

*Ecosystem Approaches
to Fisheries
Management*

Stakeholder Workshops

October and November, 2005

*New England Fishery Management Council
Newburyport, MA*



New England Fishery Management Council

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Frank Blount, *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

September 21, 2005

Dear Fishery Stakeholder:

I would like to invite you to join my staff this fall at a series of workshops designed to gather important information from fishery stakeholders like yourself.

As fisheries managers and scientists continue to take a more holistic, ecosystem-based approach toward our fisheries, the attitudes and values of stakeholders will play an increasingly crucial role in developing future policy. These workshops are an important opportunity for all stakeholders in the New England region to gather together and share their thoughts on how managers and scientists may improve our stewardship of New England's fishery resources.

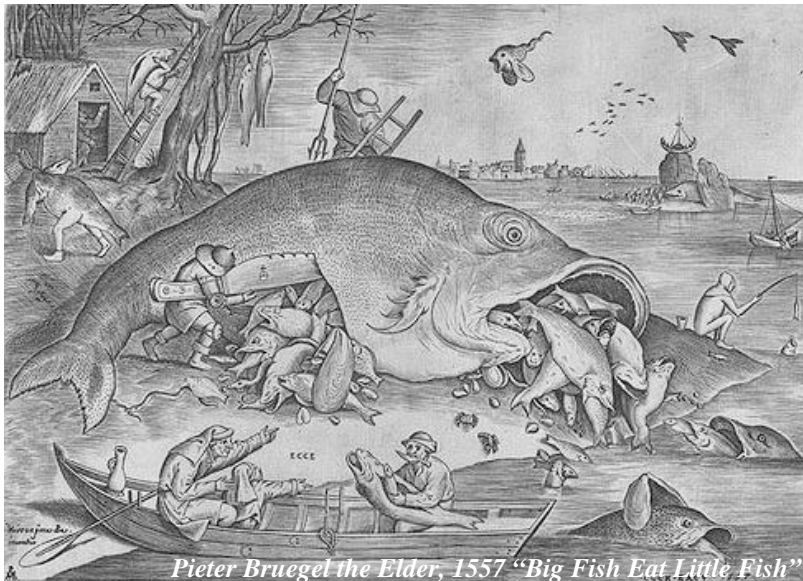
The discussions at these workshops, and the information we hope to gather, will be broad-based and applicable to all fisheries. The opinions of fish consumers, recreational anglers, commercial fisherman and many others are all equally valuable. In fact, the broadest possible participation will surely result in a clearer picture of our stakeholder's values regarding our fisheries.

Please see the schedule of workshops contained in this booklet. We have made every attempt to schedule these workshops close to your homes and places of work, and we sincerely hope that you will be able to attend.

If for any reason you cannot attend but would still like to participate, please contact my program manager, Chad Demarest, at (508) 495-2237 or cdemarest@nefmc.org. You may be able to participate in the project by telephone, email or mail—your opinions are valuable and we'll do everything we can to make it easy for you to share them.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Howard
Executive Director



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1557 "Big Fish Eat Little Fish"

Schedule of workshops

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Gouldsboro, ME | Sunday, October 2, 1:00 pm | Gouldsboro Fire Station, 6 Walters Road, Route 1, Gouldsboro, ME 04607 |
| Rockland, ME | Monday, October 3, 5:30 pm | Tradewinds Motor Inn 2 Park Drive Rockland, ME 04841 |
| Portland, ME | Tuesday, October 4, 5:30 pm | Portland Fish Exchange 6 Portland Fish Pier Portland, ME 04101 |
| Portsmouth, NH | Wednesday, October 5, 5:30 pm | The Courtyard by Marriott 1000 Market Street Portsmouth, NH 03801 |
| Gloucester, MA | Wednesday, October 12, 5:30 pm | Division of Marine Fisheries Annisquam River Station 30 Emerson Avenue Gloucester, MA 01930 |
| Boston, MA | Thursday, October 13, 5:30 pm | Seaport World Trade Center 200 Seaport Boulevard Boston, MA 02210 |
| Mystic, CT | Tuesday, October 18, 5:30 pm | Comfort Inn 48 Whitehall Avenue Mystic, CT 06355 |
| Hyannis, MA | Tuesday, November 1, 5:30 pm | Radisson Hotel Hyannis 287 Iyannough Road Hyannis, MA 02601 |
| Fairhaven, MA | Wednesday, November 2, 5:30 pm | Hampton Inn One Hampton Way Fairhaven, MA 02719 |
| Narragansett, RI | Thursday, November 3, 5:30 pm | Village Inn One Beach Street Narragansett, RI 02882 |

What is an ecosystem approach to management?



An ecosystem approach to management considers all the components of the ecosystem (biological, chemical and physical) and their interactions.

This includes an appreciation of natural ecosystem dynamics, and it explicitly recognizes that man is part of the system and seeks to include stakeholders in setting management goals.

(European Union Fisheries Ecosystem Plan (2004))

An ecosystem approach to management:

- Is adaptive and incremental
- Takes into account both knowledge and uncertainty
- Considers multiple external influences
- Strives to balance diverse societal objectives

(NOAA Fisheries Ecosystems Goal Team (2005))



What is the New England Council's Pilot Project?

The New England Council, together with the three other Gulf and Atlantic-coast Council's, received a grant from Congress intended

to initiate discussions that would assist the Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service develop an approach for integrating Ecosystem-based concepts into fisheries management.

In March of 2005, the New England Council passed a motion signaling its intent to pursue drafting a Fishery Ecosystem Plan. Such a plan would, upon completion, serve as a guidance document for all Council-managed fisheries. At least eight steps may be required for completing a Fishery Ecosystem Plan:

- (1) Determine who the fishery stakeholders are
- (2) Define the boundaries of local ecosystems
- (3) Characterize the structure and function of the ecosystems, including both the biological and economic environments
- (4) Define long-term objectives based on stakeholder values
- (5) Define indicators of ecosystem and fishery health
- (6) Determine robust, flexible methods for reaching stated objectives
- (7) Monitor and assess impacts of decisions relative to objectives
- (8) Determine impacts on adjacent ecosystems/fisheries

(Adapted from the International Union for the Conservation of Natural Resources, 2004)

The workshops



With these steps in mind, the Council is looking to our stakeholders to help guide us as we attempt to incorporate ecosystem approaches into our stewardship to initiate discussions that would assist the Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service develop an approach for integrating Ecosystem-based concepts into fisheries management. of marine resources and our fisheries. We need to know not only what is important to you, but what you can tell us that will help us manage our fisheries better.

Objectives

Our intention is to gather the broadest possible views on topics essential to incorporating ecosystem approaches into fisheries management. As we only have a limited amount of time, we will be focusing on four primary areas:

- Local or regional ecosystems and issues specific to them
- Ecosystem-level indicators of a healthy fishery
- Community-based or collaborative fisheries management
- Matching management 'tools' to management objectives

Agenda

5:30 PM—Introductions and ground rules

5:45 PM—Small group breakouts to discuss assigned topics

6:45 PM—Shuffle breakout groups and topics

7:45 PM—Plenary discussion, future directions, etc.

8:00 PM—Adjourn

Format

The workshops will be facilitated discussions focused on obtaining the widest possible array of views on the four areas of interest. We are not seeking consensus statements; rather, we are interested in everyone's individual views. Larger groups will divide into smaller breakout sessions; each individual will be given the opportunity to provide information within these groups. At the conclusion of the workshop, the group will reassemble to review the assembled information and make any changes.



Final thoughts

The following questions are provided to get expose you to some of the concepts we're considering. Your input at the workshops need not be limited by these—in fact, we are most interested in the attitudes and values that we can't foresee.

Local or regional ecosystems

- *What is the most appropriate scale for management in your region? How local, or how broad?*
- *Are there differences in fish or fisheries across regions that would benefit from geographically-applied regulations? Do these differences apply only to individual fisheries, or across all fisheries?*
- *Where do you see consistent differences in the biological processes that drive fisheries in your area?*

Indicators of a healthy ecosystem and fishery

- *What are the best indicators of a healthy fishery in your area?*
Some examples may be physical (such as temperature, salinity, pollution and/or water quality), biological (such as presence/absence of major predators, size and/or weight of fish species, total biomass, fishing mortality rate) or social/economic (such as opportunity within the fishery, average wage, vessel profitability, community structure)
- *How does a healthy ecosystem affect fisheries? How can we determine if an ecosystem is healthy?*
- *What data might we need that we don't have now?*

Community-based or collaborative management

- *If local ecosystems are designated by physical, biological or other boundaries, are these areas best managed at the regional or local level?*
- *How can we accommodate the mobility of our fishing fleet with the potential for geographically-specific (local ecosystem) management?*
- *How appropriate is local or community-based management?*
- *Are you involved now in a fisheries organization? Do they participate actively in the management process? Would that group want to be involved in setting management objectives for local or regional ecosystems?*

Matching management “tools” to management objectives

- *How well do you understand the relationship between management tools (such as Days-at-sea, trap limits, mesh restrictions, etc.) and objectives?*
- *Which tools currently work best to achieve their objectives?*
- *Do our current tools have positive, negative or neutral affects on the ecosystems of your area? How could they be improved?*