Meeting Attendees:
Advisory Panel members (* = primary voting member):
Jeff Grant, Chairman
*Peter Brodeur (Trap - Inshore)
*Lanny Dellinger (Trap - Inshore)
*Todd Sutton (Trap – Inshore)

Others:
Stephen Parente, Lincoln Seddon (and wife), Representative Teresa Tanzi (and aid), Thomas Angell (RIDFW)

There were 10 people in attendance (see list above).

Meeting convened at 6:35 PM by new Lobster AP chairman J. Grant; there was not a quorum of the Lobster Advisory Panel present, but the chairman decided to hold the meeting; will try to develop a consensus of those in attendance for any recommendations. This will be the third meeting on this issue and recommendations need to be finalized.

AGENDA:

T. Angell briefly reviewed the issue of defining lobster traps versus other types of traps/pots and associated issues.
- Enforcement’s concerns about un-tagged traps/pots being used to fish for lobster and difficulties encountered trying to enforce the lobster regulations; people without a lobster trap allocation deploying traps/pots and calling them something other than a lobster trap, but are actually targeting lobsters.
- Out-of-state recreational fishers being able to fish in RI state waters with an unlimited amount of “traps/pots”.
- Concerns of lobster trap fishery for increased trap fishing effort as it relates to current lobster fishery management proposals for a 10% reduction in exploitation and vertical line issues involved in whale protection.

The recommendations made by the Trap Definition / Trap Type working group were reviewed and discussed (see Attachment #1).

Comments / Discussion / Recommendations:
- The Lobster Advisory Panel should not recommend imposing regulatory requirements (i.e. tagging) on other “trap/pot” fisheries (scup, black sea bass, whelk, crab, etc.), however there is consensus and agreement regarding Recommendation 1 to require all traps/pots that are fished within RI state waters to be tagged to identify which fishery those traps/pots are being used for.
- There are major concerns with Recommendations 2 and 3; concerns about the potential to increase exploitation in the lobster fishery; concerns about increasing the number of vertical lines in the water and the risk for increasing interactions with whales; increased administrative burden to provide and track “miscellaneous trap/pot” tags;
recommendation for a maximum of 300 “miscellaneous traps/pots” per license is too many.

- There is consensus of agreement regarding Recommendation 4
- No discussion or consensus regarding Recommendation 5
- There is consensus of agreement regarding Recommendations 6-9
- It is recommended that this issue should be discussed by the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC)
- It is recommended that this issue should be addressed by a much larger “working group” that incorporates a wider range of representation from all the different trap/pot fisheries; possibly moderated/facilitated by URI (K. Castro); roundtable discussion.
- Consensus by the Lobster AP members present to request that other trap/pot fisheries consider requiring special trap tags, such as are used for the lobster trap fishery, to identify the specie being targeted by that trap/pot. The Lobster Advisory Panel requests that the RIMFC task the other advisory panels that have associated trap/pot fisheries with considering trap/pot tagging requirements for those fisheries.
- If any recommendations requiring development of new regulations are approved, then there would have to be a public hearing regarding those new regulations. There are concerns that this could not be done for implementation in Y2012; not enough time for other AP’s to consider this issue.
- The “Additional Recommendations” (see Attachment #1) made by the working group were not considered at this meeting.

CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS:
- The Lobster Advisory Panel requests that the RIMFC task the other advisory panels that have associated trap/pot fisheries with considering trap/pot tagging requirements for those fisheries.
- It is recommended that this issue should be addressed by a much larger “working group” that incorporates a wider range of representation from all the different trap/pot fisheries.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM

Summary of Motions: None

RIDFW Tasks / Follow-Up: If tasked by RIMFC, may need to convene other advisory panels to consider this issue.
RIMFC LOBSTER ADVISORY PANEL
October 26, 2011

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 4/21/2011 “TRAP DEFINITION / TRAP TYPE” WORKING GROUP MEETING:

The Lobster Advisory Panel requests other trap/pot fisheries consider requiring special trap tags, such as are used for the lobster trap fishery, to identify the specie being targeted by that trap/pot. The Lobster Advisory Panel requests that the RIMFC task the other advisory panels that have associated trap/pot fisheries with considering trap/pot tagging requirements for those fisheries.

1. All pots/traps fished in RI state waters must be tagged to identify which fishery they are being deployed for (i.e. the lobster trap fishery or “other pot/trap fisheries”)

2. Add “Miscellaneous Pot/Trap” endorsement to commercial licenses and recreational lobster license gear type options; endorsement fee should cover the cost of producing/supplying “miscellaneous pot/trap” tags; this will require approval by the General Assembly

3. Limit of 300 “miscellaneous pots/traps” per license / license endorsement

4. All “miscellaneous pots/traps” must have an escape vent of equal or greater size than the escape vent required for the lobster trap fishery, with the exception of conch, eel, and green crab pots/traps; eel and green crab pots/traps must have a 3” x 3” biodegradable panel (“ghost” panel) that can be incorporated into the pot/trap anywhere except on the bottom of the pot/trap

5. Need to define Eel, Conch, and Green Crab pot/trap

6. Limit the amount of lobster by-catch that can be kept from “miscellaneous pots/traps”; recommend a limit of 20 lobsters per day

7. Mobile Gear (otter trawl and gillnet) lobster by-catch will remain at 100 lobsters per day or up to 500 lobsters for fishing trips lasting 5 days or longer

8. Recommend to limit the number of lobsters that can be taken per day by recreational trap and diver licensees to 8 lobsters per day

9. Recreational lobster “miscellaneous pot/trap” endorsement limited to 5 “miscellaneous pots/traps”

Additional Recommendations:
• Keep the conch fishery separate from finfish/crab fisheries; maximum number of 250 pots/traps for the conch fishery
• Conch, eel, and green crab pots/traps will be exempt from escape vent regulations
• Trap tags for the conch fishery will be a different color from “miscellaneous pot/trap” trap tags for finfish/crab fisheries