



Cancer Crab

Public Information Document

American Lobster Board

October 2014

PID Background



- The Board initiated the development of an FMP based on recommendations of the Jonah Crab FIP which seeks to improve the fishery's performance to a level that is consistent with MSC certification.
- Specifically, the FIP recommended addressing that:
 - Crab are unregulated in federal waters.
 - Landings and effort are increasing rapidly.
 - No minimum size regulations to protect spawning biomass
 - the expanding fishery may threaten the effectiveness of the lobster conservation measures
 - the long-term sustainability is compromised.



Current Management



- Current state waters commercial management is variable between jurisdictions
 - No maximum landing size restriction
 - All states require some reporting.
 - Some states require licensing.
- Current state waters recreational management:
 - Only MA, NY, NJ, and MD have any harvest limits.
- In federal waters: all harvest is unregulated.

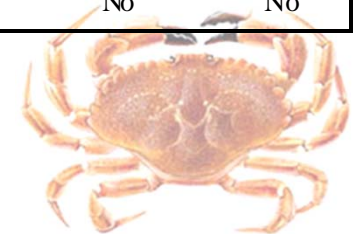


Current Regulations



	Comm Trap Limit	Comm Trap Restrictions	Comm License Required	Comm Min Size	Comm Sex Restrictions	Comm Closed Seasons	Comm Harvest Limit	Rec License	Rec Harvest Limit	Rec Trap Limit
ME	Lobster Limit	Lobster Traps	Yes	None	None	Dec 30 - Apr 1 in specific rivers	200 pounds/day or 500 pounds/trip	No - hand harvest; Yes - traps	No	5 traps
NH	Lobster Limit	Lobster Traps	Yes	None	None	No	No	Yes (if more than 12 taken)	No	No
MA*	Lobster Limit	Lobster Traps	Yes	None	No egg bearers	Jan 1 - Apr 30 in state waters	No	No - hand harvest; Yes - traps/SCUBA	50/day	10 traps
RI	No	No	Yes	None	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
CT	No	Lobster Traps	Yes	No	No	No	No	yes	No	10 traps per day
NY*	No	Escape panel required	No	No	No egg bearers	No	No	No	50/day	No
NJ	No	Bio-degradable panel required	Yes	3" - 4.5" (varies by hardness)	No egg bearers	Yes	No	Yes	One bushel/day	yes
MD*	No	Turtle BRD and escape panel required	No	3.5" to 5" (varies by hardness)	No female harvest at certain times	Open Apr 1 - Dec 15	25 bushels per vessel/day	No	3 bushels hard crabs; 2 dozen soft crabs	No
VA	No	No	No	None	No	No	No	No	No	No

**Regulated through the blue crab fishery*



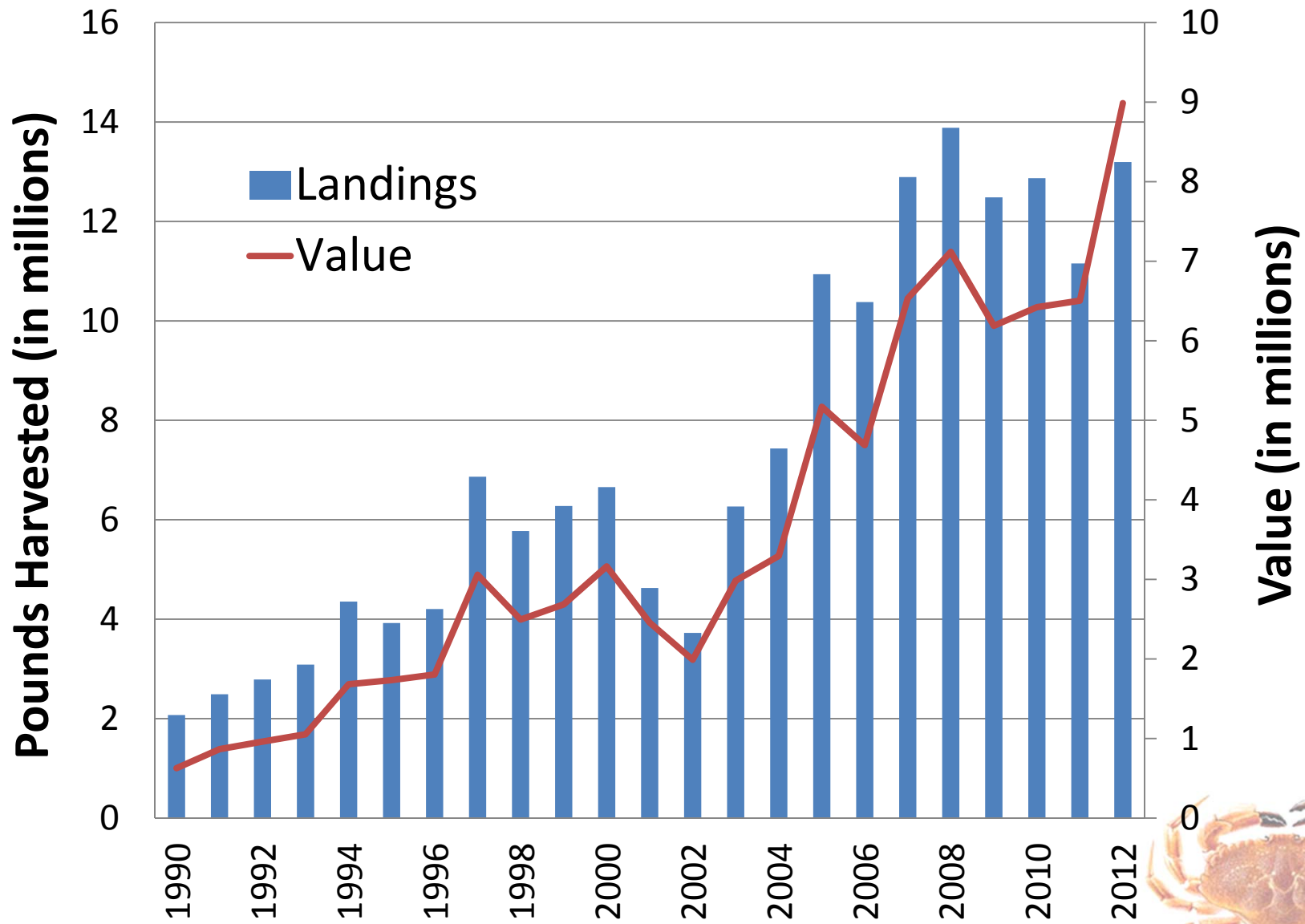
Status of the Stocks



- No range-wide stock assessment for either species
- Surveys vary state
- Data collected through the NOAA Fisheries trawl survey



Status of the Fishery



Issues for Public Comment



1. Consistent Coastwide Management?
2. Management Objectives?
3. Commercial and Recreational Management Measures?
4. Licensing?
5. Data Collection?
6. Emergency Action?
7. Federal Waters?
8. Other Recommendations?



Questions?



Cancer irroratus

Common Name: Rock crab

Fisherman Name: Sand Crab



Cancer borealis

Common Name: Jonah crab

Fisherman Name: Rock Crab



Public Comment Summary



- The public comment period ran from August 20 – October 3, 2014.
- During this time, comments were submitted by 11 individuals and five organizations.
 - AOLA, Little Bay Lobster, MLA, Mataronas Lobster Co, and NMFS
- Public hearings were held in five states (ME, MA, RI, CT, and MD).
 - 50+ people attended the public hearings, with 80% of the attendance at MA and RI hearings.



Written Comments



- **Issue #1 – Coastwide Management**

- The Commission should manage the two fisheries, possibly separately, and need to take into account the biological differences and potential regional difference if there are any.

- **Issue #2 – Management Objectives**

- Need to maintain a healthy and sustainable fishery, that optimizes economic return, while protecting the participants who have been historically engaged in this fishery.



Written Comments



- **Issue #3 – Management Measures**

- Support for protective measures for females including a tolerance
- Support for different size regulations for Johan (4.5” – 5”) and rock (3.75” – 4”) crab, with a tolerance. Need to consult TC, AP, and LEC.
- Bag limit, size limits

- **Issue #4 – Licenses**

- Support for linking crab permits to lobster permits, that participants in the fishery should be limited to those with authorized lobster traps, and that possibly the landings history should be taken into account with license qualification.



Written Comment



- **Issue #5 – Data Collection**
 - Support for mandatory data collection, that biological information is needed prior to management decisions, and industry should be included in monitoring programs.
- **Issue #6 – Emergency Action**
 - Mixed support
- **Issue #7**
 - Support for consistent regulations



Written Comments



- **Other Recommendations**

- need to set a control date
- No regulations are needed
- concern for the tremendous influx of participants into the fishery
- Socio-economic importance of the fishery
- Need for clear universal names
- Shell height
- Escape vents



Public Hearings



- **Issue #1 – Coastwide Management**
 - Support for consistent coastwide management through the Commission
 - Regional management
 - Regional names needs to be addressed
 - Possibly manage separately
- **Issue #2 – Management Objectives**
 - Achieve maximum economic yield
 - long term sustainability of any cancer crab management program will be difficult given the variability and cyclical nature of the fishery.



Public Hearings



- **Issue #3 – Management Measures**

- Gauging each crab would take a lot of time
- Support for 4.5” - 5” min size
- Fishermen already throw females back
- Support for protection of females
 - At a the right min size no need to female specific regs
- Mixed support for tolerance

- **Issue #4 – Licenses**

- support of linking crab permits to a lobster permit, with authorized trap tag
- Possible way to grandfather in people w/o lobster permits?



Public Hearings



- **Issue #5 – Data Collection**
 - Need more information before management
 - Industry involvement
- **Issue #6 – Emergency Action**
 - Some support, but hard to pass “emergency” standard
 - Interim actions could include linking the harvest with lobster permits and possibly start at a 4.5” minimum CW.
- **Issue #7**
 - Support for consistency



Public Hearings



- **Other Recommendations**

- Need to address crab parts
- Consider molt phase or hardness in regulations
- Commission needs to issue a statement that management is in progress to makes this a sustainable fishery
- Escape panels
- Need to consider socio-economic importance



Timeline for Completion

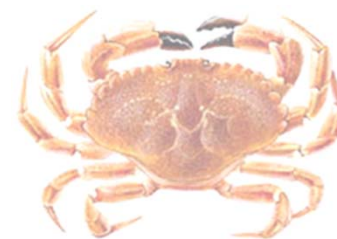


	May 2014	Board tasks the Plan Development Team to develop Public Information Document
	August 2014	Board receives the PID and considers approval for public comment
Current Step →	September - October 2014	Public Comment on the PID
	November 2014	Management Board reviews PID for public comment, considers initiation of Draft FMP. PDT will develop FMP with input from TC and AP.
	February 2015	Management Board reviews Draft FMP for public comment
	March -April 2015	Public comment on Draft FMP
	May 2015	Management Board reviews and considers recommendation of approval of the FMP Full Commission considers approval of the FMP





Questions?





State and Federal Regulatory Consistency

American Lobster Management Board
October 2014



Trap Transfer Regulations



- A subcommittee met on September 3, 2014 to discuss consistency between federal and Commission regulations.
- The following issues were discussed:
 - *Conservation tax of full business transfers*
 - *Trap transfer increments*
 - *Dual Permit Transfers*



Conservation tax of full business transfers



ISSUE:

- Current federal rule only applies the 10-percent transfer tax to partial allocation transfers.
- Under the Commission's Plan both partial and full business transfers are subject to the 10% transfer tax.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Development of an Addendum to remove 10% transfer tax on full transfers requirement
- Annual review by TC of transfer rates and rate of trap attrition in affected areas.



Trap transfer increments



ISSUE:

- Current Federal Rule only allows trap transfers to be processed in 10-trap increments.
- The Commission's Plan does not include language on trap transfer increments

RECOMMENDATION:

- The subcommittee recommends an Addendum to require that traps be transferred in 10-trap increments in all areas with trap transferability.



Dual Permit Transfers



ISSUE:

- Under current Federal Rule, a dual permit holder may purchase Federal trap allocation from any other dual lobster permit holder (regardless of state).
- Under the Commission's Plan, a dual permit holder is restricted to transferring traps only to another dual permit holder from the same state.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Support for federal regulation
- TC should be tasked to document transfer rates and trap attrition and report annually.
- If the consolidation patterns are problematic, corrective actions can be taken at a subsequent meeting.





Questions?





Upcoming Federal Rule Changes in OCC

American Lobster Management Board
October 2014



NMFS Action



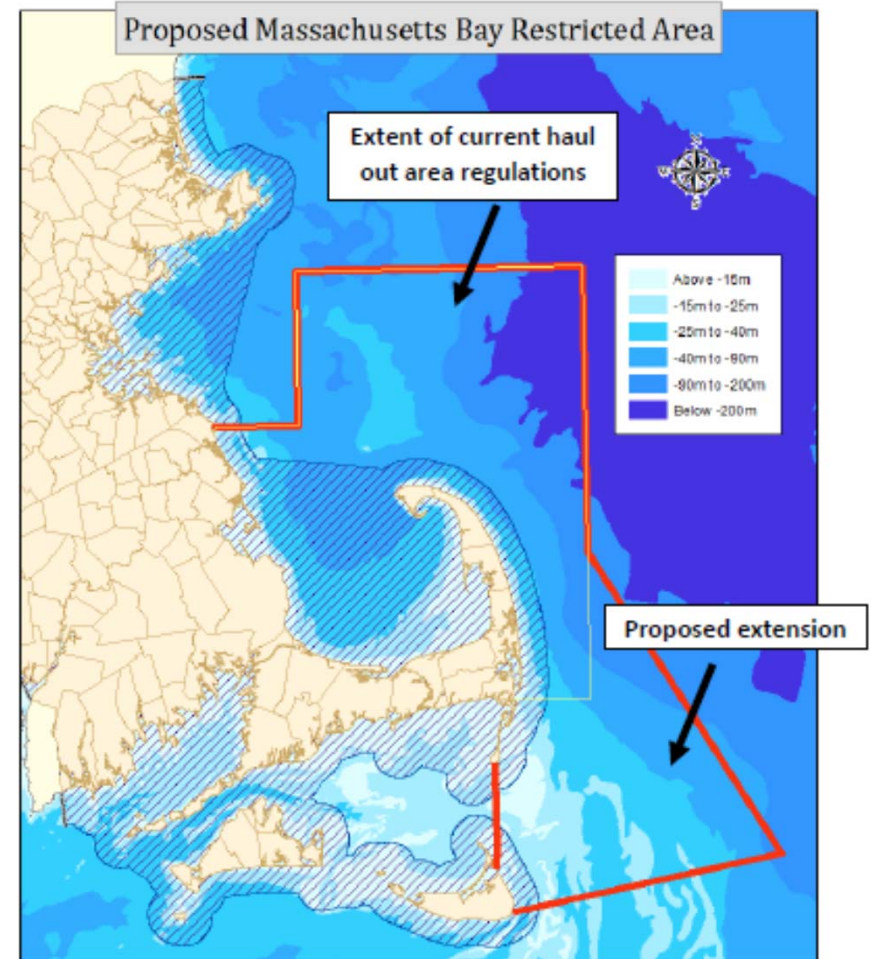
- In April 2014, NMFS implemented the Commission's 2-month winter trap haul-out recommendation (per Addendum XIII).
 - Two-month closure from January 15-March 15 with removal of all traps from Outer Cape Area waters.
- In June 2014, NMFS amended the Large Whale Take Reduction Plan.
 - Extended the Massachusetts Restricted Area and enacted closure from January 1-April 30.
- These regulations will result in considerable impacts to winter-time lobstering and safety concerns for fishermen.



Proposed Action



- Massachusetts requested spatial and temporal modifications:
 - Shift the winter haul-out period from January 15-March 15 to February 1-April 30
 - Expand the area of closure to include the remainder of the Outer Cape Cod Lobster Management Area east of 70 degrees.



Proposed Action



- The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team agreed to the spatial and temporal changes to the closure.
- If approved, MA will enact complementary regulations
- If approved, the Board should implement an Addendum to modify the haul-out language as specified in Section 4.1.6 of Addendum XIII.
 - This could likely be initiated at the February meeting and should be combined with any other proposed management changes.





SNE 10% Reduction Evaluation Update

Background



- Under Addendum XVII all LCMAs within SNE were required to reduce exploitation by 10% in order to address rebuilding.
- At the August meeting the TC presented their evaluation of the regulations.
 - Areas 4 and 5 did not meet the required reduction.



Update proposal



- Area 4 (NJ and NY) provided updated proposal for 2015 fishing year
 - Preferred option by all LCMT 4 members was a 10% reduction in trap allocation to achieve a 10% reduction in harvest.
 - The non-preferred option is a closed season from April 30-May 31
 - If new management measures for 2015 are different than the current 2014 measures, mandatory v-notching of egg bearing females will be removed from the regulation.
- Area 5 working of proposal, consistent regulations



Questions?



TC Review



- Since there is no direct relationship between trap number and landings reduction, and there is a substantial amount of latent gear, a reduction in trap allocation is unquantifiable in terms of resulting landings reduction and therefore this approach must be rejected.
- Option 1 does not have a good probability meeting the necessary reduction.
- Option 2 seasonal closure would be far better in terms of law enforcement as it aligns with the Area 6 closure.



TC Review



- The fishermen's claim that the inshore Area 4 fishery is substantially different from adjacent inshore Areas 2 and 6, but at the same time aligns with offshore Area 3 which spans the entire coast makes no sense.
- The lack of data characterizing the this fishery prevents any stand-alone assessment; what data do exist do not support their claims.
- If a large-scale multi-year tagging study were initiated some of these issues could be addressed.



Actions



- Consider approval of updated proposal

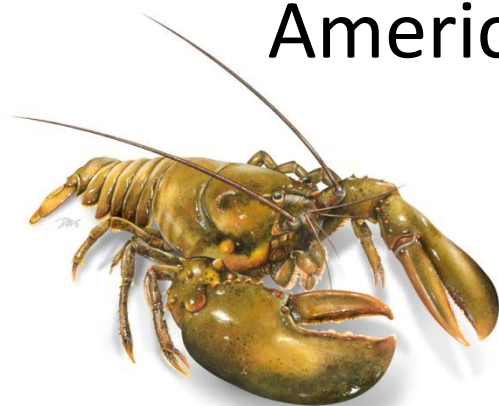




LobsTAH Update

American Lobster Management Board

October 2014



Timeline



- Currently – all federal allocations and testing of the database nearing completion
- Winter/Spring 2015 – States and NMFS hold public hearings for active and new fishermen, as well as permit brokers and fishing industry representatives, to inform the stakeholders about how the state/federal program will function and to explain the trap allocation and transfer rules.
- September 30, 2015 - Allocation transfer applications for NMFS and states will be accepted through this date and will be approved (or denied) in advance of the re-issuance of 2016 permits and trap tag orders.
- May 1, 2016 - trap allocation cuts will be executed for the 2016 fishing year





Lobster FMP Review

American Lobster Management Board

October 2014



Landings History



- Landings have exponentially increased in the last few years.

Average Landings per Time Period	
1950-1975	30 million pounds
1976-2008	90 million pounds
2012	125 million pounds

- In 2012, ME(85%) and MA (10%) landed most of the quota.
- Ex-vessel value = \$429 million
- Predominant commercial gear type- lobster pot
 - other gear types include otter trawl, gill net, dredge and SCUBA.
- The magnitude of recreational landings is unknown (all states do not collect recreational harvest data).
- Recreational gear type: lobster pot and SCUBA.



Recent Management Actions



- In 2010 , SNE stock was experiencing recruitment failure due to environmental and biological changes coupled with continued fishing.
- In 2012, the Board approved Addenda XVII and XVIII.
 - XVII reduced exploitation by 10% in SNE management areas via mandatory v-notch programs and/or season closures.
 - XVIII implemented a 25% reduction in traps for LCMAs 2 and 3.
- In 2013, the Board approved Addenda XIX–XXII.
 - XIX implemented a 10% conservation tax for transfer/full business sale
 - XX prohibits setting or storing lobster traps in Closed Area II.
 - XXI modified previous trap transferability rules for LCMAs 2 and 3
 - XXII approved modifications to ownership caps for LCMA 3.
- In 2014, the Board approved Addendum XXIII (Habitat)



Monitoring



2012 Sampling Requirements and State Implementation

State	100% Dealer reporting	10% Harvester Reporting	Overall Fishery Dependent Biological Sampling	Sea Sampling	Port Sampling	Ventless Trap Survey	Settlement Survey	Trawl Survey
ME	✓	✓	✓-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NH	✓	✓+ 100%	✓-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (ME)
MA	✓	✓+ 100%	✓-	✓		✓	✓	✓
RI	✓	✓+ 100%	✓-	✓-	✓-	✓	✓	✓
CT	✓	✓+ 100%	✓-	✓-			✓	✓
NY	✓	✓ 100%	✓-	✓-	✓-			✓ (CT)
NJ	✓	✓	✓-	✓				✓

- ✓- Sampling below FMP requirement or with reduced effort
- ✓ Sampling meets FMP requirement
- ✓+ Sampling exceeds FMP requirement



YOY Settlement Survey 2012



Maine: settlement was **below the mean** for many of Maine's seven management zones (A-F) for the second consecutive year. There has been a general decline in settlement since the mid-2000s.

New Hampshire: general upward trend in settlement from 2008-2011, followed by a decrease in 2012 to **the second lowest catch rate** of the 5-year time series.

Massachusetts: settlement was **well below** the 17-year time series median in LCMA 1 and 0 in LCMA 2.

Rhode Island: settlement has been **below the mean** and declining since 2008.

Connecticut: settlement was **well below the median** (ranked 28th in the 30-year time series).



Ventless Trap Survey 2012



Maine: catch rates were at the 7-year time series high all three statistical areas.

New Hampshire: catch rates show a general upward trend from 2009-2012.

Massachusetts: Sublegal catch rates have shown an increasing trend since 2007, while legal catch rates have remained fairly stable.

Rhode Island: sublegal lobsters decreased in catch from 2008-2010, and increased since then. Legal size catch rates have decreased slightly since 2007.





Compliance Requirements

- All states are currently in compliance with all required measures under Amendment 3 and Addendum I-XVIII.

De Minimis requests

- States requesting *de minimis*: Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware.
 - Maryland exceeded threshold for the first time and is currently addressing this issue.

