

Northern Shrimp Advisory Panel Meeting Summary #2

The Northern Shrimp Advisory Panel (AP) met on October 25, 2004, in Portland, Maine. It met to review the shrimp stock assessment and to develop a recommendation for the Northern Shrimp Section for the 2005 shrimp season. AP members present included Mr. Terry Alexander (Acting Chair, ME), Mr. Bill Lee (MA), John Seiders (ME), Bud Fernandes (NH), and Peter Kendall (NH). Also present were Mr. George Lapointe, Ms. Maggie Hunter and Mr. Dan Schick all of the Maine Department of Marine Resources. In addition, approximately 40 interested parties were in attendance.

Mr. Alexander welcomed everyone, and thanked members of the AP and the public for such a large turnout in attendance.

Mr. Alexander briefly described the minutes of the September 28th meeting of the AP held in Portland, ME (see AP Meeting Report #1), and then introduced Ms. Hunter to present the stock assessment.

Stock Assessment - Ms. Hunter described the landings data from the 2004 season, showing size distribution by month (by State) as well as the progress of egg hatch by month (by State). The catch rates/hour were the highest observed in the history of observation (361 lbs/hour), and the catch rates/month were the highest observed in 30 years.

Ms. Hunter also reported on the results of the summer survey, which confirms that the 2001 year class is quite strong, and predicted that the biomass will contain more large (4 year old) female shrimp than any time since 1995. The survey also confirmed that two weak year classes (2000 and 2002) surround the strong 2001-year class. The 2001 year class is the only significant source of egg production for this year and next. The survey shows that the 2003-year class is about average. The survey estimates that the current biomass is around 10,800 mt, which is below the biomass observed between 1984-1994.

Based on the survey and CPUE estimates, the Northern Shrimp Technical Committee (TC) estimates that last years F was around .22. The TC recommends for the upcoming season that fishing mortality be kept below .22 and landings below 2500 mt. This year the TC is not recommending a specific season, but as asked the AP to develop a recommendation that will meet the landings target.

Industry Proposals – the AP turned to reviewing 3 proposals submitted by industry associations or individuals.

IFISH proposal – 56-day season from December 27 through March 11 with weekends off. The recommendation is modeled after the 2000 season (51 days) when the fishery targeted the 1996-year class. IFISH contends that the 1996-year class is comparable to the 2001-year class that the fishery will target this year. IFISH estimates that this season will result in landings of 2400 mt.

MFCA proposal – 113 day season from December 12th- 31st, 4 days/week; Jan 3rd –March 11th, weekends off; and April 11th –May 31st, 7 day/week. This recommendation attempts to recapture the historical pre-Holiday market as well as the spring fishery. The proponents also hope to stabilize the market for processors. The MFCA estimates that this season will result in landings of 2900 mt.

Roger Allard proposal – 76 day season, Jan 3rd, 4 day/week for two weeks. Jan 17th-April 1st, 5 days/week. Monitor shrimp count during the last two weeks of March. If count is unacceptable, stop the season on April 1st. If count is acceptable, re-start the season from April 18th – May 6th. Mr. Allard was not present to offer rationale or landings estimate.

In general, participants felt that the IFISH proposal was too conservative and the MFCA proposal prone to risk.

AP proposal -

Mr. Kendall/Mr. Fernandes:

Move that the AP recommend the following season to the Northern Shrimp Section for the 2005 shrimp season: December 19th – 23rd, Sunday through Thursday; December 26th-30th, Sunday through Thursday. January 3rd through March 25th, Monday through Friday. Same season for trappers and trawlers. Total 70 days. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Based on the average CPUE during the timeframe of 1986-2001, the AP (with input from Dan Shick) estimates that this season will result in an F below .22 and landings of approximately 2500 mt. This recommendation also attempts to provide maximum opportunity during the core season (January through March) when the majority of boats can participate and attempts to restore the pre-holiday season market.

Election of Chair –

Mr. Kendall/Mr. Lee:

Move to nominate Mr. Alexander to serve as AP Chair. There were no other nominations. Mr. Alexander was unanimously elected to serve as Chair of the AP.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Alexander, Chair