

# **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**

## **American Eel Advisory Panel August 13, 2008 Conference Call Summary**

### **Attendance:**

#### **Advisory Panel Members**

Jake Kritzer, Chair  
William Legg (MD)  
Mitchell Feigenbaum (PA)  
James Trossbach (PRFC)

#### **Technical Advisors**

John Clark, Chair American Eel TC  
Laura Lee, Chair American Eel SASC

#### **Staff**

Bob Beal

The American Eel Advisory Panel (AP) held a conference call on August 13, 2008 to discuss the most recent analysis and management recommendations developed by the Technical Committee (TC). The Advisory Panel members that participated in the call agreed to the following recommendations to the Management Board regarding Addendum II.

- 1.) The AP expressed its appreciation for the Board and TC responsiveness in conducting additional analysis on impacts of slot limits.
- 2.) The AP agreed that the minimal increase in eggs per recruit (EPR) did not justify the implementation of a slot limit.
- 3.) The AP did not endorse the TC recommendations of combining a maximum size limit of 22 or 23” with a 30-day fall closure. The AP felt that there is too much uncertainty associated with the impacts of a seasonal closure. A 30-day closure has the potential to severely impact markets as well as the eel fishery, and the expected increase in EPR not known. The AP agreed with the SASC's recommendation of an incremental approach and felt the TC's recommendation would threaten the existence of the fishery.
- 4.) The AP generally felt that a limited seasonal closure (approximately 2 weeks in the fall) and a maximum size limit of 22 to 23” would be a more reasonable approach to increasing EPR. The uncertainty about the impacts on harvest and EPR of a seasonal closure concerned the AP
- 5.) The AP agreed that the impacts of seasonal closures should be fully analyzed before the Addendum goes out for public comment. Quantification of the impacts will be necessary for the public to fully respond to the draft Addendum.

- 6.) The AP reiterated that the current commercial fishery does not catch significant numbers of silver eels, therefore fishery regulations will likely have a limited impact on silver eel escapement.
- 7.) The AP expressed concern about the use of 100% as the target increase for EPR. They felt that smaller increases in EPR may still have a benefit to the stock.
- 8.) The AP felt that the Commission should emphasize the importance of improved habitat and fish passage for the restoration of American eel. The Commission needs to become more actively involved in improving habitat management. The focus of management needs to expand beyond reducing catch. Habitat degradation is a significant issue that is preventing the rebuilding of American Eel.
- 9.) The AP felt that Addendum II should “sunset” either on a specific date or when well-defined indices are met.
- 10.) The AP also agreed that the Management Board should consider and analyze other measures to restrict overall effort in the fishery, such as:
  - a. restriction on new entrants into the commercial fishery;
  - b. gear placement limits; and
  - c. creation of protected areas.
- 11.) The AP felt that the Addendum should to the extent possible allow the states flexibility in meeting the management objectives.