

**Virginia Marine Resources Commission**  
**Crab Management Advisory Committee (CMAC) Minutes**  
2600 Washington Avenue, Newport News, VA  
VMRC Commission Room, 4<sup>TH</sup> Floor  
Tuesday, January 5, 2016 – 6:00 P.M.

**ATTENDANCE**

Members Present

Hon. Lynn Haynie  
Marshall Cox  
Kenneth Diggs  
Ernest George  
Chris Moore  
Bernard Wayne Morris  
Mark Sanford  
Tom Powers

VMRC Staff Present

Rob O'Reilly  
Joe Cimino  
Jill Ramsey  
Katie May Laumann

Members Absent

Daniel Dise  
Johnny Graham  
Peter Nixon  
Donald Porter, Sr.  
Ken Smith  
Kevin Wade  
Honorable Ed Tankard  
Viola West

Others Present

Rom Lipcius  
Tim Wivell  
Lynn Squires  
Michelle Squires  
Beverly Ludford  
Douglas Jenkins  
Wayne France  
Ty Farrington  
Roger Parks  
Megan Wood (VIMS Student)

Minutes were recorded by Katie May Laumann.

**I. Introductions, announcements & approval of minutes from the June 25, 2015 meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm and 8 members were in attendance. Rob O'Reilly gave brief introduction of the agenda and introduced staff. A recording of the minutes can be found on the agency's website. A quorum was not met, therefore the Committee could not vote on any decisions or vote to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2015 meeting.

**II. Old Business**

**1. Continued discussion on sanctuary areas and corresponding closure dates to crab harvesting activities**

Joe Cimino reviewed the history of the blue crab sanctuary (established in 1942) and the previous discussions about disparity in the areas. A map of the sanctuaries was shown, and boundaries including Area 1B, which is effective this year were discussed. Mr. Sanford asked if the boundaries and regulations can be changed.

Mr. O'Reilly indicated that this could be changed, but any changes would need to take into account continued research by Dr. Rom Lipcius of VIMS and there would need to be conservation neutrality. The most recent change was estimated to yield a small conservation benefit in spawning potential. Mr. Moore asked that a nautical chart be made available to the committee in a future meeting. The Committee hopes to use this chart to look at possible sanctuary options for the future. They would then bring these options to Dr. Lipcius to evaluate. Mr. Powers asked for clarification on whether any changes would apply to 2016 or 2017, and Mr. O'Reilly stated that any changes would be for 2017.

## **2. Effort control issues; a continuation of discussions on latent effort and use of agents**

Joe Cimino presented data on the number of people eligible to buy licenses, the number who purchase them, and the number of those licenses purchased which are active in the fishery. About 75% of the eligible individuals are active in the fishery. There is more of a drop-off with peeler pot licenses, with only 60% of those eligible showing activity of at least one day in the fishery. These numbers are preliminary because not everyone has reported for 2015 yet. A lot of attrition occurs because some individuals inherit but don't use their licenses. Mr. Powers asked if the 100 people who are eligible but don't purchase a license are consistent. Ms. Haynie followed that up by asking if there had been reduction measures for this, to remove those who don't buy a license when they have eligibility. Mr. O'Reilly explained that reduction efforts beyond the waiting list have not been implemented.

The discussion moved on to agenting. In 2015 the agent cap was met with a few agent requests turned down. Mr. Powers asked that at the next meeting staff make available the total number of agents who are licensed commercial watermen and the number who are not. Mr. Sanford does not think agenting should be allowed until the dredgers are allowed back in to the fishery.

Mr. Diggs and Mr. Sanford asked what the primary reasons are for agenting. Mr. Ty Farrington said that agenting was originally meant to be to help in hardship (medical, military service) cases, and that he signs up for an agent every year in case something happens. Mr. Jenkins indicated that agenting is important for people who can no longer work the long hours required and that his grandson is his agent. Mr. O'Reilly said that there is a provision for hardship, so even if you aren't approved for agenting by the deadline you can apply and be granted it under medical or military hardship. Mr. Powers and Mr. Diggs discussed the fact that if agenting is used as a business strategy it could be an issue for the already overcapitalized fishery. Ms. Haynie asked that for the next meeting, staff prepare more specific data on agents, including the number of days worked by agents. The committee discussed possible strategies for phasing out or reducing the number of agents. There was a brief discussion of whether removing or reducing agenting might allow for an increased bushel limit.

### **III. New Business**

#### **1. Initiation of discussions on the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (2014) for blue crab:**

Mr. O'Reilly presented the issue, saying that there are 3 jurisdictions, and there should be equitability in allocation among those jurisdictions. Quota management would be difficult to implement from a law enforcement perspective. Input from the Committee is needed on how to approach allocation- what data should be used to make determinations.

Mr. Cox asked if changing abundance in different locations could be considered in allocation. Mr. Cox and Mr. Diggs asked if staff can provide data on Maryland harvest as compared to Virginia harvest, as well as comparisons of season length, and other regulations at a future meeting. Mr. O'Reilly indicated that this would be possible, and PRFC data should also be included. Ms. Haynie noted that in allocation, Virginia should be given credit for having a sanctuary. Mr. Diggs asked if market considerations could be taken into account as well. Mr. Powers said that recreational fisheries should also be considered a factor. Mr. O'Reilly said that allocation is a separate issue from the market and economic problems. Mr. Moore asked staff to specify the time frame for allocations and what staff needs from CMAC at the next meeting.

#### **2. Initiate a discussion of possible management responses to the late April-early May results of the 2015-16 Baywide Winter Crab Dredge Survey.**

Joe Cimino presented estimates for the 2015 harvest (21-22 million lbs.), and harvest from previous years along with past Winter Dredge Survey results. Dr. Lipcius indicated that past survey abundance estimate have been useful in predicting harvest. Mr. O'Reilly asked the CMAC to consider possible management strategies they might implement if dredge survey results come back lower or higher than usual. The Committee discussed different strategies including increasing bushel limits, extending the season, and opening dredging. Ms. Haynie suggested this be further discussed at the next meeting and then when survey results come in.

### **IV. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 PM.