



New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116

John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEETING SUMMARY

Recreational Advisory Panel DoubleTree by Hilton, Danvers, MA November 12, 2019

The Recreational Advisory Panel (RAP) met on November 12, 2019 in Danvers, MA to discuss: 1) recreational fishery data for fishing years (FY) 2018 and preliminary 2019; 2) Framework Adjustment 59/Specifications/possible allocation changes; 3) possible Council priorities for 2020; and 4) other business, as necessary.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Frank Blount (Chairman), Tom DePersia, Michael Plaia, Jonathan Sterritt, Patrick Paquette, and Tim Tower; Dr. Jamie Cournane and Robin Frede (NEFMC staff); Rick Bellavance (Groundfish Committee Vice Chair); Scott Steinback (NEFSC); and Jessica Joyce (Tidal Bay Consulting). In addition, eight members of the public attended, among them were Emily Keiley, Moira Kelly, and Liz Sullivan (GARFO), and Melanie Griffin (Groundfish Committee/Council members).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION: Discussions were aided by the following documents and presentations: (1) Meeting memorandum dated November 4, 2019 and meeting agenda; (2) Presentation: Council staff; (3) Recreational catch statistics, NOAA Fisheries/Northeast Fisheries Science Center; (4a) Framework Adjustment 59: Specifications/possible allocation changes - Memo from Groundfish PDT to SSC re candidate Groundfish OFLs and ABCs for fishing years 2020 to 2022; (4b) Memo from Groundfish PDT to Groundfish Committee re analysis for the priority to address allocation issues if raised by new MRIP data; (5) Summary Report of the Council Listening Sessions to Consider a Limited Access Program in the Recreational Groundfish Party/Charter Fishery, Aug. 23, 2019; (6) Presentation: Summary of NOAA Fisheries/Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office's 2019 Recreational Workshops; and (7) Correspondence.

The meeting began at 9:43 a.m.

KEY OUTCOMES:

- The RAP recommends to the Groundfish Committee (Committee) updating the recreational and commercial data for years 2001-2006 to determine the Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock allocations, based on the 2019 stock assessments, in Framework Adjustment 59.

- The RAP recommends to the Committee updating the recreational catch target for Georges Bank cod:
 1. using the post-calibration (new) MRIP data average of recreational catches in CY2012-CY2016 (406 mt) from the 2019 stock assessment,
 2. then reduce this value by the percent change from fishing year 2019 to proposed fishing year 2020 in the US ABC (a decrease of 29%),
 3. resulting in a recreational catch target of 288 mt for FY2020-FY2022.
- The RAP recommends to the Committee extending the NMFS Regional Administrator's temporary authority to adjust management measures for Georges Bank cod for fishing years 2020 and 2021 in Framework Adjustment 59.
- The RAP forwards to the Committee for consideration of possible 2020 priorities:
 1. Revise accountability measures process (proactive and reactive) to allow for regulation stability and account for uncertainty in the MRIP data.
 2. Review Atlantic Cod Stock Structure Working Group results and develop management approach.
 3. Develop an amendment for limited entry for party and charter in the recreational Northeast Multispecies (groundfish) fishery.

AGENDA ITEM #1: RECREATIONAL FISHERY DATA FOR FISHING YEARS (FY) 2018 AND PRELIMINARY 2019

PRESENTATION: RECREATIONAL FISHERY DATA FOR GULF OF MAINE COD AND HADDOCK AND GEORGES BANK COD, MR. STEINBACK

2018 and preliminary 2019 recreational catch and effort data for GOM cod and GOM haddock:

Mr. Steinback provided an overview of recreational fishery catch and effort data for Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod and GOM haddock for fishing year 2018 (FY2018) and preliminary FY2019. Data were presented in both the "old" Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) estimates and the new, recalibrated MRIP estimates.

Highlights from the data summary are as follows:

- Effort was lower in Waves 3 and 4 for FY2018 and preliminary FY2019 – these waves typically have the most effort
- Cod catches were lower in Waves 3 and 4 for both years, cod catch is the lowest since catches have been tracked; haddock catches declined as well; declines in catch seem to be due to a decline in effort
- Catches under the new MRIP estimates are ~2.5 times greater; old MRIP estimates were used to evaluate fishery performance for FY2018 and FY2019 since quotas were based on these, but moving forward the new MRIP estimates will be used.
- Trips by mode declined for all modes, with new MRIP estimates there are the same declines but higher numbers, especially for private angler and shore modes
- Declines in cod removals for party/charter and large decline for private angler – these drive the overall decline, but there was an increase in cod removals for charter mode, numbers are higher under the new MRIP estimates but the same direction of changes
- Decline in haddock removals overall for all modes especially for private anglers – surprising to see, numbers are higher under the new MRIP estimates but the same direction of changes

Questions and Comments on the Presentation:

One advisor asked why the cod catches were not higher in Waves 3 and 4 since those encompass the cod open season. Mr. Steinback responded the data presented today does not include the cod open season as that data is not available yet (data only goes through Aug 30). The advisor said he thought the two-week season was very successful and expects catch estimates to be higher once this is included. Another advisor asked why there is such disparity between the old and new MRIP estimates. Mr. Steinback explained that this was a switch from a telephone survey to a mail survey, and the telephone survey targeted primarily older anglers who didn't fish as much so as a result, the old estimates from last ten years were wrong. Another advisor agreed and noted that the US Fish and Wildlife estimates are close to the new MRIP numbers, so this is not out of the blue, and noted there have been signs that the recreational fishery is much bigger than previously thought. One advisor noted that cod catches seem to be the same before and after regulations to close cod and wondered if the regulations have any effect. Mr. Steinback explained this is total catch and not kept catch so it is hard to evaluate, and that encounters appear to be lower.

Another advisor said he would think charter boats would be most successful in avoiding cod, but it appears to be the private angler. Mr. Steinback confirmed the presiding theory is that private anglers are avoiding cod, but party/charter vessels are not. One advisor said he would like to see effort/growth of the bluefin tuna recreational fishery and how it might be affecting the groundfish fishery, as boats that used to fish for haddock now fish for tuna, mainly for-hire boats but also private anglers, and that this could affect these patterns. Mr. Steinback noted that at one of the NMFS recreational fishing workshops they showed that effort for the Gulf of Maine declined across all modes for last ten years, but there could also be some influence from effort shifts to the tuna fishery. Another advisor said that most customers don't want to fish for haddock in the summer and prefer to fish in May-June, and that for the summer it's mostly only half day tuna trips with half day haddock trips. He explained this is because there is not a high enough possession limit for haddock to make the summer worth it for charter boats, although this is probably different for party vessels with vacationer customers. He also did not think the September two week cod season was big for charter or private boats in his area, as it's not worth it to go out for one cod.

2018 and preliminary 2019 catch and effort data for GB cod:

Mr. Steinback provided an overview of recreational fishery catch and effort data for Georges Bank (GB) for FY2018 and preliminary FY2019. Data were presented in both the "old" Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) estimates and the new, recalibrated MRIP estimates.

Highlights from the data summary are as follows:

- Large increase in effort for trips that target or catch cod in FY2019 from FY2018, hard to judge effort changes since the main season for the fishery (fall/winter) hasn't occurred yet
- Large increase in catch in FY2019 from FY2018, large increase in removals, landings already higher now than all of FY2018 - will know more once they have the next wave of data for FY2019
- Average size of cod catch – 200% increase in FY2019 from FY2018

Questions and Comments on the Presentation:

One advisor said he thought it was odd that the B2s (fish released alive) went way up given the minimum fish size went down, and that either a lot of small fish are around, or perhaps anglers didn't know about the change in minimum size and discarded more fish. Mr. Steinback said he would check the numbers.

PRESENTATION: FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT 59/SPECIFICATIONS, DR. COURNANE

Council staff provided an overview of the alternatives in Framework Adjustment 59 (FW59), and explained that the focus of today's discussion is on possible reallocation. Staff gave a summary of the Council's discussion on reallocation, explaining that some Council members felt reallocation should happen in FW59, while others felt it should be in future action, and sent this back to the Committee for more analysis, who discussed this two weeks ago. Staff explained the Committee's motion that reallocation should focus on updating data for the same years but not include new years. Staff highlighted the Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) memo which outlines the process for reallocation and also notes that reallocation can be done in a framework. Staff explained that the current allocation for the recreational fishery is ~33% for GOM cod and ~27% for GOM haddock, and the new allocation would be ~3% higher for cod and ~6% higher for haddock

Staff noted that recreational catch scales up in all years with the new MRIP estimates, but the scale is not the same each year. For example, GOM cod has larger increases in the beginning and end of the timeseries. Staff explained that the PDT also looked at GB cod and pollock recreational catches, and explained that the trigger for determining whether these should have a new recreational sub-ACL is utilization as well as a 5% threshold of the overall quota. GB cod meets the criteria, while pollock does not for utilization, but is over 5% of the total ACL, and so the Council will likely continue to track these catches.

Staff explained that GB cod catches are also higher with new MRIP estimates, and the Committee had been asked what to do with the GB cod catch target. The Committee recommended to keep the target at 138mt plus extend the Regional Administrator (RA) authority to adjust measures, while the PDT recommended updating the catch target with the new data. Staff noted that the Committee at the time of its meeting did not have the data Mr. Steinback presented earlier on FY2018 and preliminary FY2019 catches. Staff also noted that pollock catches are also higher with new MRIP numbers, ~40% of the total ACL. Staff explained that the Committee will be meeting November 25 to discuss these items and recommend preferred alternatives in FW59. The goals of the RAP's discussion today were to provide recommendations on the draft alternatives in FW59, specifically: possible reallocation for GOM cod and GOM haddock, the GB cod catch target, and RA authority to adjust GB cod measures.

Questions and Comments on the Presentation:

One advisor asked whether there was any explanation for the fact that the commercial catch for haddock went up with the new MRIP estimates but went down for cod. Staff said while they can explain changes within one or the other (new or old estimates) they cannot explain changes between stocks, and noted that on the commercial side there were new discard mortality estimates that later got incorporated into the assessments. Another advisor wondered since the commercial fishery has to pay for its catch with quota, that they may be trying to avoid cod and not the same with haddock. Staff clarified that this time period for determining the allocation is before sectors. Mr. Bellavance asked for an explanation of the process for how the GB cod catch target works. Staff explained that a portion of the ACL set aside for the

recreational catch target, then measures are developed to keep the recreational fishery catch to the target, which is non-binding. Staff also clarified that the 138mt came from the most recent five-year period. An advisor said that if the catch target is set at 138mt it seems almost certain to go over the ACL given the new MRIP estimates.

Discussion:

The Chair suggested the RAP go through each stock one by one and consider that PDT's recommendations.

AGENDA ITEM #1: FRAMEWORK 59/SPECIFICATIONS

Motion #1: Plaia/Tower

The Recreational Advisory Panel recommends the Groundfish Committee adopt the Groundfish Plan Development Team's recommendation to "Continue to monitor recreational catches of pollock and utilization of pollock in future assessments and monitoring, especially in relation to the allocation criteria identified in A16. If utilization relative to the ACL becomes high, consider creating a sub-ACL for the recreational fishery." (see pp. 13 of Groundfish PDT memo to Committee, October 23, 2019, re: Analysis for the priority to address allocation issues if raised by new MRIP data).

Discussion on the Motion: The RAP agreed with the PDT's recommendations to recommend status quo for pollock but keep monitoring catches, since pollock makes up over 5% of the total ACL but is not fully utilized.

Motion #1 carried on a show of hands (5/0/0).

Motion #2: Paquette/Tower

The Recreational Advisory Panel recommends to the Groundfish Committee updating the recreational and commercial data for years 2001-2006 to determine the Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock allocations, based on the 2019 stock assessments, in Framework Adjustment 59.

Discussion on the Motion: Some advisors felt that it is straightforward to just update the numbers for a framework action, but that changing the criteria for allocations from what is in A16 might need to be done in an amendment. Staff clarified that the criteria could be updated in a framework, but likely not for FW59 and may be too large of an action for a framework. Staff explained that the PDT will do the analysis for this option and the Council will decide in December whether to include the updated allocations in FW59 and if so, then the increases in cod and haddock for the recreational allocations will be incorporated for the FY2020 recreational measures. In response to a question, staff clarified that this would mean less quota for the commercial fishery. An advisor said his feeling is the Council will not want to do this, but there is a national move to update with the new MRIP numbers, and the Agency should support this.

Motion #2 carried on a show of hands (5/0/0).

Discussion:

One advisor asked how NMFS will evaluate whether the recreational fishery is over its catch target or not for this year, since the fishery has been over some years and under others. Ms. Keiley explained that GARFO won't look at a single year, but will continue to use the most recent three-year average. She said while there are concerns about FY2016 catch being high, with the two additional years with much lower catch averaged they should be under the target. Ms. Keiley emphasized that if the recreational fishery catches are higher and this results in the ACL being exceeded, that the commercial fishery will have to pay back the overage. Dr. Cournane clarified that they can use the same five-year time period with new MRIP numbers, or a three-year average.

One advisor said he is concerned about 138mt as the catch target because this may result in very low bag limits and could end the limited winter fishery, and he also thinks philosophically they should be using the updated numbers. The Chair noted he has always argued that catch numbers for GB cod were too low. Ms. Keiley pointed out that the GB cod ABC will be much lower for next year, with a starting ABC for the U.S. portion of ~1300mt, and so while in the past 400mt may not have seemed as large of a target for the recreational fishery, this will be constraining for commercial fishery now. Another advisor asked why they don't create a recreational sub-ACL for GB cod. Ms. Keiley explained that while GB cod meets the criteria, there is a lot of uncertainty around the catch estimates, plus the ongoing work of the Cod Stock Structure Working Group to consider. Ms. Kelly suggested one approach the RAP could consider is to take 406mt and reduce it by 29%, the same as the commercial fishery decrease in ABC for next year, which could help to provide a rationale for an alternate approach. This results in a catch target of ~280mt.

Motion #3: Plaia/Tower as friendly amended

The Recreational Advisory Panel recommends to the Groundfish Committee updating the recreational catch target for GB cod:

- using the post-calibration (new) MRIP data average of recreational catches in CY2012-CY2016 (406 mt) from the 2019 stock assessment,
- then reduce this value by the percent change from fishing year 2019 to proposed fishing year 2020 in the US ABC (a decrease of 29%),
- resulting in a recreational catch target of 288 mt for FY2020-FY2022.

Rationale: This approach was developed with the understanding that an average of more recent data, which includes the post-calibration (new) MRIP data, would likely be used by NMFS when setting Georges Bank cod recreational measures.

Discussion on the Motion: One advisor said he is comfortable with 406mt, but it seems like a very hard sell for the Committee, and so reducing 406mt by 29% seems to be the best approach. Staff confirmed that the Committee did say if there was a number between 138mt and 406mt with rationale they could consider that, along with the feeling that they needed more information, but that the Committee did not seem comfortable with 406mt. Another advisor asked if given the recent assessments used updated MRIP numbers, can they use old numbers for the catch target. Staff clarified that 138mt is on the books for FY2020, and the consideration is whether to change it. The Committee struggled with this discussion but had less information than the RAP does today. An advisor asked if it is known that GARFO will approve the 29% decrease in the ABC for GB cod. Staff confirmed that this is known, and could only be a larger decrease, explaining that the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) sets the upper bound so GARFO would approve that recommendation or a lower ABC.

Motion #3 carried on a show of hands (5/0/0).

Motion #4: Plaia/Paquette

The Recreational Advisory Panel recommends to the Groundfish Committee extending the NMFS Regional Administrator's temporary authority to adjust management measures for Georges Bank cod for fishing years 2020 and 2021 in Framework Adjustment 59.

Discussion on the Motion: One advisor asked to clarify how this is different from the GOM recreational measures process, in which the RAP can still make recommendations, but RA is given authority to adjust measures. Staff explained it is a similar process, but the RA authority to adjust measures for GB cod is temporary. Another advisor asked whether the recommendations can be revisited in 2021. One advisor commented that he doesn't like this process where the Agency is determining measures but doesn't see how else to get things done for the recreational fishery.

Motion #4 carried on a show of hands (5/0/0).

AGENDA ITEM #3: POSSIBLE 2019 COUNCIL PRIORITIES

PRESENTATION: SUMMARY OF COUNCIL'S PUBLIC LISTENING SESSIONS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF LIMITED ENTRY IN THE GROUND FISH PARTY AND CHARTER FISHERY, DR. Cournane

Staff provided a summary of the Council's public listening sessions on the possibility of limited entry in the party/charter fishery. Staff gave an overview of the summary report, which contains background information, description of commenters, comment summary, and next steps, as well as several appendices, including: a summary of listening sessions, background document from the sessions, and all written comments.

Highlights of the summary of listening sessions are as follows:

- There were eight sessions, held in Seabrook, NH; Avalon, NJ; Wells, ME; Narragansett, RI; Chatham MA; Plymouth, MA; Gloucester, MA; and by webinar.
- There were 64 unique attendees, 72 total since some attended more than one session.
- Some people opposed limited access (17), some supported it (12), some are neither for nor against (17), some felt they needed something concrete to react to.
- For those for or against – comments included that this is dependent on how history would be used, speaking from experience from other fisheries.
- For those opposed – those with experience in other fisheries that had limited access where there were serious restrictions, commented that it is hard to separate the experience with the status of the GOM cod stock from discussion on limited access.

Staff explained that this presentation along with the presentation on GARFO's recreational workshops are designed to spark discussion on Council priorities. The goals of the RAP's discussion were to provide input on how to proceed with limited access for the party/charter fishery as a possible priority action. Staff clarified that discussion on whether the RAP is for or against limited access should be saved for the discussion on priorities.

Questions on the Presentation:

An advisor asked for elaboration on the comments about the control date. Staff explained these comments were from people interested in trying to get into the fishery or who had just bought a permit who were concerned the control date, even as updated, would keep them out, and that staff had explained to them that they are not sure yet how the control date would be used. Ms. Joyce added that several people at the Seabrook meeting in particular brought up the control date, and that some supported refreshing it.

PRESENTATION: SUMMARY OF GARFO RECREATIONAL WORKSHOPS, MS. JOYCE

Ms. Joyce provided an overview of the New England recreational fishery workshops GARFO held in October. There were three workshops held in Plymouth, MA; Portsmouth, NH; and Narragansett, RI. Most attendees had multiple stakeholder affiliations, a little over a third were state managers or research affiliated (federal and state), about a third were active recreational fishery participants, and the remainder were either directors of recreational fishing associations or listed as “other”. There were participants from each state. Ms. Joyce explained that the goal of the workshops was to serve as a collaborative process for developing potential management approaches for the recreational groundfish fishery. At each workshop, participants provided recommendations for improving management of the recreational fishery, both in the short-term and long-term. Participants also received presentations on various research projects being conducted in New England states on recreational fishery topics. Ms. Joyce explained there will be a detailed summary report provided that will include all the recommendations provided at the workshops, expected to be available this winter.

Questions on the Presentation:

An advisor asked to elaborate on the recommendation for spatial management, and whether these are area closures. Ms. Kelly explained that the interest is in utilizing some of the research on spatial catches for a possible alternate approach to management that combines closed areas with closed seasons - for example, rather than closing the entire season to haddock fishing, perhaps they could instead close certain areas with higher cod interactions. Another advisor asked if there were any presentations on research on descending devices, saying there has been a lot of research on this but not with species here in New England. Ms. Kelly said that Matt Ayer from the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries presented research on descending devices used with cusk.

Dr. Cournane asked for further explanation on the MRIP and VTR recommendations, as these seem to imply there is not reporting when the party/charter does report through VTR, and whether this recommendation is about validating reporting. Ms. Kelly explained that the idea of these recommendations is validating VTR data so catch data could be used, as well as a separate recommendation to have a study to validate private angler estimates. Dr. Cournane also asked for further explanation of the recommendation to use 3 to 5-year average with a buffer for the ACL: whether this is for evaluation or for developing the actual measures. Ms. Keiley (GARFO) explained this is about wanting to reduce variability year to year, and is specific to management measures and not ACLs.

Ms. Kelly added that the summary of the workshop recommendations will become a Policy Series document, which is GARFO’s version of a Northeast Fisheries Science Center technical document. Ms. Joyce also said that they saw a lot of new participants at the workshops, and encouraged them to come to RAP and Council meetings. They also had good representation from state agencies.

PRESENTATION: POSSIBLE 2020 COUNCIL PRIORITIES, DR. COURNANE

Staff provided an overview of the list of possible 2020 Council priorities, highlighting those that pertain to the recreational fishery. Staff reminded that RAP of its recommendations from 2019: 1) review reallocation – which the Council is working on now, 2) develop a Recreational Committee/Working Group – the Council discussed this but it is not fully realized, although they do have designated recreational seats on some committees, and 3) possible limited access in the party/charter fishery – listening sessions were held to help the Council determine next steps. The goals of the RAP's discussion were to review the draft list of possible 2020 groundfish priorities, and make recommendations on items to be added to the draft list.

Discussion:

Several advisors thought they could recommend taking limited access for the party/charter fishery off the list, since more people were neutral and opposed than in support of it. One advisor said there were a lot of people who were undecided but needed more information to decide how to proceed, and thought this should be pursued. He also noted there were three RAP members not here today but who would support limited access. Several other advisors agreed that limited access should move forward, as this is the first step in exploring possible limited access, and especially since there were not enough people saying they for or against it to make a decision now. One advisor disagreed and said this is not fisheries management but is about protecting charter businesses from new entrants, and since more of the public opposed limited access, he thinks there are other things the Council could work on. An advisor who supports limited access said it is not likely to benefit him since he'll probably be done fishing by the time this would go into effect, but felt that a good limited access fishery could help bring people into the fishery and help the fishery to be more successful. The Chair said he thought limited access needs to go forward to put it to rest, and noted it is hard for people to focus on the purpose of limited access instead of thinking about whether they would be in or out of the fishery. One advisor asked for an estimation of how long a limited access amendment could take to develop. Staff responded this is flagged as a multi-year item. An advisor pointed out that limited access in the whiting fishery had been supported by the Council early on and then later opposed and the action discontinued.

Motion #5: Sterrit/Plaia

The Recreational Advisory Panel recommends to the Groundfish Committee to remove development of limited access program for the recreational groundfish party and charter fishery from the 2020 Council priorities discussion, due to more opposition than support for it from public listening sessions and public comments.

Motion #5 failed on a show of hands (2/3/0).

Discussion continued:

One advisor asked whether electronic vessel trip reporting (eVTR) for the party/charter fishery should be listed as a priority. The Chair explained that there are not many boats (only around 10) that don't already have this requirement because they hold Mid-Atlantic permits with eVTR requirements, and staff further explained that the Council is planning to take action on eVTR for any remaining New England party/charter vessels not already subject to eVTR requirements, which will follow the current eVTR

action for commercial permits in New England. One advisor opposed recommending developing a GB cod recreational sub-ACL and said they should continue with the catch target. Mr. Bellavance also noted that with the ongoing Atlantic Cod Stock Structure Working Group, this work could change the understanding of stock boundaries and require addressing this again. Other advisors agreed, saying there is a big difference between updating an allocation already made and creating a new one for a stock they are unsure about. Staff explained that the Cod Stock Structure Working Group is hoping to have its report available by the end of the year, and that there will be a peer review early next year. Following this, the Council will then discuss how to use this work for management, and the work will also be important for the upcoming benchmark assessment for cod.

Staff asked if the RAP had any consideration of revising the accountability measures (AMs), both reactive and proactive). An advisor said he is interested in re-evaluating private angler effort as a research priority. The Chair cautioned that it is not the Council's purview to say how MRIP works or how it should be revised, but said the Council can ask for more accountability on the private angler side. Ms. Kelly explained that this recommendation from the workshops to improve private angler effort data is to recommend developing a video similar to one made for the HMS (highly migratory species) shark fishery as an outreach tool, the idea being to receive the video with licensing to help improve data collection. One advisor thought that all recreational fishing permits in New England should have an HMS permit, as they are supposed to have one if they may potentially interact with HMS species. Another advisor disagreed with requiring recreational groundfish permits and reporting and thinks this goes against MSA (the Magnuson Stevens Act), and thought they should check with NOAA General Counsel. Ms. Kelly noted that the Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council approved a requirement for a recreational private angler permit for tilefish last year and is legally allowed. On the workshop recommendation related to gear modifications, one advisor asked about the status of these projects and discussion on those at the workshops. Ms. Keiley explained that the workshop recommendations were to keep this as an educational component and not a mandatory requirement in management. One advisor wanted to prioritize the study on recreational GB cod discard mortality.

Staff explained that the RAP doesn't have to rank all priorities, and could rank their #1 recommendation and then keep all others equal. One advisor disagreed and said that the priorities for limited access for the party/charter fishery and Cod Stock Structure Working Group have a lot of work put into them, whereas looking into a process to improve catch and effort data for private anglers is a national problem. Another advisor asked Mr. Steinback what data he thought would help to better understand recreational private anglers, and Mr. Steinback answered that getting a better handle on compliance would help understand private angler catch and effort.

The Recreational Advisory Panel lost its quorum in the midst of discussing its recommendations for possible Council priorities for 2020. Therefore, the following summary of the discussion from the remaining members is forwarded to the Groundfish Committee for consideration of possible 2020 priorities.

1. Revise accountability measures process (proactive and reactive) to allow for regulation stability and account for uncertainty in the MRIP data.
2. Review Atlantic Cod Stock Structure Working Group results and develop management approach.
3. Develop an amendment for limited entry for party and charter in the recreational Northeast Multispecies (groundfish) fishery.

The RAP meeting adjourned at approximately 3:05 p.m.