

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel - Old Town
Alexandria, Virginia
February 8, 2012**

Approved October 22, 2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Call to Order, Chairman Bill Goldsborough.....	1
Approval of Agenda.....	1
Approval of Proceedings, November 8, 2011.....	1
Review of State Implementation of Addendum VI.....	1
Update on Approved State Regulations.....	1
New Jersey Proposal.....	3
Update of the Tautog Aging Review.....	3
Other Business.....	4
Adjournment.....	4

INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of Agenda by Consent** (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of November 8, 2011 by Consent** (Page 1).
3. **Move to approve the New Jersey commercial size increase as recommended by the technical committee** (Page 3). Motion by Bill Adler; second by Pat Augustine. Motion carried (Page 3).
4. **Motion to adjourn by Consent** (Page 4).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

David Pierce, MA, proxy for P. Diodati, (AA)
William Adler, MA (GA)
Jocelyn Cary, MA, proxy for Rep. Peake (LA)
Mark Gibson, RI, proxy for R. Ballou (AA)
William McElroy, RI (GA)
Rick Bellavance, RI, proxy for Rep. Martin (LA)
Dave Simpson, CT (AA)
Lance Stewart, CT (GA)
Rep. Craig Miner, CT (LA)
James Gilmore, NY (AA)
Pat Augustine, NY (GA)
Brian Culhane, NY, proxy for Sen. Johnson (LA)

Peter Himchak, NJ, proxy for D. Chanda (AC)
Tom Fote, NJ (GA)
Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Asm. Albano (LA)
Bernie Pankowski, DE, proxy for Sen. Venables(LA)
Jeff Tinsman, DR, proxy for D. Saveikis (AA)
Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Tom O'Connell, MD (AA)
Bill Goldsborough, MD (GA)
Jack Travelstead, VA, proxy for S. Bowman (AA)
Catherine Davenport, VA (GA)
Jaime Geiger, USFWS

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

Ex-Officio Members

Jason McNamee, Technical Committee

Staff

Vince O'Shea
Bob Beal
Chris Vonderweidt
Mike Waine

The Tautog Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Presidential Ballroom of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Alexandria, Virginia, February 8, 2012, and was called to order at 5:45 o'clock p.m. by Chairman William Goldsborough.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIRMAN WILLIAM GOLDSBOROUGH: Good evening, everybody. This is the Tautog Management Board. I'm Bill Goldsborough, the chairman. I know it's late but we have a pretty straightforward agenda, so hopefully we can get through it pretty quickly.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

As the first order of business, does anybody have any changes to the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda is approved.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

Does anybody have any changes to the proceedings from the November 8th meeting? Seeing none, the proceedings from November are approved. At this time we'll take public comment on items not on the agenda. Is there anybody that would like to offer public to the board? Seeing none, we'll move along to Agenda Item 4, the primary agenda item, the review of the state implementation of Addendum VI, and I'll pass it to Chris for an update on approved state regulations.

REVIEW OF STATE IMPLEMENTATION OF ADDENDUM VI

UPDATE ON APPROVED STATE REGULATIONS

MR. CHRISTOPHER VONDERWEIDT: I'm just going to kind of go through where states are implementing their regulations for Addendum VI and then I'm going to pass it over to Jason McNamee from Rhode Island who is sitting in as the Technical Committee Chair for this meeting, and he is going to talk about the New Jersey proposal.

Just as a quick refresher, Addendum VI established an F target equal to 0.15 to rebuild the stock, which when converted equals a 53 percent harvest reduction based on the average of 2008 and 2009. It also carried over language from previous addendums allowing for state/regional assessments that are at the same level of precision as the coast-wide assessment.

As part of that, the states are required to give an annual update as part of their compliance report. It had an implementation date of January 1, 2012. At previous board meetings there was a regional virtual population assessment submitted by Massachusetts/Rhode Island where they demonstrated an F rate lower than the coast-wide average of 0.12 and the coast-wide average was – excuse me, lower than the F target of 0.15. Their assessment was 0.12.

Their precision metric was 0.69 versus 0.61 for the coastwide so it was deemed at the same level of precision. The TC also commented that these states showed a history of proactive management so it seemed like something that would be fine to approve. The board accepted the technical committee's recommendations and Massachusetts/Rhode Island are not required to implement any new regulations as part of Addendum VI.

Moving forward to states that did have to submit regulations to meet the target, states weren't quite sure at that time what suite of regulations their fishermen were going to prefer, so what they opted to do was to submit a variety of proposals based on specific reduction methodology, reduce seasons, increase size limits, reduce bag limits; a combination but they laid out the equations and the methods that they would use to do that.

The technical reviewed those specific methods. There were a number of rounds of that and the technical committee guidance, and the technical committee gave some caveats with those recommendations; things like you couldn't have a half-inch size increase, you couldn't have a seven-day standalone season reduction, something in the middle. It would have to be two weeks or greater.

States agreed with that and so did the board. As far as state/regional assessments for states other than Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the board approved a catch curve methodology based on recommendations of the technical committee. There were three caveats with those. New York would need a 48.7 percent reduction rather than the 53 percent.

At that time New Jersey was approved to use catch curve methodology; however, it was unknown what level of reduction would be necessary. New Jersey did not go that route. Maryland was 49 percent and Virginia was 50.5 percent. That's where we were at during the last board meetings.

Since then all states submitted proposals explaining what methodology was used to achieve the regulations in their final regulation package or where they were along in the process. Unfortunately there were two proposals that were submitted last week. That's one of the reasons why this stuff was on the supplemental material rather than the briefing materials.

Staff handed out the actual proposals from the states, and then there is sort of a summary table here that has actually been updated from the supplemental material. There were a few inconsistencies between state proposals and the actual regulations, but this table represents what the final state regulations – or the ones that will be final are.

I just want to point out that the plan review team hasn't had a chance to look at this, so it's pretty preliminary at this point. The Law Enforcement Committee also has not had a chance to review it due to the late submissions. I have spoken with Mark about reviewing and looking at what some of the recommendations for federal waters might be based on the state regulations, but it's just preliminary.

All the state proposals appear to comply with the technical committee's previously approved methodology – the board's previously approved methodology except one part of the New Jersey proposal, which Jay will go through. It's a commercial size increase, which the technical committee reviewed, and you can follow along in the memo.

Going from north to south, remember Massachusetts/Rhode Island were not required to implement anything new, so that brings us to Connecticut. They have a 53 percent total reduction. They stayed with a 14-inch size limit. These regulations were effective January 23rd. There is just a new closed season from February 1 through April 30th in both fisheries.

For New York a total of 48.7 percent reduction; there are a few additional closures in the recreational season, January through April, October 1-7, and December 4-20. I'll just point out that the October 1-7, that's not in the middle of an existing season. It is at the end of an existing season, so it follows what the technical committee recommendations were.

They also increased the recreational size limit by two inches. It is now 16 inches. You can look on the table and sort of get a sense for where states are with the size limits if you want, because that's one of the

themes that has come up over and over with this as far as enforcement and things like that.

For the commercial in New York, they increased the size limit by one inch from 14 inches to 15 inches.

For Delaware, a 53 percent reduction was effective February 11th or it will be. They have consistent recreational and commercial regulations for the tautog fishery. What they did was they reduced the bag limit. They had a ten-fish bag limit in three seasons and then there was a three-fish bag limit in the other season so they made all the seasons a bag limit of five fish, so they decrease it by five and three of them increased it by two.

Then in addition it was a 16-day additional Wave 4 closure. They increased the size limit from two 16 inches, and it was 14 in three of the seasons and 15 in one of the seasons, so that was a one-inch size increase for one of the seasons and then it would be a two-inch size increase for those other two seasons.

Maryland used a catch curve methodology to demonstrate an F rate which only needed a 48.8 percent reduction using the catch curve methodology. It's not in place right now. It's expected to be effective April 2, 2012. Maryland DNR staff told me that. They have consistent commercial and recreational regulations.

They went with a 16-inch size limit, which is a two-inch increase, and also implemented an additional 16-day Wave 6 closure. Just one thing to point out with the April 2nd implementation date, the harvest reduction from January 1 through April 1, the increase in size limit won't be realized. I don't know if it's a big deal or not, but they're on schedule to have this implemented soon.

For Virginia, they reduced 50.5 percent using that catch curve approved methodology. Their regulations were effective January 1. The new recreational regulations, they increased their size limit to 16 inches, which is a two-inch increase; decreased the possession limit to three fish, which is a one-fish bag limit reduction; and implemented a 106 day closure in Waves 2 through 4. For their commercial regulations, there is an additional 57-day closure, Wave 1 and Wave 5, and then a commercial increase to 15 inches, which is an increase of one inch.

For New Jersey, like I said before, their harvest reduction methodology was the same as their submitted proposals for the majority of the proposal.

It's a 53 percent reduction so the full reduction. These regulations were effective January 25th of this year. They increased the size limit to 15 inches. There are additional closures, March 1 through 31st; July 10 through 16; July 17 through 26; September 10 through October 16.

None of these closures are standalone so they meet the caveats that the TC laid out; four fish November 16 through December 31, so they reduced the bag limit for that season. In the commercial you'll see underlined there is a 15-inch size limit, which Jay is going to talk about, and additional closures of June and November. I'm going to pass it over to Jason to give the technical committee's review of New Jersey's proposals.

NEW JERSEY PROPOSAL

MR. GOLDSBOROUGH: Before you do that, I want to point out to the board that Jason is pinch hitting for Paul Caruso, the TC Chair, who couldn't be here, so thank you, Jason.

MR. JASON McNAMEE: As Chris mentioned, New Jersey had come back after the original approval with an additional idea, and that was to take some of their reduction in their commercial fishery. The New Jersey advisors requested this increase after the November board meeting. The TC met in December of last year to go over this.

The next slide is the methodology that they used. What they did was they applied the recreational size limit data to the commercial fishery. This is a discussion we have a lot with tautog. We used the recreational size distribution from that fishery as a proxy for the commercial fishery because they're not completely dissimilar.

A lot of it is rod and reel and smaller scale fishermen, commercial or recreational. They took that distribution and used the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's SAS Code. That is a program that the Mid-Atlantic Council has developed that goes into the MRFSS data – it was MRFSS at the time this all occurred – and extracts the information regarding catch and size and then develops a set of reductions that you can get from various iterations of different size and bag limit levels.

It's something that we've used in other fisheries. For instance, summer flounder, black sea bass, scup, we use the same program to develop those reductions and liberalizations. The technical committee was comfortable with the approach. It was also a similar

methodology to what was used in New York and Connecticut.

The technical committee had recommended not taking more than a maximum of 44 percent of your reduction from a size limit adjustment alone just to be precautionary and to diversify a little bit where the reduction is coming from, and this would also allow for a 9 percent buffer just to take account of some of the lack of precision in the information that's being used.

Their final regulation package in the end only took 29 percent; so of that 53 percent that ended up putting together for their reduction, only 29 percent of that came from the minimum size change to the commercial fishery. The technical committee recommended that the board approve that. With that, we end up on the last slide and I think that is the only action that we need today to hear from the board. With that, thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN GOLDSBOROUGH: Thank you, Jason. Questions for either Jason or Chris? Seeing none, we need a motion, right? Do I see a motion to approve the New Jersey commercial size increase? Bill Adler.

MR. WILLIAM A. ADLER: **I will so move.**

CHAIRMAN GOLDSBOROUGH: Is there a second; Pat Augustine. Any discussion on the motion? **The motion is move to approve the New Jersey commercial size increase.** Motion by Mr. Adler; second by Mr. Augustine. Pete.

MR. PETER HIMCHAK: Mr. Chairman, I think this motion is straightforward as far as methodology. I would just like to add to that that New Jersey does have a limited entry program on tautog. There are only 64 commercial fishermen allowed to sell tautog in New Jersey; and of those 24 have a non-directed permit which limits them to a hundred pounds per day. It's becoming smaller and smaller. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN GOLDSBOROUGH: Any further discussion? Ready to vote? Any need for a caucus? Seeing no apparent need, all in favor indicate with raising your right hand, please; opposed same sign; any abstentions; null votes. **The motion passes ten to nothing.** Okay, let's move on to Agenda Item 5, update of the tautog aging review.

UPDATE OF THE TAUTOG AGING REVIEW

DR. KATIE DREW: This year we initiated a tautog hard part exchange, so participating states from Massachusetts all the way down through Virginia have each contributed ten opercula samples and also if available ten samples of otoliths from paired fish. They have been sent to the commission and all their identifying information has been stripped off of them.

They are now going up to the states. We just sent the package out to the first lab in Virginia today. Each lab will read the otoliths and opercula and then give me the results. In the end we'll be able to compare and see what the labs are saying about each fish, so comparing how close everybody is to each other and how close the otolith and opercula samples are. This will help us get an idea of how standardized the states are in their aging techniques and maybe give us an idea of how well matched otoliths and opercula bones are for aging tautog.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN GOLDSBOROUGH: Any questions for Katie? Great report! I suppose this moves us on to other business. Do I have any volunteers for other business? Pat.

ADJOURNMENT

MR. PATRICK AUGUSTINE: Move to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN GOLDSBOROUGH: Any objections; we are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 o'clock p.m., February 8, 2012.)