



ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SHELLFISHERIES



MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2018

DNREC Auditorium, 89 Kings Hwy, Dover, DE 19901
Div. of Fish & Wildlife phone: 302-739-9914

ADVISORY COUNCIL

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

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

John Clark
Stew Michels
Rich Wong
Mike Greco
Capt. Nick Couch

PUBLIC

9 Visitors

Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes from 1/25/17

Chairman Voss called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and thanked everyone for their attendance. A quorum was not present and therefore the minutes were not approved.

Agenda Item 2. Update on the Delaware Bay Derelict Crab Pot Removal Pilot Study

Ms. Nicole Rodi, environmental scientist for the Delaware Coastal Management Program, briefed the Council on first year activities of the pilot crab pot removal study, which focused on a four-mile stretch of the bay from Collins Beach north. An estimated 150 to 200 derelict pots were found in this area, half at a depth less than 10 feet. The next phase of the project will focus on removing the derelict pots.

Agenda Item 3. Setting the 2018 Oyster Quota

Mr. Rich Wong, fisheries biometrician, reviewed the oyster quota-setting process, which uses a harvest control model that incorporates oyster spat abundance determined during the Division's fall oyster dredge survey. Spat abundance in 2017 was above average for a second straight year. The harvest control model recommended a 2018 quota 43% higher than the 2017 quota, from 11,438 to 16,341 bushels.

Agenda Item 4. 2017 Juvenile Crab Index and 2018 Blue Crab Outlook

Mr. Mike Greco, fisheries scientist, stated that the September and October 2017 survey found juvenile crabs throughout the sampling area. The juvenile blue crab index was above the 39-year time series mean for the third year in a row. Mr. Greco explained that the juvenile blue crab index is a good predictor of adult blue crab abundance for the following year, so the 2018 blue crab harvest should be good, with landings estimated to be 3.8 million pounds. The 2016 harvest estimate based on the 2015 juvenile index was 4.1 million pounds, but Delaware crabbers actually landed closer to 4.5 million pounds in 2016.

Agenda Item 5. Cage Culture of Oysters in Delaware Bay

Mr. Stew Michels, fisheries program manager, briefed the Council on recent inquiries received by the Division regarding caged oyster aquaculture on the long-established leased oyster beds in Delaware Bay. Mr. Michels explained that such aquaculture is not specifically allowed nor forbidden by current

law and regulation, but it would be advisable, if oyster aquaculture is to be established, that the law and regulations be changed to allow successful oyster aquaculture in Delaware Bay that does not negatively affect other fishing activities. Council did have concerns about oyster aquaculture in Delaware Bay that they would like addressed before oyster aquaculture was allowed to proceed.

Agenda Item 6. Topics & Tentative date for the next meeting

Chairman Voss stated that the next meeting will be scheduled either for Fall of 2018 or Winter of 2019. The following agenda item was suggested:

1. Shellfish Aquaculture in the Inland Bays and Delaware Bay

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John H. Clark
Recording Secretary

