

NEW JERSEY MARINE FISHERIES COUNCIL
Stafford Municipal Building
Stafford, New Jersey
November 12, 2015

Council Attendees:

Richard Herb (Acting Chairman)
Scott Bailey
Erling Berg
Walter L. Johnson III
Frances Puskas
Sergio Radossi
Joseph Rizzo
Robert Rush
Joseph Zaborowski
James Alexis

Council Absentees:

Eleanor Bochenek

Division of Fish and Wildlife Attendees:

Brandon Muffley, Administrator, Marine Fisheries Administration (MFA)
Russ Allen, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Marine Fisheries (BMF)
Jeff Normant, Principal Biologist, Bureau of Shellfisheries (BSF)
Conservation Officer Chris Petruccelli, Bureau of Law Enforcement (BLE)
Tom Baum, Supervising Biologist, BMF
Jeff Brust, Research Scientist, MFA
Jen Pyle, Senior Biologist, BMF
Brian Neilan, Assistant Biologist, BMF
Sherry Bennett, Council Secretary

Ms. Bennett read the compliance with the Sunshine Law. Notice of the Marine Fisheries Council (Council) meeting was filed with the Secretary of State on October 14, 2015. Council meeting minutes for September 3, 2015 were approved. Mr. Herb began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Audience Conduct

Mr. Herb reminded the audience to take conversations outside or wait until the end of the meeting and to turn off all cell phones. Individuals wishing to make a public comment will need to sign up.

Law Enforcement Report

CO Petruccelli presented the Council with an update of the Law Enforcement Report for September-October 2015, Handout #1. Highlights include:

- On September 7, 2015, CO's responded to a complaint of two fishermen keeping undersize fish and hiding them under the stairs by the party boats in Belmar. Two plastic bags contained a 16 ¼ inch fluke, a 7 ¼ inch black sea bass, a 7 inch tautog, and a bergall. The fishermen were issued summonses for the undersize fish and possession during the closed season for black sea bass.
- On September 18, 2015, CO's conducted a late night striped bass patrol of the Manasquan River. An inspection at 5:10 am, revealed 12 undersized striped bass. Two of the men were issued summonses for the possession of undersize striped bass and the possession of over limit striped bass. The third fisherman was issued a summons for littering for throwing garbage into a nearby bush. The sum of the fisherman's violations was over \$2000.
- In mid-September, CO's stepped up surveillance of recreational fishermen in the Atlantic City area because of the increase in tautog fishing activity. In approximately one week the Officers issued 22 summonses for undersize and over the limit tautog, interference with the duties of a CO, wanton waste and littering. A few fishermen that were apprehended are repeat offenders.
- CO's conducted several routine inspections last month and issued a few summonses to cast and seine netters. One recreational netter was issued a summons in possession of 216 bluefish over the daily limit of 15 fish.
- CO's began conducting surveillance at Absecon Inlet on one October weekend. When CO's inspected a vehicle they found 62 undersize tautog. In addition to the undersize violation the owner of the vehicle was also charged with possession of 61 tautog over the daily possession limit.
- A commercial fisherman was charged with possession of stolen property of another fisherman's conch pots.
- CO's investigated an Atlantic menhaden dealer for failing to report over one million pounds of menhaden landed by purse seine vessel in May of 2015. The unreported landings resulted in an over harvest of NJ's 2015 menhaden quota. The over harvested amount will be deducted from NJ's 2016 Atlantic menhaden quota. The dealer was charged individually for each week in which he failed to report on time.
- CO's have been contacting commercial trap fisherman to clarify confusion about the regulations as they pertain to the Federal lobster management area 5 trap waiver program.

Legislative/Regulatory Report

Mr. Muffley presented Council with the Legislative and Regulatory Report:

- Presented Council with the approved Notice of Administrative Change (Notice) from Council's May meeting which appeared in the September 8, 2015 NJ Register (Handout #2). The Notice pertained to modification of commercial black sea bass trip limits, and possession limits of recreational and commercial blueline tilefish regulations.
- Gave an update on the Multispecies Rule Proposal initiated in 2008 which has completed public comment and staff anticipates final approval early in 2016.
- On November 2, 2015 the new reef regulations for reefs within marine State waters were approved.
- Legislative Actions:
 - S3192 – designates striped bass as NJ's official saltwater fish
 - S3193 – requires Dept of Agriculture, DEP and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) to streamline aquaculture application process
 - S3194 – requires Dept of Agriculture, and DEP to develop a joint application and review process for aquaculture.
 - S3416 – prohibits possession, transport, import, processing, sale and shipment of certain animal species. Not pertaining to marine directly, but could impact species such as American eel and diamondback terrapin if the original wording were used. If the original bill should pass it will close these fisheries.
 - SJR95 – declares aquaculture as an important economic contributor in NJ and consider industry in future economic plans.
 - SR144 – urges State to promote and support shellfish aquaculture
 - SR145 – urges USFWS and DEP to resolve issues with red knots and shellfish aquaculture.
- Handout #4 is a letter to MAFMC from Assistant Commissioner Boornazian requesting time on an upcoming meeting agenda to discuss the potential for moving forward with the Special Management Zone (SMZ) designation on the 13 NJ reefs within federal waters.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Report

Mr. Allen and Mr. Baum presented Council with ASMFC Management Board (Board) Annual Meeting Summary held in St. Augustine, Florida November 2-5, 2015. (Handout #5):

Mr. Allen **American Eel**

The Board met to review and approve Addendum IV implementation plans, including NJ's, which detail how states and jurisdictions plan to monitor and manage potential implementation of state-by-state yellow eel quotas if management triggers for the coastwide quota are exceeded. Included in the Board's approval was the TC's recommendation to use harvester reporting to monitor the quota as well as requiring the

states to submit preliminary landings data for the previous fishing year by March 1 so the quota triggers can be evaluated by the Board at its May meeting.

Atlantic Menhaden

The Board met to discuss progress on the development of Draft Amendment, including – sub-committee recommendations on ecosystem reference points (ERPs), revisiting commercial allocation, and upcoming socioeconomic analysis of the menhaden fishery. The Amendment will consider both ERPs and revisit allocation. As the first step in the amendment process, a public information document will be developed to scope both allocation options and available ERPs in early 2017, followed by a Draft Amendment document in mid-2017 for potential implementation of final measures in 2018.

Atlantic Striped Bass

The Board met to review the 2015 Stock Assessment Update and receive a Technical Committee Report on fleet-specific fishing mortality reference points using two different time periods for fishing selectivity. According to the 2015 Stock Assessment Update, female spawning stock biomass (SSB) in the terminal year (2014) was estimated at 63,918 metric tons, which is a slight increase from the 2013 benchmark assessment but still between the SSB reference points (i.e., below the target and above the threshold). Similarly, fishing mortality (F) is estimated at 0.21 which is just below the F threshold of 0.22. Subsequently, the Board tasked the Technical Committee to conduct a stock assessment update in 2016 utilizing catch and index data through 2015. It is anticipated that no additional management will occur until completion of the 2016 assessment update, which is anticipated for next fall.

Tautog

The Board reviewed submitted public comment on the Public Information Document (PID) for Amendment 1 to the Tautog Fishery Management Plan and subsequently tasked the Plan Development Team (PDT) with developing a draft Amendment focusing on regional management. The Draft Amendment will include two regional management options. One option is a four-region approach that requires the completion of two stock assessments: one for Long Island Sound (LIS) and the other for New York-New Jersey (excluding LIS). The Board expects to review the peer-reviewed assessments at the August 2016 Board meeting. The PDT will start developing the amendment and provide an update at the February 2016 meeting. The Law Enforcement Subcommittee will evaluate the feasibility of a commercial tagging program.

Horseshoe Crab

The Board approved the harvest specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. Under the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework, the Board set a harvest limit of 500,000 Delaware Bay male horseshoe crabs and zero female horseshoe crabs for the 2016 season. The Board chose a harvest management program based on the Technical Committee and ARM Subcommittee recommendation. The ARM Framework, established through Addendum VII, incorporates both shorebird and horseshoe crab

abundance levels to set optimized harvest levels for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. The Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee, Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee, and the ARM Subcommittee also recommended the ARM Framework be reviewed and updated in 2016. The Board agreed with this recommendation, with specific interest in re-considering the thresholds to allow the harvest of female horseshoe crabs, as well as the recent listing of red knot as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The ARM Subcommittee will develop specific recommendations to the Board on changes to the ARM Framework in 2016.

Weakfish

The Weakfish Board reviewed progress on the weakfish benchmark stock-assessment for peer review in 2016.

South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries

The Board discussed future management of spotted sea trout and agreed this species best left to individual states for management. For NJ, spotted sea trout falls under weakfish regulatory actions.

Mr. Baum

American Lobster

The Board initiated Addendum I to the Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to consider changes to non-trap bycatch trip limits. The Board also reviewed Southern New England (SNE) lobster management objectives and in order to gain more information on the SNE stock and options moving forward, the Board charged the Technical Committee to complete several tasks.

Atlantic Herring

The Board approved the Public Hearing Document for Draft Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Herring for public comment. The Public Hearing Document proposes (1) alternatives to the spawning monitoring program; (2) removing the fixed gear set-aside rollover provision, and (3) requiring a vessel's fish hold to be emptied before leaving on a fishing trip.

Winter Flounder

The Board met to review the recent stock assessment for the Gulf of Maine (GOM) stock and the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) stock, and discuss potential management responses. The SNE/MA winter flounder stock is overfished but overfishing is not occurring. The Board did not set the 2016 specifications at this time. It will address the issue during the Commission's Winter Meeting, after the New England Fishery Management Council has had an opportunity to set its specifications for the 2016 fishing year.

Spiny Dogfish

The Board reviewed the 2015 stock assessment update and the recommended acceptable biological catch (ABC). The Science and Statistical Committee will be meeting in November to investigate other methods for calculating the ABC. The proposed coastwide commercial quota for 2016 is a 50% decrease from the 2015 quota. Final action on the 2016-2018 spiny dogfish specifications were postponed until the Winter meeting.

Coastal Sharks

The Board received updates from NOAA Fisheries on Amendment 6 and 9, as well as proposed 2016 specifications. The proposed 2016 specifications include an opening date of January 1, 2016 and an initial commercial retention limits (CRL) of 45 large coastal sharks (LCS) per trip, excluding sandbar sharks, for directed permit holders. States discussed their ability to implement variable CRLs. Some states have proclamation authority which allows them to amend regulations within 48 hours, while other states would likely take 2-3 months to amend their CRLs. Given the proposed specifications may differ from the final rule. The Board deferred setting final specifications until NOAA Fisheries publishes the final rule.

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC)

Mr. Baum presented Council with MAFMC (Council) Meeting Summary, held in Philadelphia, PA, October 6-8, 2015 (Handout #6). The next MAFMC meeting is December 7-10, 2015 in Annapolis, MD:

Blueline Tilefish

The MAFMC reviewed a preliminary set of alternatives for blueline tilefish managements and endorsed development of a range of alternatives in a full Environmental Assessment to be reviewed at a future MAFMC meeting. The Council passed a motion requesting that NMFS publish a control date notice for all sectors of the fishery. The intent of a control date to discourage speculative entry and investment into the blueline tilefish fishery.

Spiny Dogfish

The MAFMC adopted an ABC of 37.0 million pounds of spiny dogfish in 2016. This ABC translates to a commercial quota of 25.3 million pounds. The spiny dogfish is managed jointly with the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) must also make recommendations at an upcoming meeting in December. If approved, the new measure will go into effect May 1, 2016. The recommended commercial quota is a 50% reduction from the 2015 commercial quota of 50.6 million pounds. Although the stock was found to be neither overfished nor subject to overfishing, the new 2015 estimate of stock biomass (87%) was a decrease from the 2013 update (135%). Due to mechanical breakdown of trawl survey, the MAFMC tasked the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to fill in missing data point. The SSC will meet later this year.

Unmanaged Forage

The MAFMC voted to initiate an omnibus amendment to add unmanaged forage species as Ecosystem Component (EC) species to the relevant FMPs for Council-managed stocks. The amendment will consider options to prohibit the development of new, and expansion of existing, directed commercial and recreational fisheries for unmanaged forage species in Mid-Atlantic federal waters. The MAFMC has not yet determined which forage species will be addressed, although the amendment will only be limited to federal waters.

Black Sea Bass

The MAFMC revisited its previous black sea bass ABC recommendations for 2016-2017. The MAFMC voted to increase the ABC to 6.67 million pounds for the 2016 and 2017, resulting in a commercial quota of 2.71 million pounds and a recreational harvest limit of 2.82 million pounds. The ASMFC will consider the revised ABC recommendations in November. The SSC will revisit the 2017 ABC next summer based on updated analysis.

- **Mr. Zabrowski** commented in regards to tilefish, management of this species in NJ is totally different than how you would probably manage tile fish in FL. Without any assessments in place he would like to see the management of a species to slow down until making a final ruling on management of species.
- **Mr. Baum** responded that the MAMFC is taking steps and are very thorough investigating existing fisheries and effort, which data would be included into a Draft Amendment into a FMP.

Jeff Kaelin

Mr. Kaelin updated Council on updates from both the MAFMC and the New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC).

- In regards to the Habitat Amendment, Mr. Kaelin discussed how the clam industry will be restricted from fishing in the Great South Channel and Georges Shoals Habitat Management areas. There is a one year time frame from the implementation in the Habitat Amendment for clam industry to demonstrate they can continue to fish in the high energy sand areas without negatively impacting the habitat of fish being protected in these areas.
- Joint Industry Funding Monitoring Amendment is developing with primary focus on the river herring and mackerel fisheries, with the potential for those fisheries to pay for shore side monitoring to increase data.
- November 13, 2015 a Webinar at 9am will take place on the need of additional research on fisheries, such as blue line tilefish.

Marine Fisheries Bureau Report

Mr. Allen presented Council with a Marine Fisheries Bureau update. Mr. Allen stated that with the new-year in January, if Council had anything specific items they would like to be updated on to contact him.

- Monthly data was downloaded from the sturgeon receivers when they were pulled for the year on November 2, 2015. In 2015, there were a total of 40,641 detections from 297 different fish. The majority of tags detected in 2015 were from Atlantic sturgeon (220) followed by 45 sand tiger sharks, 11 horseshoe crabs, 1 bull shark, 1 American shad, and 19 unknown species.
- The Striped Bass Recruitment Survey preliminary numbers were completed for October 2015 and the preliminary geometric mean is 0.97 which ranks 21st in the time series. Approximately 798 more fish were caught this October compared to October 2014. Over 62 percent of the catch was comprised of bay anchovy followed in abundance by blueback herring, Atlantic silverside, spottail shiner, and American shad. Striped bass ranked 9th in abundance which was 1.4% of October's total catch. Maryland's striped bass index was the 8th highest on record.
- A total of 11,177 Striped Bass Bonus Program Permits have been issued to individuals and an additional 4,200 permits have been issued to 138 party/charter boats. The current 2015 harvest is 2,224.5 pounds from 331 fish. Bonus harvest from individuals is 1,274.7 pounds and 1,159.3 pounds from party/charter boats.
- Staff continues to deploy concrete material on the Axel Carlson and Sea Girt reefs with approximately 7 barges deployed thus far this year equating to 72,000 tons of material.
- As of November 9th, there were 191,416 individuals and 797 for-hire vessels (September 28th: 187,071 individuals and 785 for-hire vessels) registered with the 2015 New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP).

Shellfish Council Reports

- **Delaware Bay – Mr. Bailey**
Delaware Bay Direct Market Harvest
 The Delaware Bay oyster harvest has remained strong throughout the end of the season. With less than 2 weeks left, the industry has harvested 85,741 bushels, over 97 percent of the total allowable catch. The industry has also shown to have one of the highest catch per unit efforts of recent years with an average of over 95 bushels per day. Oyster tongers season has also opened in Delaware Bay and are averaging from 5 to 6 bushels per day.

- **Atlantic Coast – Mr. Johnson** – No report

- **Bureau Report – Mr. Normant**

In October, the Bureau finished all sampling and data collection for the hard clam stock assessment of the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers. The rivers were last surveyed comprehensively in 1983. A total of 115 stations were sampled between the two rivers, including some areas that were not previously sampled in the 1983 assessment. In addition to shellfish data collection, sediment samples were collected at each station for characterization, as time and staffing permit.

Bureau staff along with representatives from the Division's Endangered and Nongame Species Program, Department of Agriculture and USFWS have dedicating a significant amount of time and effort working on a Formal Programmatic Consultation with USFWS, in response to the federal listing of the red knot with regards to shellfish aquaculture in the Delaware Bay. Bureau staff hosted and attended several stakeholders meetings where NGOs, leaseholders and permit holders were invited to attend and Bureau and partnering agencies are in the process of reviewing the feedback and finalizing the Conservation Measures.

Mr. Normant also informed the Council about the Shellfish Growers' Forum to be held November 17, 2015 at 9:30 am at Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory, titled USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Aquaculture Initiative: Support for implementing Conservation Measures.

Committee Reports

- **American Eel Committee - Mr. Rizzo**

The purpose of the meeting was to continue a dialogue with advisors in regards to developing compliance criteria for ASMFC Addendum IV to the American Eel FMP. States are required to approve regulations that would allow for implementation of a state-specific quota management program no later than March 2016.

To meet the requirements of the potential ASMFC adoption of state-specific quotas, the Eel Committee agree to move forward with the following regulatory actions:

- A limited entry program, with the following criteria:
 - Applicants must have purchased a Miniature-Fyke License in at least one year from 2007 to 2014
 - Applicants must have reported American eel landings to the state during at least 50% of the years in which they held a Miniature-Fyke License from 2007 to 2014

- Applicants who submit proof of landings from other gear types in any year from 2007 to 2014 **and** purchased a Miniature Fyke License during that year are considered eligible
- A 300 pot maximum for mini-fyke license holders
- These changes would not affect fisherman using the Miniature Fyke License for other species (catfish, suckers, and killifish)

Advisors also supported the idea of seasonal closures, but decided that specifics would be discussed if and when the quota is implemented. It was agreed upon that the Marine Fisheries Administration would send a letter to all 2015 Miniature Fyke License holders letting them know that these changes were proposed, and that if they have any comments or questions they can call the Administration or voice their concerns at the Council meeting in November.

Move to approve the American Eel Committee’s recommendations to move forward with ASMFC compliance. Motion by Mr. Rizzo, seconded by Mr. Rush. Motion Passed with 2 abstentions (Mr. Bailey and Mr. Johnson).

Public Comment

- **Mr. Jenks** – If we going to have a quota should make no difference how I catch my eels. I am the only one in NJ that targeted silver eels, and he is not decimating the eel population.
- **Mr. Sterling** – Disappointed he cannot harvest eels because he never had a Mini-Fyke License in 2007-2014.

Mr. Johnson asked how Mr. Jenks lost being able to participate in the fishery. **Mr. Allen** commented that when ASMFC made first regulatory changes to eliminate the harvest of silver eels from September – December and limiting harvest to baited gear only, Mr. Jenks did not qualify.

- Commercial Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Reports – **Mr. Herb**
The purpose of this meeting was to review the 2016 commercial summer flounder and black sea bass quotas and trip limits.

NJDFW staff provided the 2015 black sea bass landings summary and fishery performance overview. The preliminary 2016 commercial black sea bass quota for NJ is 537,600 pounds, a 20% increase from the 2015 quota. Advisors discussed new trip limit options and recommended changes to two of the four directed seasons in order to benefit the various commercial black sea bass gear types and better utilize the seasonal quotas. The following changes are the Committee’s preferred options: Season 1 (January 1 through April 15): instead of a 1,000-pound trip limit three times per two week period or 1,500 pound trip limit two times per two week period or 3,000 pound trip limit one time per two week period, vessels may land 1,000 pounds two times per two week period or 2,000 pounds once per

two week period. For Season 2 (April 16 through June 30): instead of 500 pounds three times per week or 1,500 pounds once per week, vessels may land 500 pounds two times per week or 1,000 pounds one time per week.

The commercial black sea bass trip limits for Season 3 (July 1 through September 30) and Season 4 (October 1 through December 31) will remain unchanged.

The Committee recommends the commercial trip limit changes for black sea bass as provided in the report and therefore becomes the motion and therefore no second needed. No further comment was made by Council or Public. **Motion passed unanimously.**

NJDFW staff then provided the 2015 summer flounder landings summary and fishery performance overview. The preliminary 2016 commercial summer flounder quota for NJ is 1,358,069 pounds, a 29 percent decrease in 2016 relative to the 2015 quota and the lowest quota in at least 10 years. Advisors discussed new possible trip limits for 2016 and recommended changes to four of the six summer flounder directed seasons. The following changes are the Committee's preferred options; Season 1 (January-February) instead of a 2,500 pound trip limit twice over a two week period or 5,000 pound trip limit once over a two week period, vessels may land 1,000 pounds twice over a two week period or 2,000 pound trip twice a week, vessels may land 500 pounds twice a week or 1,000 pounds once a week. Seasons 3 (May-June) and 4 (July – August) remain unchanged. For Season 5 (September-October) instead of a 650 pound trip limit four times per week or 2,500 pounds once a week, vessels may land 250 pounds six times per week, 500 pounds three times per week, or 1,500 pounds one time per week. For Season 6 (November- December), instead of a 1,000 pound trip limit three times per week or 3,000 pound trip limit one time per week, vessel may land 500 pounds three times per week or 1,500 pounds one time per week.

The Committee recommends the commercial trip limit changes for summer flounder as provided in the report and therefore becomes the motion and therefore no second needed. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Council Comments

- **Mr. Bailey** asked if the rest of the states were also taking cuts, the answer was yes.

Public Comments

- **Mr. Wolfe** commented that he felt the summer flounder management system currently implemented is 'poor'.

Regulatory Actions

- **Mr. Rush** commented the importance to initiate and progress moving forward on a landing license. Mr. Muffley commented that a Regulatory Committee meeting was held this past summer, and more research is being sought out on how to proceed with initiating a landing license. Mr. Herb commented a committee meeting will meet again in early 2016.
- **Mr. Allen** presented Council with Handout #9 (Notice of Administrative Change) which modifies American eel commercial regulations and commercial trip limits for black sea bass and summer flounder as approved tonight.

Move to initiate a Notice of Administration Change for summer flounder, black sea bass and American eel as approved tonight by the Council. Motion by Mr. Rizzo seconded by Mr. Rush. Motion passes unanimously.

Old Business

- Council commented they would like to have a Regulatory Committee meeting to discuss marine waters bow fishing (for cow-nosed rays) by the end of 2015, crab meeting (**Mr. Bailey**) in January 2016, and another Regulatory committee meeting in regards to landing and dealers license, after research is compiled in early part of 2016.
- **Mr. Radossi** reminded Council of a letter sent over the summer to ACOE regarding sand mining. Mr. Radossi said one of Council's jobs is to protect its resources and habitat and even though ACOE's response to Council's letter was that everything will return to normal in these areas within 12-18 months. The truth of the matter, history shows that alteration to our resource and habitat will not comeback. After Council discussion a motion was made to send a letter to the Department's Division of Land Use Regulation and copy the ACOE, the Commissioner and all of New Jersey's federal delegation expressing the Council's concern over utilizing the important sand lumps for beach replenishment and the need to mitigate for the loss of this critical fisheries habitat.

Move to request mitigation on altered marine habitat as a result of recent sand mining projects by the ACOE. Motion by Mr. Radossi, seconded by Mr. Johnson. Motion carries with 1 abstention (Ms. Puskas).

- **Mr. Rizzo** asked about the timeline for the next multi-species regulatory package, and the amount of time it has taken to get the current multispecies rule approved, and it still not final. Mr. Muffley commented that the Commissioner's legal advisors are the contact in Trenton that prioritizes all regulatory packages. Mr. Herb commented he feared such a letter would stall the process more. Mr. Rizzo commented we have to highlight the issue of how it has affected small business in New Jersey, and economics of the state in the years that this package has not been approved.

Move to draft a letter to Ray Cantor to request the next multi-species regulatory package for a rule priority for 2016. Motion by Mr. Rizzo, seconded by Mr. Rush. Motion passes with 1 abstention (Mr. Johnson).

New Business

Mr. Muffley presented Handout #10-11 to Council:

- Handout #10 is a letter in regards to Initial Inspection and Monitoring Report for the Apollo South Fiber Optic Telecommunications Cable.
- Handout #11 is 2016 Council dates. January 7, 2016 will be held in Stafford, not at Galloway Library.

Mr. Johnson asked about the status of Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) approved offshore leases for wind farms. Mr. Normant commented he and Mr. Clarke recently attended a meeting in regards to a NY windfarm lease proposal covering more than 100 thousand acres. State representatives and industry were present and addressed their concerns. The interesting part to this, is that the approvals of these proposals only give the right to build in the proposed area, but does not guarantee that a wind farm can be built in that area.

Public Comment

Mr. Wolf – For 30 years regulations have been set based on estimates and quotas to replenish the summer flounder stock. However, the stock has yet to replenish. What must be done is to stop harvesting during summer flounder spawning season. Otherwise the stock will never replenish. Mr. Herb commented that Mr. Wolf has reached out to ASMFC, MAFMC as well as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). To be able to make such a change more research as well as discussion must be taken to make a change coast wide.

Mr. Sterling – Freshwater Fisheries have begun limiting the harvest of snapping turtles in freshwater. Mr. Sterling has been fishing for snapping turtles since 1972 and now is prohibited to harvesting them in brackish waters. He is seeking a license to be able to continue to fish in brackish, and saltwater so not to get in legal trouble. Mr. Muffley commented that snapping turtle is not a managed species under Marine Fisheries Management or this Council's jurisdiction, for snapping turtle is managed by Freshwater Fisheries and therefore the license they issue to commercially harvest snapping turtles is not valid in marine waters. He will speak to the Director regarding this matter.

Mr. Berwick – Supports bow fishing in NJ and appreciates Council setting in motion a committee meeting.

Mr. Donofrio – Supports bow fishing in NJ and stressed the need for management of cow nose ray, either with bow fishing, rod and reel or combination of both.

Meeting adjourned. Next Meeting January 7, 2016, Stafford Municipal Building.