

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
AMERICAN EEL MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**Beaufort Hotel
Beaufort, North Carolina
Hybrid Meeting**

October 19, 2023

Approved January 23, 2024

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1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 1).
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3. **Move to adjourn** by consent (8).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Megan Ware, ME, proxy for P. Keliher (AA)	Kris Kuhn, PA, proxy for T. Schaeffer (AA)
Stephen Train, ME (GA)	Loren Lustig, PA (GA)
Rep. Allison Hepler, ME (LA)	John Clark, DE (AA)
Cheri Patterson, NH (AA)	Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Doug Grout, NH (GA)	Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)	Lynn Fegley, MD (AA, Acting)
Dan McKiernan, MA (AA)	David Sikorski, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)
Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Shanna Madsen, VA, proxy for J. Green (AA)
Sarah Ferrara, MA, proxy for Rep. Peake (LA)	Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for K. Rawls (AA)
Phil Edwards, RI, proxy for J. McNamee (AA)	Chad Thomas, NC, proxy for Rep. Wray (LA)
David Borden, RI (GA)	Malcolm Rhodes, SC (GA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Ben Dyar, SC, proxy for Sen. Cromer (LA)
Justin Davis, CT (AA)	Doug Haymans, GA (AA)
Robert LaFrance, CT, proxy for B. Hyatt (GA)	Spud Woodward, GA (GA)
Craig Miner, CT, proxy for Rep. Gresko, CT (LA)	Erika Burgess, FL, proxy for J. McCawley (AA)
Jesse Hornstein, NY, proxy for M. Gary (AA)	Dan Ryan, DC, proxy for R. Cloyd
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)	Ingrid Braun, PRFC, proxy for M. Gary
Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)	Chris Wright, NMFS
Jeff Kaelin, NJ (GA)	Rick Jacobson, US FWS
Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Sen. Gopal (LA)	

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

Ex-Officio Members

Mari-Beth Delucia, Advisory Panel Chair	Rob Beal, Law Enforcement Committee Rep.
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Staff

Bob Beal	Jeff Kipp	Emilie Franke
Toni Kerns	Tracy Bauer	James Boyle
Tina Berger	Caitlin Starks	Kristen Anstead
Madeline Musante	Katie Drew	Chelsea Tuohy

Guests

Debra Abercrombie, US FWS	Margaret Conroy, DE DNREC	Pat Geer, VMRC
Max Appelman, NOAA	Caitlin Craig, NYS DEC	Lewis Gillingham, VMRC
Pat Augustine	Dustin Delano, NEFSA	Joseph Grist, VMRC
Richard Balouskus, RI DEM	Julie Evans	Pat Keliher, ME (AA)
Carolyn Belcher, GA DNR	Sheila Eyler, US FWS	John Maniscalco, NYS DEC
Jessica Best, NYS DEC	Cynthia Ferrio, NOAA	Todd Mathes, NC DEQ
Alan Bianchi, NC DMF	James Fletcher, United National	Joshua McGilly, VMRC
William Brantley, NC DEQ	Fishermen's Assn.	Patrick Moran, MA
Jeffrey Brust, NJ DEP	Tony Friedrich, ASGA	Environmental Police
Haley Clinton, NC DEQ	Marty Gary, NY (AA)	Allison Murphy, NOAA

Guests (continued)

Thomas Newman
John Nielsen, Sly Fishing
Outfitters
Emily Paribello, NYS DEC
Jeffrey Pierce, MEFA
Jennifer Pyle, NJ DEP
Jill Ramsey, VMRC

Kathy Rawls, NC (AA)
Harry Rickabaugh, MD DNR
Jason Rock, NC DMF
Kirby Rootes-Murdy, BOEM
Mike Ruccio, NOAA
Alexandra Schwaab, AFWA
Somers Smott, VMRC

Scott Travers, RI Saltwater
Anglers Assn.
Keith Whiteford, MD DNR
Darrell Young, MEFA
Daniel Zapf, NC DEQ
Jordan Zimmerman, DE DFW

The American Eel Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Rachel Carson Ballroom via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Thursday, October 19, 2023, and was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chair Phillip A. Edwards III.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR PHILLIP A. EDWARDS III: I would like to call to order the American Eel Management Board meeting. My name is Phil Edwards; I'm the Administrative Proxy for Rhode Island. Joining me today from the Commission is Caitlin Starks and Kristen Anstead. Also joining me today is Major Robert Beal from Enforcement, and Mari-Beth DeLucia representing the Advisory Panel from the Nature Conservancy.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR EDWARDS: The first item on our agenda is the Approval of the Agenda. Are there any proposed changes or modifications? If so, please raise your hands. Anything online? Seeing none; the agenda is approved by consent.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR EDWARDS: Moving on to the approval of the proceedings from August of 2023, which was in your materials. Are there any corrections or edits? Seeing none; it is approved by consent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR EDWARDS: Next up is public comment. We have one person signed up for public comment, Jeff Pierce.

MR. JEFFREY PIERCE: Chairman Edwards, members of the American Eel Board, my name is Jeffrey Pierce. I'm here on the behalf of the Maine Elver Fishermen's Association, that sent meeting notes and information for you to review. In July we provided the rationale for reviewing and increasing the glass eel quota for fishermen in Maine waters.

At that time, we provided a summary of restoration activities. We were on the mainstem of the Penobscot River, completed since 2012. It selected some of their fish passage improvements that have taken place in other waterways in the state of Maine since 2012. Please know, there has been many other fish passage improvements in the region during this time, but they are not shown on this table.

We plan on submitting further summaries that will help qualify these projects, the summaries attached include dam removals, fish construction and passage improvement that have impacted 380 miles of rivers and streams and over 35,000 acres of lake. American eels at various stages of their life benefit from these projects. Thank you for reviewing this information, and we hope to be able to use the conservation credits that were set forth in Addendum IV. Thank you.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Thank you, Jeffrey for your public comment. Is there any other public comment that is not on the agenda? Anything online? Okay. We'll move to Agenda Item Number 4.

PROGRESS UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT OF DRAFT ADDENDA TO ADDRESS YELLOW EEL COMMERCIAL QUOTA AND MAINE GLASS EEL COMMERCIAL QUOTA

CHAIR EDWARDS: Caitlin Starks will provide us with a progress update on the development of Draft Addenda to address the yellow eel commercial quota, and the Maine glass eel commercial quota.

MS. CAITLIN STARKS: This will just be a short update on what the PDT has been working on since the last meeting. Starting off with the background. In August, the Board approved the recent American Eel Benchmark Stock Assessment for management use, and the assessment found that the American eel stock is depleted, and recommended that yellow eel catch be reduced.

At that same meeting, the Board initiated two addenda. The first was in response to the stock assessment findings and recommendation, and it

addresses the coastwide catch of yellow eel. The second is to address Maine's glass eel quota, because the current quota expires after 2024. These are the motions that initiated these two addenda.

For yellow eel the Board specifically asked the PDT to consider options that use the ITARGET tool that was used in the assessment to recommend various coastwide caps. I'm going to start off with the development of the Draft Addendum for Maine's glass eel quota, since it's a little faster. But the PDT has met once to discuss the development of the Addendum, and potential management options to include.

The PDT all agreed that the status quo of 9,688 pounds is a valid option to be considered, and should be included, and one PDT member felt that an option should also be included to consider reducing Maine's glass eel quota, because the assessment indicates that the stock is depleted and the Board is considering reducing the catch of yellow eel. The PDT also talked about options for how long the Maine glass eel quota should stay in place, and whether there should be a sunset clause or not.

One suggestion was that the quota should be reevaluated when there is a new stock assessment. Because there was only one meeting so far, the PDT has not made any more specific recommendations, but is planning to further review the Addendum V provisions that are relevant to glass eel, and determine if the current addendum should consider any improvements to those, such as the reporting requirements and the allowance for additional restoration projects. This is a potential timeline for the next steps of the development of the glass eel Addendum.

I think it's feasible to get a draft document to the Board at the winter meeting, so the Board could consider that Draft Addendum for public comment. If approved at that meeting, hearings and the public comment period could take place in February or early March, and the

Board could then review the public comment, and consider the Addendum for final approval at the Spring 2024 Commission meeting.

If the Addendum is approved at that meeting, then it would give adequate time for the new quota to be implemented before 2025. Moving on to the yellow eel Draft Addendum. The PDT for this action met twice in September, and they've started to draft potential management options for yellow eel.

Status quo will be the first option, and the PDT also recommended that one option for the coastwide cap be based on the ITARGET configurations that was recommended in the stock assessment, and that a second option for the coastwide cap to be based on using the ITARGET tool with the later reference period, which is 1988 through 1999. Just as a reminder, when using ITARGET there are three variables or "knobs" that can be adjusted to configure the tool, and these are the reference period, the multiplier and the threshold.

The reference period is meant to be a time period where the population is stable or at a desirable abundance level. The multiplier determines the level of abundance that management is aiming to achieve. If the multiplier is set to 1, then that means you're aiming to achieve the same abundance from the reference period.

If you set the multiplier to 1.25 that means you're aiming to achieve an abundance that is 25 percent higher than what it was during the reference period. Then the threshold value is a proportion of the ITARGET value that depends on the goals of the fishery. A threshold of 0.5 is less conservative, and would generally result in higher catch caps, whereas a threshold of 0.8 was recommended by the New England Fishery Science Center as a more conservative value.

These are the two options that the PDT is recommending for inclusion in the Addendum at this point. The top option is what was recommended in the assessment, in terms of the ITARGET configuration, so it uses the reference period of 1974 through 1987. That is the higher

abundance regime that was identified in the stock assessment, and it uses a multiplier value of 1.25, meaning it aims to achieve an abundance 25 percent greater than the abundance during those years, and a threshold value of 0.8, and with those values the ITARGET recommends that the catch in 2020 should not have exceeded 202,453 pounds.

So, 2020 is the last year of data in the assessment, and that is why we're using this year from ITARGET. The bottom row is then the second option that the PDT recommended, and this one uses the later reference period 1988 to 1999, a multiplier of 1.5, and a threshold of 0.5.

That resulted in a recommended catch cap of 509,780 pounds. Then to provide a better picture of how those two options are working, this is the graph of the yellow eel abundance index, which is the dotted gray line and their landings, which is the black line, and the two reference periods are shown in the shaded areas with the blue one being the earlier reference period, where the abundance was higher, and the orange area is the later reference period when the abundance was lower.

These two reference periods were based on distinct regimes that were identified in the assessment. For that first option that I just showed you, it uses the abundance levels in the blue shaded areas as a reference, and it's aiming to achieve a 25 percent increase from that. For the second option, it uses the abundance levels in the orange area, and is aiming to achieve a 50 percent increase from that level.

Then in addition to those options, the PDT also made some general recommendations for the Draft Addendum. First, they recommend that in each option it be clear what abundance level it's aiming to achieve. This would be done by explaining the relationship of that multiplier and reference period. The PDT also recommends that the Addendum consider

additional options for what the management response would be if the catch cap is exceeded, in addition to status quo from Addendum V. Then lastly, when the catch cap is reevaluated in the future, it's recommended that whatever ITARGET configuration is selected by the Board, that should not be changed, so we have a solid baseline to compare to, and instead additional years of landings and index data could just be added and run through ITARGET to update the catch cap recommendation.

To help the PDT further develop the Addendum options, they are looking for some input from the Board in a few specific areas. First, they want to know what abundance level the Board is looking to achieve, so is it 25 percent higher than the higher abundance regime, or 50 percent higher than the lower abundance regime, or something else?

Does the Board want to reconsider using state by state quotas to control landings, and if not, how would the states then control landings so that the cap is not exceeded? The PDT noted that Maryland's landings alone are close to some of those ITARGET recommended catch caps, so this warrants some consideration by the Board.

Then, are there limits around what catch caps the Board is willing to consider, and if the catch cap is exceeded, does the Board want to stick with the same process that was established in Addendum V, or consider other options for paying back quota? Then lastly, how often should the catch cap be reevaluated?

On this topic the PDT did recommend that it should be at least three years from when it's implemented, no less time. Then last here, similar to glass eel, this is a timeline outlining the fastest possible schedule for moving this Addendum forward. This would involve considering the Draft Addendum for public comment at the 2024 winter meeting, and then holding public hearings and a comment period during February and March.

If that goes through, then the Board could consider the public comments at the spring meeting, and consider final approval of the Addendum. The

Board could then set the implementation date, but this would probably allow the states enough time to implement any changes by 2025. With that I can take any questions.

CHAIR EDWARDS: A great update, questions for Caitlin. Craig.

MR. CRAIG D. PUGH: Effort values, how are they considered in this? I don't see any information about that. That seems to be a huge question since the 1980s effort has dropped off. I know here lately dropped off even more. One would be bait resources and Number 2 would be marketability. Marketability has fell off lately, especially since COVID, to back to 1980 levels of sales driving the market to the point where fishing for eel is unfeasible.

Then of course, that results in no landings. It doesn't necessarily mean there aren't any fish, it doesn't mean there aren't any eels, it just means that we're not fishing. How does that factor into these findings you have?

MS. STARKS: The PDT has not discussed effort levels as a part of this so far, because the task from the Board was specifically asking to look at using the ITARGET tool to set the catch cap, so that is not something the PDT discussed.

CHAIR EDWARDS: John Clark.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Thanks for the presentation, Caitlin. Just following up on Craig's point. Is there really any pressing need to move ahead with this yellow eel addendum at this point? I've spoke to the largest buyer of eels on the east coast. There is no market anymore for yellow eels. I now a lot of the data we get is actually based on the commercial fishery. It just seems like we're looking for a problem that doesn't exist right now. When the fishery comes back, if it comes back, I mean it seems like this could be postponed until we start seeing more interest in catching eels.

MS. STARKS: I think the Board initiated this Addendum because the stock assessment found that the catch levels, even in the last few years where they've been lower, are too high, in terms of comparing them to the recommended catch that comes out of the ITARGET tool. If we want to change course, then I would need direction from the Board.

CHAIR EDWARDS: John Clark.

MR. CLARK: If I could just follow up. I mean the stock has been depleted, based on the assessments we've done, since we've been, this is what the third benchmark assessment? Each time, or the second, each time it has been we have deficiency in the data. Each time we do it we just have like five more years of deficient data.

I just don't want to see us getting into a situation where we have a population of eels out there that can sustain more, and then we end up taking management actions unnecessarily, when and if a market for eels ever comes back. Anyhow, just putting that out there. I don't see any pressing need to pursue this further at this time.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Lynn Fegley.

MS. LYNN FEGLEY: Thank you, Caitlin, and I apologize, because I am maybe a little bit less prepared than I wanted to be. But I just wanted to ask about the multiplier value and the reference period. Is the PDT planning to use the 1.25 multiplier with the 1988 to 1999 reference period? Was that the one that resulted in a higher cap than what we currently have?

MS. STARKS: There are two options, Madeline if you could put Slide 8 up, that the PDT has discussed. One of those uses the earlier reference period with the 1.25, and the other uses the later reference period with the 1.5 multiplier. However, as with all of our addenda, if these two options were in the document for public comment, then the Board could pick other options between those values.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Lynn.

MS. FEGLEY: Yes, because I think that is going to be important to include, because in my mind, I mean the idea here right, if you're aiming to get higher than some sort of condition you've seen in the past. From my perspective, trying to get ourselves 1.25 the level of that most recent reference period is a really good incremental start.

You know sort of to John's point, you know we've got a lot of market conditions here, and it seems like given the uncertainty around whether management action is really going to exert and enforce at all on changing the trajectory of the stock. One way to go at it is to take your step, take smaller incremental steps. I don't remember what the cap result was when you did 1988 to 1999 with a 1.25 multiplier. But I would love to see that in the document.

MS. STARKS: Thanks, Lynn, we can add that.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Dan McKiernan.

MR. DANIEL MCKIERNAN: I would like to follow upon the comments coming from the Delaware delegation concerning effort. I don't know where the answer lies, maybe it's from the TC. Is it possible to describe the reduction in effort? Do the states collectively have effort data that could corroborate what they're describing as a serious drop off in effort?

CHAIR EDWARDS: Kristen.

DR. KRISTEN ANSTEAD: Several states submitted commercial CPUEs and we put them in the appendix of the assessment, and they are not entirely fresh in my mind, but I believe most of them were declining, with the exception of Maryland. But we don't have extensive effort data.

MR. MCKIERNAN: If I could follow up. There is another species board, the Horseshoe Crab Board that I think could really use the holistic

view of the use of that organism as bait, and it would be really valuable to crossover. Now there is a third species, which is the whelk, that uses the horseshoe crabs as bait.

At some point I think we need to kind of rise up above just the single species challenges, and maybe ask the states to describe the effort levels of these fisheries that use the controversial horseshoe crab. I'll bring that up at the policy board, but thank you for that.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Rick Jacobson.

MR. RICK JACOBSON: In many fisheries I can understand taking an incremental approach, for instance applying a 1.25 multiplier to a lower abundance reference period of '88 to '99. But in this case, where we have a species that has been considered for a listing under ESA here in the United States. It has been listed European eels in Europe, it's considered under CITES, and in the absence of a real active market and fishery, it seems counterintuitive to explore an incremental approach when we have an opportunity to aim for a higher target. I just question the wisdom of including the 1.25 multiplier for the '88 to '99 period.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Shanna.

MS. SHANNA MADSEN: I'm going to go back to question time. I don't know that we've moved on to comments. Caitlin, can you remind us what, so you're asking us a question about whether or not we want to use the same process established in Addendum V, if we exceed the cap. Can you remind us what the process is for exceeding the cap from Addendum V?

MS. STARKS: Under Addendum V, which I actually have a slide on this so I'll put it up. Only states withwith, so if the cap is exceeded, then the Board would initiate an addendum to reduce landings to or below the cap, and a PDT could consider actions to reduce harvest back to the cap. But only the states with greater than 1 percent of landings, in the years when the management trigger is tripped,

would be responsible for reducing their landings to achieve the coastwide cap in the subsequent year.

States with greater than 1 percent of landings would work collectively to achieve an equitable reduction to the coastwide cap. There is a tree in Addendum V that gives all of the details for exactly how each step would work, depending on when the overage is and how much the overage is.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Shanna.

MS. MADSEN: Just a quick follow up to that. Another question that you guys have asked us that I just want a little bit of clarification on is, if we want to reconsider the use of state-by-state quotas, can you kind of remind us? I know that this has come up previously. I just want to make sure that my understanding is correct. Last time we talked about this, I think the states were concerned about administrative burden. Is that right on why we did not want to look into doing state by state quotas?

MS. STARKS: I believe that is accurate.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Are there any other questions for Caitlin? Are there any questions online? John Clark.

MR. CLARK: Not so much a question, I think Dan was asking about effort, and we've kept catch per unit effort in Delaware since we started the plan. We have seen changes over time, but a lot of it was related to when female horseshoe crabs were no longer available to use as bait. Then the other things happened related to effort, it's an open license in Delaware. A lot of the older people that, what do you call yourself, Craig, young/old?

MR. PUGH: New old guy.

MR. CLARK: Yes, the new old guys have stopped dealing, some young people will get into it or new to it. They don't have good bait,

they don't really know what they're doing, and the catch won't be as good. There has been some change there, but overall, it really hasn't changed that much.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Are there any other questions? Caitlin, do you have what you need to bring back to the Plan Development Team? Shanna.

MS. MADSEN: Yes, so if we're going to move into comment period, and it seems like you've been given some tasking from some of the other states. Something that I would like to see is the first reference period with the 1.25 multiplier, but I would like to see the threshold at 0.5. That kind of seems to be closest to what the assessment had suggested that we look into, but I'm guessing that it probably falls within the two options that you've put before us.

However, I think it's important for us to not just kind of pick between the two options, but to understand why we're taking those options. One suggestion that I would give to the PDT is to maybe try to run through kind of these various scenarios. I know you guys don't want to give up, you know you don't want to do a ton of crazy scenarios, but I think that seeing how those levels vary, and what thresholds, time periods, multipliers they are associated with would make good sense for all of us.

MS. STARKS: Just to respond to that. I put a slide up with all of the sensitivity runs that were done for the assessment, and we are considering these. You can see in this table how the recommended catch cap differs, based on changing the threshold value. Those first three rows, if you look at that. That is the earlier reference period with a 1.25 base multiplier.

Changing the threshold value gets you a pretty significant range of different catch caps. I believe the SAS recommended using that threshold value to adjust the ITARGET tool, rather than the reference period and multiplier, but the PDT did want to look at using that closer reference period from 1988 to 1999.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Shanna.

MS. MADSEN: Just a quick follow up. Thank you, so much, Caitlin, I think that this is really helpful. One thing that I would recommend, maybe to the PDT is, I like seeing this range of options. However, I think it's really important when this document ends up going out to the public, or even ends up coming back to the Board, that it has some justification and reasons for, like you just said, this is what the SAS has recommended that we use, in order to vary these catch caps. I would love to just see some of that in the document when it comes back to us.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Are there any other comments from the Board for Caitlin to bring back to the Plan Development Team? John Clark.

MR. CLARK: Sorry, Mr. Chair, I'm just repeating what I say in a lot of ways, but it seems like we want to have fun with numbers here, and get to an option that is closer to the cap we have now, which begs the question, why don't we just put this all on hold, is my comment.

CHAIR EDWARDS: Are there any other comments or questions? Seeing no other comments or questions, we're going to move on to Agenda Item Number 5, the Advisory Panel Report by Mari-Beth DeLucia.

ADVISORY PANEL REPORT

MS. MARI-BETH DeLUCIA: Good morning, everybody. I'm just going to give a brief overview of the Advisory Panel report, and I guess one comment I really want to make is there was only three members on the call, so it's a small AP, and I'll mention more about that in a minute. Myself, Mitch Feigenbaum, and Richard Stoughton from South Carolina were on the call, as well as our chairman. On that call, Kristen gave an overview of the stock assessment, and Caitlin did an update to the Addendum on the call. Most of the comments

that are going to follow are usually one AP members comments, not necessarily the whole AP agreeing with each other.

Basically, the staff recommends that the states look at the membership of the AP, and see if we can get some more participation. I know when I first started this almost six years ago, we had about 10 or 15 people around the table, and now calls are two or three people, which isn't really an effective AP.

One AP member felt that the stock assessment results are heavily driven by the fishery dependent data, which we've talked about already this morning, and a low catch can be influencing the results. Another AP member felt this is not enough data to call the stock depleted. One of the choices that we did agree, the entire AP agreed on, was that the young of year surveys, you know are really important.

But we have a lot of them, and a lot of them don't seem to be showing us anything. Maybe the TC could evaluate and identify ones that are more meaningful, and kind of focused our resources on those, not so much quantity but the quality young of year surveys. There was a suggestion that some genetic work be done, so that we can look at the spawning stock, or how reproductive the stock is.

A suggestion was made that the yellow eel addendum should include an option for no change, I think Mr. Clark has suggested that as well this morning. It seems as if the status quo seems effective, and the catch is not going to increase due to the market, or the lack of a market. Even though the price for eels have gone up worldwide over the last five or six years, the demand is being supplied by European aquaculture farms.

That seems to be what is driving the lack of a market here in the states, as well as COVID and a lot of the issues we've had over the last few years. It is clear, it seems like the low harvest does not equate to low abundance necessarily, and it's just decreased effort. I think there are a lot of folks that would like to see some effort, and that was a strong

suggestion from the AP, put into some of the analyses.

Back to the AP, I've been the Chair for the last six years. I can't remember who asked me to be the Chair, but it was supposed to be for two years, which was fine. But the Advisors that were on the call would like to elect a new Chair. Caitlin mentioned that they understand that, but there is a lack of participation, so that is a challenge.

As I mentioned, participation has been nearly nonexistent in the last two years, and there are two or three calls, you now often it's Mitch and myself, we kind of sometimes negate each other on the call. Last time there was only two commercial fishermen on the call, and it definitely wasn't, it was two people from Pennsylvania and one from South Carolina, so it's a very small group on the call. That's all I have, any questions?

CHAIR EDWARDS: Thank you, Mari-Beth. Are there any questions for Mari-Beth? Online? Okay, Other Business. Is there any other business to be brought before this Board? I would just like to add, this is the end of my term as Chair, and I would like to welcome Kris Kuhn from Pennsylvania; he will be the Chair in 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR EDWARDS: Could I have a motion to adjourn this meeting, John Clark, could I have a second, Shanna? Thank you, this meeting is adjourned.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m. on October 19, 2023)