

Marine Resources Advisory Council

Marine Resources Advisory Council
May 16, 2017
2:00 p.m.

Volume XXVIII No. 5

Sean Barrett

Next Meeting: Tuesday, July 18th – 6:00 p.m. at Stony Brook University, Endeavour Hall room 120 at the School of Marine & Atmospheric Sciences.

Michael Craig

Dr. Frisk went over the agenda, followed by introductions by the Councilors present as well as Mr. James Gilmore, Director of the Marine Division of the DEC.

Robert Danielson

Something new: The meeting is being broadcast and can be accessed by going to the following site from the NYSDEC's webpage:
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/568.html>

Melissa Dearborn

The day's meeting will be dedicated to giving updates on the various fisheries that were covered at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's meeting held May 8-11, the week prior.

Thomas Jordan

Dr. Frisk apprised the audience members that moving forward, the requirement for a quorum will be majority of seeded councilors overall (right now it would be 7 since we still have a vacancy on the commercial side; however, once filled it should revert to 8) this does not include the Chairman. This has been thought as a way to conduct business while still being fair to both the recreational and commercial fishing communities.

Hank Lackner

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Joseph Paradiso

Audience member, Mr. John Mihale said rather than have the voting be the majority of seeded Councilors; he would prefer to see the Council have alternates.

Christopher Squeri

He also said that prior to the meeting he went to the Permit Office and asked for an application for a landing license permit. He brought up the fact that you are no longer able to land blackfish with this permit. He wanted folks to realize how this came about. Former Chairman, William Wise, actually took a piece of legislation allowing for the landing license but wrote into it, an amendment that prohibited the taking of blackfish while using that license. Mr. Jordan then gave it to Mr. Arnold Leo who in turn took it to Assemblyman Thiele who saw it through to fruition. He believes the same can be accomplished regarding the Predesignation of Beneficiary rule. He asked if there could be a short meeting prior to a future MRAC meeting with several of the Councilors to discuss a preferential change(s) to what is on the books now.

Charles Witek

Councilor Davi said this has been on the table many times, the whole industry is starting to go in a direction to do away with latent licenses, not use them as a qualifier and perhaps this is the time to go forward with a change. Councilor Witthuhn questioned when was the last time we had a qualifier? Mr. Gilmore said it's more than that, he believes we really need to look at a much larger picture since most of the rules we are using now are based from 20-30 years ago, and much has changed.

Steve Witthuhn

Dean Yaxa

Michael Frisk
Chairman

Kim Knoll
Staff Assistant

We can use a new management approach for a number of the fisheries. Mr. Mihale said the only thing he is trying to accomplish right now would be for people who have latent licenses to keep them and not make them transferrable. Instead of having 900 people fishing, keep it at 600. Dr. Frisk said this will be a discussion for the future.

Nancy Solomon, from LI Traditions, said she was talking to a recreational fisherman who said that many times the people on a party and charter boat don't actually realize they have caught a fish until the captain tells them to lift their rod; unfortunately, many times the fish is now dead and cannot be thrown back if it's too small. He mentioned circle hooks to her as a way to go for fish conservation, she wondered if it could be made mandatory for the charter and party boat industry.

Ron Turbin, from The Gateway Striper Club wanted to compliment the Enforcement Division. He recently witnessed a demonstration with the newest K9 unit, he was quite impressed with the ability this unit has in finding hidden fish and catching poachers.

His perpetual suggestion is that the Department would be able to do more if they had more money and one way to do that would be through a fishing license. He blames propaganda for the squelching of the license previously put through because there was much too much misinformation being passed around. He would hope people, Councilors included, would check facts before passing them along.

Mr. Schoenig stated that he sat on the ad-hoc committee and can testify that the Conservation Fund has never been raided; it was never used for anything other than conservation efforts. He has spoken to many, many recreational fishers and he hasn't met one fisherman who would, then or now, refuse to spend \$10 on a license. The state has lost millions of dollars by the license not going through. There are many folks who had information at their fingertips that could have brought the false rumors to a halt but they chose not to enlighten people so many folks continued to believe the money from a license would be mis-used; therefore, the license was repealed.

Mr. Schoenig then asked the timeline for the DEC's new office space – when do they expect them to be ready? Mr. Gilmore said the preliminary design is in the works and if everything goes according to plan, they should be in their new offices within 3 years.

Councilor Witthuhn wanted to know what the procedure is for alerting folks to upcoming Council meetings. Ms. Knoll said the meeting schedule is posted on the Council's webpage: <https://you.stonybrook.edu/mrac/> as well as at the end of each bulletin that goes out. Council meetings for the upcoming year are set in January and are listed on the Council's webpage. Agenda items are posted one week prior to an upcoming meeting. Mr. Witthuhn said that he hears from folks that they don't know when a meeting is. Ms. Knoll countered that the information is there, but interested parties need to be proactive as well.

Mr. Gilmore reminded everyone that at last month's legislative review meeting, bill No. S4051 LaValle/A4289 Thiele – *Provides a safe harbor exemption to commercial fishing vessels in certain emergency situations* was discussed. A motion was made to oppose this bill but to give the sponsor additional language regarding that if they are from another state and need safe harbor, the quota or load they are carrying should not be counted against the particular state where they are seeking safety. It's also important for the catch to not be wasted. Councilor Davi questioned if the suggestion by the Council was adopted by the ASMFC at last week's meeting. Mr. Gilmore said they had a little push back because some folks felt like not everything applied to their states; however, it ended up being voted unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from April 18, 2017

11:00 a.m. open meeting
1:15 p.m. closed session

Motion to approve both sets of meeting minutes by Mr. Davi, seconded by Ms. Dearborn. All in favor – 8, Opposed -0, Abstentions -1. Motion passes

Updates from May's ASMFC Meeting:

<http://www.asmfc.org/files/Meetings/2017SpringMeeting/2017SpringMeetingSummary.pdf>

Please Note: The above link is for the **complete** meeting summary

Mr. Witthuhn said in reading through the summary, he would like the ASMFC to post which state each person is from, he feels it's helpful to know how each state is voting. Mr. Gilmore said Tina Berger would be the person to contact regarding that and he will bring it up to her.

Black Sea Bass –

Audience member, Mr. Neal Delanoy said he is involved in the winter sea bass fishery when it's open; it's a mixed fishery because it combines sea bass and porgies from mid-December through March. In NY, the sea bass fishery hasn't been open for the past few years but in New Jersey the porgy fishery has been open in January and February. So while catching the porgies, they also caught a tremendous amount of sea bass but are not supposed to keep them. Unfortunately, 99% of the fish that have to get thrown back are dead due to barotrauma because of the depth of water they are caught in. What upsets him the most is the waste that goes on in the fisheries. If NY ever does have a winter sea bass fishery, it would make sense to have it coincide with a porgy/scup fishery.

Mr. Gilmore reminded everyone that although the stock assessment showed that we are 240+% of the target range, the RHL from Wave 6 indicates that New York overharvested by an unprecedented amount of 10 times more than ever before.

Mr. Maniscalco has been challenging the numbers since they came out by providing all sorts of data to dispute the MRIP data and to prove it cannot be relied on. The first motion at the ASMFC meeting was to show GARFO that

NYSDEC was working toward generating a methodology to smooth problematic harvest estimates. This would eliminate the extreme highs or lows. This was approved unanimously.

Unfortunately, another motion was made by a state north of us that would reduce the wave 6 bag limit from 10 fish to 5 fish from Rhode Island through New Jersey. That motion passed. However, the DEC is going to challenge that. They are trying for a better discussion to work on this.

An audience member from Sheepshead Bay wanted to know if anyone was checking the data being brought in by the MRIP numbers. The numbers do not make sense. He said he is a retired detective and has worked with statistics in the police department and he knows that sometimes you would bring numbers to the boss and he would tell them to lower them in one place and maybe raise them in another. He called it massaging the numbers. Mr. Gilmore answered by saying the DEC staff are working *tirelessly* to get the Wave 6 numbers thrown out. The gentleman continued by saying the MRIP system is a disaster and nothing is being done to protect the for-hire industry.

Mr. Witthuhn said that recreational folks are frustrated and don't know where to turn and appreciate all the DEC is doing but he, too, feels it's a tough nut to swallow.

Mr. Paradiso wants to know what we can do as a Council to help. Mr. Gilmore said that right now the DEC is challenging the ruling through the Commission and *they are* receiving support for the challenge. The Commission is realizing that if this does not get fixed now, this is going to be a problem year after year. Dr. Frisk added that although it has been said previously, it bears repeating - the survey was designed to provide a

coastal estimate of the stock and not be broken down by state, then by sector, then by wave. In so doing, the variability is going to be high. The Council can make the case that the survey is being used incorrectly. Several Councilors are collaborating on a letter to send.

Mark Dejoan makes his living in the sound and the Sea Bass is relatively new but it's been a Godsend. To look at a stock that is 240% rebuilt and to *hope* that things will remain status quo but to find out that we are actually looking at cuts is completely ridiculous. They need the Sea Bass fishery – now, and without cuts.

Mr. Delanoy questioned if they can expect the Sea Bass season to open June 27th, with wave 4 and 5 remaining the same? The only possible difference might come in wave 6? To which Mr. Gilmore replied yes.

Marc Hoffman said the Council can write a letter; however, he thinks things will only change if people constantly complain and give them negative feedback. Dr. Frisk said it's fine for people to complain but if they could make people understand the survey is being used beyond its capability, he believes that is the best way to approach this. Mr. Gilmore said that New York needs to collect its own data so we can dispute MRIP findings; however, that will take money and there is currently no funding for this. To which, many folks complained that this is a perfect example of why there should be a recreational fishing license – monies could be designated to be used specifically for this purpose.

Summer Flounder-

Mr. Gilmore said that option 5 was approved by each of the states except New Jersey. New Jersey actually filed an appeal and also came up with a proposal for a conservation-equivalent management measure. Should those measures be accepted, they will withdraw the appeal. Procedurally, it could not be approved at the table because it had not been analyzed by the technical committee and then the board would have to vote on it (19" size limit, 3 fish bag limit and a 128 day season). They have been found to have been out of compliance because they did not implement those rules. They have since put in an alternative for ocean waters (18" size limit, 3 fish bag limit and a season from May 25th – September 5th – this would take 24 days off the season) and Delaware Bay would have a 17" size, 3 fish bag limit, May 25th – September 5th. Mr. Gilmore said there will be a board meeting via webinar and once they receive the results from the Technical Committee's findings, they will then vote as to whether or not they approve this and subsequently put New Jersey back in compliance.

New York's season will be: 19" size limit, 3 fish bag limit, May 17th – Sept 21st.

Mr. Delanoy noted that Fluke, Seabass and Scup are managed under one plan and we're only allowed to regulate the recreational fishery through size, season and bag limit. Handling the fishery in this manner does not allow for any latitude. There are other ways of managing species, i.e., reducing discard mortality, etc. that have proven to be very successful in other areas. There are more efficient ways of utilizing the fisheries which could lead to relaxing the season, bag limit or size. Perhaps if we restrict the fishery in another way it would open it up in another. An example would be in the Florida Keys, they have MPAs. Originally they hated them and now they love them; in the Gulf of Mexico they have a program for party boats called the Gulf Headboat Collaborative for Red Snapper:

(<https://www.gulfshores.com/fishing/charters/headboat.aspx#sm.00013fy6afkemcy8qof1ohy9na03a>)

From their web page: *This is basically an allocation-based management system that provides headboat captains with the freedom and flexibility to fish when it is best for their business and customers. Through strict monitoring and reporting requirements, the EFP will allow the participating headboats to catch the same number of fish allowed during the normally short recreational fishing seasons, but to take anglers fishing anytime during the calendar year.*

Participating headboats will test new electronic data collection methods and collaborate with academic researchers to help answer important management questions about this new approach to managing recreational for-hire fishing.

He continued by saying that the system works by having the captains document what they have caught over a certain period of time for which they will receive tags. An example would be if you caught an average of 2,000

fish from a certain period of time, you would receive 2,000 tags. It would be up to you how you want to fish. The tags can be transferable or not, that, too, would be up to you. If you choose to say fish 3 days a week, you can do it, you can adjust your season to whatever works best for you. This eliminates discard mortality because no one is focusing on size limits; no one catches a fish they can't keep. There are more efficient ways to run a fishery. We need to put together a committee to go over discard mortality and ways to reduce it.

Striped bass-

Mr. Gilmore stated that draft Addendum V was put out for the Chesapeake Bay States. At the last assessment, mortality rates had gone down (.16) which led to thoughts about liberalization; however, when the 2016 data came out, it showed the Chesapeake Bay states were already over the 10% increase they were hoping to receive. Projections went as high as 22%. There was a motion made at the meeting to bring this to public comment but the motion failed so that will not be happening.

The next management change will be considered when the 2018 stock assessment comes out.

Currently, there will be no changes with regard to Striped Bass regulations anywhere on the coast.

Atlantic Menhaden-

Mr. Gilmore said the DEC is still working on the Amendment to the plan that will be looking at ecosystem based reference points along with other important topics. He hopes to have a public document prepared by August which will be presented to the public as part of the management plan. The more significant issue is the episodic event(s) that have taken place and will most likely happen again. He wanted to assure folks that New York is still part of the Episodic Event Program. The hope is to come up with an alternative to just filling the landfill with the fish carcasses, perhaps fishers will have use for them. New York has been capped at one million lbs. as their quota allowance.

Tautaug

Mr. Gilmore said this is another area that they are not happy with. Under Amendment 1, we are going to regional management. Unfortunately, for New York, the Long Island Sound is being separated from the South Shore as well as the East End, with each area having their own set of measures to abide by. This is going to be a nightmare for law enforcement. There will essentially be 4 separate water bodies and 3 separate sets of limits – this might work on paper but on water, it's a completely different matter. They are moving forward with this approach. New York's voice is being heard but it is being out-voted. The DEC will continue to oppose this.

The regions being:

- 1- Massachusetts – Rhode Island
- 2- Long Island Sound (CT and NY LIS)
- 3- New Jersey – New York Bight
- 4- Delaware – Maryland – Virginia

Mr. Gilmore strongly suggested that when the public comment period comes out; Long Islanders should come out in droves and let their opinions be known.

Mr. Paradiso said that this is crazy because you go to regional management to offset a reduction but Long Island always seems to get punished. Now we're going to have inequality *within* a state. It's impossible to manage it in this way.

Mr. Davi has a problem with anytime a cut has to be made; it comes out of the commercial sector.

Mr. Gilmore said that part of the amendment is that there will also be a tagging system which they hope will eliminate illegal harvest. Anytime a fish is sold at a market, a tag will need to be removed

Mr. Turbin said the tagging system might take care of the Commercial sector but what about the the illegal poaching that takes place? They hope that the tagging system will deter illegal activity as well by making it more obvious what fish has been caught legally vs. illegally.

Mr. Maniscalco explained that a tagging study was performed to find a tag that was quick and easy to use. The tag that is being used is small, made of stainless steel and attaches quickly and easily to the fish's gill plate. An average fisherman will be able to use this without a problem.

Mr. Mihale said that he began coming to Council meetings in January of 1997 and tautog was on the agenda then too. In April of 1998 they implemented the Tautog Management Plan; however, they didn't fully implement it because one of the things they called for was a 14" size limit and a fishing mortality target of $F=0.15$. We didn't achieve that until January of 2012. Now we finally have what we always wanted; we are now seeing and catching very small fish which we have to throw back. He would like to know where the sampling is being done if this is not what is being seen. Why are they saying there's a problem when there clearly is none? Mr. Mihale said he fishes in the real world and welcomes anyone to come on his boat to see what he sees. As far as the tagging program, he would accept tags with 2 considerations: – 1. We have to require that the recreational fishery do not carry live blackfish, they need to kill their fish. 2. Get a better tag – it should be easier to insert – it should be put toward the back. There needs to be a simpler tagging system. By putting it in its gill plate, you are creating additional stress for the fish which will eventually kill the fish.

Others in the audience agreed with Mr. Mihale's points. They felt there should be a committee comprised of fishers who actually do this and would be able to offer advice as to what would work and wouldn't work – what would be best for the fish as well as the fishers. Mr. Gilmore said this was decided by a committee, it was the ASMFC Law Enforcement Committee, he will give anyone who wants, their contact information and they should get in touch with them.

Scup-

Mr. Gilmore said there will be a change for the commercial fishing sector. The Winter I season will now run January 1st – April 30th making a 120 day season. Summer will be May 1st – September 30th reducing the season to 53 days and Winter II will be October 1st – December 31st which is 92 days. The summer season was shortened by 31 days and the Winter II is extended by 31 days.

American lobster -

Mr. Gilmore said initially there was talk about a 10% reduction; however, after a discussion, it was changed to 5% reduction in Southern New England. Mr. Gilmore said they tried to get area 6 (Long Island Sound) excluded from the 5% reduction simply because they've already had a 97% reduction to contend with but they were not able to. Mr. Davi views this as a win but Mr. Gilmore said there is much work ahead but for very little gain.

Jonah Crab Management-

Ms. Rachel Sysak, a biologist with the DEC gave the following presentation:

Jonah Crab Proposed Regulations



MRAC - May 16, 2017

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Jonah Crab FMP

- Goal

Support and promote the development and implementation of a unified coastal management program. The plan was designed to promote conservation, reduce the possibility of recruitment failure, and allow full utilization of the resource by the United States industry.

FMP was adopted August 2015

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Jonah Crab FMP

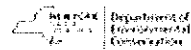
A. Commercial Fishery

- Permits
 - Directed trap fishery limited to lobster permit holders & lobster gear
 - Bycatch – incidental permit
- 4.75" minimum size with no tolerance
- Only whole crabs can be retained.
 - Exception – NJ, DE, MD, VA with history of claw landings
- Prohibition on retention of egg-bearing females
- Incidental bycatch limit for non-trap gear
 - 200 crabs per day, 500 per trip

Jonah Crab FMP cont

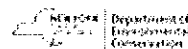
B. Recreational Fishery

- Possession limit
 - 50 crabs per day
- Prohibition on retention of egg-bearing females



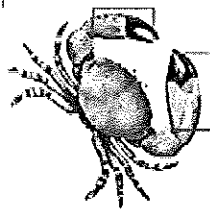
Jonah Crab Addendum I – Bycatch Limits

- Bycatch by non-trap gears (trawls, nets, etc)
 - 1,000 crabs per trip incidental bycatch limit – applies to trips any length
- Bycatch by non-lobster trap gears (crab pots, etc)
 - 1,000 crab per trip incidental bycatch limit – applies to trips any length
- Adopted May 2016

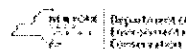


Jonah Crab Addendum II - Claw Harvest

- Claw Harvest
 - Jonah crab claws may be detached & harvested at-sea throughout management unit
 - If volume of detached at sea claws is < 5 gallons – no min claw size
 - If volume > 5 gallons – min claw length of 2.5"
 - Claw length measured along the bottom of the claw, from the joint to the lower tip of the claw
- Bycatch Definition
 - Jonah crab caught under the bycatch limit must comprise at all times during a fishing trip an amount lower, in pounds, than the target species the deployed gear is targeting.

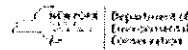


Adopted January 2017



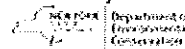
Jonah Crab Proposed Rules

- Minimum size of 4.75" for whole Jonah crab for both the commercial & recreational fisheries
- Rules to allow commercial lobster permit holders to harvest and/or land Jonah crab from lobster traps that conform to the lobster management plan
- Rules to allow commercial crab permit holders to harvest Jonah crab below the bycatch limit from non-trap gear & non-lobster trap gear.



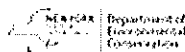
Jonah Crab Proposed Rules - continued

- The crab permit bycatch limits include:
 - 1,000 crab bycatch limit per trip for non-trap gear
 - 1,000 crab bycatch limit per trip for non-lobster trap gear
 - Bycatch definition that defines bycatch as an amount lower than the target species
- Rules allowing Jonah crab claws to be detached at sea and harvested
 - If the volume of detached claws < 5 gallons – no claw size limit
 - If volume of detached claws > 5 gallons – 2.75" min claw size
 - Claw length measured along the bottom of the claw, from the joint to the lower tip of the claw



Jonah Crab Regulatory Proposal Timeline

- Currently
 - Regulatory Initiation Memo being reviewed by counsel
- Late Spring/Summer
 - Develop regulatory package
 - Internal review and sign off
 - publish in DOS register – 45 day comment period
 - Assessment of public comments
- Fall
 - Adopt the rules



Thank You

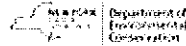
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Mr. Mihale wanted to know where you would find these crabs. Ms. Sysak replied you would find them off the South Shore.

The DEC would like feedback from the Council on this. Mr. Davi said he would reach out to folks to get their feedback.

Proposed regulatory package for Sharks/Cod/Squid

Mr. Chris Scott, a biologist with the DEC gave the following presentation; this pertains to the commercial industry:



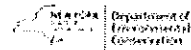
Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Shark/Cod/Squid Proposed Regulations

MRAC - May 16, 2017

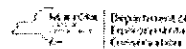
Shark/Cod/Squid Proposed Rules

- Purpose of the rulemaking is to ensure consistency between federal and state fishery management plans for:
 - Coastal Sharks
 - Atlantic Cod
 - Longfin and *Illex* squid

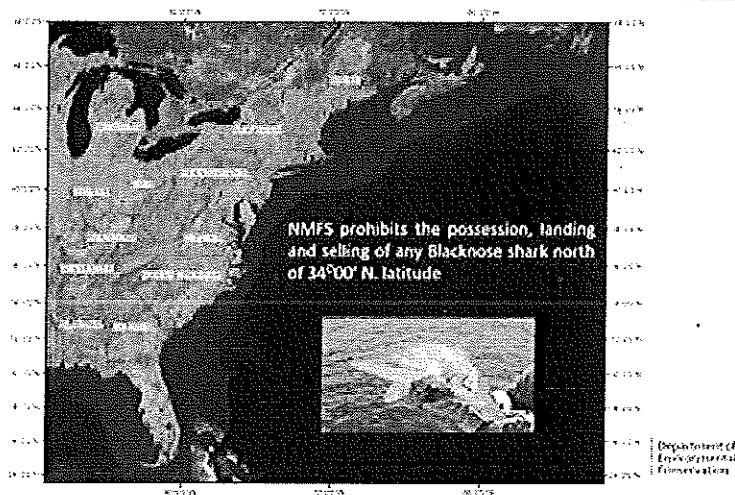


Shark

- NOAA Fisheries manages Large Coastal Sharks (LCS) and Hammerhead sharks through the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
- ASMFC Coastal Sharks Board adopts complimentary measures to maintain consistency between federal and state coastal shark FMP
 - LCS and Hammerhead sharks are managed under commercial quotas
 - Quotas of different shark groups are linked to prevent overfishing
 - ASMFC will not actively set quotas for any species, but does follow NMFS for in-season changes to the commercial retention limit.

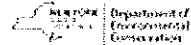


Shark



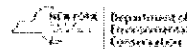
Atlantic Cod

- Atlantic cod is managed in federal waters by the New England Fishery Management Council as part of the Northeast Multispecies fishery management plan (FMP)
 - Atlantic cod is one of 20 groundfish stocks which are managed using catch limits and landings and/or possession limits
 - Catch limits are specified through framework adjustments to the FMP
 - Landing/possession limits are subject to change during the fishing year
- Federal commercial minimum size limit for Atlantic cod is 19"



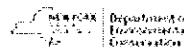
Longfin and Illex Squid

- Atlantic mackerel, longfin squid, Illex squid, and butterfish fisheries are managed in federal waters by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council under a single fishery management plan
 - Harvested for bait and food for domestic and foreign markets
- Squid are managed using quotas and trip limits
 - Annual quotas are based on recommendations from the Council
 - NMFS tracks quotas and modifies trip limits based on pre-determined thresholds



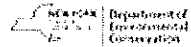
Shark/Cod/Squid Proposed Rules

- Five marine issues proposed in this rule making
 - Three are similar
 - Allow the department to adopt federal and/or ASMFC commercial quotas, trip, and/or possession limits by reference for:
 - Large Coastal Shark complex (LCS) and Hammerhead shark complex
 - Longfin and Illex squid
 - Atlantic cod
 - Ban the harvest of blacknose sharks
 - Revise the commercial size of Atlantic Cod to 19"



Regulatory Proposal Timeline

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- Summer/Fall
 - Develop regulatory package
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 - publish in DOS register – 45 day comment period
 - Assessment of public comments
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 - Adopt the rules



Thank You

- Kim McKown
- Chris Scott

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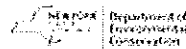
- MIPR

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Mr. Davi went to one of the meetings regarding the Butterfish and Squid fishery and said he understands the perspective that certain fishers have with regard to closing the fishery to latent licenses because they are being crushed but he's personally afraid the state will follow suite and this would hurt a lot of fishers in New York State. There should be a measure in NY State that allows them to go out and catch their Butterfish and/or squid. Mr. Gilmore said it's the Mid-Atlantic Council that is trying to limit the amount of licenses.

Brief update on Northern Puffer

Dr. Frisk stated that there has been much interest of late regarding the Northern Puffer and had asked Mr. Maniscalco to put information together about this species. Of particular concern to people is what the actual regulatory authority is for Northern Puffer and how would people go about recommending a management plan for the species.

Ms. McKown of the DEC said that currently there is only a very broad authority regarding the species and if more management tools are requested, the department can begin to put a plan together. The Council could then put it forward to the Legislation. It was thought that perhaps the tools could mimic what is in place for fluke.

Mr. Paradiso said we will basically have to change the law in order to manage the species. This is the first step in the process.

Mr. Davi feels it's a cycle thing and doesn't believe we need to regulate this. The species runs in cycles. They disappeared for a very long time but now they're back again. He thinks things should remain status quo; however, if the Council thinks it's a good idea and something that would help the fishery, he would go along with it.

Mr. Witek said one of the things we lack right now is a recreational summer bait fishery. There isn't much kids can fish for off the dock. It would be a good family fishery, they're tasty too. It would be better to regulate it and smooth it out to prevent them from disappearing again. We should even out the fishery. In Great South Bay they pound the life out of them when they do show up. It would be nice to have a steady fishery. It would be nice to keep them around.

Mr. Davi wanted to know what kind of limits would be put forward for the commercial industry? Mr. Gilmore said there needs to be more data and research before moving forward if they even do move forward. Landings aren't high right now because many people associate it with the Japanese Poison Fish so when they catch them, they throw them back.

Dr. Frisk said he knows very little about their migration but he will try to put together some information that he will share with the Council as a whole.

Mr. Mihale suggested the Council think about other species and maybe take care of everything in one shot.

Mr. Witthuhn and many others think we need to protect the Puffer Fish.

Mr. Gilmore said procedurally the correct way to move forward with this would be for the Council to say if they want to proceed with a management plan or not, that would be step one. It goes without saying this is for 2018 or even 2019.

This will be placed on the agenda for July or September, the next meeting. There should be a solid proposal ready when the Legislation meets in January 2018.

Mr. Turbin thinks the Council should include Sea Robins in this proposal.

MRAC Calendar Dates for 2017

July 18th – 6:00 p.m. – This meeting will take place at Stony Brook University, Endeavour Hall 120 at the School of Marine & Atmospheric Sciences

September 12th - 2:00 p.m. – NYSDEC offices 205 Belle Mead Road, East Setauket

November 14th – 2:00 p.m. – NYSDEC offices, 205 Belle Mead Road, East Setauket

For further information about the Marine Resources Advisory Council, past and present bulletins, as well as any pertinent graphs, charts or data, please check the Council's web page: <http://you.stonybrook.edu/mrac/meetings/>

Should you wish to suggest an agenda topic, contact the Chairman, Michael Frisk, (michael.frisk@stonybrook.edu); phone 631/632-8656; Staff Assistant, Kim Knoll, (kim.knoll@stonybrook.edu)