



Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

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RIMFC: Molly Moran-Ogren, *Chair*; Coral Aiello; David Bethoney, Ph.D.; Andy Dangelo; Katie Eagan; Melva Treviño Peña, Ph.D.; Mike Roderick; Russell Sylvestre; Greg Vespe

MEETING SUMMARY

March 26, 2025

Chairperson: Molly Ogren

Council members: Ms. Treviño Peña and Mr. Dangelo absent

Division of Marine Fisheries: S. Olszewski, J. Livermore, C. Truesdale, J. Lake, N. Costa, C. Parkins, K. Rodrigue, P. Duhamel

Division of Law Enforcement: Sgt. Jeff Mercer, Field officer Josh Beuth

1. Approval of the agenda: Ms. Ogren inquired to any objections to approving the agenda or if there were any requests for modifications. Hearing no objections or requests for modifications from the Council members, **the agenda was approved by consent.**
2. New members welcome: Newly appointed members Russell Sylvestre (commercial) and Coral Aiello (recreational) were welcomed.
3. Approval of minutes from last meeting on December 2, 2024: Ms. Ogren inquired to any objections to approving the minutes, or if there were any requests for modifications. Hearing none, **the minutes were approved by consent.**
4. Public comments regarding any other matters not on agenda: Nicole Costa provided that the ASMFC is seeking applications for AP membership and provided her contact information for the receipt of applications from interested persons.
5. 2024 RIMFC Annual Report: Ms. Ogren inquired as to any feedback or advice for content. Hearing none, she inquired as to any objections to approving the report by consent. Hearing none, **the report was approved by consent.**
6. Shellfish Advisory Panel (SAP) meeting minutes February 19 and March 5, 2025: SAP chair Ms. Eagan provided a brief overview of the meeting discussion. Ms. Ogren inquired to any objections to approving the minutes or if there were any requests for modifications. Hearing none, **the minutes were approved by consent.**
7. Providence River Shellfish Management Area (Area "E") commercial shellfish harvest schedule: Seven persons from the public provided public comment on this matter, with six persons in support of the SAP recommended schedule and one opposed. Motion made by Ms. Eagan; 2nd by Dr. Bethoney, to recommend adoption of the SAP recommended schedule:

- Commercial boat harvest:
 - Summer/Fall 2025: Open 8-11am, 6 bushel limit
 - Open May 6, 13, 20, 27; June 3, 10, 17, 24, 26, 30; July 2, 8, 15, 17, 22, 29, 31; August 5, 12, 14, 19, 26, 28; Sept 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Oct 7, 14, 21; Dec. 12
 - 23 day cap (to be closed if/when 23 open days reached)
 - December 2025: Open 8-11am, 6 bushel limit
 - Dec 15-19: Open 2 weekdays on first 2 nonconsecutive weekdays not closed due to water quality impairment
 - Dec 22 – 26: Open 1 weekday on first weekday not closed due to water quality impairment
 - Winter 2026: Open 8-10am, 6 bushel limit
 - Weeks Feb. 9-13, Feb 23-27, March 9-13, March 23-27, April 6-10, April 20-24: Open 1 weekday on first weekday not closed due to water quality impairment

The motion passed 6-0.

- Commercial shoredigging: Motion made by Ms. Eagan; 2nd by Mr. Vespe, to recommend commercial shoredigging be open @ 6 bu./person/day sunrise to sunset on commercial boat harvest days. Harvesters shall only harvest by a single method in a calendar day, either from a vessel or by shoredigging. **The motion passed 6-0.**

8. Proposed regulations publicly noticed:

- a. 2025 recreational striped bass management: Motion made by Mr. Vespe; 2nd by Ms. Aiello, to recommend status quo regarding recreational total length measurement. **The motion passed 6 – 0.**
- b. 2025 commercial striped bass management:
 - Proposal 4 (Industry) to amend opening of 1st sub-period, change closed days, and eliminate the second sub-period: Motion made by Mr. Roderick; 2nd by Mr. Vespe to recommend adoption of 2025 commercial general category management as follows:
 - Open Season: June 10 – December 31
 - Allocation: 100%
 - 5 fish/vsl/day
 - Closed days: Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday

The motion passed 5-0-1 (Mr. Sylvestre recused)

- Proposal 2 (Industry) to change the General Category (GC) fishery for striped bass to Rod & Reel. Harvest restricted to Rod & Reel only: Motion made by Mr. Roderick, 2nd by Dr. Bethoney, to recommend status quo with all current gear types in general category. **The motion passed 5-0-1 (Mr. Sylvestre recused)**

- Proposal 3 (Industry) to change the quota allocations between general category and floating fish trap: Motion made by Mr. Vespe, 2nd by Ms. Eagan to recommend status quo on and floating fish trap and general category allocations. **The motion passed 5-0-1** (Mr. Sylvestre recused)
- Prohibition of harvest of striped bass by gill net: Motion made by Mr. Vespe to recommend status quo for the striped bass commercial gillnet prohibition. No second to the motion was provided.
- Proposal 1 (Industry) to amend gill net prohibition for striped bass to allow commercial harvest: The chair provided opportunity for public comment; to which several comments were received supporting the harvest of striped bass by gill net. Motion made by Dr. Bethoney; 2nd by Ms. Eagan, to adopt Proposal 1 to allow gillnet harvest under the general category fishery after November 1st @ 5 fish/vessel/day with the total weight of striped bass possessed (measured in pounds) equal to or less than the total combined weight of all other fish possessed. No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gillnetting, or while hauling a gillnet, north of a line commencing at upper pier in the town of Narragansett and extending in a straight line in a northeasterly direction to Beavertail Lighthouse and thence continuing in a northeasterly direction in a straight line to Castle Hill Lighthouse in the city of Newport. **The motion passed 3 – 2** (Mr. Vespe and Ms. Aiello opposed; Mr. Sylvestre recused)

9. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 9:40pm. Another meeting will be scheduled in the immediate future to address remaining regulatory matters on the agenda that were not addressed this meeting, which include:

- Commercial menhaden management
- Black sea bass pots
- Horseshoe crab management
- Dealer accounting
- Aggregate Program for Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass:
 - Summer/fall program closure trigger for black sea bass
 - Summer/fall program closure trigger closure trigger for summer flounder
 - Possession limit for black sea bass
 - Penalties for non-compliance
- 2025 recreational cobia management
- Lobster LCMA 1 and LCMA 3 management
- Lobster FMP compliance measures (min. size, min. escape vent size corrections)
- Ninigret Pond-Foster Cove sub-area 1 and sub-area 2 (Ninigret Pond Shellfish Management Area)

Note: This document represents a meeting summary of the actions taken and/or future actions that will be addressed at subsequent meetings. The full video recording of the meeting is available at the Division of Marine Fisheries YouTube channel [here](#).