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New England Fishery Management Council EAFM Stakeholder Workshop #6 Boston, MA

Date: October 13, 2005
Location: Seaport World Trade Center Boston
Attendees: (9) – Jimmy Bramante, Boston MA; Scott Hopkinson, Boston MA; Tory Bramante, Boston MA; Bernie Bramante, Boston MA; Salvatore Bramante, Boston MA; Lydia Bergen, Boston MA; Frank Gable, Natick MA; Madeline Hall-Arber, Cambridge MA; Peter Cooper, Andover MA
Facilitators: Chad Demarest (NEFMC), Kathy Mills (Cornell University)
Start time: 5:30 scheduled, 5:50 actual
End time: 8:30 scheduled, 9:15 actual
Questionnaires: 7 completed on-site, 0 received in the mail

I. Purpose and format

The purpose of this workshop was to engage participants in a discussion, and to solicit a wide range of opinions, on topics critical to integrating ecosystem approaches into the Council's stewardship of marine resources and our fisheries.

Due to the number of participants the workshop was run in one group. Kathy began by discussing Objectives, Indicators and Tools, followed by Chad discussing Ecosystem Boundaries and Collaborative Management.

II. Break-out Session: Objectives, Indicators and Tools

Implementing an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management requires drawing upon stakeholder input to define objectives for both local fisheries and ecosystems. Identifying indicators to track the status of these fisheries and ecosystems, and determining methods or tools for reaching these objectives, follow closely after. Participants were asked to consider changes in fisheries management that may result if ecosystem approaches are utilized, and to identify objectives related to the fishery management process and its outcomes for both fisheries and the ecosystem. From this information, we hoped to gain a sense of the issues and priorities stakeholders want to see addressed through an ecosystem approach, and the results they hope such an approach will achieve. Participants were also asked to identify indicators (including biological, ecological, social, and economic features) that can be used to track how well fisheries and the ecosystem are doing based on metrics relevant to our stakeholders. Finally, participants shared their perceptions of the usefulness and acceptability of common current management tools and offered suggestions for other tools that could be adapted under an ecosystem approach.

A. Objectives

Management structure and process

- Simpler management

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- Flexibility in implementation of regulations (e.g., mesh shrinkage)
- More coordinated regulations (including international coordination)
- Separate category, sector, regulations for boats with ONLY multi-species permits
- Do not reward bad practices
- Adopt management strategies without waiting for catastrophe
 - Implement smaller, incremental changes over longer period of time
- Problem that the regional administrator can only close fisheries; can't take preventative measures like cutting TACs or slowing down fishery
- Predictability, stability in management
- Stop lawsuits and the influence they currently have on regulations
- Give regulations a chance to work before change them (changes often happen because of lawsuits)
- Management that reflects larger ethical values (ethical towards ecosystem and towards fishermen)

Fisheries

- Build stocks up to where they were 40-50 years ago
- Prevent fleet growth and compression into smaller areas
 - Closed areas good, equal for everyone
- Fewer permits
- Safe vessels
- Financially productive fleet
- High efficiency
- Major buy-out (funded by environmental groups, charter/recreational boats)
- Any permits that come back should be auctioned when stock grows
- Tariffs on foreign fish—gave away grounds to Canada, stocks move across boundaries, fish sold in Canada comes back to the U.S. and affects U.S. markets
- Fish belong to taxpayers—fishermen need to sell product for its real value, pay taxes, and thereby re-pay taxpayers

Stakeholders

- Grassroots, industry guidance of fishery
- More industry input
- Develop trust between fishermen, scientists, and managers (find common ground between them)

Ecological considerations

- Healthy biodiversity
- Number of fish species/abundance increasing
- Preserve or restore spatial range of species
- Sustainable, pass on to next generation

Science

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- Need to talk to fishermen to know about where fish were, migration patterns, etc.
- Need to know past to know what future could look like
- Can't rely solely on recent baselines

Objectives stated by participants in this session fell into several major categories: management and the management process, fisheries, stakeholders, ecological considerations, and science. (Note: categories were developed after the discussion and were not used to guide the session.) There was support among participants simpler, consistent regulations that do not heavily disadvantage any particular group. (In this case, concern was mostly focused on holders of single fishing permits, due to the impact of days-at-sea regulations on large boat owners with only multi-species permits.) In several suggestions, market mechanisms were supported as a way of managing fisheries. A desire for greater interaction between fishermen, scientists, and managers was also expressed, including greater industry involvement in science and management.

B. Indicators

Ecological

- Size structure of fish
- Small fish
- Prey stocks
 - Migratory patterns (and changes in them)
- By-catch
- Water quality
- Habitats and breeding/nursery areas

Socio-economic

- Landing variability (steady better)
- Fishermen's attitude, optimism
- Vessel maintenance
- New gear
- Age of fishermen
- Availability of money for loans (qualification for mortgages)
- Fair retail cost of fish (or price paid to fishermen)
- Value of vessels
- Fleet replacement and upgrades
- Media stories and their perspective (present fishing in positive or negative light)
- Healthy recreational fishing
 - Number of fish caught per day

Indicators put forward by the group included ecological and socio-economic features that could be used to track the status of fisheries and the ecosystem. (Note: categories for the indicators were developed after the group discussion.) Fishermen spoke of the need to protect young fish and prey stocks; they also focused on fleet-

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based indicators of the health of the fishery. In addition, a desire to use data that were collected by fishing boats or by sea samplers on them was expressed by the fishermen.

C. Tools

Management tools	Useful for?	Acceptability?
Effort controls (DAS, trip limits, trap limits)	Control effort and mortality	Some by-catch limits too low DAS and trip limits should depend on size of boat and the number of crew
Output controls (quotas, size limits)	TACs should be broken into permit categories (by vessel size, crew, number of alternate permits) Size limits useful for certain fisheries, not necessarily for all (can lead to by-catch, waste)	Vessel quotas or sector allocations favored when hard TACs used Overall TACs encourage derby fishing Guild quotas not useful, leads to imbalance in ecosystem
Technical tools (gear/vessel regulations)	Gear regulations can allow escapement, protect juveniles; square mesh useful	
Protected areas (spawning/year-round closures)	Excellent tools Spawning closures useful Err on conservation side	Everyone in same category, same rules Should be closed to everyone, whether permanent or for spawning

Participants recognized useful benefits of many currently-utilized management tools. However, they felt that certain factors should be considered carefully in the process of determining days-at-sea allocations. While the participants were skeptical of overall quotas, they supported the use of quotas if they were allocated to individual vessels or sectors. Participants also supported protected areas, but they want all closures to be closed to everyone, not just to certain fisheries.

III. Break-out Session: Ecosystem Boundaries and Collaborative Management

One of the foundational concepts underlying Ecosystem Approaches to Management is that different geographically-defined areas have different biological production capacities, and that it may be advantageous to scale science and management to these areas. The first step, obviously, is to define the areas. The group was asked the question “what makes a particular area unique.” The answers in many cases may be predictable, such as “temperature,” “salinity,” “sediment,” etc., but the question was designed to get the participants thinking in terms of spatially-differentiated geographical areas. It was especially interesting to note when novel indicators were explored, and to what degree participants felt that actions of humans (fishing and non-fishing) should be factored into the equation.

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Input was then solicited on the appropriate geographic scale for fisheries management, the link between ‘scientifically-defined ecosystems’ and potential ‘management areas,’ and any governance issues that may arise as a result of spatially-defined ecosystems.

Terrestrial and, to some extent, international literature on ecosystems approaches to management frequently target community-based (or co-management, collaborative management) principals as a primary driver for ecosystems approaches to management. The group was asked to comment on the perceived advantages of collaborative management, such as an increased sense of stewardship and the potential to see gains from personal conservation-based behaviors, and how these benefits may dovetail with what might be considered a highly geographically mobile fishing fleet in New England. Does the capacity for local management exist? Is there a way to maintain geographic flexibility while achieving the perceived benefits of community-based management? Are communities necessarily geographic, or can they take on other units?

A. Ecosystem Boundaries

Responses by participants are categorized (below) into one of two themes: delineation, and governance. These themes emerged from discussions during the workshop and they were not presented to participants in this structured format.

Discussions initially centered on the physical indicators that may be relevant for delineating local ecosystem boundaries. Participants did not explore social boundaries, nor were many ideas presented that would link fisherman to the ecosystem. However, the recognition of political boundaries, particularly international and state boundaries, but also existing regulatory boundaries, was stated by multiple participants as crucial to providing continuity during a transition to an ecosystem approach.

The idea of adaptive-ness was expressed, as several participants noted that the indicators useful for delineating local ecosystems change over time, sometimes dramatically.

Delineation

- Spawning patterns
- Migration patterns
- Sediment/bottom type
- Species composition
- Prey availability
- Current/water flow
- Take into account currently existing political boundaries

Governance

- Must change over time, or not prevent change
 - Impermanence
 - Adaptive-ness

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- Include separate near-coastal zone
- Account for human impacts
- Use lat/lon for reference in defining
- Applying regulations differently across areas can become too confusing
- Simpler is better
- Need consistency

B. Collaborative Management

All participants mentioned that different ports have different needs, though all were tentative to offer specific solutions for integrating these needs into management beyond using the processes already in place. It should be noted that several participants did not find the current process ideal for such purposes. A fair amount of time was spent discussing the dislocation of formerly geographically-defined fishing communities due to loss of waterfront access and increased housing costs. Many fishermen (most?) can no longer afford to live in the same coastal communities that they work out of. This may have led to a decreased sense of community amongst fishermen of different gear types/fisheries, who no longer spend time together. Instead, fishing communities are more aligned with fishery and fishing areas and, perhaps, gear types.

- Different ports have different needs
- Communities are geographically broken up
- May not exist in/around fishing docks, but fishing communities may develop inland where housing is more affordable.

IV. Summary statements

Both groups were reassembled in plenary and given an opportunity to provide any comments or feedback on any issues pertinent to ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. Here is what they felt was most important:

- Closed areas need to be closed to everyone
- Groundfish regulations make it nearly impossible for vessels to operate within just this fishery – 160 DAS minimum for this purpose
- Vessels with groundfish permits only have been disproportionately impacted by the regulations (DAS cuts in particular)
- IFQ's are fair and equitable, regardless of whether fishing history or vessel size or some combination thereof is used for initial quota allocation
- Single-license boats should be given separate treatment under the regulations
- Fisheries management needs to encourage the development of policies that are respectful of natural resources

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