



**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SHELLFISHERIES**  
**MINUTES OF OCTOBER 2, 2014**



Richardson & Robbins Building Auditorium, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, DE 19901  
 Div. of Fish & Wildlife phone: 302-739-9914

**ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Leonard "Limbo" Voss, Jr., Chairman  
 Patrick Gaffney  
 Virgilio Pacelli (*Absent*)  
 Paul Satterfield  
 Steven Copp (*Absent*)  
 Richard S. Hand, Jr. (*Absent*)  
 Robert Thompson

**DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE**

John Clark  
 Stew Michels  
 David Saveikis, Director  
 Rich Wong  
 Mike Garvilla  
 Mike Steiger  
 Alex Dijohnson  
 Capt. Nick Couch  
 Kim Stangl

**PUBLIC**

16 Visitors

**Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes from 3/6/14**

**Chairman Voss** called the meeting to order at 6:11 (late start due to technical issues) and thanked everyone for their attendance. A motion carried to approve the minutes from March 6, 2014.

**Agenda Item 2. Change Oyster Season from May through June to April through May for 2015**

Environmental Program Manager **Mr. Michels** discussed a previous request from this Council to consider changing the spring oyster harvesting season from May through June to April through May. He informed the Council that the Division of Fish & Wildlife (DFW) researched the proposal and had no objection to changing the season. The Council voted unanimously to request that the spring oyster harvesting season be changed to April through May.

**Agenda Item 3. Results of Delaware Bay whelk (conch) research**

Biometrician **Mr. Wong** presented an update on his knobbed and smooth whelk (conch) research. He reported that aging conch using the conch's statoliths will result in more accurate aging than using the opercles, but there are still some difficulties in reading the statoliths. The histological examination of conch ovaries to determine maturity indicated that only 62% of females are mature at 5 inches in length, but 93% are mature at 6 inches in length. Mr. Wong also reported that male conchs stopped growing at 5 inches in length. He then discussed the management implications of his research. Some Council members have asked the DFW to reduce the minimum legal length of conch from 6 inches to 5 inches to match the New Jersey size limit. Mr. Wong pointed out that reducing the size limit to 5 inches would result in the harvest of many females that had never spawned and could cause the population to decline. The Council and some audience members said that New Jersey commercial fishermen have been harvesting 5-inch long conchs in the same Delaware Bay conch population that Delaware fishes for years, and the population seems stable, so Delaware conch fishermen are losing valuable catch to New Jersey by not having the same size limit. After some discussion, the Council passed a motion 3 to 1 requesting that the DFW promulgate a new regulation changing the minimum conch size limit to 5 inches.

**Agenda Item 4. Oyster Recovery Fund status**

Fisheries Section Administrator **Mr. Clark** told the Council that there was approximately \$188,000 in the Oyster Recovery Fund (ORF). He asked the Council to support using the ORF to leverage additional funds by supporting an effort by Delaware and New Jersey to secure Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) funding for an oyster bed habitat restoration project to plant much more shell than the ORF could achieve alone. A motion to use the ORF funds to match the ACOE project funds was approved, provided the ACOE project is funded.

**\*Addition to Agenda**

Division Director **Mr. Saveikis** briefed the Council on the shellfish aquaculture program in the Inland Bays, including that the final aquaculture regulations became effective August 11, 2014, and that the DFW is awaiting permit approval from the Army Corps of Engineers to be able to issue shellfish aquaculture leases. Director Saveikis then discussed the steps the DFW would take to address the Council concerns about the conch size limit regulation (see Agenda Item 3).

**Agenda Item 5. Topics & Tentative date for the next meeting**

**Mr. Voss** stated that the next meeting will be scheduled for March of 2015 and suggested the following items for the agenda:

1. Conch regulation update
2. Oyster Recovery Fund status
3. Blue crab data

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kim Stangl*

Kim Stangl  
 Recording Secretary

