

VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
CRAB MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 12, 2005 - 6:00 PM

Draft Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT

John Graham III
Tom Powers
Chris Moore
Marshall Cox
Pete Freeman

MEMBERS ABSENT

Wayne Abbott
Jim Casey
Jeff Crockett
Eddie Crockett
Louis Whittaker
William E. Abbott
Woody Zember
Ronnie Jett
Paige Hogge
Wade Harding
Lee Scarborough
Billy Moore
Lesney Miller
Peter Nixon

STAFF PRESENT

Jack Travelstead
Rob O'Reilly
Ellen Cosby
Kenny Oliver

I. Introductions, Announcements

The meeting was called to order at 6:25 PM by Jack Travelstead. It was noted that there was no quorum.

II. Approval of minutes

No action.

III. Old Business

None discussed.

IV. New Business

A. Report of New Stock Assessment

Rob O'Reilly gave an overview of the new stock assessment. He reported that the natural mortality was calculated as a range (0.6 – 1.2), and the most likely value of M was 0.9. There were four fishery-independent surveys reviewed; however, the stock assessment committee had the most confidence in the Baywide winter dredge survey. There has been an extended period of decline in commercial landings since 1990. The stock was over-exploited from 1997 through 2002. Results from 2003 appear to be more positive. A recommendation from the stock assessment report was the need to work on effort data.

Staff was expecting Rom Lipcius from VIMS to present a report to the committee, but he did not attend the meeting.

B. Review of proposal to eliminate requirement to transfer or sell boat or vessel to be eligible to transfer or sell crabbing license to another fisherman

Mr. Travelstead reviewed the criteria for crab license transfers. He provided a hand-out showing the history of crab license transfers. It was pointed out that on Tangier, a boat is the primary mode of transportation. This requirement has been difficult administratively for staff and the Commission is interested in doing away with it. Another hand-out was distributed that illustrated active vs. inactive license numbers, as well as harvest data.

Tom Powers inquired about capping the number of licenses.

John Graham reviewed industry trends over the last few years and reminded members that there are no open crab licenses for young people.

Several members noted that they didn't think there would be a sudden rush for licenses.

Marshall Cox said the average age of watermen has been increasing.

Mr. Powers stated that we will probably see a drop in the price people pay for crab licenses. He suggested requiring the licensee to be on board and to either drop or restrict agent usage.

Mr. Graham asked if there was a limit on the number of licenses a person could work as an agent.

Mr. O'Reilly asked members if we should require a certain amount of activity for a license. He then suggested that if any year exploitation rate is too high, allow no transfers.

Mr. Graham suggested buy-outs.

Pete Freeman asked that we leave it as is.

Mr. Powers recommended that we leave the deceased transfer part as is, and cap the number of other transfers.

The committee's consensus was to eliminate the boat requirement and cap the number of transfers.

Mr. Powers also suggested to allow no transfer in and out during the same year.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.