

CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS and MEETING SUMMARY
TAUTOG ADVISORY PANEL
Conference Call
January 18, 2007

Meeting Staff: Chris Vonderweidt (ASMFC)

Meeting Participants: Denise Wagner (NJ); John G. Mihale (NY); Jack Conway (CT); Greg Jackson (DE); Robert Rogean (MA).

MEETING SUMMARY

The Tautog Advisory Panel Convened via a phone conference at 3:30 pm on January 18, 2007. Chris Vonderweidt began the meeting with an overview of Draft Addendum IV for Public Comment that had been mailed to all AP members prior to the meeting.

Requiring almost no debate, the Advisory Panel unanimously choose “**status quo**” for **Issue 1 (biomass reference points) and 2 (fishing mortality rates)**. The AP is happy with the tautog fishery, it was noted that it may have been better in the past, but fishermen are content with it.

The AP is also in agreement that reductions are inappropriate until the illegal live fishery is stopped. The members feel that if there is any problem in the fishery, it is the large numbers of illegal live market fishers. Upon further discussion of this issue, **the AP recommends prohibiting recreational fishermen from retaining live tautog**. The Panel agreed that recreational fishermen often supplement their income by selling live fish. Indiscriminate buyers who do not check for commercial licenses often meet these fishermen at the dock and buy their live tautog. There are other recreational fishermen who put tanks on the backs of their trucks and drive the live fish to Asian markets themselves. The AP agreed that there is no good argument for recreational fishermen to have live tautog. The Panel feels that prohibiting recreational fishermen from retaining live tautog will simplify enforcement. They also feel that eliminating illegal sales will increase demand and value of legal live tautog.

Finally, all panel members discussed fairness of an addendum that requires reductions in the recreational, but not the commercial fishery. One member abstained from commenting, two are in favor of the current language, and two want reductions to come from both sectors.

The New Jersey and Delaware Panel members feel that the commercial fishery is already un-proportionally regulated and further restrictions would cripple the commercial fishery. The representative from New Jersey pointed out that commercial fishermen in her state only land around half of their state implemented commercial quota. The remaining two panel members (Massachusetts and Connecticut) want states to have flexibility to reduce in both recreational and commercial sectors.