

ASMFC Lobster Advisory Panel

May 20, 2004
Conference Call

Meeting Summary

Meeting Participants:

AP Members:

David Spencer

Robert Baines

John Sorlien

ASMFC Staff:

Carrie Selberg

Summary of Meeting and Recommendations to the Lobster Board:

Approve Meeting Summary from November 2003

The meeting summary approval was deferred until the next meeting.

Update on Management Board Activities

Staff updated the AP on the most recent developments on the stock assessment, Amendment 4, Addendum IV, if necessary clauses, and transferability. Addendum IV was passed on December 2003 and included changes in vent sizes for some gauge sizes, changes to the interpretation of the most restrictive rule, a transferability program for Area 3 and finally an effort control (including transferability) program and gauge increases for Area 2. The implementation dates vary for each measure. Also, staff briefed the A.P. concerning Addendum V, which was approved in March 2004 and included a revised overall trap cap for Area 3.

The Board took action on the if necessary clauses at the December Board meeting as well indicating that all if necessary measures were considered necessary except for Area 6 which got a one year delay on implementation of upcoming management measures. **The A.P. discussed the if necessary clauses and the Lobster Board's action on the if necessary clauses at the December Board meeting. The AP recommends making sure this issue is clarified in all future management measures to prevent confusion.**

Transferability

Staff explained that the transferability subcommittee met earlier in the week to discuss implementation of the transferability program. Staff briefed the A.P of the subcommittee's concerns on implementing the program. NOAA Fisheries discussed concerns about their ability to immediately implement transferability programs, based on recent draft recommendations by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy that identified the potential value of 'Dedicated Access Programs', but acknowledged that many issues still needed resolution. The draft Ocean Policy report recommended Congress direct NOAA Fisheries to issue national guidelines on Dedicated Access Programs, including transferability and ITQ's, and identified several specific issues that

such guidelines should address. Given this guidance, NMFS implementation of the transferability components of Addendum IV and V for Federal lobster permit holders may be delayed. The Subcommittee is concerned about states implementing transferability programs without complimentary federal action and will be discussing these concerns with the Board at the upcoming meeting.

The AP indicated that it was important not to split up the effort control management measures for Area 2. Therefore if there is a delay in transferability, the Area 2 allocation should be delayed as well.

The AP urges the Board and NMFS to move forward with planning and implementation of transferability as quickly as possible. The AP is concerned that waiting for NMFS and Congress could take a long time.

Several LCMA's have already passed transferability programs and more LCMA's may be interested in doing so in the future. In light of the Ocean Commission recommendations, the AP recommends that the ASMFC and lobster community participate in the larger national discussion that will likely take place about Dedicated Access programs. There may be a need for regional workshops and dialogues about these programs and the AP would like to participate in those discussions and urges the Board and the ASMFC to do so as well.

Finally, as more LCMA's move towards dedicated access programs, the AP feels it is important that all states move towards required catch reports that are needed to implement these programs.

Update on Stock Assessment Activities

The Technical Committee and various subcommittees are actively working on the stock assessment. The anticipated completion date for the assessment has been extended until early 2005. The Model Development Subcommittee is exploring and testing several different models and those models will be reviewed by an outside panel of experts this Fall. This feedback is designed to assist the TC in choosing the model for the upcoming assessment. The TC is also currently working on the input parameter estimates including growth, maturing, and natural mortality.

Discussion on AP activities for the year

The AP discussed issues they would like to work on throughout 2004 and beyond. At the next meeting, the AP would like to discuss a coast wide zero tolerance v-notching definition; a universal gauge size for the coast; the placement of escape vents in traps; lobster health and disease information coming out of the Long Island Sound research; dedicated access programs and the role AP members can play in the national dialogue; funding for research activities; and finally, when the model has been chosen for the stock assessment, the AP requested a presentation from Bob Glenn about the model.

Discussion about Chair of AP

After the May 2004 Meeting week, John Sorlein will be taking over the role of Chair of the AP.