

Memorandum

Date: November 7, 2013

To: Sonke Mastrup
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director



Subject: Consensus Recommendations from the Lobster Advisory Committee for the Lobster Fishery Management Plan (FMP)

In April 2012, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) initiated a public process to develop a Spiny Lobster FMP. Volunteers were sought to create a Lobster Advisory Committee (LAC) to provide advice, feedback and recommendations on the development and implementation of a Spiny Lobster FMP. Sixteen members and six alternates representing commercial and recreational fishermen, scientists, NGOs, non-consumptive individuals, and federal agencies were chosen to serve on the LAC. The LAC formally met nine times and conducted outreach and participated in numerous discussions with their constituents, the Department, and Fish and Game Commission staff. The LAC report (attached) presents the Committee's consensus recommendations for improved management of the commercial and recreational lobster fisheries in California

The LAC reached consensus on a number of key issues, including an allocation policy for lobster in the State, and a commercial trap limit program that would hold the fishery at or below current trap numbers. The trap limit program would require trap tags which would improve the understanding of the amount of gear used in the fishery and assist the Department in their enforcement of the program. Other LAC recommendations for the commercial fishery would reduce the amount of lost gear, and improve the safety and efficiency of the fishery.

The LAC reached consensus on five recreational management measures, including a tail-cutting proposal for recreationally landed lobster, a limitation on the use of mechanized pullers, a new season opening time, a clarification of the diver prohibition on carrying hooked devices, and a proposal to mark hoop net floats. A broad majority of the LAC also supported a proposal to set a seasonal limit on the number of lobster harvested recreationally and a ban on the use of conical (rigid-framed) hoop nets, but consensus was not achieved on these two proposals.

The Department wishes to emphasize that the LAC recommendations for management changes in the lobster fisheries do not constitute a Harvest Control Rule. The Department, with independent scientific consultation, has drafted a preliminary harvest control rule matrix to ensure the sustainability of California's lobster resource

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and fisheries. A toolbox of regulatory options and the harvest control rule matrix will be presented at a Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting early next year.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Dr. Craig Shuman, Manager of the Marine Region, at (805) 568-1246.

Attachment

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