

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

SUMMARY

Monkfish Amendment 6 Scoping Hearing

Holiday Inn, Manahawkin, NJ

February 1, 2011

Hearing Chair: Howard King

Staff: Jim Armstrong

Attendance: approx. 24

The meeting started at approximately 9:15 AM.

The first fisherman read comments into the record and stated that he will be sending them in as written comments.

A fisherman who is active in the scallop fishery stated that the scallop fishery had historically been involved in the indirect landings of monkfish. This fact needs to be kept in mind as we go forward so that the scallopers are not disenfranchised.

A third fisherman stated that he expects things to improve in May with the increased DAS and trip limits. He said that the fishery is not a derby fishery and that it is working fine, so a whole new management system isn't warranted. He had concerns about going to an ITQ system, especially with regard to net limits. He stated that allocation will be a big problem because of the issue of non-reporting that has historically occurred. He supports the referendum requirement in that it should prevent a drastic change being imposed. He is against sector management.

A scalloper stated that open access needs to be maintained. He said the system isn't broken, so why fix it? He also said that sector management is overly complicated and he is not in favor of it.

A fifth fisherman stated that he is opposed to ITQs. He said that the DAS system works as a de facto ITQ system. He cited pending lawsuits and suggested that the question of what an ITQ/IFQ is will be determined by the courts. He also said that sectors are ITQs and cost \$780/day for monitoring which can be the value of the entire catch. He said that ITQs will cause fishermen to exhaust their individual quota and then fish in other fisheries. Finally, he stated that scheduling a scoping hearing at 9 AM is inappropriate as there would be better turnout if the hearings were in the evening.

A 6th fisherman said he was against sectors and supported fish for time, where landings levels determine how many DAS he is charged. He stated that he was in favor of maintaining the N-S split in the management unit. He said that we need to invest in cooperative research.

A 7th fisherman said he is against sectors based on his experience – he has a D permit and a limited access multispecies permit. He stated that he is in favor of any system in which he doesn't have to throw back his catch.

An 8th fisherman who has a B permit stated that he supports fish for time and is against sectors. He suggested that more money needs to be put into cooperative research.

A 9th fisherman stated he did not support sector management, and that enforcement in an ITQ system would be a nightmare. He supports maintaining the N-S division and thinks that the 2/3 referendum requirement is good. He stated that monkfish should no longer be classified as a data poor stock.

A 10th commenter stated that sector management will cost deck hands money because of the expenses related to monitoring. The effect will be felt by everyone. She stated that 16 out of 230 stocks are managed in the U.S. under ITQs and we should stop there. She said that ITQs will tend to consolidate wealth toward the bigger boats. Catch shares reduce the number of boats and thus the number of jobs. She said that catch shares will reduce crew size and will therefore affect safety at sea.

An 11th commenter, a fisherman, with an A permit said he will submit written comments.

The 12th commenter, a fisherman, said he is opposed to sectors, and catch shares. He said the current system works well.

The 13th commenter, a mayor of a fishing town said that he is concerned about what will happen to communities. He doesn't want to see the icehouse get converted into apartments.

The final commenter reiterated opposition to sectors and support for fish for time.

The meeting ended at approximately 10:45 AM.