

**PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**August 17, 2004
Alexandria, VA**

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Lewis Flagg, ME DMR
John Nelson, NH F&G
Dennis Abbott, NH proxy for Rep. Mary Ann
Blanchard
G. Ritchie White, NH Gov. Appte.
William Adler, MA Gov. Appte.
David Pierce, MA DMF
Vito Calomo, MA, proxy for Rep. Anthony J. Verga
Mark Gibson, RI DEM
Everett Petronio, RI Gov. Appte..
Lance Stewart, CT Gov. Appte.
Pat Augustine, NY Gov. Appte.
Gordon Colvin, NY DEC
Tom Fote, NJ Gov. Appte.
Bruce Freeman, NJ DF&W
Ed Goldman, NJ, proxy for Assemblyman Robert
Smith
Jeff C. Tinsman, DE Div F&W

Sen. Robert Venables, DE Leg. Appte
Russell Dize, MD proxy for Sen. Richard F. Colburn
William P. Jensen, MD DNR
Bruno Vasta, MD Gov. Appte.
A.C. Carpenter, PRFC (Vice Chair)
Jack Travelstead, VMRC (Chair)
Catherine Davenport, VA Gov. Appte.
Damon Tatem, NC Gov. Appte
Preston Pate, NC DMF
David Cupka, SC DNR
John E Frampton, SC DNR
Spud Woodward, GA Coastal Resources
John Duren, GA, proxy for Ralph Balkcom Gov.
Appte.
Kathy Barco, FL Gov. Appte.
Gil McRae, FL FWCC
Steve Meyers, NOAA Fisheries
Wilson Laney, USFWS

Ex-officio Members

Matthew Cieri, ME DNR, Technical Committee
Chair

Mike Bloxom, LEC Rep
William Windley, Advisory Panel Chair

Staff

Vince O'Shea
Robert Beal

Nancy Wallace
Toni Kerns

Guests

Howard King, MD DNR
Roy Miller, DE Div F&W
Mel Bell, SC DNR
Karen Ripple, CCA MD
Amy Schick, Environmental Defense
Susan Gaston, OPC
Jennifer Winkler, OME
Toby Gascon, Omega
Jeff Kaelin, Menhaden Resource Council

Tony Bogan, United Boatman
Michael Doebley, RFA
Bennie Williams, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Dick Brame, CCA
Phil Jones, MD DNR
Charles Hutchinson, MSSA
Clint Waters, MSSA
George Lapointe, ME DMR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Call to Order, Chairman Jack Travelstead.....5

Approval of Agenda.....5

Approval of Proceedings.....5

Public Comment.....5

Technical Committee Report.....5

Review of Public Comment for Addendum 1.....7

Progress Report on Menhaden Workshop.....10

Adjournment.....14

Summary of Motions

Move to approve option two of the biological reference points.

Motion made by Mr. Colvin; seconded by Dr. Pierce. Motion carries

Move to adopt option three to assess the stock every three years.

Motion made by Dr. Pierce; seconded Mr. Cupka. Motion carries.

Move to approve the habitat section of the addendum.

Motion made by Mr. Colvin; seconded by Mr. Pate. Motion carries.

Move to accept Addendum I to the Atlantic menhaden FMP as discussed today.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine; seconded by Mr. Vasta. Motion carries.

**ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES
COMMISSION
ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT
BOARD**

**Radisson Hotel
Alexandria, Virginia
August 17, 2004**

The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Presidential Suite of the Radisson Hotel, Alexandria, Virginia, on Tuesday, August 17, 2004, and was called to order at 2:00 o'clock, p.m., by Chairman Jack Travelstead.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIRMAN JACK TRAVELSTEAD:
Good afternoon, ladies and gentle-men. If you will take your seats, we'll get started with the Menhaden Board. This is the meeting of the Atlantic Menhaden Management Board.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Copies of the agenda have been distributed. Are there any changes that anyone wishes to make to the agenda at this time? Seeing none, the agenda will stand as presented.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

Each of you were provided with a copy of the minutes of the March 2004 meeting. Are there any additions or corrections to those minutes? Seeing none, the minutes of March 2004 are approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The next item is public comment. Is there anyone in the audience who wishes to make public comment or a statement at this time? We will provide additional opportunities for the public to comment on specific agenda items as we move forward.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Item 5, we are and I certainly am at a disadvantage today because our technical committee chair, Matt Cieri's flight was cancelled this morning, so he's not able to be with us. I'm going to rely on Nancy to give the technical report. I would only ask that you bear with us and understand the fact that Matt is not here. We'll do the best we can. Nancy.

MS. NANCY E. WALLACE: Okay, in the last board meeting that we had, the board requested that the technical committee meet and kind of expand on some of the ideas of the research priorities that we had talked about in earlier meetings, get a better budget estimate and put some more meat on the bones.

The technical committee met June 30th. Unfortunately, Matt did have, I'm sure, a very nice presentation to give you all. I do not have that, so what I'm going to do is kind of just go through what we have here in front of us in the technical committee report -- I do have extra copies in the back of the room if anybody doesn't have one -- and just kind of give you an overview of what the technical committee thought. If there are any other questions, we can take them up later or get back to you with the answers.

Pretty much, there are four research priorities that the technical committee feels are most important to get a handle on, the localized depletion, especially in Chesapeake Bay, and try to get some sort of regional assessments going.

The first is to determine menhaden abundance in the Chesapeake Bay. The technical committee has recommended a two-year pilot study of a LIDAR study be conducted in Chesapeake Bay to examine the feasibility of determining abundance in the Bay. This study will estimate abundance, distribution and biomass.

The technical committee has recommended doing a two-year pilot study over two seasons in each year, so four surveys total. The first year of the LIDAR pilot study would include sampling resolution, evaluate gear performance and groundtruthing.

During the second year, researchers will design protocol and obtain samples. It is also important to know that we would have to do biological sampling with the LIDAR studies to get groundtruthing. The cost estimate that the technical committee came up with was approximately \$550,000 for a two-year pilot study.

The second important part of what the technical committee has thought is to determine the estimates of removal of menhaden by predators. They have also recommended a two-year pilot study using current state and federal fishery-independent surveys.

A lot of times these surveys are being conducted

anyway by the states. They thought if we could get stomach samples and gut contents, that would be a good way to add to the predator-prey relationship. The cost estimate is approximately \$100,000 per state per year.

The third is exchange of menhaden between bay and coastal systems. There's a couple ways to do this. The coded micro-wire tagging study had been done previously, collected in the fishery reduction magnetic tagging, I believe. The second is an otolith microchemistry study. Third is a morphometric study.

The technical committee recommends a pilot study to examine otolith microchemistry as a tool and perhaps longer-term research if the technique proves useful. The cost estimate for the tagging study is approximately \$150,000 per year.

In that report, you'll also see that we included the striped bass tagging program as sort of a proxy for what it may cost the menhaden program of a similar study.

The third part is larval studies. Actually, there is not an estimate on this part, but I did talk to Matt earlier and he felt it was approximately \$100,000 per year.

This is what the technical committee has come up with. Staff is going to work in investigating ways to move forward in obtaining this funding, either through congressional funding or also working with NOAA, to try to get some of this research done. I just wanted to give the board an update of this is what the technical committee has recommended and we are moving forward with it.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Okay, you have the technical committee report. Are there questions or comments? Vito.

MR. VITO CALOMO: Yes, excuse me, I might have missed it. She might have said it. Her voice is so nice and soft, you know, I'm not used to that. Mr. Chairman, did she say where the funding would come from?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Well, that's the ultimate question, Vito, and that's why the technical committee was asked to put this report together. You'll recall several months ago the Commission identified four or five priority topics that they would seek federal funding for.

Menhaden was one of those topics. We then asked

the technical committee to more or less flesh out the specific types of research and the amounts of money it would take to do those so that when our executive director approaches Congress for money, he'll have those kind of details as part of his request.

MR. CALOMO: Mr. Chairman, I do remember. My reasoning for asking this question was the same question I brought forward to this board, was to ask people like Omega, that are into this, to donate some of the money back to the research project and even using their vessels as staging.

I haven't taken that off the table because it's to their benefit and the benefit of all of us to do the research properly done. So, I think they're stakeholders, as others are, and I think this request can be made if we do not get the total amount of funding.

And sometimes if there is funding that is put from the industry itself, it's easier to get funding out of the government. I just want to bring that on the top of the table back again, because I'm the one that made the suggestion. I did remember, Jack. I appreciate it, though.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Well, I know that Omega was very clearly on the record at our last meeting as expressing a sincere willingness to participate in research programs in the way of offering vessel time and other services, so that is definitely a part of the record.

The other piece of information I have for you is I think there appears to be a real interest in the menhaden issues at the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office. They are provided with a rather large chunk of money each year specifically to look at ecological issues in Chesapeake Bay.

I think there's a possibility that some of that funding could be directed to portions of these items that the technical committee has identified, at least that's what I hope to convince NOAA's Chesapeake Bay program to do. Ritchie.

MR. G. RITCHIE WHITE: What will be the next step in this process, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Do you want to comment on that?

MS. WALLACE: Now that the technical committee has got a little bit better budget estimate, staff is going to go back and talk to Vince and Bob,

and we're all going to work together and try to figure out how we want to present this to Congress and try to get money from congressional funding as well as work with the NOAA Chesapeake Bay. So we are moving forward. This was kind of the first step and now we're going to keep going and go after the money.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Any other comments on this issue? Okay, seeing none, we'll move on to Item 6, review of the public comment and consideration of Addendum I to Amendment 1. Nancy.

REVIEW OF PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ADDENDUM 1

MS. WALLACE: Okay, we're going to go through the Draft Addendum I to the Atlantic Menhaden Management Plan. I went out and did some public comment. We did six public hearings on this issue and we also received lots of written comment.

The way I'm going to go through this presentation is to go through each issue and show you what was supported in each issue. I'm not going to go through state by state. All of that information is, however, in your packet that you received, so if you want to look through it; also, all of the written comments are in there that we've received.

The reason I'm doing it this way is we actually didn't receive too much substantive comments on the actual addendum. We received a lot of other comments on menhaden in general, which I'm going to touch briefly on, but if you're interested in those, they're all in your packet, but I wanted to focus this presentation more on the actual addendum.

We had six public hearings in New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland. The first issue in the addendum is the biological reference points. Out of all the public hearings, there was no support for Option 1, which was status quo.

Twelve people supported Option 2, which was the revised reference points based on fecundity recommended by the technical committee. Multiple people commented that they would like to see reference points based on the ecological role of menhaden.

Many people also stated they would like to see more conservative reference points. So, basically,

biological reference points; the two options were status quo or the second option was to move forward with fecundity-based reference points.

The second major issue in the Addendum I was the frequency of the stock assessments. Thirteen people supported Option 1, which was status quo, meaning the stock assessment would be updated annually.

There was no support for Option 2, which was the assessment would be updated every other year. Nine people supported Option 3, which was the assessment updated every three years, which is with the technical committee meeting annually to review the data. This was what the technical committee has recommended.

In addition, at the public hearings, there were many comments not specifically related to Addendum I. Some of these topics included concern over the decline of menhaden population, especially in Chesapeake Bay.

Some people mentioned they would like to see tighter restrictions on the menhaden fishery and they would like to base management on menhaden's ecological role.

The summary of written comments, total received comments were 37. We had 11 fax, mail or e-mail attachments and 26 e-mail. There were also many comments submitted by organizations, and there is a brief summary in the written comments that you have in front of you, and then all of the complete letters are there as well.

From the written comments, Option 1 of the biological reference points, which was status quo, was not supported at all. Option 2, the fecundity-based reference points, was supported three times, and that is what the technical committee has recommended.

There was also some alternative management options suggested by the public. One was to implement more conservative reference points to ensure the health of the menhaden stock. That came up three times.

Develop reference points that take into account the ecological role of menhaden, that was brought up six times. Other comments were adopt interim management measures to protect against depletion of menhaden forage based, particularly with respect to Chesapeake Bay, while new reference points are being developed. That was mentioned twice.

The frequency of the stock assessments, Option 1,

stock assessment updated annually, was supported six times. Option 2, the stock assessment updated every year, was not supported. Option 3, the stock assessment updated every three years with the data reviewed on an annual basis, was supported twice, and that's what the technical committee has recommended.

We also had the habitat section in Addendum I. One organization, Environmental Defense, provided detailed comments on the habitat section, a recommendation that the ASMFC should move forward aggressively to designate and protect important habitats for all life history stages within current authority. Those are included in your packet.

There were many general comments not specifically related to Addendum I. Some of the comments were related to the following: Concern over the decline of menhaden, many people said to set stricter controls for the menhaden fishery, and many people would like to see Chesapeake Bay specific plans for menhaden. That's very brief but that's the overview of the public comments.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Questions of Nancy on the public comment or on the addendum? Everyone understands it fully and we're ready to now move forward? What's your pleasure on the addendum? Pat.

MR. PATRICK AUGUSTINE: Mr. Chairman, how fast do you want to move to accept, or do you want to go item for item or have we already done that to the point where everyone is satisfied? It appears no one is reacting.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Well, I think we have a couple of options.

MR. AUGUSTINE: I thought so.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: There are three issues within the addendum: the reference points, the frequency of the assessment and the habitat sections. Now we can take those one by one if that's how you want to proceed, or we can just vote on the full addendum as it contains all those. It's up to you. Pat.

MR. AUGUSTINE: Mr. Chairman, because a couple of those are a little bit complex and we do have some time, I think, I would almost suggest we do them option by option and get those out of the way and then move forward with the full adoption, with your indulgence, if we could do that.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: We can take them one by one, that's fine.

MR. AUGUSTINE: Yes, that would be the recommendation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Anyone object to that? Okay, the first item for debate would be the biological reference points. There are two options there. You will find them on Page 7 of the addendum. Option 1 is status quo, and Option 2 are the revised biological reference points that are recommended by the technical committee. Gordon.

MR. GORDON C. COLVIN: **Move adoption of Option 2.**

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: I have a motion to adopt Option 2 under the biological reference points; **seconded by David Pierce.** Discussion on the motion? Any discussion from board members? Any discussion from the audience on the motion?

Seeing none, are we ready to vote? Do we need to caucus on this? Apparently not. All those in favor of the motion, say aye; opposed, no; any abstentions; null votes. **The motion carries.**

The next issue is the frequency of the menhaden stock assessment, and those options appear on Page 10. Option 1 is status quo. Option 2 is update the assessment every two years without the technical committee meeting on non-assessment years to review data.

Option 3 is to update the assessment every three years with the technical committee meeting on each non-assessment year to review the data. It is that third option that is recommended by the technical committee. David.

DR. DAVID PIERCE: **Yes, I would move adoption of Option 3.**

MR. DAVID CUPKA: **Second.**

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: I have a motion to approve Option 3 by Dave Pierce; seconded by David Cupka. Comments on the motion? Any comments from the audience on this motion? Seeing none, are we ready to vote?

Is there a need to caucus? No. All those in favor of the motion, say aye; opposed, no; any abstentions;

null votes. **The motion carries.**

The third issue is the updated habitat section of the FMP that likewise can be found on Pages 10 and following through to the end of the document. Is there a motion on the habitat section? Gordon.

MR. COLVIN: **Move acceptance and approval of the habitat section.**

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: A motion has been made to approve the updated habitat section by Gordon Colvin. Is there a second to the motion?

MR. PRESTON PATE, JR.: **Second.**

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Seconded by Pres Pate. Any comments on the motion? Wilson.

MR. WILSON LANEY: Jack, on behalf of the Habitat Committee, I just wanted to point out I think it's in the Environmental Defense comments that were submitted on the document, that it would be beneficial maybe to add a little bit of language about the importance of inlets with regard to menhaden recruitment into estuarine areas, so I think that we could just ask staff to take a look at that and add text as appropriate.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Any objection from the maker of the motion or seconder? Seeing none, that will be incorporated into the motion. David.

DR. PIERCE: I seek clarification. It's unclear to me whether or not the recommendations and/or requirements for fish habitat conservation restoration on Page 23 are included in this motion. If we adopt this, are we also approving those recommendations and requirements?

MR. COLVIN: That is the intent of the motion.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Further comment, David? Okay, any other comments by board members? Any comments from the audience? Seeing none, I don't think there's a need for a caucus. All those in favor of the motion, say aye; opposed, no; abstentions; null votes. **The motion carries.**

Can we get then a final motion to accept Addendum I with the single amendment that was offered? Pat.

MR. AUGUSTINE: Thank you, Mr.

Chairman. Would you like to have me restate that? Mr. Graham, does he need me to restate what you just said? Move to accept.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: **The motion is to accept Addendum I.**

MR. AUGUSTINE: **Yes, Addendum I to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic menhaden.**

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: **Seconded by Bruno Vasta.** Comments on the motion? Any comments from our audience? Charlie, come on up.

MR. CHARLIE HUTCHINSON: I guess I ought to identify who I am. My name is Charlie Hutchinson. I'm with MSSA. One thing that sort of interests me, the group here seems to have approved of all of the technical committee's recommendations, but if I look at the statistics that were provided on public input, they certainly didn't go that way. I'm interested as to how do you explain that?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: I assume that's a rhetorical question.

MR. HUTCHINSON: I didn't intend to explain it? I thought you folks might.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Well, you're going to have to talk to the individuals around the table individually, I assume, to assess why they voted the way they did or about the vote the way they did.

MR. HUTCHINSON: I'll have to do that the hard way. That will probably be written. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Thank you. Any other comments? Are we ready to vote? All those in favor of the motion, say aye; opposed, no; any abstentions; null votes. **The motion carries and the addendum is approved.**

Item 7, progress report on the upcoming Atlantic menhaden workshops. Before Nancy gives her report, I just want to say that we've had a number of conversations amongst the steering group.

I think things for the most part we have tried to operate by consensus in putting all of this together. It seems to have worked fairly well. I, for one, am very interested in the board's comments that if you wish to identify specific issues that might be put to the

scientists at this workshop, I think it would be very helpful, so be thinking about that as Nancy goes through her progress report.

PROGRESS REPORT ON MENHADEN WORKSHOP

MS. WALLACE: Okay, in May, at the last board meeting, we had a motion to move forward with these menhaden workshops. As Jack just said, we've put together a steering committee, and the steering committee is on this handout that is coming around right now.

The steering committee has met and had a couple phone calls. We have determined kind of the goals and objectives of the meeting which are in front of you. We got those basically right from the motion that was made.

Just as an update, the dates of the workshop are going to be October 12th through the 14th. It will be in the Baltimore, Maryland, area. We have not set hotel details yet, but that's our hope that it will be there.

I'm going to just run through the goals and objectives that we've come up with. We're going to examine the status of Atlantic menhaden with respect to its ecological role, explore the implications of current management reference points with respect to menhaden's ecological role, explore the implications of concentrated harvest in the Chesapeake Bay and develop recommendations for revised or new directions to the Atlantic menhaden fishery management plan to the board at the annual meeting in November.

We have sent out invitations to state, federal and university researchers that are working on menhaden, in filter feeding, as forage-base, predator-prey relations, multi-species modeling, trying to get the gamut of people who will be helpful.

You can see on the second page of this, on the back are the people that we have invited who have positively RSVP'd and are tentatively scheduled to be coming to the meeting. We have some really great names coming.

I think it's going to be a good workshop. The steering committee is going to have another conference call next week where we're going to hammer out the agenda and decide on who we would like to give presentations at the meeting and also just some other final details.

So we are moving forward with it; and if the board has any input that they'd like me to pass along to the steering committee or things they would like to see happen at the workshop, I'd like to get some feedback.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: We really would like some feedback from the board. If you think we're headed in the right direction with this, then we'd like to hear that. If we need to change things, we need to know fairly quickly.

If you have more specific details that you want to offer, please let us know. But, what I hope happens at this workshop is that we're going to have some very high-caliber scientists around the table.

They're going to be asked to talk about the existing science, discuss what conclusions, if any, can be drawn from the existing science. And if in fact conclusions can be drawn at this point, where might that lead us with a new direction in the fishery management plan.

I certainly don't have any preconceived thoughts about what might come out of the workshop. I think it's going to be very interesting just trying to control a group of about 40 or 50 scientists, something I've never had to do before. I know Matt Cieri will be a big help in that.

In addition, we do envision inviting representatives from the recreational fishery, commercial fishery and environmental groups to make presentations to sort of stimulate the thought process, ask questions, to sort of lead the discussion to some degree.

But in the end, to me at least, it should be primarily a scientific debate on the issues, that they can then bring that information back to this board, and we as managers use that information and act accordingly.

The public is certainly going to be invited. There will be some limited participation, but it is my thought that we don't want the workshop to simply become a public referendum on menhaden issues.

We're certainly going to hear from the public, but we really, at this point, need to hear from the scientists. Unless the board tells me something differently, that's more or less the way I see this thing going. If you have other ideas, please speak up. Pete.

MR. W. Peter JENSEN: A couple of things; one, there were two motions at the last meeting. One was to do a workshop on the ecological role of

menhaden, and that appears that this is it.

And then there was second motion to organize and conduct a technical committee to develop complete plans for research. Now is the report from the technical committee the product of what that second motion intended?

MS. WALLACE: Yes, I'm sorry, I didn't clarify that before. That was kind of the first step was having the technical committee meet and expand on those research priorities. The second step is for us to go out and try to get some funding.

We are going to, if necessary, go back and have -- if it's the pleasure of the board, to go back and have the workshop with the research priorities with an expanded list of people.

I think when the steering committee talked about it and we talked about it on a staff level, we're going to have a lot of those people in the room, it looks like, with the filter feeder and the forage-based scientists in the room and kind of see how this workshop goes.

On a staff perspective, it wasn't really plausible to have both workshops before the November meeting just because of time commitments, but we are still moving forward with that second workshop, if after this first workshop and the technical committee meeting, it's still necessary. I'd like to get some more feedback if you have some ideas on that.

MR. JENSEN: Okay, and so there will be two workshops, one of which is oriented to the ecological role of menhaden that will come to us before our next meeting. And if I understand the way this is laid out here, those management recommendations are to be related to the ecological role of menhaden, right?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: They could be, yes.

MR. JENSEN: All right, but what brought us to this round debate we were having, and I'll frame it in my own way, is there a connection between low recruitment that we've seen and the fishery in Chesapeake Bay?

I still don't quite see clearly how we're going to get these technical groups to address that question to come back to this board with any kind of a focused answer to that question.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Well, I

think the very question you just asked, is the low recruitment we've seen along the coast a function of the fishery in Chesapeake Bay, is a question that can be put to the scientists at this workshop to sort of focus the discussion.

And if there are other questions like that that board members have in mind, then we certainly want to make a list to ensure that those kind of discussions occur.

Now, where that's going to lead the debate, who knows? They may say we don't have enough information to even get into that. Others may say, well, here's new information you may not be aware of and take off from there.

MR. JENSEN: Well, I agree. In fact, I thought that was the critical point we were addressing in authorizing these workshops. And if I may follow up, Nancy, you had mentioned going out and finding money for the technical workshop?

MS. WALLACE: No, finding money for actually doing the research.

MR. JENSEN: The research, okay.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Okay, I have Bruce, Vince and then Gordon.

MR. BRUCE FREEMAN: Thank you, Jack. The question I had relative to the workshop is are we soliciting information to find out the importance of menhaden relative to other prey species?

It seems like one of the premises that we're moving forward with is that -- and particularly in the Chesapeake Bay -- it's a major food item, and I'm just, in my own mind, trying to fathom what we know about other prey items -- menhaden's not the only one -- and what relationship does that play.

Then in coastal waters do we have any idea of how the menhaden prey relationship fits in with other major prey species? It seems to me that's a major issue that needs to be discussed. And if that's the way the steering committee is thinking, I think certainly that's a reasonable way to approach, but I'm unclear.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: That is definitely one of the issues that will be discussed. Several of the scientists that have been invited are versed in those kinds of subjects and I assume will be

able to comment on them intelligently.

What will be drawn from it, I don't know, but that is clearly --and I believe we've also invited the chairs of the other species technical committees?

MS. WALLACE: We have. Yes, we invited the chairs of the striped bass, weakfish and bluefish technical committees because those are the species that the Commission's multi-species models deals with along with menhaden.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Gordon.

MR. COLVIN: Thank you. Looking at the workshop progress report, I'm quite pleased with the progress that has been made, quite responsive to what I think we had in mind at the last board meeting.

And I agree, I am very encouraged by looking at the list of people who have agreed to participate. I quite agree with Nancy's representation. It's quite an impressive list of people and it would seem that we have a good chance of success.

I did have one question in terms of whether we have or the steering committee has given some thought to reaching outside our region and outside our usual group of collaborators to get some participation from scientists who may have considerable expertise in predator-prey modeling and dynamics but are not currently engaged in East Coast fisheries.

I think, for example, that there is an enormous amount of work that has been done and is ongoing involving predator-prey issues in the Great Lakes involving salmonid fisheries. And one might find some experts from that area who could contribute something that would be perhaps from a different perspective but very, very helpful and fresh to this particular examination, if we could accommodate that.

So I don't know if the committee has thought about it, but I would encourage you to. We might be able to make some suggestions to you on some scientists who could help.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: I think that would be very helpful. I think we were a little bit limited. Our steering committee is only familiar with so much science, and I think it's a good recommendation.

If board members have suggestions of other experts, I assume there is still funding available that we could

invite them because there were a number of people yet, I guess, who were invited who could not attend, so there is still some blank spots I guess that we can fill. Bill.

MR. WILLIAM A. ADLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A question that I would like raised at that workshop is either a reaffirmation of a scientific report that's been in these menhaden papers as to the affects of today's fishing levels on stock growth or decline.

It has been mentioned many times, having to do with environmental factors, the health of the menhaden stock, and I've read that fishing has no affect on the stock size in the report. I'd like them to either say that's wrong or reaffirm what they said.

So maybe there could be at least a little topic they could discuss whether they still stick by that statement based on today's fishing levels, and does it really do that much for the stock health, and I'll leave it at that. I think you get the point. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Okay, that will be done. Vito.

MR. CALOMO: Mr. Chairman, I may be looking for your guidance here. I hear about these low recruitments to the southern states. In the same breath, I'd like to bring up the high recruitment in the northeast region that I brought to this group about two years ago, and no one seemed to have talked about for the longest period of time.

I just want to bring it forward to make sure that's on the charts, also, that we're still seeing a high abundance of recruitment from Maine to Rhode Island, which is a pretty large area.

In my backyard, as I looked out the window yesterday, there were schools of, I would say, zero to ones that I haven't seen in years that seemed to be knocking at our doorstep. We go into our bays and estuaries and people are seeing -- they have no idea what these fish are but they're menhaden.

Our science people have said it from Woods Hole and also our scientists from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has identified an abundance of these fish but no one has made a recognition that there is a high recruitment now focusing in the northeast region. I'd like that on the charts, too. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Nancy is

taking notes with all your suggestions, so they'll be compiled and refined and made part of some agenda that we come up with next week. Ritchie

MR. WHITE: I guess to add to what Vito has been saying, to tag on to that, is the lack of adult menhaden that we no longer see in the northeast. We are seeing some very small menhaden, but we are not seeing adults and why is that that we see the small ones year after year but never see adults.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Okay. Any other items? Pete.

MR. JENSEN: This may be a detailed question, but the technical committee has come up with a research agenda. I really thought that was going to be one of the products of this technical workshop also, so is the technical committee proposal going to be up for debate in the technical group by this broader range of people? I can anticipate that people are going to have different ideas about how to go about this given the list of participants you have here.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: I suppose we could do that. I mean, we could present the technical committee's report to the workshop participants and ask them to comment on its adequacy. I guess we could do that.

I don't want to focus, though, as much on the research questions at this first workshop as the ecological issues and what the current body of science tells us as opposed to how we might go out and improve the body of science. But I suppose we could look at that list and ask them to comment on it. Vince, did you have your hand up?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOHN V. O'SHEA: Well, obviously, I assume one of the things that will come out of these workshops is a rank order list of things that -- we could ask it in a rank order things so that would help us match up resources with priorities and ensure that we get the sort of most urgent questions for the best value of the money that we have available.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: It makes sense. Vito.

MR. CALOMO: I had to think about giving this comment, Mr. Chairman, but I will. I do not have a scientific background, although I started fishing for menhaden in 1956. It makes me kind of been in the fishery for a long time. But, also, I know

that baby menhaden come from adults somewhere. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Any other comments? A.C., you had your hand up and then Steve.

MR. A.C. CARPENTER: Mr. Chairman, the steering committee, do you envision a fair number of board members sitting in on this workshop in addition to the public?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: I think all the board members are invited as long as they pay their own way. I'm not sure we have sufficient funds to bring the entire -- and, quite frankly, I don't want a lot of managers there.

I want this to be, again, a scientific debate of the issues. I mean, if you can stimulate that debate, then great, but hopefully we can avoid a bunch of managers sitting around talking about issues that we don't know anything about. That's just my personal thought on the issue. Steve.

MR. STEVE MEYERS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. This is follow up on a promise that we made at the last meeting. We're sending \$25,000 to the Commission to support the workshops.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Thank you very much. Pete.

MR. JENSEN: What is the total that we've accumulated for the workshop? Are we making money here?

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: We're printing it as fast as we can.

MS. WALLACE: I think what we're going to do is for the management workshop is we're going to use money from NOAA, and we're going to use some left-over money from the Commission just to move forward and make sure that -- we appreciate all the money that has been offered, and we are hopefully going to use that for some of these research priorities and go back to the states that have offered us money and back to the different organizations.

We just happen to have the NOAA money and the money from the Commission to move forward with this particular workshop. That makes sure that there is no interest -- at the end of the day, we'll have recommendations that are completely unbiased. They would have been unbiased anyway, but this

way it's clear that they money hasn't come from anywhere.

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Other comments on the report? Jim.

MR. JAMES FLETCHER: I was going to be good until I heard the words "unbiased science." Let me explain to you, the science the Commission and NOAA is getting is just about as biased as when you sit at the side of the table I do as you can get.

I went to a SAW/SARC, and I heard three out of five British, a couple from somewhere else in the world, basically say what I've been saying, what you presented us is not science. They sat there.

You can look at the record. You can review what Perry Smith will tell you, and he will glass it over. But what we're seeing is not science. There is a fish like this, and I forget what the name is. It grows in the same ecological conditions in other areas of the world, filter feeders.

I encourage you to bring some of those people that know something about it into it. I also encourage rather than doing like happens when I go to a SARC or a SAW, they sit there and look at me, after I make a comment, and go right on with their business.

And six years later or three years later it becomes, oh, well, maybe we should have looked at that a little bit better. But the best science in the United States should mean "biased" science because that's what's coming in.

I don't have a dog in this fight on menhaden except that I see a way, as I explained this morning, of a cookie-cutter effect, and that's good science. The plan comes out cookie-cutter. We change the name. We change the F and we go forth.

And guess what? It's not working. Oh, look what a good job we did with clams and look what a good job we've done with summer flounders. Look at the cyclical patterns and the fish are where they should be.

Oh, well, we didn't look at cyclical patterns. Well, guess what? What you were trying to do, you just got lucky and it came into the thing. And my reason for coming up here is the use of best science.

And, as I say, the people that are going to come to this board, I can almost tell you, for this meeting, are going to have a very biased opinion. Most of them

are going to come out of the ecological community.

Some of them are going to come out of the environmental community. Anything that does not fit in their groove is going to get glossed over. And guess what? They're going to be the greatest number of people, so when it comes to a vote, they voted for it. Look what a good job we did.

But it's not good science and I encourage you, as members of this board, to insist that you get some science from "left field." Get some from "right field." But don't go right in the middle of the road and pick out what you want.

I would encourage you to look for some of the outside science. And as I say, in this particular interest, from my particular side of the industry, except for bait, I don't have a dog in this fight. But it's one that good science, if it came from across the board, would give you a totally different idea than what you're going to get. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIRMAN TRAVELSTEAD: Thank you. Any other comments on this issue from the board or the audience? All right, that takes us to other business. Is there any other business? Seeing no other business, is there a motion to adjourn? We are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 2:50 o'clock p.m., August 17, 2004.)
