

ASMFC Lobster Advisory Panel

September 28, 2005

Providence, RI

Meeting Summary

Meeting Participants

AP Members

Robert Baines

Jon Carter

John Carver

Angelo Correnti

Bro Cote

David Cousens

Nicholas Crismale

George Doll

Robert Nudd

Aurthur Sawyer

David Spencer

Other:

Pat White (Board Chair)

Bob Glenn (TC Chair)

Bonnie Spinazzola

ASMFC Staff:

Toni Kerns

Summary of Meeting and Recommendations to the Lobster Board:

Recommendations to the Board

1. **Mandatory coastwide reporting for the state and federal waters.**
 - a. **Hold a committee meeting including Industry, TC, and State and federal Managers to design a minimum standard reporting system.**
2. **Make recommendation in the current proposed rules to add mandatory reporting**
3. **Hold a meeting of the transferability committee to discuss uniform measures in adopting transferability in management plans.**
4. **Conduct a study on the most effective placement of vents for escapement.**
5. **LIS Health:**
 - a. **Research projects should be cooperative effort between science and industry**
 - b. **Results of studies should include recommendations for solving lobster health problems.**
6. **Conduct a workshop to look at the affects of having landing and possession laws in states.**

Discussion about Chair of AP

Starting at the end of this meeting Dave Spencer will serve as chair of the AP and Bob Bains will be the Vice Chair.

Approve Meeting Summary from May 2004

The meeting summary approval was deferred until the next meeting.

Update on Stock Assessment Activities

Bob Glenn updated the AP on the progress of the stock assessment. The lobster database was completed in late March and data from the database was used to run the models of the assessment. The Technical Committee and various subcommittees completed the stock assessment in July. An expert external peer review panel reviewed the assessment in August.

The panel's advisory report and review of the assessment will be available the first week of October. A review of the assessment and the peer review panel's report will be presented to the Lobster Board at the October 31 Lobster Board meeting in Galloway, NJ. Bob presented the new stock boundaries, the southern area of old Georges Bank South became a part of old area SCCLIS, and the new name for this stock is now Southern New England. The rest of old area Georges Bank South is now called Georges Bank. The boundaries of the Gulf of Maine stock remain the same. These changes are a result of analysis of growth rates, settlement indices, and abundance trends.

Update on Management Board Activities

Staff updated the AP on the most recent developments on the Lobster Workshop, the most restrictive rule, Addendum VII, and current management measures of each area.

The Lobster workshop address several important topics to the Lobster Board. The workshop was designed to foster discussion on these topics but not to accept management decisions. The topics included: Potential Changes to Lobster Management; communication between the Board, AP, and the TC; data collection, TC support, and upcoming whale issues. The workshop concluded with the Board reaching the following consensus statements: List state data deficiencies and identify data gaps to address assessment needs; Compare data gaps to ACCSP standards; Identify benefits of increased data collection; Develop outreach initiative for distribution to industry; Add Technical Committee, Advisory Panel, and/or LCMT statements of endorsed options to the draft management plans for Board review (prior to public comment); List reasoning behind accepting or rejecting technical committee advice ; State Directors will communicate logic behind Board decisions requiring TC advice; Hold a meeting with the Board Chair, Advisory Panel Chair, the Technical Committee Chair, and each LCMT Chair; and Discuss roles of each committee and how groups can initiate better communication between groups.

Members of the AP expressed concerns regarding discussions of changing the boundaries of management areas. Members wondered if there were other changes that could be made to allow for better management of stocks than changing area boundaries. Changing areas could be a nightmare for the federal process.

There was agreement that there needs to be better data collection. The AP feels the TC should designate what data is needed for assessments. That information should be used to design a data collection system. In some states federal and state reporting is redundant and there should be cooperation between the two.

Concern was raised that the LCMT process not be lost in a new Amendment. The LCMT is an important bridge between the fishermen, state agencies, and the Board. The LCMT process is starting to come under some pressure at the Board level and the AP is concerned that the Board recognizes that industry is not the only player in the LCMT process.

Staff reported that all states are in compliance with the most restrictive rules and have adopted the appropriate regulations.

Staff briefly reviewed Addendum VII to the Lobster FMP. The purpose of the proposed management plan is to establish a multi-state effort control program for Lobster Conservation

Management Area 2 that governs traps fished in state and federal waters to cap effort (traps fished) at recent levels and allows adjustments in traps based on future stock conditions. This proposed plan attempts to capture the attrition from the fishery, caused by stock decline, thereby preventing a return of overall fishing levels to historic highs of the late 1990's.

The draft plan includes options endorsed by the Area 2 LCMT and with an Outer Cape Cod-like plan crafted for Area 2. The plans limit participation to permit holders who have been active in the fishery in recent years, create permit-holder specific trap limits that are unique and based on reported traps fished and landings, and establish a transfer program that allows the transfer of trap allocations with a conservation "tax".

The AP decided it was not their role to comment on an area specific plan and their comments should be reserved for coastwide issues. The AP would like to be briefed on all addendums to keep up with all area management.

Coastwide Consistency

The AP discussed but could not come to agreement on a consistent coastwide definition for V notching. Some members of the group would like to see the words settle hairs struck from the current definition and a realistic "V" notch size such as 1/16 or 1/8 while others did not agree.

The AP agreed it is important to have consistent transferability regulations in each state. They recommend that a meeting of the transferability committee should be held to discuss uniform measures in adopting transferability in management plans.

The AP agreed it is important to make a recommendation for effective placement of escape vents on lobster traps. There is not a consistent coastwide regulation for vent placement, therefore some fishermen have the ability to place escape vents on their traps so that they are ineffective in allowing undersized lobsters out of the trap. The AP agreed multiple placement regulations could be recommended but it is necessary to conduct a study on the most effective placement of vents for escapement before a recommendation is made to the Board. The AP therefore recommends the Board initiate a study on the most effective placement of vents for undersized lobster escapement.

LIS Lobster Health Research

There was concern among AP members that the research projects that came out of the LIS Lobster Health Research was focused on studies for scientific publication. The research projects should have been a more cooperative effort between science and industry. The results of studies should include recommendations for solving lobster health problems. The AP recommends the Board that any further research projects should have a cooperative effort between science and industry and the results should include recommendations for solving lobster health problems.

Other Concerns

As the gauge is increasing in many of the LMA's, there is concern among some AP members that there will be market inequities. Some states, such as New York, have possession laws that prohibit fishermen from selling lobster to restaurants and dealers because their states legal size is smaller than New York's.