

Rhode Island Commercial Fisheries Blueprint for Resilience Launch Event

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Notes from the Innovative Seafood Marketing Breakout Group

Moderators: Aubrey Church, Mike Long, Thomas Heimann

Notes: Mike Long

Participants: Ronald Kenyon (fisherman), Jason McNamee (RIDEM), Cynthia Hanson (NOAA), Ken Murgio (F/V Johnny B), John Hoey (NOAA), Katie Almeida (Town Dock), Andy Lipsky (NOAA), Danielle Bilecki (URI), Vanessa Anderson (URI), Changue Weng (NOAA), Lauren Gentile (NOAA), Katie Eagan (fisherman), John Peabody (F/V Lady Clare), Walter Anoushian (NOAA)

Goal: Make fisheries science and management as dynamic as the ecosystem

The purpose of this breakout discussion is to come away with a clear understanding of:

- What do we need to do? (the key issues, barriers, next steps)
- How are we going to do it?
- Who needs to be involved?

Summary: This breakout group included members of the fishing and fisheries science and management communities. The group dove into a detailed discussion of three elements to adaptive science and management that are critically needed in New England fisheries: addressing time lags between observations/data collection and regulation changes; getting Rhode Island a voting seat on the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council; and development of data and management tools to address emerging species and shifting distributions. Tools discussed included technology, collaborative research, legislative action, and marketing and public education. The group also discussed differences in the appropriateness of different tools for large boats versus small, artisanal fishing boats; the solution has to fit the scales of the fishery.

NOTES:

Addressing Time Lags Between Observations/Data Collection and Regulation Changes:

- NOAA and ACCSP now require for-hire fishery trip reporting within 48 hours of a trip to minimize time between trip reporting and data processing
- Other electronic data reporting (eVTR) was favored by most group members because it reduces data processing time and effort for, and allows data to be analyzed quicker by managers
- Pushback from fleet members who do not want more technology will always be a problem, and changes in reporting requirements will always require retraining fishing fleets on how to report
- Fishermen suggested that electronic reporting platforms be more specific for regional areas (i.e. New England fishermen do not need all species listed that are managed on the US East Coast)
- Discrepancies between fishermen and dealer/processor reporting can lead to problems for species such as Jonah/rock crab, conch/whelk, skate, etc.
- NOAA staff pointed that real time temperature/depth monitoring is being conducted by a study fleet to get more fine scale models
- Group members noted that the same technologies (or reporting requirements) are not applicable to all fisheries; but the more fine scale the data being reported is, the more accurate and fine scale management can be
- There was discussion on how data can or should be reported differently between small and large boats, and how their data is used differently in stock assessments and resulting management decisions
- Fishermen noted that small boats are required to report to the same level as large boats, but because large boats usually account for higher catches their data is used with more weight in stock assessments
- Fishermen noted that bycatch from smaller boats is typically less per CPUE compared to large boats, but bycatch rates of large boats also hold more weight in stock assessments
- Similar discussion was held for small scale artisanal/local market boats/fleets vs. large scale industrial boats/fleets
- NOAA staff deflected comments from fishermen that distrust from regulators in fishermen reporting leads to errors in stock assessments, but NOAA staff noted that one or a few bad apples can ruin things for entire fleets
- Last comments on this topic were regarding public perception of the fishing industry which overall is very negative, and even recreational fishermen vs. commercial fishermen often have poor relationships

- It was noted that commercial fleets must stick together and try to give positive views of commercial fishing to the public to overcome this

RI Seat with the MAFMC:

- Town Dock staff noted that an act of Congress would be needed to get RI a seat on the council, so lobbying and contacting Congressional staffers is needed to keep the movement going
- Other states on the MAFMC think that giving RI a seat would result in their own votes getting watered down, and RI would also be able to control too many things that does not relate to RI fisheries
- FMPs for individual species are assigned to regional councils by historical catch data for the initial FMP, which is why black sea bass is under the MAFMC

Emerging Species and Shifting Distributions:

- This topic was directly related to the MAFMC seat for RI as we may continue to see more warm water species moving north into our fishing areas
- New local seafood markets need to be created for these emerging warm water species to be sold for higher value in Southern New England
- This may only be possible for black sea bass currently as fishermen think this is the only emerging species with enough landings to sustain a robust local market at this time, but that may change in the future
- All group members agreed that data is needed to capture the emergence of new species and to prove that abundance of warm water species is increasing over time
- Fishing fleet models similar to that of CFRF's fleets were pointed out as a good way to capture that, however these fleets need to be expanded to more appropriately manage species at stock scale levels rather than just the RI fleets for species such as black sea bass
- NOAA staff noted that adaptability of specific boats, ports, and fleets can be accounted for in models when data is collected to see when fishermen are targeting specific species or when they are being caught as bycatch. That distinction plays a major part in stock assessment modeling and data reporting needs to be directed towards that so it can be addressed in future stock assessments

Next steps:

The majority of group members stated that they would like to remain engaged in these types of discussions moving forward to maintain positive communication

between fishing industry and scientists/managers towards progressive and resilient fisheries