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### New England Fishery Management Council EAFM Stakeholder Workshop #7 Mystic, CT

**Date:** October 18, 2005  
**Location:** Comfort Inn  
**Attendees:** (11) – William Bomster, Stonington CT; Frank Gable, Natick MA; Kate Simmons, Camden ME; Bill Spicer, Noank CT; Eric Smith, Old Lyme CT; David Simpson, Waterford CT; Syma Ebbin, Groton CT; Fred Emery, Ledyard CT; Penny Howell, Niantic CT; Ray Collins, Old Saybrook CT; Thomas Coley, Clinton CT  
**Facilitators:** Chad Demarest (NEFMC), Patricia Pinto da Silva (NOAA, NEFSC)  
**Start time:** 5:30 scheduled, 5:40 actual  
**End time:** 8:30 scheduled, 8:50 actual  
**Questionnaires:** 6 completed on-site, 0 received in the mail

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#### 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 conducted with one large group, as opposed to two groups as was done at other locations. Chad began by discussing Objectives, Indicators and Tools, followed by Patricia 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.

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### *A. Objectives*

Objectives stated by participants in this session fell into several major categories: management and the management process, fisheries, stakeholders, and ecological considerations. [Note that these categories were developed after the discussion and were not used to guide the session.] Participants advocated for maximizing economic returns from the fishery, ensuring industry sustainability, incorporating notions of inter-generational equity, and providing healthy food for the public. The need for someone (though no definitive body was determined) to advocate for fisheries in matters that affect the health of the marine ecosystem was emphasized as well.

#### **Management structure and process**

- Stability
- Provide for/create environment for sustaining high biomass levels
- Minimize market disruptions
- Provide for sustainable livelihoods
- Consider inter-generational equity
  - Provide opportunities for the next generation
- Encourage and provide for flexibility

#### **Fisheries**

- Maximum value per recruit
- Not impairing reproductive capacity
- Affordable, quality seafood
- Diverse fishery
- Maintain institutional (tradition/local) knowledge within fishery
  - Sustain human dimension of fishery

#### **Stakeholders**

- A content public
- Good communication between stakeholders and regulators
- Multi-dimensional communications (vice one-way communication)

#### **Ecological considerations**

- Advocate for fisheries with regard to non-fishing impacts to the marine environment

### *B. Indicators*

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 that categories for the indicators were developed after the group discussion.] Participants pointed to a few novel indicators such as seafood contaminants and fish disease that may serve to monitor the affect of non-fishing impacts of marine fishery resources. Also new to the workshops was the inclusion of nuisance species (invasive species). Efficiency and economic health indicators were discussed, as some very important

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safety indicators. Overall, there was a decided focus on health indicators: coastal health, fishery business health, and fisherman's health.

### Ecological

- Water quality
- Presence of eelgrass in coastal waters
- Presence of baitfish/invertebrates
- Occurrence of nuisance species (negative measure)
- Presence of seafood contaminants/health of product (negative measure)
- Presence of fish diseases (negative measure)
- Changes in trophic structure
- Population age structure
- Weight-at-age
- Recruitment

### Socio-economic

- Average age of fisherman
- Profitability of fishing fleets/vessels/businesses
- Consistent supply to markets
- Frequency of closures (negative measure)
- Derby-style fishing practices (negative measure)
- Frequency of lawsuits (negative measure)
- Number of new (especially replacement) boats purchased
- Overall safety compliance noted in CG dockside inspections
- Number of sinkings/insurance claims (negative measure)
- Average age of vessels
- Accident rates
  - Inshore
  - At dock
- Fleet efficiency

### *C. Tools*

Participants in this session recognized that the usefulness and acceptability of various management tools depends on how they are implemented. They were able to provide a wealth of information on the efficacy of various management tools under specific circumstances. The “useful and acceptable” format utilized at the nine other workshops was not employed here; general comments on tools that were familiar to the participants were instead solicited.

The participants viewed favorably tools that encouraged or provided for flexibility, did not encourage waste (either wastes of money or resources) and had buy-in from those on the water (that is, they made sense to fisherman). No tool was recognized as being universally good, or bad. Instances were tools may or may not be optimally-employed were cited, such as year-round closures designed to protect haddock stocks when cod stocks were in trouble. Issues of economic waste (inefficiency) and

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product waste (regulatory bycatch) were of prominent concern. The important role of communication between managers, scientists, fisherman and observers was also emphasized heavily.

<b>Management tools</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Effort controls (DAS, trip limits, trap limits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Flexible</li> <li>-Limit overfishing</li> <li>-Encourage safety</li> <li>TRAP LIMITS:</li> <li>-Must be adjustable</li> <li>-Allocation is an issue that can't be avoided</li> <li>-May increase overall effective effort</li> <li>-Traps may not be good proxy for effort</li> <li>LIMITED ENTRY:</li> <li>-Allows for diversity of fishing opportunities and diversity of harvest</li> <li>-May reduce derby fishing</li> </ul>
Output controls (quotas, size limits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-May promote derby-style fishing practices</li> <li>-Implies a level of certainty in setting quotas that science may not be able to accommodate</li> <li>-May achieve biological benefits, but with social and economic costs</li> <li>-Very complicated in multi-species fisheries</li> <li>-May encourage waste/increase bycatch</li> <li>-Size limits okay for low discard mortality fisheries (lobster, scallop), but bad for mobile gear fisheries due to discards/discard mortality</li> <li>-Must apply standards more rigorous than what is in the MFCMA</li> </ul>
Technical tools (gear/vessel regulations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gear restrictions good for scallop fishery</li> <li>-Roller size reductions would be good for groundfish fishery/protect sensitive habitats</li> <li>-Door size restrictions may decrease discard mortality</li> </ul>
Protected areas (spawning/year-round closures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Time/area management may have benefits</li> <li>-Permanence, or perception thereof, is a large problem</li> <li>-May be protecting the wrong areas, allowing 'right' areas to be damaged or go unprotected</li> <li>-Ocean zoning may be OK if (1) it is properly designated and (2) there is adequate two-way communication with stakeholders</li> <li>-Areas protected must be matched to protection objectives</li> <li>-Must know the bottom               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increase on inclusion of fisherman's knowledge</li> <li>-Increased emphasis on/resources for ocean mapping</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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### 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.

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 three themes: delineation, governance, and scale. These themes emerged from discussions during the workshop and they were not presented to participants in this structured format. Participants chose to emphasize ecological indicators heavily for delineating local ecosystems. They argued, de facto, for a larger scale of sub-regions, but stated that geographically-localized subregions may increase stakeholder involvement.

##### **Delineation**

- Bottom type
  - Associated biodiversity
- Depth
- Tide/current
- Salinity, temperature
- Fish behavior
- Availability of food for key species
- Vegetative habitat
  - Kelp, seagrass

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- How areas are used by people
  - Fishing areas/fishing ports
- Vulnerability
  - Ecological make-up of an area
- Species distribution

### Governance

- Species-specific boundaries will be difficult to manage
- Fewer boundaries are better
- Sub-areas may increase participation of local stakeholders

### Scale

- Depends on goals – sometimes ecosystem boundaries are appropriate, sometimes political boundaries are appropriate
- Local knowledge may assist in delineation
- Areas must be big enough to detect impacts

### ***B. Collaborative Management***

Participants were allowed a little more room to run with current fishery management problems in Mystic than at other workshops for two reasons. One, this portion had a different moderator and two, because the discussions related exclusively to the ability of stakeholders to interact with the management process—a theme that seems highly relevant to the stakeholder-driven nature of ecosystem approaches to management. Problems of access to, and difficulties with interacting with, the current management process were noted by nearly all participants. Several participants spoke strongly in favor of the Council proactively seeking changes in how the Council addresses its stakeholders. Other participants noted positive aspects to the current system, including the fact that paid lobbyists may be serving their clients interests, and in the process enhancing stakeholder involvement, very well. Issues relating to the appropriate scale for management and how stakeholders should be involved were addressed. Several participants expressed reservations with geographically-delineated governance units smaller than the current New England region because, it was felt, this may add yet another layer of complexity.

- Current system is difficult to participate in
  - Council meetings are hard to understand
  - Same people participate/dominate
  - Fisherman don't want to sound "stupid" when talking at the microphone
  - Not everyone can afford to be there
  - Speaking at the microphone is very intimidating
  - People currently participating are often paid representatives
  - Low levels of attendance currently
  - Documents are too long and inaccessible
  - Decision documents are too complex
  - Council needs to make participation easier
  - Lobbyists may serve stakeholders well

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- Is who has the money to hire the best lobbyist the best way to manage the fisheries?
- Different stakeholders are affected by management decisions differently
- Local species-specific meetings (applying to sub-areas) would be too complex
- State and local governments may not have the knowledge to have greater decision making/management authority
- Self-selecting sectors (not geographically-defined) may be a way for the ‘little guy’ to be able to participate
- Sectors increase control in decision making, setting up a positive incentive structure

### 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:

- The scallop fleet would kindly like access into Asia Rip as soon as possible
- Don't forget the consumer
- Achieving balance for the resource, ecosystem, is a step in the right direction
- Sustainable fisheries include people
  - Infrastructure
  - Human community
  - Institutional knowledge
- Need to responsibly manage resource for future generations
- Effort controls had more positive attributes than quotas/size restrictions
- Avoid the “bus driver” mentality that would be associated with quotas
- Avoid regulations that may change the nature of fisherman with regard to their culture and institutional knowledge

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