

# MEETING OVERVIEW

## American Lobster Management Board

May 3, 2021

1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Webinar

Chair: Daniel McKiernan (MA) Assumed Chairmanship: 02/20	Technical Committee Chair: Kathleen Reardon (ME)	Law Enforcement Committee Representative: Rob Beal
Vice Chair: Dr. Jason McNamee	Advisory Panel Chair: Grant Moore (MA)	Previous Board Meeting: May 3, 2021
Voting Members: ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, VA, NMFS, NEFMC (12 votes)		

### 2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from May 3, 2021

**3. Public Comment** – At the beginning of the meeting public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

### 4. Progress Report on Development of Draft Addendum XXVII on Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank Resiliency (1:45-2:20 p.m.)

#### Background

- Addendum XXVII was initiated in 2017 to proactively increase resilience of the GOM/GBK stock but stalled due to the prioritization of Atlantic right whale issues. After accepting the 2020 Benchmark Stock Assessment for American lobster, the Board reinitiated work on the draft addendum in February 2021, with a focus on developing a trigger mechanism that would automatically implement management measures to improve the biological resiliency of the GOM/GBK stock if the trigger is reached. Since then the Plan Development Team (PDT) and Technical Committee (TC) have met a number of times to discuss the development of the addendum and analyze potential management options.
- The TC was tasked by the PDT to analyze possible changes to minimum and maximum gauge size for the management areas within the GOM/GBK stock. Due to competing TC workloads this analysis was delayed.
- The PDT has provided additional guidance on the structure of the management document, and is seeking additional guidance from the Board, with the intention of providing a draft addendum for consideration for public comment in October 2021. **(Briefing Materials).**

**Presentations**

- Update on the Development of Draft Addendum XXVII by C. Starks

**Board Actions for Consideration at the Meeting**

- Provide guidance to PDT on draft management options

**5. Review Workgroup Report on Vessel Tracking Devices in Federal Lobster and Jonah Crab Fisheries (2:20-2:50 p.m.) Possible Action****Background**

- In May 2021, the Board discussed electronic vessel tracking in the federal lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. They received presentations from state partners on recent work that has expanded upon the Commission's 2020 pilot project on vessel tracking initiated through Addendum XXVI; these projects have tested additional tracking devices, integrated cell-based tracking with ACCSP's SAFIS eTRIPS mobile trip reporting application, and created trip viewers within SAFIS eTRIPS online.
- As in previous discussions, the Board emphasized the critical need for high-resolution spatial and temporal data to characterize effort in the federal lobster and Jonah crab fleet in order to address a number of challenges facing the fisheries, including Atlantic right whale risk reduction efforts, marine spatial planning discussions, and offshore enforcement.
- The Board formed technical work group including representatives from NOAA Fisheries, state and federal law enforcement, and members of the Board to develop objectives, technological solutions, and system characteristics for vessel tracking devices in the federal lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. The work group and technical staff from ASMFC, ACCSP and the states have met several times since the May meeting to develop recommendations for implementing tracking requirements in the federal fleet **(Supplemental Materials)**.

**Presentations**

- Work Group Report on Electronic Vessel Tracking Requirements by C. Starks

**Board Actions for Consideration at the Meeting**

- Initiate addendum to consider requiring electronic vessel tracking for federal lobster and Jonah crab vessels

**6. Review Jonah Crab Pre-Assessment Report and Consider Initiation of a Stock Assessment (2:50-3:30 p.m.) Possible Action****Background**

- The Board tasked the TC in August 2020 with conducting a pre-assessment workshop for Jonah crab and providing a report on available data and recommended assessment approaches. Webinars were held November 16-18, 2020, February 11, 2021, June 3, 2021, and June 29, 2021 to review and discuss available Jonah crab data sets, potential assessment approaches, and remaining data limitations. From these discussions the TC produced a Jonah Crab Pre-Assessment Data Workshop Report. The report includes descriptions of available data and limitations, assessment approaches, and research recommendations **(Briefing Materials)**.

- The TC recommends moving forward with a stock assessment to be completed in 2023, consistent with current Northeast Region Coordinating Council and ASMFC assessment schedules (**Briefing Materials**).

**Presentations**

- Jonah Crab Pre-Assessment Data Workshop Report by D. Perry

**Board Actions for Consideration at the Meeting**

- Consider initiating a stock assessment for Jonah Crab

**7. Consider Development of a Management Strategy Evaluation of the American Lobster Fisheries (3:30-4:00 p.m.) Possible Action**

**Background**

- In May 2021 the Board reviewed TC recommendations on a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the lobster fishery. The TC recommended the Board pursue a two-phase MSE focused on the GOM/GBK stock, with the goal of providing short-term management guidance at the stock-wide scale while concurrently building the framework to expand the MSE to provide long-term, spatially-explicit management advice. As next steps, the TC recommended a formal process to develop management goals and objectives for the future of the lobster fishery, and forming a steering committee for additional scoping and work plan development (**Briefing Materials**).
- The Board expressed interest in pursuing an MSE but postponed any action on development of an MSE until the August meeting in order to prioritize work on Draft Addendum XXVII.

**Presentations**

- Review of MSE Options and TC recommendations by J. Kipp

**Board Actions for Consideration at the Meeting**

- Consider forming a steering committee to develop lobster management goals and objectives and an MSE work plan

**8. Other Business/Adjourn**



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** American Lobster Management Board  
**FROM:** Caitlin Starks, FMP Coordinator  
**DATE:** July 28, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** Recommendation for Implementing Requirements for Electronic Vessel Tracking for Federal Lobster and Jonah Crab Fleet

### Background

Over the last few years the American Lobster Management Board (Board) has continually expressed interest in implementing requirements to collect high resolution spatial and temporal effort data in the federal lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, and has supported efforts to investigate systems and technology for collecting these data. At its May 2021 meeting, the Board agreed to create a technical work group including representatives from NOAA Fisheries, state and federal law enforcement, and members of the Board to identify objectives, technological solutions, and system characteristics for vessel tracking devices in the federal lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. The work group, as well as technical staff from state and federal partners, has developed recommendations on implementing tracking requirements which are summarized below.

### Board Action for Consideration

Based on discussions among state and federal representatives in the work group, as well as leadership at the Commission and NOAA Fisheries, the work group recommends the Board initiate an addendum to consider implementing electronic tracking requirements for federally permitted vessels in the lobster and Jonah crab fishery. Implementing fishery dependent tracking data collection under the authority of the Atlantic Coastal Fishery Cooperative Management Act provides the needed process and information collection and sharing flexibility that would not be allowed under the NOAA Fisheries Vessel Monitoring Systems. More specifically, operating under ACFCMA allows data to be stored directly to ACCSP, as opposed to federal VMS data which is first sent to OLE. This should provide greater access to the data by state fishery management agencies which often find it difficult to obtaining VMS data.

The work group recommends the addendum consider the following specifications to ensure the data collected meet the needs for stock assessment, protected species risk reduction efforts, offshore enforcement, and marine spatial planning discussions:

- Vessel track data should be reported at a minimum rate of one ping per minute for at least 90% of the fishing trip. This rate is necessary to distinguish lobster fishing activity from transiting activity, and allows the calculation of number of traps per trawl.
- Cellular tracking devices are the preferred technology over satellite systems. Testing of cellular devices has shown the devices are simple to install and cost significantly less

than satellite devices. Reporting data at the recommended rate of one ping per minute using a satellite device would incur prohibitive costs.

- Minimum technological standards defined by ACCSP and its partners should be observed for tracking devices to ensure data needs are consistently met, while providing flexibility for technology to evolve and improve. For example, devices should have power systems capable of running the device at the specified ping rate. Further, at a minimum, precision and accuracy requirements for VMS should be met by cellular tracking devices. Finally, tracking systems should allow for a distinction to be made between a tracker unit and a vessel/permit. This distinction is necessary so that if a tracker is reassigned to a new vessel or a vessel requires a replacement tracker data integrity and confidentiality will be maintained.

### **Objective of Electronic Vessel Tracking**

The objective of implementing electronic tracking requirements is to collect high-resolution spatial and temporal data to characterize effort in the federal American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries for management and enforcement needs. These data will improve stock assessments, inform management decisions related to protected species and marine spatial planning, and enhance offshore enforcement.

A number of challenges the fishery is currently facing pose an acute need for electronic tracking in the offshore fishery. Enhanced spatial information on effort in federal waters is needed to address these issues, including:

- Stock assessment: Size composition data for lobster catch are generated by matching statistical area-specific total harvest data and biosampling data, as statistical area is currently the finest spatial resolution for harvest data. Preliminary work has indicated size composition varies at a finer spatial scale than statistical area. Improved spatial resolution of total harvest data from vessel tracking will improve size composition data used in the stock assessment models to ultimately estimate exploitation and reference abundance.
- Right whales and protected resources: The current models used to assess the location of vertical lines in the fishery and their associated risk to right whale could be significantly improved with data collected through vessel tracking. The recently released Biological Opinion outlines additional risk reductions in the US lobster fishery starting in 2025 and it is important to update this data and the associated risk reduction models ahead of this timeline.
- Marine Spatial Planning (including protected areas): It is critically important to record the footprint of the US lobster fishery as spatial allocation discussions occur as a result of emerging ocean uses such as aquaculture, marine protected areas, and offshore energy development. For example, in January 2021, President Biden issued an Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. Included in this Executive Order is a goal of protecting 30% of US waters by 2030. Given this goal, documentation of the US lobster fishery footprint is essential for consideration in future discussions and decisions.

- Offshore enforcement: It has long been recognized that enforcement efforts in the offshore federal lobster fishery need to be improved. As a result, there are ongoing efforts to enhance enforcement capabilities, including discussions around an offshore enforcement vessel capable of hauling and re-setting long trawls. However, even with an enforcement vessel, it can be hard to locate gear, particularly in LCMA 3. Vessel tracking could improve the efficiency and efficacy of offshore enforcement efforts by directing enforcement personnel to where gear is located.

### **Additional Considerations for Electronic Vessel Tracking Requirements**

The work group highlighted some additional considerations that should be further discussed and addressed during the addendum development process. First, the Law Enforcement Committee should be consulted on several issues, including requirements for when tracking devices would need to remain active, dockside communication (i.e. should the device recognize when it is in port allowing for the ping rate to be automatically slowed), and tamper-proof features (i.e., affixing the device to the vessel). They also noted that additional discussion is needed to determine how tracking should be applied to the mobile gear fleet, as a different ping rate may be more appropriate for these vessels which already have VMS requirements. Additionally, technical staff from the states and ACCSP should draft data reporting, management, and dissemination processes and standards for vessel track data collected under the proposed requirements. Important data collection fields identified by the work group included the type of device, date/time, lat/long, horizontal accuracy of lat/long, and vessel ID. Lastly, the addendum should address a process to approve devices for use in the fishery.

Alongside these considerations, attention needs to be paid to the implementation timeline and budgetary implications. Launching a technological program like this will require significant lead time prior to implementation—likely at least one year. Additionally, there are budgetary and personnel considerations for all partners. Staff time will be needed for harvester support and data analysis. Finally, potential costs to industry for the devices and data plans will need to be communicated clearly.