

New England Fishery Management Council
Recreational Advisory Panel
Meeting Summary
January 24, 2007

The Recreational Advisory Panel met in Danvers, Massachusetts. The Panel was asked to comment on issues relevant to the Council's development of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan's Amendment 16. Panel members present were Mr. Bud Brown, Mr. Charles Casella, Mr. Fred Chistian, Mr. Tom DePersia, Mr. Mike Sosik, Mr. Tony DiLernia, Mr. Barry Gibson (Chair), Mr. Joeseeph Huckemeyer, Mr. Ed Nowak, and Mr. Don Swanson. Mr. Rip Cunningham (NEFMC Groundfish Committee Chair) represented the Council. Chad Demarest and Tom Nies (NEFMC staff) were present, and approximately four members of the public were in attendance.

The Panel reviewed the meeting agenda. Mr. Cunningham provided an overview of the purpose and timeline for Amendment 16 (Am16), and staff gave a brief overview of the written and verbal comments received during the Am16 scoping process.

Limited entry in the Party/Charter recreational fishery

Mr. Gibson summarized the Panel's prior motion requesting the Council consider limited entry in the Party/Charter fishery, and the fact that the Council had not made this issue a priority for 2007. Mr. Casella asked for clarification as to why the Council could not take this issue up in Am16, and Mr. Cunningham explained that Council actions have extensive procedural requirements which require staff time and other resources. Therefore, the Council limits the number and scope of actions that it undertakes in a given year, and while this issue was discussed very seriously by the Council, it was not selected as a funded priority for 2007.

Motion: That the Recreational Advisory Panel request that the New England Council implement Limited Entry in the Gulf of Maine as a management tool for the party/charter fishery in Amendment 16. (Mr. DiLernia/Mr. Huckemeyer)

Mr. DeLernia offered as rationale that this motion would reaffirm the panel's position on Limited Entry, even if the Council did not accept the motion and add party/charter Limited Entry to the Am16 document.

The panel discussed the implications for limited entry. One member expressed concern that, if the balance of operators shifted from small to large, it could drive down bag limits. Mr. Gibson indicated that this may be a larger concern in the absence of Limited Entry, and furthermore that the bag limits apply evenly across the board regardless of the size of the charter operation. There was some discussion on the idea of adding permits if and when the resource rebounds. A member added that this was a long-term concern, but that instituting limited entry at this point does not preclude expanding the number of permits available in the future. Mr. Cunningham stated that language could probably be added to the management action that allowed for additional permit creation in the future.

From the audience, Mr. Jim Walsh, a party fisherman from Lynne, MA, supported the motion.

The motion **carried** on a show of hands (6-1-1).

Allocation of catch for the Party/Charter recreational fishery

Mr. Gibson began the discussion on allocation in Am16 by stating that the recreational fishery clearly catches a substantial amount of fish, particularly in the Gulf of Maine, and that there is a need to contribute to rebuilding these stocks. Therefore, the Panel was asked to think about recreational management as a whole, and the role that allocation could play in that management.

The Panel spent considerable time discussing the concept of allocation, the potential stocks available for allocation and the benefits and costs associated with a recreational allocation. Most of the discussions centered around the themes of accountability, independence from the commercial fishery, and the maximum allocation that the recreational sector could reasonably expect. Consistency with any commercial sector allocations, particularly qualifying baseline years, may be important to ensure that the sum of any individual allocations do not exceed the whole.

Motion: That the Recreational Advisory Panel requests a recreational (inclusive) allocation of GOM cod and that the percentage allocation be determined by the data provided in the 2000-2004 GARM report (GARM II). (Mr. Casella/Mr. DePersia)

Mr. Casella offered as rationale for the motion the fact that GOM cod is the primary stock for the recreational fishery in the Gulf of Maine, and that pursuing a recreational allocation will provide more accountability and control for the recreational fishing industry. One Panel member wondered if specifying the qualifying years in the motion was a good idea.

A perfected motion was offered to include the last five years of GARM data.

Perfected motion: That the Recreational Advisory Panel request a recreational (inclusive) allocation of Gulf of Maine cod and that the percentage allocation be determined by the last five years of recreational landings data as determined by the GARM.

The Panel discussed whether or not to add additional stocks to the motion, and from the audience Kevin Twombly, a recreational fisherman from Gloucester, MA, spoke in favor of not limiting the motion to Gulf of Maine cod. A friendly amendment was approved by the maker and second for the perfected motion:

Perfected motion: That the Recreational Advisory Panel request a recreational (inclusive of all segments) allocation of Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock, and that the percentage allocation be determined by the last five years of recreational landings data as determined by the GARM.

The Panel discussed whether or not adding haddock to the motion was likely to result in a larger share of the GOM haddock resource than they would get in absence of a directed allocation. The idea of waiting a few years to build up a greater landings history was discussed, but did not gain traction.

The motion **carried** on a show of hands (7-0-2).

Motion: That the Recreational Advisory Panel recommend to the Council that any stock of regulated multispecies that ceases to be an open fishery be given a recreational quota. (Mr. Swanson/Mr. Casella)

Mr. Swanson offered as rationale for the motion that, if restrictions were placed on additional stocks in the recreational fishery, the recreational fishery would like to signal its intent to request an allocation of those stocks.

Perfect motion: That the Recreational Advisory Panel recommend to the Council that any stock of regulated multispecies that ceases to have an unregulated recreational catch be given a recreational allocation. (Mr. Swanson/Mr. Casella)

The motion **carried** on a show of hands (9-0-0).

Additional mortality measures to consider in the recreational fishery for Am16

Motion: That the Recreational Advisory Panel recommend to the Council that the size limit be equal in both the commercial and recreational fishery for cod. (Mr. Christian/Mr. Casella)

Mr. Christian offered as rationale that the size limits should either be increased for the commercial fishery or decreased for the recreational fishery, but that, because of the current discrepancy, it is difficult for recreational fisherman to find legal sized cod in areas where commercial fishing has recently taken place.

One Panel member stated that the ability to exchange the higher size limit for more lenient restrictions in other areas, like bag limits and seasonal closures, may be important to the recreational fishery in the future. He did not feel that the Council was likely to increase the minimum commercial size for cod. Another Panel member stated that, should the recreational sector be given an allocation, then this motion might be more supportable. A third Panel member stated that there was additional unnecessary mortality being caused by the 24 inch minimum size. A fourth Panel member stated that he would prefer the larger size to a longer seasonal closure.

The motion **failed** on a show of hands (2-4-3).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 PM.