

**ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panel
January 27, 2000 - Meeting Summary (Minutes)
Linthicum, Maryland**

ATTENDANCE:

Advisory Panel (AP) Members:

Robert Munson (AP Chairman; NJ Waterman's Association)
Jim Cooper (AP Vice-Chairman; SC - Endosafe, Inc. (biomedical))
Kenneth Bailey (NJ - HSC and conch fisherman)
Merrill Campbell (MD - Seafood (HSC) Dealer)
Michael Dawson (MA - Associates of Cape Cod (biomedical))
Frank Eicherly (DE - conch fisherman)
Jeff Eutsler (MD - HSC trawler)
Jay Harrington (MA - HSC collector for biomedical)
Bill McCormick (MD - Bio-Whittaker, Inc. (biomedical))
William Brian Pruitt (VA - conch fisherman)
Richard Robbins (VA - conch processor)
Peter Wenczel (NY - conch and HSC fisherman)

Advisory Panel Members Not In Attendance:

John Barnette (MD - eel fisherman)
Mitchell Fisher (DE - HSC dealer)
William Legg (MD - eel fisherman)
James Patterson (RI - HSC trawler)
Grace Pierce-Beck (DE Audubon Society)
Dr. Carl Safina (NY - National Audubon Society, Living Oceans)
Scott Salmon (MD - HSC fisherman)

Technical Committee (TC):

Peter Himchak (TC Chairman)

ASMFC Staff:

Tom O'Connell (Horseshoe Crab Plan Coordinator)

Other:

Steve Latson (NY - conch fisherman)

HANDOUTS:

The following handout was distributed to the advisory panel:

- 1) Draft of "Public Comment Summary on Addendum 1";

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT:

Peter Himchak (TC Chairman) provided a report on the previous day's meeting of the technical committee. A summary of the technical committee meeting is attached.

UPDATE ON ALTERNATIVE BAITS & TRAP TECHNIQUES:

An update on alternative bait and trap techniques is provided in the attached technical committee report.

REVIEW OF REFERENCE PERIOD LANDINGS:

The states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island submitted requests for changing their reference period landings based upon additional data which has become available during 1999. The state of Georgia also made reference to changes to their reference period landing prior to the technical committee meeting, however the technical committee did not receive a formal request or additional data to justify any changes. The technical committee's recommendation to the management board on these requests can be found in the attached technical committee report.

Jay Harrington suggested that fishermen in Massachusetts inflated their landings in 1999 because they knew they these numbers would be used in establishing a cap or reduction in 2000. Peter Wenzel indicated that fishermen also have incentives to under-report, and believes the reference period landings to be the best estimate of landings under the given circumstances.

ADDENDUM 1 - MANAGEMENT OPTION RECOMMENDATION:

Option 13 - Alternative Baits and Trap Techniques:

Peter Wenzel informed the advisory panel that conch fishermen in New York are already using bait bags and have reduced their demand for horseshoe crabs as much as possible. Peter is not in favor of any harvest reductions in New York but recognizes that reductions may be warranted in other states (mid-Atlantic region).

Rick Robbins reported that the preliminary results of Virginia's field tests with bait bags is promising but too early to indicate whether or not they will reduce the demand for horseshoe crabs in Virginia. Frank Eicherly indicated that there is a design flaw in the bait bags which are being utilized in Virginia which if corrected could significantly increase conch catches.

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that the management support Option 13 and provide the necessary resources to facilitate the development of these alternative bait and trap techniques in an aggressive and swift manner. (Motion made by Peter Wenzel; Seconded by Jay Harrington)

Motion approved, 10 in favor and 1 opposed. Jeff Eutsler opposed the motion because he is a horseshoe crab harvester and the development of alternative baits and trap techniques will reduce the demand for horseshoe crabs and impact his business.

Ken Bailey indicated the need to develop an artificial food for migratory shorebirds.

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that the management board consider encouraging the development of a supplemental feeding program for migratory shorebirds during their stopover in the Delaware Bay region. (Motion made by Ken Bailey; Seconded by ???)

Motion approved, 10 in favor and 1 opposed. Jim Cooper opposed the motion because he believes it does not address the management options for horseshoe crabs,

its shorebird related.

Option 12 - Federal Water Closure:

Rick Robbins indicated the need to consider the biological impact of harvesting techniques (hand harvesters and trawls).

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that the management board oppose Option 12 because the transfer of harvest at sea is minimal, and the closure would result in additional pressure on near-shore waters and spawning areas. (Motion made by Mic Dawson; Seconded by Merrill Campbell)

Motion approved unanimously.

Ken Bailey suggested that the advisory panel should support the prohibition of transfers-at-sea even though it is currently not an issue because it would satisfy those stakeholders which believe it is or could be a problem.

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that the management board should make a recommendation to the National Marine Fisheries Service, requesting them to establish measures to prohibit the transfer of horseshoe crabs at sea. (Motion made by Ken Bailey; Seconded by Peter Wenzel)

Motion approved unanimously.

The advisory panel discussed the possibility of landings shifting to *de minimis* states and strategies which would prevent this from occurring other than closing Federal waters.

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that *de minimis* states be required to implement mandatory monthly reporting and close their respective horseshoe crab fishery once their landings meet or exceed the *de minimis* threshold. (Motion made by Mic Dawson; Seconded by Jim Cooper)

Motion approved unanimously.

Option 11 - Harvest Sex Ratio Limit of at Least 1 Male to 1 Female:

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that the management board oppose Option 11 and examine other management strategies for maintaining appropriate harvest sex ratios. (Motion made by Frank Eicherly; Seconded by Bob Munson)

Motion approved, 9 in favor and 2 opposed. Bill McCormick and Mic Dawson opposed the motion because they believe it is critical to maintain adequate numbers of female horseshoe crabs.

Option 10 - Non-Mid-Atlantic Option of Coastwide Cap or 25 HSC Daily Possession Limit:

Rick Robbins and Brian Pruitt indicated that they oppose Option 10 because the daily possession

limit of 25 is not high enough to allow the fishermen in non-mid-Atlantic states to harvest their allowable catch for which Virginia conch fishermen may become more dependent upon.

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that the management board oppose Option 10 because the daily possession limit is not high enough to allow fishermen in non-mid-Atlantic states to harvest their allowable catch. (Motion made by Brian Pruitt; Seconded by Rick Robbins)

Motion approved, 6 in favor, 1 opposed and 3 abstained. Bill McCormick opposed the motion because he believes that Option 10 would be beneficial. Merrill Campbell, Jeff Eutsler and Mic Dawson abstained.

Option 9 - Transfer of Quota:

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that the management board oppose Option 9. (Motion made by Jay Harrington, Seconded by Frank Eicherly)

Motion was weakly opposed with the original vote tied 5 in favor and 5 opposed, and was opposed with the Chairperson's vote of opposing the motion. The Chairperson noted that his support of Option 9 was primarily to allow end-of-year transfers to occur to compensate for overages. Therefore, the motion was weakly opposed with 6 opposed and 5 in favor.

Motion: Support end of year transfers to compensate for overages. (Motion made by Jay Harrington, no second)

Options 5 to 8: Coastwide Cap Not Allocated State-By-State:

Rick Robbins provided a presentation explaining why the advisory panel and management board should support Option 6 or 7. Rick explained that Option 6 and 7 provide the management board with a unique opportunity to reduce landings by 25% while allowing the consumptive user groups to continue without significant impacts. Of the two options, Rick supports Option 6 as the horseshoe crab - shorebird phenomena does not appear to exist in non-mid-Atlantic states.

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that the management board consider a combination of Option 2 and Option 6 which includes the following: establishing a mid-Atlantic quota at 25% below the reference period landings and establish a state-by-state cap for non-mid-Atlantic states at their reference period landings. (Motion made by Rick Robbins, Seconded by Brian Pruitt)

Motion NOT approved, 2 in favor and 9 opposed. Those in opposition indicated that coastwide or regional quota which are not allocated state-by-state have not worked in the past.

Options 1 to 4: Coastwide Cap Allocated State-By-State:

Frank Eicherly reported on all of the harvest restriction measures which have been implemented in Delaware since 1991, and requested that Delaware be credited for the harvest reductions already

realized when establishing a cap on Delaware’s commercial horseshoe crab bait landings.

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that the management board, when establishing a cap on Delaware’s commercial horseshoe crab bait landings, take into account the harvest restrictions that Delaware has implemented since 1991 which have resulted in significant harvest reductions. (Motion made by Jay Harrington; Seconded by Peter Wenzel)

Motion approved unanimously.

AP Member	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 6
Ken Bailey	✗				
Merrill Campbell			✗		
Jim Cooper				✗	
Mic Dawson				✗	
Frank Eicherly					
Jeff Eutsler		✗			
Jay Harrington					
Bill McCormick				✗	
Bob Munson					
Grace Pierce-Beck ¹				✗	
Brian Pruitt	✗				
Rick Robbins					✗
Peter Wenzel	✗				

¹ Unable to attend due to inclement weather conditions but forwarded preferred option prior to the meeting.

Motion: The advisory panel recommends that the management board adopt the following: each state shall establish a cap on its commercial horseshoe crab bait landings at 0-25% below the states reference period landings based upon the available scientific data and discussion with its stakeholder groups.

Motion approved, 5 in favor, 4 opposed and 1 abstained. Brian Pruitt and Rick Robbins opposed the motion because they believe the reference period landings result in inequity to Virginia. Bill McCormick opposed the motion because he believes a 0-25% reduction is not sufficient and that is should be between 25-50%. Mic Dawson opposed the motion because he is concerned that states will not establish the necessary reductions unless mandated by the ASMFC. Jim Cooper abstained.