

RIMFC Lobster Advisory Panel Minutes
Corless Auditorium
June 8, 2010

Meeting Attendees:

Advisory Panel members (* = primary voting member):

Jody King, Co-Chair

Stephen Parente, Co-Chair

*David Spencer (Offshore Trap)

*Lanny Dellinger (Inshore Trap)

*Peter Brodeur (Inshore Trap)

Dennis Ingram (alternate for Todd Sutton)

Others:

Willaim Cote, Alan Eagles, Gregory Mataronas, William Bergan, Steven Seymour, Harry Whilden, Brad Mathews, William Briggs, Tina Jackson (AAFC), Patrick Duckworth, Timothy Baker, Richard Allen, Mark Gibson (RIDFW), Scott Olszewski (RIDFW), Thomas Angell (RIDFW)

Meeting convened at 6:38 pm by Chairman J. King.
There were 21 people in attendance (see list above).

AGENDA:

1. Update on ASMFC Lobster Technical Committee and Lobster Management Board activities.

Approval of Agenda – motion made to approve the meeting agenda; addenda approved unanimously.

Mark Gibson commented that this is an informational meeting only; no management actions to be recommended/taken at this time.

T. Angell reviewed the ASMFC Lobster TC report to Lobster Management Board. ASMFC Lobster TC looked at all available data; looked at updated data since the last stock assessment; settlement surveys, trawl surveys, commercial trap sea sampling, ventless trap surveys, temperature data.

All indices from this data are either at the lowest point, or near the lowest point, in the near 30-year time-series.

COMMENTS / DISCUSSION:

P. Brodeur commented that the settlement collectors that were deployed in 2009 did not do well because of hurricane swell; not good data to use.

D. Spencer comment about water temperatures (elevated); things happening at different times with higher water temperatures; timing of surveys may need to be adjusted.

T. Jackson - seeing more females offshore because lobster traps are moving offshore; lobster traps attract more lobsters; food source for the lobsters; predators are more abundant. This will be a big fight; lobstermen do not believe the TC report.

P. Brodeur – not working on a healthy fishery presently; don't regulate the fishermen when it is the resource that has the problem; RI lobstermen will not make any more management sacrifices.

Al Eagles – general comments about fishery surveys; area that he fishes lost the lobsters for a couple of years and then they came back; need to look at things over a longer period of time.

L. Dellinger – settlement (suction sampling) survey is flawed; locations picked based on one year of data (1987). Settlement collectors (rock-filled cages, 2009) were placed in areas that were computer-generated; settlement collector survey index in RI is flawed.

D. Spencer – struggles with applying “inshore” data to the “offshore” fishery; this may be a good point to start to expand the sampling programs; industry and State cooperation.

M. Gibson – this was supposed to be an informational meeting; we are getting off the purpose of this meeting; management process is trying to be transparent.
Next meeting will be a special meeting of the Lobster Management Board (LMB) in July (July 22nd) at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick.
Moratorium for the southern New England lobster stock is probably not a viable option for management.
May end up with a “sentinel” fishery with greatly increased sampling/data collection efforts.

S. Seymour – has worked on VTS for last 4 years; can't place the management burden on the fishermen.

A. Eagles – fishermen are already over-regulated; need to sit back and see what happens with the current management regime.

M. Gibson – not sure if the LMB will take a broad-brush approach or a more nuanced approach to this situation; may look at restricting small areas of the SNE stock unit.

L. Dellinger – Area 2 has already done enough in terms of management to try and help the resource.

LMB meeting will be July 22 at Crown Plaza in Warwick

P. Brodeur – commented on latent effort (page 55 of TC report); trap reductions; license reductions.

W. Bergan – need to look at biomass of predators on lobsters; is this being looked at?
T. Baker – lots of sea bass predators now; unable to catch enough of them to reduce predation influence; need to increase the quotas on these predators.

M. Gibson – it is very doubtful that fishery managers will allow for increased pressure on recovering/recovered fish stocks.

A. Eagles – management only on fishermen.

W. Bergan – what will a 5-year moratorium do for the resource?

M. Gibson – TC is working on projections for this; will be presented at July 22 meeting.

T. Baker – latent effort has been created because transferability has not been allowed.

Motion to adjourn by D. Ingram; motion approved unanimously; meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.