

VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
FINFISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
VMRC CONFERENCE ROOM

April 20, 2004

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ken Neill
James Kellum
Wynston Holbrook
Hon. Russell Garrison
Chris Vaughan
Tom Powers
Jeff Deem
Sam Swift
Robert Weagley
Peter Nixon
Douglas Jenkins
William Laine Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Lyell Jett
Hon. Gordon Birkett

VMRC STAFF

Lewis Jones
Jack Travelstead
Roy Insley
Todd Watkins

I. Introductions, Announcements

Hon. Russell Garrison called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

II. Approval of the minutes from the March 15, 2004 meeting

Minutes were approved as written.

III. Old Business

A. Continued Discussion of an Exception Process for limited fisheries; criteria for application

Jack Travelstead reviewed the discussion from the March 15th Finfish Management Advisory Committee meeting where it was recommended that the Commission establish a committee to review applications for exceptions in to the limited entry fisheries. This proposal was presented to the Commission on March 23, 2004. The Commission deferred making any decisions until more information is obtained, and the Finfish Committee further reviewed options.

Jack Travelstead asked the Committee to establish criteria required for eligibility. He made a recommendation to allow exceptions to those who were assigned to active military duty and exceptions should only be granted if new quotas are established in the ITQ fisheries.

Ernest Bowden Jr. recommended allowing people who are severely ill be allowed to apply for exceptions in to the limited entry fisheries.

Russell Garrison made the motion that the Finfish Management Advisory Committee be responsible for reviewing exceptions. There was no second to the motion.

Pete Nixon made a motion for the Commission to appoint a small committee consisting of at least one Staff member and one member of the Commission. Pete Nixon said the Crab Dredge Exception Committee had worked well and it was designed in the way recommended. The motion was seconded and carried.

B. Exceptions to the Commercial Fisherman Registration License renewal/filing deadline

Jack Travelstead asked the Committee to consider a plan that would eliminate the time consuming process of making exceptions for the renewal/filing deadline for purchasing Commercial Registration Licenses.

Russell Garrison expressed his concerns regarding the legalities and processes that may be required to change the deadline for renewals. He suggested that the Commission refer these inquiries to the appointed attorney before any further action is taken.

IV. New Business

A. Review of the Black Drum Limited Entry Fishery

Jack Travelstead asked the Committee to review and possibly update the Black Drum Limited Entry Fishery. Jack exhibited a power point presentation to demonstrate historical data of the black drum fishery. It was explained that the quota was arbitrary and set by the Finfish Committee to address allocation of the resources and not biological concerns. Following the presentation, Jack asked for comments.

Ernest Bowden Jr. recommended keeping the existing management plan as it is, but eliminating the weekly reporting requirements and allowing all commercial fishermen to keep at least one black drum as bycatch.

Stan Winner, a representative from the Virginia Beach Charter Association, expressed the Association's concern regarding the potential negative financial impact to the charter boat industry if the black drum fishery were to open to all commercial fishermen.

Sam Swift made a motion to keep the existing management plan the same, with the exception that all commercial fishermen would be allowed to keep one black drum as bycatch. The bycatch would be counted toward the 120,000 pound commercial harvest quota. The weekly reporting requirements would be eliminated. There was a second to the motion and it was passed.

V. Next Meeting

The date and time for the next Finfish Management Advisory Committee meeting was not discussed.

VI. Adjournment

Russell Garrison adjourned the meeting at 7:10 P.M.