

VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

FINFISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

VMRC CONFERENCE ROOM

FINAL MINUTES, AUGUST 20, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT

Richard Young
Kelly Place
Ken Neill
Hon. Gordon Birkett
Ernest Bowden
Tom Powers
G.G. Crump
Warren Cosby
Douglas Jenkins
John Wyatt
Robert Weagley
Larry Snider
Kevin Seldon
Bob Pride
Pete Nixon

MEMBERS ABSENT

Warren Cook
Greg Swift
Charles Williams
Frank McLaughlin
Raymond Kellum
Lionel Jenkins
Wayne France
Hon. Wayne McLeskey
Robert Brumbaugh
Raymond Spence

VMRC

Chad Boyce
Jack Travelstead
Rob O'Reilly
Roy Insley
Ellen Cosby
Randy Owen

I. Introductions, Announcements

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M. by acting Chairman Jack Travelstead. Mr. Travelstead asked for the Habitat Division item to be taken first. He also reminded the committee of the AFMFC public hearing for Amendment VI to the striped bass management plan would soon be held. Randy Owen briefed the committee on the proposed placement of a NOAA maintained current meter near the first island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge- Tunnel (CBBT). He then introduced Mark Bushnell of NOAA. Mr. Bushnell explained the meter would be placed on the bottom and a power cable would be run to it from the CBBT fishing pier. These cables would be buried in the sediment approximately two feet down. The meter's location would be marked with a lighted buoy. Peter

Nixon reminded Mr. Bushnell to make sure the cables were under the sediment, since crab dredging is popular in that area. The committee did not have any objections to the project.

Mr. Travelstead briefed the committee on some upcoming General Assembly actions that would clarify the definition of a haul seine. He stated there were two concerns over the current definition. The first is the haul seine industry finds the definition confusing, which causes problems with interpretations of industry and law enforcement. The other concern is the recent findings from VIMS, indicating the scarring of SAV beds as a result of propellers from haul seine boats. Mr. Travelstead stated this just will change the definition, then staff can get with the haul seine industry and write the regulation to further define the operation of haul seines. This is just the first step to rectifying the current confusion.

II. Approval of minutes from the July 16, 2002 meeting

Minutes were approved as written.

III. Old Business

a. Ocean Striped Bass Allocation Plans

Rob O'Reilly handed out a list of four options that staff had prepared to allocate the 98,000-pound ocean quota. He reviewed each option, and commented on each. The options ranged from the use of historical participants in the coastal fishery to those that are currently in the coastal fishery. Mr. Nixon asked about the possibility of combining portions of the four options to make one option. Warren Cosby stated the fishery should be regulated by mesh size, like the upriver fishermen. Discussion followed on the criteria to be used to be in the coastal fishery. Tom Powers stated that an initial allocation could be made to all permit holders, then a separate allocation could be made according to each person's participation in the coastal fishery. Mr. Powers then made a motion that required a fisherman to be a current permit holder as of August 20, 2002, and has not gotten out of the fishery as of January 1, 2003, as the criteria to be used for someone to be eligible to get coastal tags. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Bowden stated the bay quota was distributed by use of historical landings, so use that guideline when setting the coastal allocations. The issue of a fisherman having to give up some "bay tags" for "coastal tags" was discussed at great length. The use of a percentage of tags versus a straight number of tags was also discussed.

An audience member stated the problem did not occur with the 1993 -1997 harvesters, it occurred with the 2000-2001 harvesters, so why penalize the historical harvesters. Kevin Seldon proposed a different option. He suggested adding the 98,000 pounds to the bay quota and determine what percentage of tags each fisherman would receive, then contact each fisherman and see if he wanted

his share in “bay tags” or “ocean tags”. If he wanted “ocean tags” he would have to give up his “bay tags”. Discussion continued on this topic. Mr. Bowden made a motion to pick options 3 & 4, and let fisheries staff “work out the details”. The motion passed unanimously.

b. American Shad Intercept Fishery Allocation Plans

Mr. Travelstead presented a list of options for the American Shad quota in 2003 and 2004. Mr. Nixon made a motion to accept the “Other” section that defined the bycatch allowances and “set aside” for the fishery. The motion passed unanimously. A statement was made about the fishery becoming a “derby” fishery, with everyone trying to get their portion of the quota. Mr. Bowden made a motion to set the maximum number of feet of net and mesh sizes that could be set. He said the maximum feet of net should be 4800 feet (4-1200 foot nets), and the mesh size should be between five inch and six inch (stretched mesh) from January through March only. The motion passed unanimously. Some discussion followed on the exact option to pick. Mr. Bowden then made a motion to accept Option 5-C-1, that sets the landings criteria at 5,000 pounds of shad in two or more years from 1993 through 2001. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. New Business

a. 2003 Red Drum and Tautog Measures

Mr. Travelstead reminded the committee of the meeting on August 21, 2002 at VMRC concerning management measures in the Red Drum and Tautog fisheries. He stated the tautog reductions (29% overall) would be coming from the recreational fishery only, and stated the reductions would be coming from wave closures or possession limit reductions. He also reviewed the reductions that will be required for the red drum fishery. He reminded the committee that he would report back at their next meeting with the results from the meeting on August 21.

Mr. Travelstead briefed the committee on the current situation involving the state by state quota allocations for black sea bass. He informed the committee of the complexity of establishing an individual fishing quota (IFQ) for a fishery with three distinctive gear types. He briefed the committee on the results of the first meeting with the black sea bass industry.

b. 2003 Recreational Striped Bass Measures

Mr. Travelstead briefly discussed the situation with the committee. The Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) has expressed support for decreasing the recreational possession limit to allow only one fish over 34 inches. Ken Neill stated that all the people he has spoken with are in support of this. Mr. Travelstead suggested that this item be brought back to the committee in September.

V. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date was not scheduled.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Travelstead adjourned the meeting at 9:45 P.M.