



Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930



Memorandum

Date: October 22, 2018

To: Tom Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council

From: Moira Kelly (GARFO), Mark Grant (GARFO), Emily Keiley (GARFO), Jamie Cournane (NEFMC), Jessica Joyce (Tidal Bay Consulting), and Caitlin Cleaver (FB Environmental)

Re: Input for planning GARFO's 2018/2019 Recreational Fishing Industry Workshops

We are in the early stages of planning up to four workshops with the recreational fishing community, and are requesting stakeholder input on these preliminary ideas. If the Council could please forward this memo to the Recreational Advisory Panel, we would appreciate their feedback. We are open to new ideas on the goals and objectives, process, and logistics of these meetings, and also have some specific questions for consideration.

DRAFT meeting goal, objectives, and outcomes:

- **Goal (*what is the ideal state as a result of these workshops/why are we meeting?*):** A collaborative process for developing management measures for the recreational groundfish fishery that balance the need to prevent overfishing while enhancing recreational fishing opportunities for all stakeholders.
- **Objectives (*how will the goal be achieved?*):**
 1. Short-term: Develop new management measures around preventing recreational catch overages in FY2019, specifically of GOM cod/haddock.
 2. Long-term: Think creatively how to meaningfully utilize new MRIP data in management of groundfish stocks with a recreational catch component in the long-term (defined as FY2020 and beyond).
 3. Stabilize business planning with multi-year measures and more predictable regulatory changes.
 4. Discuss how to adapt best practices in data management that allow for more appropriate usage of MRIP data, e.g., using an average of 3-5 years of data for analyses and not just looking back on 1-year of data.
 5. Develop measures and processes to better align timing of regulations across fisheries, other management plans (i.e. state and federal), and with the availability of data. For example, reducing overlap in closures across

recreational fisheries; increasing coordination between various recreational management plans, and decreasing the gap between the timing of stock assessments and the specifications process.

6. Develop solutions that work across sectors (e.g. private angler and for-hire fleet) and state regulations, or that address the nuances within various user groups (recognizing a one-size-fits all approach isn't ideal in most cases).
7. Brainstorm methods to regularly engage with captains and anglers throughout the season to get feedback on catch and trends, and develop ideas on how to enhance coordination between NOAA Fisheries, state partners, scientists, and the recreational fishing community.

- **Outcomes (*what will we walk out with? - results or products*):**

- A list of potential management measures/processes to address the short-term objective of preventing GOM cod and haddock overages and long-term objectives for all groundfish stocks with a recreational catch component.
 - *These ideas could be tested through pilot studies prior to integrating them into the regulatory process.*
- A shared understanding of the new MRIP data collection and assessment processes, and any relevant data limitations.
- A list of communication methods to inform all stakeholders of any new proposals, pilot studies, or potential rulemaking.

Meeting Logistics and Attendance:

1. Locations, dates and time of day: Currently, we are considering the following dates and times for the workshops and a summary presentation. We've discussed multiple alternatives, including evenings and weekends, to accommodate schedules of various stakeholders attending, from private anglers with day jobs to charter/party boat owners/captains, and others. Locations are tentative.
 - a. **Dec. 18** – Evening 'data primer' workshop in a location north of Boston (e.g. Gloucester or Danvers) and accessible by webinar (~5:30-7:30 pm)
 - b. **January 8** - Workshop in Point Judith, RI or Plymouth, MA (or similar) (full day, timing TBD).
 - c. **January 10** – Workshop in Point Judith, RI or Plymouth, MA (or similar) (full day, timing TBD).
 - d. **Jan. 15 or 16** - Workshop in Portsmouth, NH: full day (*before RAP meeting*)
 - e. **January 29-31**: Preliminary presentation of workshop summaries at Council meeting.

Questions: 1) Are there any major schedule conflicts with these dates? 2) What would be the ideal timing for the full day workshops, perhaps with at least one that starts and ends later to accommodate attendance after work?

2. Representative attendance: Any ideas on how to invite and incentivize a broad range of stakeholders to attend and participate in these workshops would be appreciated. Currently, one incentive already in the budget is reimbursement for mileage.

Question: Are there sponsors and/or partners that can contribute towards industry stipends (~\$100/day)?

3. Meeting approach: The workshops could follow several different approaches in the four various locations (1. Southern Maine/NH, 2. North Shore MA, 3. South Shore MA, and 4. RI/CT), including having each meeting cover all topics or having each meeting focus on a separate topic. Thus far, we are leaning towards one data-specific meeting that is focused on MRIP data availability, applicability, and timing of incorporating new data in stock assessments. This would be a shorter, 2- to 3-hour evening meeting, available through webinar and in person. Then there would be three full-day workshops that would focus on all topics, understanding that issues vary by state and catch composition for that fleet/sector.

Question: Feedback on either approach or alternative approaches are appreciated.

For more information, see the attached report from the GARFO Recreational Workshop in November 2017. The 2018 Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Summit report offers national perspectives, and the report is available online:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/recreational-fishing/2018-saltwater-recreational-fisheries-summit>

New England Recreational Fisheries



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

Improving New England Recreational Fisheries Management

Workshop Summary Report

November 13, 2017

NOAA

Workshop Summary

Charter and party boat captains, private anglers, state fishery management partners, and others came together with NOAA Fisheries staff for a workshop on improving recreational fisheries management in New England. After agreeing on a common set of issues, workshop participants discussed potential ideal scenarios for each of the key issues. Participants then highlighted the hurdles or challenges that are preventing us from achieving the ideal state and possible approaches for overcoming those challenges. Time constraints left some issues without a full list of hurdles or solutions. However, we hope this will be the beginning of a productive effort to advance these issues into meaningful change.

The table at the end of the report summarizes the discussions.

Key Issues

The key issues with New England recreational fisheries management were summarized into seven categories: Stability; timing; consistency; data; communication; effectiveness; and accounting for different needs among user groups. These issues are connected and should be addressed holistically, where appropriate.

Stability, Timing, Consistency, and Effectiveness

Regulations that change annually, that are not final in advance of the fishing season, and different regulations in different parts of the ocean make planning difficult for businesses and customers alike. The ability of the for-hire fleet to market and book trips in advance of the fishing season is paramount to long-term business planning and security.

Workshop participants suggested the following ideal scenario: Multi-year management measures that maximize the season length and

provide for pre-planned adjustments, if necessary, that are announced at the start of the calendar year, and that are designed with a high probability to prevent overfishing but achieve long-term stability of the fishery. Participants suggested that the current management plan, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, competing priorities among the public, the risk of over- or under-utilizing a species, and data limitations are key hurdles to overcome to get to the ideal scenario. Recommended solutions were Council action to revise management, and redirecting resources from surveying for-hire boats to improving private angler surveys, while using validated vessel trip reports as a census of for-hire information.

Data

Underlying our entire fishery management process are the recreational catch data. Primarily, recreational data come from the Marine Resource Information Program, or MRIP, a federal-regional-state partnership to collect recreational fisheries data and estimate total recreational catch. Concerns about the validity of the data make coming to consensus on management measures difficult. Participants identified a transparent, fine-scale dataset built on electronic reporting and as much data as possible as the goal scenario. Challenges include cost, fishing community and scientific

buy-in on various data collection tools and sources, the scale of the fishing community, and a sense of “not knowing enough to know what to ask” to understand the data and the collection process. Potential solutions include using recreational fishing license fees to increase data collection, a review of the current survey methods with an eye towards cost effectiveness, real-time public data input, education and outreach on the importance of accurate data, training on reporting tools, and several suggestions on outreach materials or workshops on improving the understanding of how MRIP works and how the estimates are calculated (i.e., “show your work”).

Communication

Transparent and frequent communication between fisheries managers and for-hire captains and private anglers is critical to the success of our management program. The ideal scenarios suggested by workshop participants included regular, formalized, and representative mid-season engagement with captains to understand not only what they are catching, but what they are seeing on the water, enhanced coordination between NOAA Fisheries and our state partners, increased scientist participation in discussions with fishery participants, and support recruiting participants (captains and anglers) into the fishery. Challenges include time and resources,

complicated topics that are hard to summarize and distill, the regulatory process, and business uncertainty, among others.



Accounting for Differences in User Groups

One of the more controversial aspects of recreational fisheries management is trying to ensure fair and appropriate management measures for user groups with different needs and preferences. Private anglers, charter/6-pack captains, and party boat captains likely have different ideas on what “successful” management looks like. The ideal state to accounting for these differences may include increased enforcement (patrols and penalties), accounting for stock movement and jurisdictional issues, and designing different regulations for each sector of the recreational community. The Magnuson-Stevens Act, lack of money, and value judgement differences were noted as challenges. An agreed upon standard probability of achieving a catch target across all modes and an agreed upon percent contribution to the overall target were suggested as potential solutions.



Summary of Participant Discussions

| Issue | Ideal State | Challenges | Solutions |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| Stability | Multi-year plan * Fixed or Decision Tree * % change w/in plan | * FMP Structure/Council Process * MSA Limitations * Risk of under/over-utilization | Amendment Council Action |
| | Maximize season (at least for for-hire) | * Need better data for better decisions * Low/inaccurate quotas * Public tolerance/competing priorities | Census of for-hire catch, with validation; redirect resources to private angler surveys |
| | Time Horizon * Set number of years * Between stock assessments | * Need to change FMP * Risk of under/over-utilization * Data limitations/no confidence | |
| Timing | By January 1 (no later than March 1) | * Data availability/cycle * NEPA | * Electronic reporting * Adjust cycle by 1 quarter |
| Consistency | Strive for consistency | | |
| | Between Feds and States | * Communications * Timing * Process/bureaucratic inconsistencies | * Ensure measures available soon enough for all parties to implement for start of fishing year * Communication * Coordination |
| | Across States | * State sovereignty * Competing needs between states | |
| | Between stock assessments | * Sufficient data quality for projections and harvest monitoring * Assessment prioritization | |
| | Balance between stocks (ecosystem accounting) | * Too many data gaps * MSA single species focus | |
| | Transparency | * Regulatory Process | |
| Data | Enhanced ability to use MRIP at finer scale | Cost | * Use rec license fees to improve data * Cost efficiency review of current methods (both state and Fed) |
| | Census | * Scientist buy-in on data * Cost prohibitive/scale for private anglers * Accurate self-reporting | * Real-time public data input |

Summary of Participant Discussions

| Issue | Ideal State | Challenges | Solutions |
|----------------------|--|--|--|
| | Validity -- quality vs timeliness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Scale/cost * Ability to validate self-reporting on private boats | Educate captains on the importance of accurate data |
| | Multi-year aggregation | | |
| | Use electronic reporting appropriately <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Training (how) * Understanding (why) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Accurate reporting (completeness) * Scientist buy-in * Industry buy-in | Require training and reporting to be issued license |
| | Transparency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Each state and Fed have a unique process * Don't know what to ask for | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Workshop on MRIP and high-level resource manual on how MRIP works * Make formulas available * Clear estimation method * Show your work in an accessible manner * Release all data (to allow for recreation of estimates) * Use plain language |
| Effectiveness | Perception of/actual opportunity | No/low quota | |
| | Slot limits, where appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Enforcement/lack of compliance * Year class fluctuations | |
| | Point-system (each sps = # of points, limits on total points) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complicated enforcement * FMP/MSA limits * Projection complications | |
| | Provide more model output options to Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Time * NEPA | |
| | Flexibility in the bag limit by season (vs closure) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Analyses * Compliance * Risk of overfishing | |
| | No unlimited bag limits | * Arbitrary (need a reasoned decision) | |
| | Higher probability options | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inaccurate predictions of success * Changing conditions * Less popular options | |
| | Strive for effective measures to prevent overfishing, maintain access | | |



Summary of Participant Discussions

| Issue | Ideal State | Challenges | Solutions |
|---|---|--|--|
| Communication | Manager/captain engagement * What are you catching? * What are you seeing? * Representative survey--not all the highliners in one week | * Federal time and resources * Ensuring use of data, formalizing process | |
| | Explain how data are assembled and catch estimates | * Broad base with different background knowledge * Hard to summarize | |
| | Better outreach--enhanced coordination with states | Regulatory process is not transparent | |
| | Recruit anglers | * Hard to do because of a lack of faith in an improving future * Business uncertainty | |
| | Increased center/modelers participation in discussions | * Limited staff time * Language/communication skills | |
| Accounting for differences among user groups | Account for stock movement better in management body (CT, RI, MA on MAFMC) | MSA | |
| | Increased enforcement -- more patrols and higher penalties | * Lack of money * Lack of people | |
| | Potential for different regulations between private, charter, and party | Value judgement on targets | * Agreed upon standard probability of achieving catch target across modes * Agree percentage contribution to the overall target |