

**Striped Bass Advisory Panel
Report to the Striped Bass Management Board
January 29, 2007**

On behalf of the Advisory Panel, I requested that copies of the Maryland and North Carolina proposals and a copy of the Technical Committee (TC) report be sent to each of the 21 members currently serving on the Advisory Panel. Because the report was not available on January 12 when the proposals were sent to Panel members, an excerpt of the staff's notes from the TC meeting was included in lieu of the official report.

Without the opportunity to convene as it has in the past with a technical representative present to provide guidance on technical issues, Advisory Panel members submitted their comments independently based on the proposals themselves and the excerpt of the staff's notes from the Technical Committee meeting.

Having the Advisory Panel function in isolation does not serve well either the advisory process or the Board. In evaluating the North Carolina proposal, Panel members might reasonably have had questions about the basis for the current TAC given the TC's comment that there is no measure of either a current or historical mortality rate for the A/R fishery. The TC comments to the Board regarding the Maryland proposal suggests that the actual mortality in the spring season likely is being underestimated and that there is a potential for a slight increase in fishing mortality (F) if the quota is eliminated. Without access to the TC, Panel members had to decide for themselves the meaning of likely, potential and slight as used in the TC comments.

Comments have been received from 11 Advisory Panel members including 6 recreational representatives, 1 each from New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Virginia, and North Carolina; 2 charter boat, one each from Maine and Maryland; and 3 commercial representatives, 1 each from New York, Virginia and North Carolina. Board members have received copies of the unedited comments and the supporting rationale submitted by each of the 11 Panel members.

In the interest of time, I have attempted to categorized the Panel members' positions on each proposal and I refer you to the verbatim copies of the panel member comments to judge the appropriateness of the categorization.

With respect to the Maryland proposal, 4 panel members (1 charter boat, 1 commercial and 2 recreational) are opposed to eliminating the quota, 1 (recreational) concurred with the conclusions as stated in the excerpt of the TC meeting but also could support the proposal provided adequate

reporting and documentation of the fishery is provided, 4 panel members (1 charter boat, 1 recreational and 2 commercial) support the proposal, 1 panel member who neither opposed nor supported eliminating the quota recommends that the Board “error on the side of caution” while 1 member (recreational) did not comment on the Maryland proposal.

Comments regarding the North Carolina proposal were received from 10 of the 11 Panel members, 1 charter boat, 3 commercial and 6 recreational representatives. Supporting comments were received from 3 Panel members (2 commercial and 1 recreational). Comments opposing the proposal were received from 5 Panel members (1 charter boat, 1 commercial and 3 recreational representatives). While neither supporting or opposing the proposal, 1 panel member (recreational) recommended the Board “error on the side of caution) and 1 Panel member who agreed with the TC conclusion but could also support the proposal provided adequate reporting and documentation was submitted.