

**RHODE ISLAND MARINE FISHERIES COUNCIL**  
**Summary of Minutes from Monthly Meeting**  
**July 29, 2010 – 6:00PM**  
**URI Narragansett Bay Campus**  
**Corless Auditorium**  
**South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI**

RIMFC Members Present: S. Medeiros, R. Hittinger, C. Anderson, J. King, K Ketcham,  
S. Parente, R. Bellavance

RIMFC Members Absent: S. Macinko  
Chairperson: B. Ballou  
RIDEM F&W Staff: N. Scarduzio, J. McNamee  
DEM Staff: G. Powers, S. Hall, L. Mouradjian  
Public: 18 people attended

B. Ballou called the meeting to order. He asked if there were any changes to the agenda. K. Ketcham stated he would like to add an item under New Business, his recommendation to nominate R. Bellavance as the new Chair for the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC). B. Ballou added the item as 5c. **B. Ballou asked if there were any objections to approve the agenda as amended. Hearing none, the agenda was approved as amended.**

The next agenda item was the approval of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council (Council or RIMFC) meeting minutes from the July 12, 2010, Council meeting. B. Ballou asked if there were any objections to approving the minutes. **S. Medeiros made a motion to approve the July 12, 2010, Council meeting minutes. R. Hittinger seconded the motion. The minutes from the July 12, 2010, Council meeting were approved.**

**Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public.

**Advisory Panel Reports**

*Industry Advisory Committee (7/21/2010) – K. Ketcham:*

B. Ballou reported that the IAC met to review and discuss licensing issues for 2011, which was an annual exercise conducted by the IAC each year. The meeting began with a power point presentation given by D. Cost outlining the current licensing situation and the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) reporting system.

B. Ballou reported that the IAC reviewed and discussed commercial licensing opportunities for 2011. For quahog, soft-shell clam, and lobster endorsements the IAC recommended the exit/entry ratio remain at status quo. For the restricted finfish endorsement (RFF) the IAC recommended remaining at status quo, however they proposed to convert all the available CFL's with a RFF endorsement to a PEL with RFF endorsement, which would be a full harvest level. This part of the recommendation would be a new way going forward.

Lastly, Ballou reported that the IAC reviewed and discussed a proposal from the Division to amend the RI Marine Fisheries Regulation Part III, Section 3.2.1 to provide DEM with additional flexibility to adjust possession limits and seasons in accordance with federal fisheries management and quota management plans. He stated that no specific language was proposed as yet, but this would be vetted through the Council. He noted that all these issues would be going out to public hearing then go before the Council for Council recommendation.

*Tautog (7/22/2010) – R. Hittinger:*

R. Hittinger reviewed the minutes from the Tautog AP meeting, highlighting the review of the 2010 commercial and recreational tautog fisheries. Recreational spawning stock status was down as well as poor recruitment, therefore the Division recommended reducing the catch mid-year. The group discussed the proposed reduction in bag limit from 8 fish to 3 fish. Hittinger indicated that other proposals were also entertained. There was discussion if RI took no action what would happen. It was possible that the Board could revoke the regional approach and require RI to take the full reduction taken by the other states back in 2008. There was no consensus therefore two proposals would go forward for consideration by the Council and to public hearing.

*Shellfish (7/21/2010) – J. King:*

J. King reviewed the minutes from the Shellfish AP meeting, highlighting that most of the discussion pertained to updating the group on the status of the soft-shell clam fishery in Conimicut Point. There were discussions about reducing the possession limit in this area, and changing the minimum legal size limit.

S. Parente asked what the status was with the Conimicut Point soft-shell clam fishery and the proposed regulatory changes being implemented. He noted he had heard it was pretty wild in the area with the shift in the pollution closure line that opened up new area. He questions if the Division was going to let the digging go on until the soft-shell clam resources were completely depleted.

B. Ballou stated that the matter was in the Director's hands. The Director was considering a few options and it was unclear at this time whether he was going to take any action. The Director was carefully evaluating the issues. Ballou noted it was a pending issue.

### **New Business**

*Council recommendations on July 29, 2010 Public hearing items:*

1) Proposal to amend the Recreational Black Sea Bass Management Plan:

**S. Medeiros made a motion to recommend that the Director adopt the proposal to extend the recreational black sea bass season from May 22 through October 11, 2010, with the season closing from October 12 through October 31, then re-opening from November 1 through December 31, 2010. R. Bellavance seconded the motion.**

There was no Council discussion.

**B. Ballou asked for a vote. The Council members present voted unanimously, (6) in support; K. Ketcham, S. Parente, R. Bellavance, C. Anderson, S. Medeiros, R. Hittinger; Councilman J. King had left the meeting prior to the vote.**

2) Proposal to amend the Recreational Tautog Management Plan:

**S. Medeiros made a motion to recommend that the Director adopt; (3) tautog from April 15 through May 31, closed from June 1 through June 30, then from July 1 through the Friday before the third Saturday in October (3) fish, then it would go to (6) fish from the third Saturday in October through December 15, for all recreational fishermen and Party/Charter Boats. Additionally, during the entire year for private recreational boats only, the possession limit would be a maximum (10) fish per boat. R. Hittinger seconded the motion.**

S. Parente stated that the reduction in fish from (8) to (3) fish for the Party/Charter people was to draconian for the remainder of 2010. He felt going forward this might be something to consider but not for 2010. He stated to go to (6) fish would be a reasonable compromise especially with a (10) fish limit for private recreational throughout the year. He noted that (10) fish also coincided with the commercial limit per vessel.

K. Ketcham added that he was in favor of having the Party/Charter Boats have a separate set of recommendations and not be included in the current motion. He wanted to move forward with a control date for the Party/Charter Boats and possibly have the Division come up with a hard tack number. K. Ketcham requested having a separate motion for the Party/Charter fleet.

R. Hittinger stated he was in support of the motion made by S. Medeiros however, He felt that trying to reduce to (3) fish in the fall season would be too dramatic for the Party/Charter boats. He also commented that letting them stay at (8) fish while the rest of the private recreational boats take a decrease to (10) fish per boat gives all of the burden to the private recreational boats. He noted that the (6) fish per person still gives the Party/Charter boats an advantage over the surrounding states. He stated that the motion was a good compromise.

R. Bellavance stated by reducing the bag limits for the Party/Charter industry for 2010 from a number that was already established and promoted with in the Party/Charter industry to a lesser number would have a tremendous impact upon the industry. He would entertain something going into 2011 if the data showed we needed to have more reductions but he felt a reduction to (6) fish would not be helpful. He pointed out that his customers would not fish at lower bag limits and this was also mentioned at the public hearing by other people in the Party/Charter industry. A reduction at this point would not go over well with the fore-hire industry. He state that it may seem like a compromise, but it would actually be a devastating proposal for the Party/Charter industry, and for that reason he could not support the motion.

S. Hall stated, in reference to the motion, he would not like to see this happen with every species, but he thought it would be worthwhile to try.

F. Blount stated if S. Medeiros's motion passed then it would be very difficult to make another proposal, but if you made a motion to split the question and separate out the Party/Charter from the recreational then K. Ketcham would be able to make another motion.

F. Blount stated if this goes forward he would like to see a control date put in. He was encouraged to hear that Chief S. Hall liked the concept of a boat limit.

There was discussion about changing and implementing bag limits mid-season and if they would continue into 2011. A few audience members felt the private recreational and the Party/Charter boats should be kept separate.

B. Ballou asked Council members if there was any interest in splitting the current motion.

**K. Ketcham made a motion to split the motion; to separate out the Party/Charter portion of the current motion and just vote on the recreational portion of the motion. R. Bellavance seconded the motion.**

There was discussion about splitting the vote. Also, G. Powers suggested that the change be presented as a friendly amendment to the maker of the motion. B. Ballou determined, that procedurally, the move to splitting the motion would be appropriate in this case since this was an integrated motion intentionally made by S. Medeiros.

**B. Ballou asked for a vote on the motion made by K. Ketcham to split the original motion.**

There was Council discussion on the splitting of the motion.

R. Hittinger stated he thought the (10) fish per boat limit would be a very effective tool. He pointed out that the goal was to get the reduction by the end of the year and he felt the (10) fish per boat limit would achieve the needed reduction. He also felt the original motion would not affect the Party/Charter Boats that much.

**The Council members present voted; (2) in support, (K. Ketcham, R. Bellavance); (4) opposed, (C. Anderson, S. Parente, S. Medeiros, R. Hittinger); the motion to split the original motion, made by S. Medeiros, failed. Councilman J. King had left the meeting prior to the vote.**

There was further discussion by Council members for trying to work out a compromise between the private recreational and the Party/Charter Boats but it looked like it might have to be a disproportional compromise with private recreational absorbing a larger reduction. This was why the majority of the Council members wanted to form the motion so they could combine both modes.

**B. Ballou asked for a vote on the original motion made by S. Medeiros. The Council members present voted; (3) in support, (S. Medeiros, R. Hittinger, C. Anderson); (3) opposed, (K. Ketcham, R. Bellavance, S. Parente), the motion failed on a 3 to 3 vote. Councilman J. King had left the meeting prior to the vote.**

**K. Ketcham made a new motion pertaining to just the private recreational fishery to have everything remain at status quo except during the fall season this would be (6) fish from the third Saturday in October through December 15. Additionally, during the entire year for private recreational boats, the possession limit would be a maximum (10) fish per boat. R. Bellavance seconded the motion.**

**B. Ballou asked for a vote. The Council members present voted; (3) in support, (K. Ketcham, R. Bellavance, S. Parente); (3) opposed (S. Medeiros, R. Hittinger, C. Anderson) the motion failed on a 3 to 3 vote. Councilman J. King had left the meeting prior to the vote.**

**K. Ketcham made another motion pertaining to just the Party/Charter Boats to recommend to the Director that for 2010 only and from now (August) through October 14, (1) tautog per person. From October 15 through November 30, (8) tautog per person, and December 1 through December 31, (1) tautog per person. A Tautog Party/Charter Permit and logbook must be aboard the vessel while fishing and must be furnished upon request. Logbook information must be submitted to the Division monthly while the season is open. This recommendation would be only for the remainder of 2010 and should be revisited for 2011. R. Bellavance seconded the motion.**

There was Council discussion about the motion. R. Hittinger stated he was not opposed to the idea but he wanted to achieve an equitable solution so he would abstain from the vote.

F. Blount stated he did not like losing December.

**B. Ballou asked for a vote. The Council members present voted; (3) in support, (K. Ketcham, R. Bellavance, S. Parente); (2) opposed (S. Medeiros, C. Anderson); (1) abstention (R. Hittinger), the motion passed. Councilman J. King had left the meeting prior to the vote.**

*Review licensing and regulation recommendations from IAC meeting - B. Ballou:*

B. Ballou asked if Council members were comfortable with the IAC recommendations on licensing for 2011, or if they had any other items that needed to be addressed regarding 2011 licensing, He noted this was the opportunity to offer any other thoughts on any additional commercial licensing regulations for 2011. He stated there were no comments or suggestions from the Council so he would take that as support to go forward with the recommendations from the IAC.

*New Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) Chair – K. Ketcham:*

K. Ketcham stated that since his term on the RIMFC would be expiring and since he was the Chair for a number of Advisory Panels he would like to relinquish one that being the IAC. He stated he wanted to nominate R. Bellavance as his replacement. Ketcham felt Bellavance would be a suitable replacement since he attended all the meetings and was familiar with how the IAC worked. K. Ketcham proposed R. Bellavance as the new IAC Chair.

B. Ballou suggested that since this was not on the agenda we should put this on the next Council agenda as an action item for a vote.

B. Ballou asked if there were any other issues to come before the Council.

F. Blount stated he would like at some point for the Division to try to figure out how to do a control date.

There were no other comments B. Ballou adjourned the meeting.

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Nancy E. Scarduzio, Recording Secretary