

Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Finfish Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) Minutes
2600 Washington Avenue, Newport News, VA
VMRC Commission Room, 4TH Floor
Tuesday, September 15, 2015 – 6:00 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present

Jeff Deem (Chairman)
Honorable Dr. Ken Neill
Meade Amory
Jack Austin
Ernest Bowden
Scott MacDonald
Beth Synowiec
Robert Weagley

VMRC Staff Present

Joe Cimino
Lewis Gillingham
Samantha Hoover
Katie May Laumann
Rachael Maulorico
Rob O'Reilly
Jill Ramsey

Members Absent

Honorable G. Wayne France
Skip Feller
Andy Hall
Tom Powers
Walter Rogers

Others Present

Mike Avery
Bob Allen
John Balderson
James Close
Bob Fisher, VIMS

Minutes were recorded by Samantha Hoover.

I. FMAC Introductions; Announcements

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm and a quorum was present with 8 members in attendance. A recording of the minutes can be found on the agency's website.

II. Approval of minutes from March 17, 2015 meeting

The minutes from March 17, 2015 were approved unanimously.

III. Discussion: Cownose Ray

Mr. Lewis Gillingham gave a brief presentation on the cownose ray life cycle and the role they play in the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem and the Virginia fisheries. He then discussed the history of bow fishing and its connection to the predation of cownose rays. He stated that many animal activist groups would like more regulations on bow fishing, in general, and specifically for the cownose rays because of the amount of waste associated with this fishery practice. Mr. Bob Fisher, from VIMS, discussed cownose ray predation, migration, reproduction, population dynamics, and their benefit and effect on the ecosystem. The committee discussed the need for more information and science on the cownose ray before any decisions can be made. They discussed the need for a better market for these rays and noted this is a potential

fisheries resource if it can be figured out how to utilize it. Mr. O'Reilly stated the Chesapeake Bay Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team will be hosting a workshop on cownose rays, and that the Commission is also interested in hearing the results of that workshop. Mr. Deem stated that the bow fishing activities are growing in popularity and we will need to discuss this again in the future.

IV. Discussion: Transferability of spiny dogfish limited entry permits

Mr. Joe Cimino gave a short presentation on Virginia's spiny dogfish, limited entry history, and what possible criteria that can be used in order to allow transfers for these limited entry permits. He stated that although the quota has been substantially rising since 2012 there is a potential for at least a one year quota reduction in 2016/2017 season. The committee discussed concerns of an unstable market and that allowing transfers may add more fishing effort to the fishery. Mr. Scott MacDonald discussed the potential for the permits to strictly go to vessel owners, so there would be only one permit per vessel. The committee also discussed the potential to only allow transfers for active permits and for medical hardships, so that minimal latent effort would be let into the fishery. Harvest parameters would have to be set in order to define an active permit. Staff stated that the problem with eliminating permits due to inactivity would potentially be penalizing people because of the lack of market. The committee requested staff use SAFIS data to look at the number of permits per vessel currently being used, look at the potential for establishing a control date, and to possibly implement Class A and Class B permits dependent on harvest. The Committee suggested that staff go back to the original limited entry date when the market was good, and do a vessel analysis during that time period, in order to not penalize fisherman due to the current market situation.

V. Discussion: VMRC implementing the Marine Recreational Information Program (Formerly MRFSS)

Mr. Gillingham gave a brief presentation on APAIS, the access point angler intercept survey. He explained that VMRC will be taking over APAIS responsibility from a federal contractor, as will all states. This should provide states with direct interaction and immediate feed-back with the anglers, which should foster better participation with the survey.

VI. Discussion: Regional Management of the Recreational Summer Flounder Harvest Limit

Mr. O'Reilly informed the committee of the 25.6 percent coast-wide reduction in allowable catch for both recreational and commercial summer flounder that will occur over the next three years. The ASMFC hopes to have more information on how the recreation sector will be managed in light of this reduction by November and should be making their decision around February. He stated that there has not been a good year class since 2009 in the summer flounder stock. Staff will keep the committee informed about this topic and will let them know if we need further limits on the fishery.

VII. Review: Recent ASMFC actions from its early August meeting

Mr. O'Reilly gave a brief update on the actions from the ASMFC early August meeting. He gave the committee an update on American lobster, jonah crabs, American eel, tautog, striped bass, and menhaden.

VIII. New Business

No next meeting date has been decided at this time. However, there are meeting topics that the Committee and public would like to see in the future. Mr. Mike Avery, representative of Virginia saltwater sport fishing tournament, would like an update on cobia and the possibility for conservation measures in the recreational fishery and a discussion on inshore grouper harvest and current grouper regulations in the recreational sector. Mr. Robert Weagley requested for there to be a discussion on the use and permitting of electric shock gear for the blue catfish fishery.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34pm.

DRAFT