

ASMFC American Lobster Management Program **Operating Procedures**

Revised November 2002

BACKGROUND

The Lobster Board is responsible for implementation of the lobster management program and is accountable to the States, Policy Board and the Commission for successfully implementing the Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The supporting committees provide input to the Board to ensure that management decisions are informed and based on sound science. This document outlines the purpose and composition of the various lobster committees. The description of each committee is taken directly from the Interstate Fishery Management Program (ISFMP) Charter and/or Amendment 3.

PURPOSE

To promote transparent and efficient American lobster management program operations.

OPERATION OF ADVISORY BODIES

The supporting lobster committees primarily draw upon the resources of agency staff members, universities, and lobster industry representatives for information and advice on the lobster fishery. Input from the various advisory bodies assists the Board in making management decisions. The most constructive and productive way for advisory bodies to assist the Board and support the management program is through consensus recommendations. It is strongly recommended that votes not be taken at the advisory body level. All efforts should be made for the group to reach consensus. Where consensus is not possible, the group should document the different points of view and justification for the differences.

BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Each Board member needs to keep tabs on how the supporting committees are doing, and especially how their respective representatives are functioning. Communication, both formal and informal, between the Board and supporting committees is critical for an efficient and effective management program.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (TC)

Description - The Technical Committee is composed of experts in scientific and technical matters relating to the lobster stocks. The Committee is appointed and convened by the Lobster Board to provide scientific and technical advice in the process of developing and monitoring the FMP.

Composition - The Technical Committee shall be composed of one member per active state/federal agency on the Lobster Board. A state may designate a proxy to participate in the absence of the committee member, however the Commission will only reimburse travel for one member per agency.

Sub-committees - The Technical Committee Chair, in consultation with the Board Chair, will recruit/designate special expertise, as appropriate, for Technical Committee deliberations on specific issues, including a subcommittee on economics and social sciences. All sub-committees of the Technical Committee shall report to the Technical Committee.

Leadership - The Technical Committee shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from among the members who are willing and able to commit the time and energy required by the job. The role of the Chair is very demanding. The Chair should be willing to do the job and state agencies must be willing to provide the Chair time to attend to TC business. The Chair should attend all Board meetings. The Chair will be in frequent contact with the FMP Coordinator

All requests for Technical Committee analyses and evaluations should be coordinated through the Chair.

The Vice-Chair of the Technical Committee shall prepare a summary after every meeting to be distributed to the Board, Technical Committee and Advisory Panel.

STOCK ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (SAC)

Description - The Stock Assessment Subcommittee is a group of experts in fish population dynamics and is appointed and convened by the Technical Committee, as a standing committee, to prepare a stock assessment. The SAC is responsible for data analysis and preliminary preparation of a stock assessment report.

The SASC shall report back to the Technical Committee for review and evaluation of work.

Composition - The SAC shall consist of a maximum of 6 members and membership should be comprised entirely of expertise in stock assessment and fishery population dynamics. It is important to preserve a diversity of scientific viewpoints, while assuring that each SAC member has experience in stock assessment/population dynamics. The TC Chair or Vice-Chair will serve as an ex-officio member of the SAC

The Technical Committee shall identify SAC membership for Board acceptance. Membership to the SAC shall not be limited to Technical Committee members.

Leadership - The SAC shall elect a Chair from within its membership who is willing and able to commit the time and energy required by the job. The Chair will be in frequent contact with the FMP Coordinator.

Based on experience, it is possible that a candidate Chair may not step forward under these circumstances. In this case, the Board should consider:

1. A request to agency representatives who should confer with their committee members and identify a person to be made available to assume the job, or
2. Board engage an independent person with appropriate credentials to step in as Chair.

ADVISORY PANEL (AP)

Description - The Advisory Panel is a group of people involved in the lobster fishery and are appointed and convened by the Lobster Board. The purpose of the AP is to advise the Board in the development and monitoring of the lobster management program. The AP traditionally has taken a coastwide approach to issues. The AP provides overall advice to the Board on all aspects of the management program (i.e. reference points, non-trap gear, whale interaction). In contrast, the LCMTs focus on area management only. The AP may examine, based on coastwide industry concerns, issues that emerge from individual or multiple lobster management areas which have implications in other management areas. For example, the AP may be directed by the Board to comment on the impact of implementing a gauge increase in multiple areas on different time schedules. The AP would be requested to provide comments to the Board. Meeting arrangements and staff support shall be provided by the Commission.

Leadership - A Chair and Vice-Chair should be elected and serve for a two-year term, as designated in the ASMFC Advisory Committee Charter

Composition - Industry input to lobster management program is unique with two advisory groups - the Advisory Panel and the Lobster Conservation Management Teams (LCMT). The LCMTs provide additional industry representatives focusing on local management issues. Therefore a large Advisory Panel is no longer necessary.

The Advisory Panel membership shall be reconstituted, through attrition. The new membership shall be comprised of four representatives from the states of Maine and Massachusetts, two representatives from the states of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. States may appoint advisory panel members who are also members of LCMTs. In such cases, the State's Board members need to clearly communicate to the advisors the different roles they are serving, and the distinction between the role of a coastwide advisor and an LCMT member.

Advisors shall serve a term of four years, in accordance with the Advisory Committee Charter, and may be re-appointed. However, a State may not re-appoint more than the new limits on membership.

The AP process can demand a large amount of time and it is important to have members that are willing to participate.

LOBSTER CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT TEAMS (LCMT)

Description - The Lobster Conservation Management Teams were created through Amendment

3 for each of the seven lobster management areas. The LCMTs are appointed and convened by the Lobster Board to advise the Board on each management area and recommend changes to the management program. The lobster FMP identifies goals, objectives and a rebuilding schedule. The LCMTs provide recommendations for management measures that will accomplish the goals of the FMP while taking into consideration local fishing practices. For example, the LCMTs recommended trap limits, area closures, limits on vessel upgrades, gauge increases and vent size increases to limit effort and meet egg production goals. The LCMTs do not make recommendations on coastwide issues.

Meeting arrangements and staff support is provided by the states.

Process for Submitting Management Area Recommendations/Proposals – LCMTs and the jurisdictions adjacent to the area of concern shall be responsible for the development of recommendations for each lobster management area. Adjacent jurisdictions will be responsible for preparing a management proposal containing said recommendations. Concerns regarding conservation, enforcement, administration, and socio-economic implications should be addressed during this time period. Upon finalization of the management proposal, the area/state contact for each LCMT will forward the proposal to Commission staff for distribution to and review by the Lobster Management Board. Upon receipt of the proposal or during the next scheduled lobster Board meeting, the Board will take action on the management area proposal.

Composition - Amendment 3 identifies a minimum number of LCMT members and the states involved with the selection of members (see table on the next page). The LCMT process can demand a large amount of time and it is important to have members that are willing to participate.

Area	Minimum number of members	States involved in selection of members
1	15	ME, NH, MA
2	10	MA, RI, CT, NY
3	10	ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, VA, NC
4	7	NY, NJ
5	7	NJ, DE, MD, VA, NC
6	6	CT, NY
OCLMA	3	MA

State personnel, including representatives from the Technical Committee, are expected to staff meetings of the LCMTs. The states should keep the Commission informed of all meetings and provide meeting summaries/minutes for all LCMT meetings.

Leadership - Each LCMT shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair. The Commission will reimburse the Chairs of each LCMT for travel expenses to Lobster Board meetings only. The Chairs must represent the view of the LCMTs at Board meetings, not the views of the individual, state or the

associations to which they belong. The state may choose to appoint a LCMT chair or other member to the AP. At AP meetings, such LCMT members would be expected to represent their personal views and/or those of industry associations or segments to which they belong.

In addition, a state contact person and technical advisor shall be appointed to each LCMT.

PLAN REVIEW TEAM (PRT)

Description - The Plan Review Team is a group of individuals who are knowledgeable concerning scientific facts, stock and fishery condition, and fishery management issues concerning the lobster stocks. The Lobster Board appoints and convenes the PRT for the purpose of conducting an annual plan review for the FMP. Consistent with applicable schedules and compliance provisions of the FMP and its addenda, the PRT will conduct a review of the stock status and states' compliance with the implementation requirements of the FMP. The PRT should function in a manner that produces the work requested by the Board. In addition, time should be allotted for the PRT to review issues and prepare recommendations for the Board.

Membership - The Plan Review Team shall be composed of approximately of six persons. The PRT members should have expertise in the lobster fishery and be willing to participate. Board members should solicit volunteers from among their staff to nominate to the PRT. The PRT members must be willing and able to commit the time and energy required.

The Technical Committee Chair or other willing Technical Committee representative, shall serve on the Plan review Team.

Leadership - The FMP Coordinator shall serve as the Chair of the Plan Review Team.