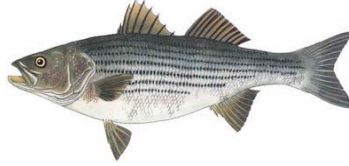


Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

Striped Bass Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes



January 08, 2013 – 6:00 PM
URI/GSO Narragansett Bay Campus
Coastal Institute Building, Large Conference Room
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, RI 02882

Ken Booth, Panel Chair	Keith Bilodeau
Jerry Tremblay ^A	Ed Gotovich
James Kaczynski	Ray Jobin*
Jack Demers	Robert Beresford*
Joseph Macari III ^A	Jeff Barter
Stephen Medeiros	Frank Tameo
Henry Bernacki	Mike Lanni*
Ray Masciarelli Jr.	Dennis Zambrotta*
David Sanford*	Ed Cook ^A
Rich Chatowsky	Ron Enright*
Mark Ambrosia	Alan Glidden ^A
Dave Tyrell	Andy Dangelo*
Bart Wagner ^A	Ray Masciarelli
Bo Christensen	Scott Olszewski, DFW Staff
Mike McElroy	Nicole Lengyel, DFW Staff

(*Primary Advisory Panel member, ^AAlternate Advisory Panel member)

Ken Booth started the meeting. He stated that Nicole Lengyel Trivisono of the RI Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW or the Division) is the new DFW staff member for the STB AP and that she had a presentation and would cover the first three agenda items. K. Booth also stated that there were various handouts being passed around including some proposals and asked that everyone sign in on the meeting sign-in sheet. N. Lengyel began by informing the group that they could feel free to ask questions during the presentation. N. Lengyel began the presentation (see attached) by reviewing the current striped bass stock status taken from the ASMFC 2011 stock assessment update which stated that the stock was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring. N. Lengyel briefly discussed the striped bass young of year (YOY) index from the Chesapeake Bay which was the lowest on record in 2012. Next, N. Lengyel reviewed the 2012 RI striped bass fishery. Both the recreational and commercial fisheries were discussed including quota allocations and total landings. Addendum III to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Management Plan for Striped Bass and the implications this addendum has for RI was the last item discussed in the presentation.

Several AP members and meeting participants asked questions regarding the presentation. Robert Beresford asked if the general category (GC) fishery overage and the floating fish trap (FFT) underage would cancel each other out. N. Lengyel said this was not the case, the GC

would still be penalized in 2013 for the 2012 overage. Meeting participants asked about rolling the unused FFT quota for 2012 into the GC and N. Lengyel stated it would not have been a sufficient amount to open for another day in the fall sub-period. A question was asked about the GC season going to August 31st. N. Lengyel stated that although the season is in regulation to go to August 31st, the quota is always exhausted prior to that date and the fishery closed early as a result. Joseph Macari III asked if the graph showing the 2012 recreational landings was coastwide landings or just for RI. N. Lengyel stated that it was just for RI and included all fish. J. Macari III asked when the tagging program per Addendum III was to be implemented and N. Lengyel stated it would be implemented in RI in 2013, however she noted that MA did not have to implement their program until 2014.

The 2013 FFT season and quota allocation was discussed next. It was stated that the Division as well as the FFT companies were not proposing any changes for 2013. Alan Glidden made a motion for status quo, there was a second to the motion. At this point K. Booth went through the AP member list to see which members were present, 9 voting members were present. It was noted that Robert Koch could not be contacted and that he should probably be replaced. No formal vote was taken but there appeared to be no opposition to status quo.

The 2013 GC season and quota allocation was discussed next. It was stated that the Division was not proposing any changes for 2013. The proposal submitted by the RI Commercial Rod & Reel Association (RICRRA) was read out loud by Ronald Enright. It proposed to allocate 70% of the quota to a period that opens on June 9, 2013 and closes when 70% has been landed. Additionally the remaining 30% of the quota would be allocated to a period that opens on September 8, 2013 and closes when the quota has been landed. R. Enright made a motion to adopt the proposal and there was a second to the motion by R. Beresford. AP members and the public gave their opinions on the proposal. A discussion took place regarding the start of the spring period among the fishermen who fish in the Bay versus those who fish outside the Bay and out at Block Island. The dates being proposed were June 5th, 6th, and 9th. The arguments for the dates were June 5th was too early, June 6th would only allow one day of fishing before the Friday/Saturday closure, and that June 9th was too late. Participants agreed to compromise and meet in the middle and stated that even though June 6th would only give them one day, keep that date. R. Enright made an amendment to his motion to a June 6th start date, a 70/30 split, and a September 8th start date. J. Macari III made a second to the motion. A vote of AP members resulted in 9 in favor, no opposed.

The 2013 recreational fishery was discussed next. It was stated that the Division was not proposing any changes for 2013. A motion was made by Andrew Dangelo for status quo. A second to the motion was made by R. Enright. A vote among AP members resulted in 9 in favor and no opposed.

A discussion then took place regarding the banning of yo-yo rigs in RI. K. Booth stated that this agenda item came from the RIMFC and that Richard Hittinger asked it be added to the agenda. George Allen spoke on behalf of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) which recommended and approved the ban. The regulation that was recently passed in MA was discussed and read aloud by G. Allen. It was stated that the MA regulation is not a ban on yo-yo rigs, the MA regulation states that the weight must be attached to the terminal end of the tackle. J. Macari III briefly discussed the MA striped bass fishery and why some commercial fishermen in MA supported the ban. G. Allen stated that the point was to not ban, but modify the rig, so the weight stayed with the rig and not the fish should the line break. Ray Jobin asked if there was any evidence of fish mortality resulting from this and G. Allen stated that he was not aware of

any. G. Allen initiated a discussion on lead, lead weights in striped bass stomachs and the toxicity of lead. The discussion included a picture of lead weights found in striped bass stomachs and the position of the American Fisheries Society who has voted to adopt a policy regarding lead in fishing tackle.

A discussion ensued regarding the issue covering several points including mortality, modifying the rig, enforceability, ethics, and lead.

The topic of striped bass mortality from fishing in general and from fishing with yo-yo rigs was discussed. The question was asked again if there is any evidence showing that this technique results in striped bass mortality and it was stated that there is no science available regarding the effects of the technique. A portion of a letter provided by Jared Silva from MADMF was read regarding the lack of science on the topic. A point was made that if you cannot see the mortality then the issue should not be discussed. Several AP members and participants pointed out that there are larger and more important sources of mortality to striped bass from fishing that should be addressed if mortality is the real concern. The point was made that there is a lot of damage seen to striped bass from hook and line fishing and a lot of mortality from draggers and gill-netters and that while striped bass are found with foreign objects in their stomachs, they are found alive and with minor irritation. Bart Wagner stated that if the fish is caught alive with foreign objects (weights, sinkers, etc.) in the belly, this implies some percentage of these fish are surviving. Of course there will be some mortality as with any fishing method but there is no way to measure that.

The yo-yo rig itself was discussed among the group. Several participants asked if the rig could be modified and still be effective. B. Wagner discussed the rig and how he thought modifying it would add weight and decrease the effectiveness of the rig. One meeting participant stated that the elastics used in the rig were the real problem. Another meeting participant briefly discussed a recent article on the Projo regarding an EPA study on lead and how lead is not as large of an issue as once thought. R. Jobin gave a brief background on the use of the technique in RI and why it is suddenly an issue due to one individual. He also discussed the photo of the weights from On The Water magazine. Steve Medeiros spoke on behalf of RISAA and stated that this is not about lead or lead poisoning, or about banning the use of yo-yo rigs, it is merely to modify/correct the rig to prevent unnecessary mortality in striped bass by keeping the weights attached to the terminal end of the tackle.

Several members and participants were against telling someone how they were allowed to fish or banning a proven technique that has been used for many years and is just now becoming well known and therefore an issue.

The issue of enforceability was also discussed. How could it be enforced? How does enforcement feel about it?

A brief discussion of it being an ethical issue took place. Several meeting participants stated that what is unethical to one person may not be unethical to another.

A meeting participant asked who is forcing the AP to deal with this issue, why can't it be tabled and dealt with at another time. K. Booth read the MA regulation again and suggested to recommend the RIMFC start an ad hoc committee to address mortality as a comprehensive issue and not make decisions based on emotion.

R. Enright made a motion to table it. A second to the motion was made by A. Dangelo.

The group discussed the need for data and facts. K. Booth asked N. Lengyel if any data is available on this issue and mortality. She stated no, not that she is aware of and that DFW has no studies ongoing that could address this issue. The group briefly discussed how difficult it would be to collect data on this issue. It was suggested that if lead is a concern, perhaps N. Lengyel could look into whether there is any research on lead being an issue. N. Lengyel stated that the TC and SASC are concerned with striped bass mortality due to mycobacteriosis.

K. Booth suggested that rather than just table the issue, it should go back to the RIMFC with a recommendation for DFW staff to look into the issue more or do research. DFW staff could look into mortality in general. Participants stated that this should be tabled but not forever.

A vote was taken on the motion and second to table the issue. 4 opposed, 1 abstention, motion failed.

A motion was made by A. Dangelo to send it to the RIMFC to discuss it further, including both mortality issues in general and enforcement capabilities. A second to the motion was made by David Sanford. A vote resulted in 7 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention. Motion passes.

K. Booth asked if there was any other business. The subject of not being allowed to have multiple possession limits on board a vessel came up and was discussed briefly. The AP discussed the history of the matter and why the regulation is the way it is. When the rod and reel category was changed to general category, the draggers would come in with many limits and they were hurting the quota. As a result it was changed to a vessel limit.

The meeting was adjourned at this point.

Striped Bass Advisory Panel Meeting






January 8, 2013



Striped Bass Stock Status




Stock Status:

-  The striped bass stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring according to the ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Stock Assessment Update, 2011.
-  Female SSB = 50,548 mt, greater than the threshold SSB = 30,000 mt and the target SSB = 37,500 mt.
-  Fishing mortality was estimated to be 0.23 in 2010, below the threshold F reference point = 0.34 and the F target = 0.30.



Striped Bass Stock Status





Stock Status:

-  Biomass estimates have remained stable due to growth and maturation of 2003 year class and accumulation of spawning biomass from year classes prior to 1996.
-  Stock abundance has declined from 67.5 million in 2004 to 42.3 million in 2010.
-  The decline is more prevalent in areas depending on the Chesapeake Bay stock than in areas dominated by the Hudson River stock.



Striped Bass Stock Status

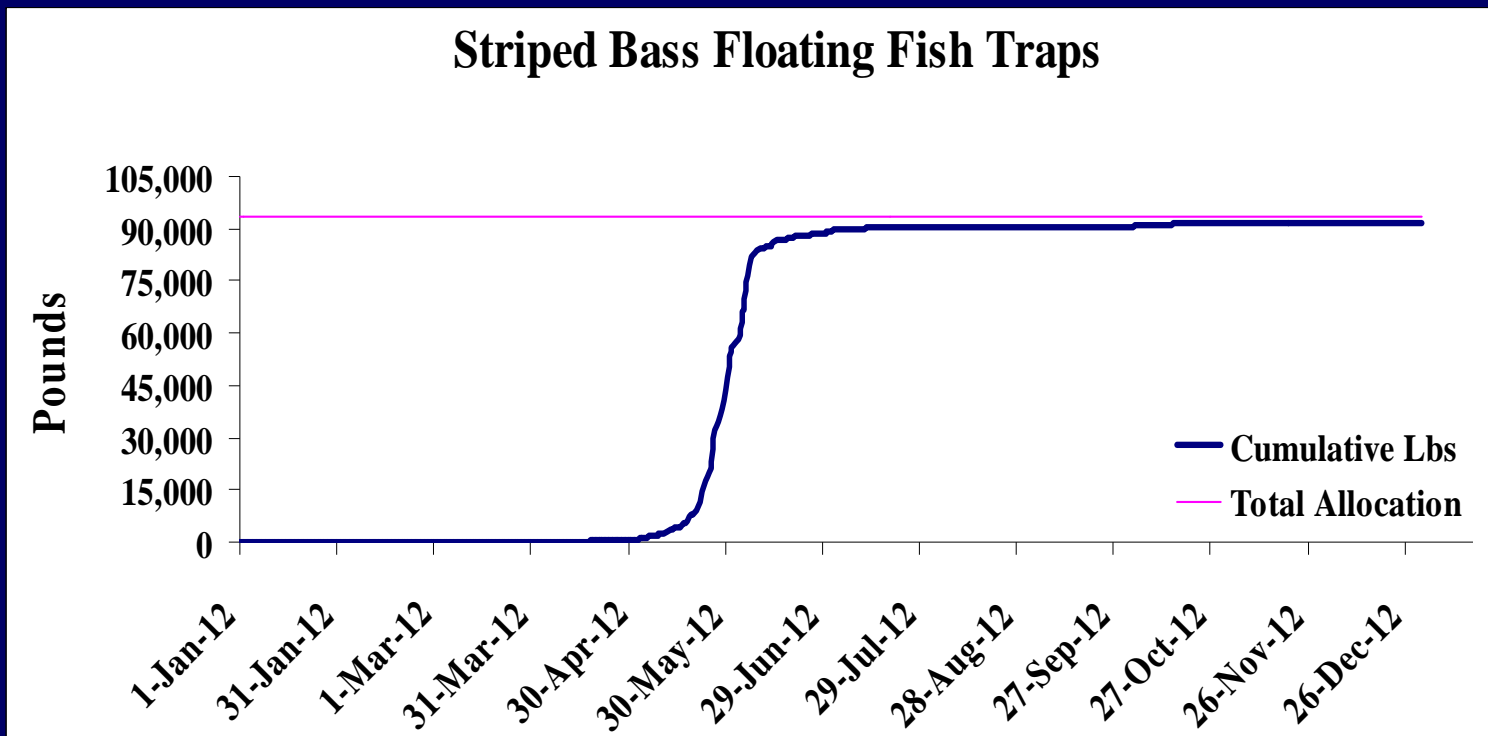
YOY Index

-  The 2012 Young of Year (YOY) Striped Bass Index was 0.9, significantly lower than the 2011 index of 34.6.
-  From one of the best years on record in 2011 to the worst in 2012.
-  The decline is thought to be due to poor recruitment resulting from dry conditions in the spring spawning period.
-  Next stock assessment in 2013.



Review of 2012 Fishery

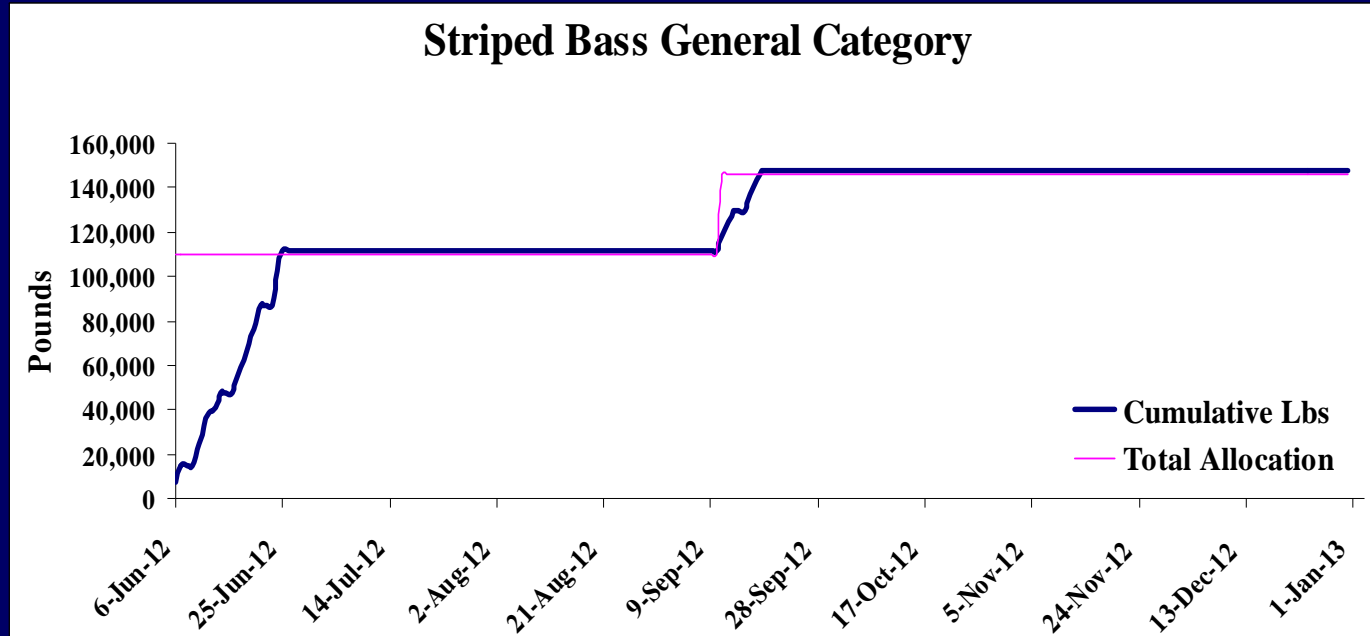
Commercial — Floating Fish Trap



Period	2012 Allocation	Landings	Remaining
Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	93,266	91,871	1,395

Review of 2012 Fishery

Commercial - General Category

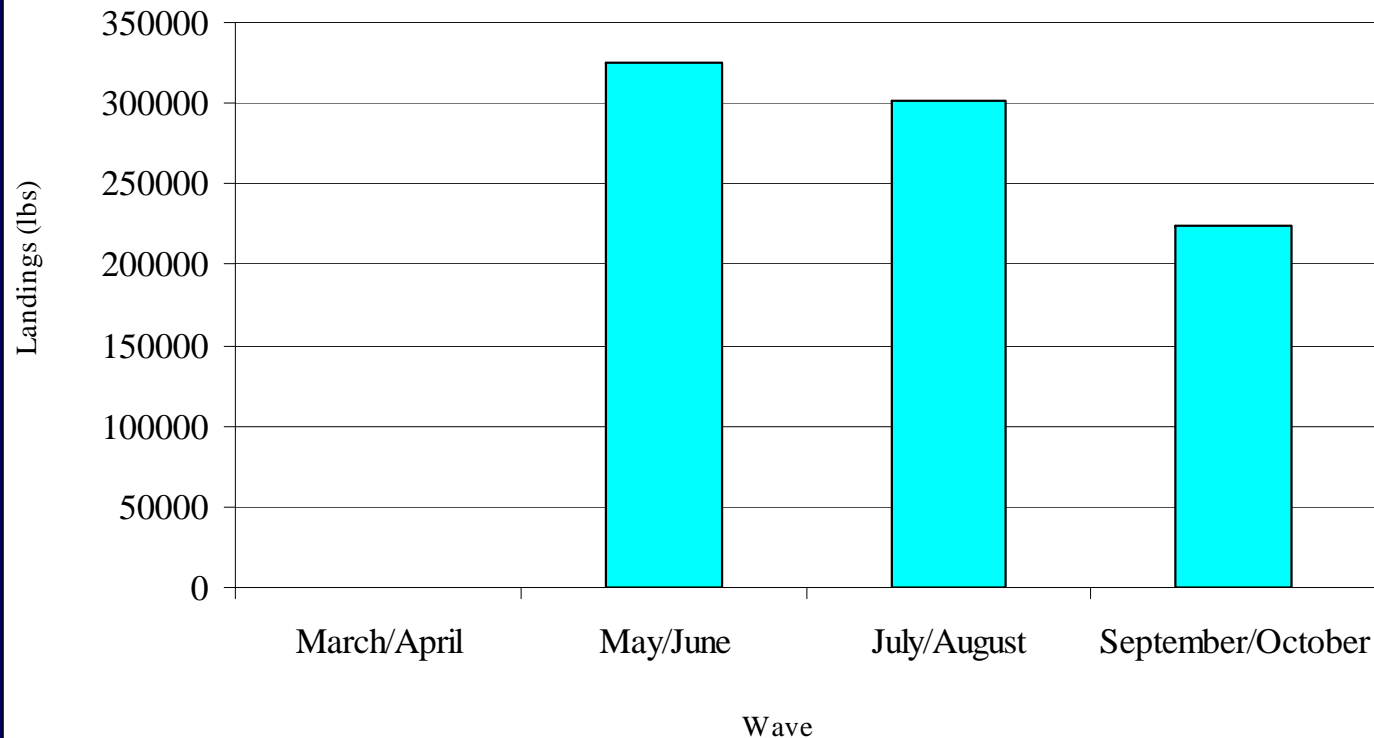


Period	2012 Allocation	Landings	Period Adjustment	Remaining
June 6 – Aug 31	109,783	111,898		-2,115
Sep 11 – Dec 31	36,594	36,144	-2,115	-1,665
2012 Total	146,377	148,042		






Review of 2012 Fishery Preliminary Recreational Landings (MRIP)

Preliminary 2012 Striped Bass Recreational Landings



Addendum III to Amendment 6




Background

-  Interstate Watershed Task Force (IWTF) conducted multi-year, multi-jurisdictional investigation of illegal striped bass harvest within the Chesapeake Bay.
-  \$1.6 million dollars in fines against 19 individuals and 3 corporations for > 1 million pounds of illegal STB estimated to be worth up to 7 million dollars.
-  Illegal harvest attributed to lack of sufficient tagging programs.



Addendum III to Amendment 6






Summary

-  All Atlantic states and jurisdictions required to implement commercial striped bass tagging program.
-  States may choose whether fish are tagged at point of harvest or point of sale.
-  At a minimum tags must be tamper evident, valid for one year only, and have the following information:
 - Year
 - State
 - Unique number



Addendum III to Amendment 6

What this means for RI

-  RI already has a tagging program that meets the minimum requirements.
-  RI will maintain point of sale tagging.
-  Stricter rules regarding the distribution of tags and submittal of tag reports will be implemented in 2013.
-  End of year summary from dealers required.
-  Dealers who do not comply will not receive tags the following year.















2013 Fish Trap Commercial Seasons and Quota Allocation

- The Division does not propose any changes for 2013
- 2012 management:
 - Jan. 1 – Dec. 31
 - 26” minimum size (TL).
 - 100 % of the floating trap quota shall be available from January 1 through December 31.
 - Once eighty percent (80%) of the seasonal allocation is projected to be harvested the possession limit shall be 500 pounds per fish trap licensee per calendar day.



2013 General Category Commercial Seasons and Quota Allocation

-  The Division does not propose any changes for 2013
-  2012 management:
 -  34" minimum size (TL)
 -  January 1 – June 5: **CLOSED**
 -  June 6 – Aug. 31:
 -  75% of quota
 -  5 fish/person/day
 -  **CLOSED** Friday and Saturday throughout
 -  Sept. 11 – Dec. 31:
 -  25% of quota
 -  5 fish/person/day
 -  **CLOSED** Friday and Saturday throughout



Discussion of Recreational Striped Bass Fishery

 The division does not propose any changes for 2013

 2012 management:

 28" minimum size (TL)

 2 fish/person/day possession limit



Discussion on Ban of Yo-yo Rigs

