through Sunday, the netters can't net.

Menhaden caught on Thursday can't be sold as fresh bait on Sunday; so our netters are missing out on that lucrative market of selling fresh bait. The netters have come to us and to the Tidal Finfish Council and asked us to see if we could modify our closure day system. They asked us to look into asking ASMFC to allow us to use the alternative state management regime as per Amendment 3 and switch from closure days to a closed season.

We would estimate the length of a closed weakfish season that would give us the equivalent of the current closure days in terms of reduction in fishing mortality. To follow the ASMFC Guidelines in estimating the necessary closed season, the closed season must occur during the months of maximum weakfish landings during 1989 to 1991. I know we have been talking about ancient data, but that is what the amendment says we have to do.

Most weakfish were landed during April through June in Delaware. Our peak landings' month was May. We've estimated that a closed season from May 1<sup>st</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup> would give us the required 32 percent reduction in fishing mortality. I just would also like to point out that we still have 17 net closure days as mandated by the state law during that time that was not factored into the closed season that we're asking for. I would be glad to take any questions and we hope the board can endorse Delaware changing to a closed season from closure days. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: Before I take any questions, I would really like to get to the technical committee's report, also, and take care of that. That way we can handle it all in one shot, I hope.

#### **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT**

MR. CIMINO: This was actually a joint conference call between the technical committee and the stock assessment subcommittee. I

started off that call kind of reiterating what John said, that we're looking at ancient data. This isn't the stock that we were dealing with in the late eighties. If Delaware had a whole bunch of nets in the water, I'd still be very surprised if they didn't meet their percent reduction in harvest just because the fish aren't there.

We're dealing with two different amendments that are still holding to this review; and that is the original requirements of Amendment 3 but also importantly Addendum IV to Amendment 3. I think we all recognize that a lot of stuff had been done to protect this stock and state had creative ways of doing that.

Instead of trying to go back and remove some of those other restrictions that have been put in place, the 100-pound trip limit and the one-fish recreational bag limit were put in place on top of all remaining requirements. With that, the technical committee and stock assessment subcommittee simply reviewed this as kind of an alternate management scheme to that original Amendment 3 requirement.

What they presented there on paper, this certainly does meet that reduction and that requirement. Aside from that, there was some concern that you're going from nets out of the water to nets in the water. In the case of black drum, we didn't have a great deal of concern that black drum nets were going to be taking a lot of weakfish, but there would certainly be a potential for interactions between gill nets fishing for menhaden and weakfish.

I think what is still in place for Delaware especially regarding the fact that this is mostly a drift gill net fishery; that alleviated a lot of our concerns. Looking at this in comparison to what every other state has been held to, we certainly didn't see anything out of the ordinary.

**CONSIDER DELAWARE'S  
ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT  
PROPOSAL**

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: I will open it up to the board now if they have any questions of John or Joe. David Pierce.

DR. DAVID PIERCE: John, a question about your drift gill net fishery; how does that operate? Gill nets are set for some short period of time, left to drift; how would you describe that fishery in the context of the potential for bycatch of weakfish?

MR. CLARK: Yes; anchor netting is ended as of May 1<sup>st</sup>; so we only allow drift netting at that time. Typically, the guys go out and set the nets for maybe an hour or so, maybe longer, but there is clearly the potential for weakfish bycatch. A lot times they're targeting – they're using a mesh that is small enough to catch weakfish as they're targeting menhaden or bluefish, croaker, spot, those types of things; anything pretty much they can catch in Delaware Bay at that time.

DR. DANIEL: Are you ready for a motion?

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: Yes, sir.

**DR. DANIEL: I would like to move we approve Delaware's request for conservation equivalency.**

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: Second by Pat Augustine. Is there any discussion on the motion? We will be doing a roll call vote on this; so when we're ready, I will hand it over to Marin. The motion is move to approve Delaware's request for conservation equivalency. Motion by Dr. Daniel; seconded by Mr. Augustine. Is there any discussion? Seeing none; I will hand it over to Marin.

MS. MARIN HAWK: Massachusetts.

MASSACHUSETTS: Yes.

MS. HAWK: Rhode Island.

RHODE ISLAND: Yes.

MS. HAWK: Connecticut.

CONNECTICUT: Yes.

MS. HAWK: New York.

NEW YORK: Yes.

MS. HAWK: New Jersey.

NEW JERSEY: Yes.

MS. HAWK: Delaware.

DELAWARE: Yes.

MS. HAWK: Maryland.

MARYLAND: Yes.

MS. HAWK: Potomac River Fisheries Commission.

POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION: Yes.

MS. HAWK: Virginia.

VIRGINIA: Yes.

MS. HAWK: North Carolina.

NORTH CAROLINA: Yes.

MS. HAWK: South Carolina.

SOUTH CAROLINA: Yes.

MS. HAWK: Georgia.

GEORGIA: Yes.

MS. HAWK: Florida.

FLORIDA: Yes.

MS. HAWK: U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: Yes.

MS. HAWK: National Marine Fisheries Service.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: **It sounded unanimous there;** very good. Okay, we're just about done.

#### **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: I am going to have someone make a recommendation for vice-chair. Mr. Miller.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chair, it is my honor to nominate Rob O'Reilly as vice-chair for the Weakfish Board.

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: Seconded by Pat.

MR. AUGUSTINE: Mr. Chairman, I move to close nominations and cast one vote.

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: So done!

MR. O'REILLY: Since I won't have anything to say for a little while; I do want to say that since we spend a lot of time looking back at what has been done and whether it is relevant – and I saw a comment in the report the technical committee wondering on the relevance of the timeframe when these measures were done back in the late eighties and early nineties.

I would suggest that we should pay attention to that particular time period because it was meant to have a 32 percent reduction so that it would signal the start of rebuilding. If we get those levels of abundance that we were hoping for then, then at least we have something to start from. I think it should be relevant.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

CHAIRMAN ALLEN: Let's hope that is under your watch, Rob. If there is nothing else to come before this board, a motion to adjourn is accepted. Let's move it.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 o'clock p.m., February 5, 2014.)