

RIMFC Lobster Advisory Panel
“Trap Definition” Working Group Meeting Summary
April 21, 2011

Working Group / Meeting Attendees:

Rick Bellavance, Richard Hopkins, Jeffrey Grant, Gary Mataronas, Jr., Ian Parente, Daniel Eagan, Allan Bessette, Elaine Bessette, Gerald Schey, Robert Smith, Robert Braman, Frances Ethier (Law Enforcement), Scott Olszewski (RIDFW), Thomas Angell (RIDFW)

There were 14 people in attendance. Meeting convened at 4:10 p.m.

Meeting Summary:

- Review of background of this issue and the need to identify different types of pots/traps that are used in fisheries other than lobster (conch, crab, finfish), but are capable of catching lobster.
- Current regulations provide a loophole for the ability to increase “trap” effort on the lobster fishery at a time when significant reductions for the lobster trap fishery are being considered.
- Review and discuss ideas/recommendations from last Lobster AP meeting
 - All pots/traps fished in RI state waters must be tagged to identify which fishery they are being deployed for (i.e. the lobster trap fishery or “other pot/trap fisheries)
 - Add “Miscellaneous Pot/Trap” endorsement for 2012 commercial licenses and recreational lobster licenses; endorsement fee should cover the cost of producing/supplying “miscellaneous pot/trap” tags; this will require approval by the General Assembly
 - Limit of 300 “miscellaneous pots/traps” per license / license endorsement
 - All “miscellaneous pots/traps” must have an escape vent of equal or greater size than the escape vent required for the lobster trap fishery, with the exception of conch, eel, and green crab pots/traps; eel and green crab pots/traps must have a 3” x 3” biodegradable panel (“ghost” panel) that can be incorporated into the pot/trap anywhere except on the bottom of the pot/trap
 - Need to define Eel, Conch, and Green Crab pot/trap
 - Limit the amount of lobster by-catch that can be kept from “miscellaneous pots/traps”; recommend a limit of 20 lobsters per day
 - Mobile Gear (otter trawl and gillnet) lobster by-catch will remain at 100 lobsters per day or up to 500 lobsters for fishing trips lasting 5 days or longer
 - Recommend to limit the number of lobsters that can be taken per day by recreational trap and diver licensees to 8 lobsters per day
 - Recreational lobster “miscellaneous pot/trap” endorsement limited to 5 “miscellaneous pots/traps”
- Additional Recommendations

- Keep the conch fishery separate from finfish/crab fisheries; maximum number of 250 pots/traps for the conch fishery
- Conch, eel, and green crab pots/traps will be exempt from escape vent regulations (*DID WE INCLUDE CONCH IN THIS RECOMMENDATION? MY NOTES INDICATE ONLY EEL AND GREEN CRAB POTS/TRAPS WOULD BE EXEMPT*)
- Trap tags for the conch fishery will be a different color from “miscellaneous pot/trap” trap tags for finfish/crab fisheries

T. Angell will prepare the meeting summary and send to meeting attendees for review/approval; send comments/revisions to T. Angell by email or phone call.

Need to have the Lobster AP review/comment on the working group recommendations?

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.