

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Potomac River Fisheries Commission  
Colonial Beach, Virginia  
April 14, 2000**

**Commissioners Present:** Gordon M. Birkett (VA) – Chairman, William L. Rice, Sr. (MD) – Vice Chairman, John T. Parran (MD) – Secretary, William A. Pruitt (VA), John W. White (VA), Sarah Taylor-Rogers (MD), and Kenneth W. Williams, Sr. (VA). Paul H. Kellam, III (MD) was unable to attend.

**Officers Present:** Kirby A. Carpenter – Executive Secretary, J. Clifford Hutt and Michael C. Mayo – Legal Counsel

**Others Present:** Bill Sieling – Maryland Department of Agriculture Seafood Marketing, Ellen Cosby – VMRC, Capt. M. Ray Jewell and Jeff Stonehill – VMRC Law Enforcement, Jim Drummond, John Dean, Mark Gares and Marvin L. Harley – Finfish Advisory Committee, Douglas F. Jenkins, Sr., Herman Delvo, Richard Daiger, Bob Bowes, Walter Johnson, Dennis Fleming, Alton Hancock, George Edlen, Kenny Pearson, Tommy Crowder and several others who did not sign the guest register.

Chairman Birkett called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Commissioner Parran provided an invocation.

**Consideration of Minutes**

Commissioner White made *a motion to approve the minutes of February 11, 2000 as written and distributed*. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and approved.

**Review of Current Advisory Committee's Membership Procedures & By-Laws**

In light of recent discussions and public comment regarding the advisory committees' makeup and representation, the chairman had asked for a review. The current membership, procedures and by-laws for the finfish and shellfish advisory committees were presented. The Executive Secretary noted the advisory committees were established almost a decade ago and we have found them very helpful, but at times, cumbersome and some particular membership criteria have made it difficult to fill some seats. He then made the following recommendations for modification of the committees.

**Finfish Advisory Committee**

Reduce membership from 18 to 14 with 7 members from each state; 8 commercial, 4 recreational and 2 charter boat positions. Positions to be eliminated would include the Prince George's County recreational and charter boat, the upper river Virginia charter boat and one commercial fisherman from Virginia. The committee will be restructured so that there are 4 commercial fishermen from each state (currently there are 3 from MD and 5 from VA). Adjust meeting quorum and committee report schedules.

**Shellfish Committee**

Separate the single committee into two, one for crabs and the other for oysters and clams. The Crab Advisory Committee should have 8 members with 4 representatives from each state, 2 recreational and 6 commercial. The commercial representatives should be 1 peeler potter and 2 hard crab potters representing both lower and upper river crabbers from each state. The Oyster/Clam Advisory Committee should combine the functions of the industry segment of the oyster repletion committee with the oyster/clam advisory committee. The new committee should have 9 members, with 4 from Virginia and 5 from Maryland. There should be 6 commercial oystermen, 3 from each state, 1 clammer from Maryland and an oyster buyer from each state.

Mr. Dennis Fleming asked that since they are having trouble filling the Prince George's County recreational fisherman position could it be shifted to Charles or St. Mary's County. The Executive Secretary stated that the committee structure of 18 people is extremely large and that having a smaller committee will be more productive. It was also noted that committee members each serve a 3-year term so 1/3 of the committee is being re-appointed each year.

Commissioner Williams made a motion; it was seconded by Commissioner White and approved *to make changes to the Advisory Committee Procedures and By-laws as recommended by staff*. The Executive Secretary stated that he would bring a complete revision of the procedures and by-laws to the next meeting.

Chairman Birkett stated that with the downsizing of the committee there should be better attendance. He commented that if anyone serving on the committee was not going to be faithful by showing up than they should not serve and allow someone whom would be willing to take the space. He stated that better representation from each section of the industries was needed.

**Financial Report**

A report on the third quarter (January through March 2000) disbursements was presented with budget items totaling \$78,406.88. No unusual disbursements were noted in the regular operating budget.

A report of cash on hand as of April 11, 2000 was presented as follows:

First Virginia Bank (Checking – includes \$400 petty cash)	\$ 51,102.35
Nations Bank (Savings – DNR License Sales)	18,988.09
Virginia Local Government Investment Pool	246,376.54
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool	<u>241,660.50</u>
	\$ 558,127.48

The following motion was made by Commissioner Parran, seconded by Commissioner White and approved:

***“That the third quarter disbursements of \$78,406.88 be approved as presented.”***

**Oyster Harvest Report**

An oyster harvest report was presented which showed the amount of tax collected, licenses sold and the oyster harvest by bar and gear for the period of October 1, 1999 through March 31, 2000. Tongers (64 boat licenses) reported 8,499 bushels while handscrapers (15 boats) reported 481 bushels for a total harvest of 8,980 bushels. Swan Point accounted for 5,756 bushels of the total harvest and was the direct result of prior years seed plantings. The expanded hand scrape area (Ragged Point to Huggins), which was opened 2 years ago, dropped from 2,000 bushels the first season to only 464 bushels the second. There was \$6, 509.20 collected in oyster inspection tax for the 1999-2000 season.

The Chairman recognized that Commissioner Taylor-Rogers had joined the meeting at 9:58 a.m.

**Oyster Repletion Program**

The Executive Secretary reported the following recommendations for the 2000 oyster repletion program as developed by the staff and industry segments of the Oyster Repletion Committee:

**Available Funds for 2000 Program - \$244,347.00**

Staff Recommendations Meeting held February 23,2000	Industry Recommendations Meeting held March 9, 2000	Estimated Cost
<b>PLANT BACK COVE SEED (MdDNR) ON SWAN POINT BAR</b> Approx. 8,000 bu. @ \$5.00 per bu. 800 – 1200 count, single year class	Agreed with recommendation – Suggested local watermen be contacted for area to be planted so new seed not put on top of previous plantings  It was also suggested to plant some seed on Cedar Pt. Bar inside the beacon	40,000.00
<b>PLANT KEDGES STRAIGHT SEED (MdDNR) ON SHEEPSHEAD BAR</b> Approx. 20,000 bu. @ \$3.50 per bu. 250 – 500 count, multiple year classes	Agreed with recommendation	70,000.00
<b>PLANT PIANKITANK SEED (VMRC) ON RAGGED POINT BAR</b> Approx. 5, 000 bu. @ \$3.00 per bu. 600 – 1200 count, single year class	Agreed with recommendation	15,000.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>\$125,000.00</b>
<b>PLANT AVAILABLE FRESH SHELL ON THICKET POINT BAR</b> Anticipating approximately 40,000 bu. (last years cost 80¢ per bu.)	Agreed with recommendation Suggested planting in same location as earlier shell planting on that bar	32,000
<b>PLANT REEF SHELL ON KITTS POINT BAR</b> Last year’s cost 47¢ per bu. could purchase 183,000 bu.	Agreed with recommendation	86,000
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>\$118,000.00</b>
Last year’s count and control cost		1,500.00
<b>SUGGESTED PROGRAM TOTAL</b>		<b>\$244,500.00</b>

**Additional Recommendations**

1. Both the staff and industry segments of the committee agreed that more of the repletion budget be used to purchase seed if it is available from any of the above sources.
2. It was suggested during the industry meeting that license fees for hand scraping be reduced to encourage activity in the lower river to help clean the oyster shells in case of a spat set.
3. It was suggested during the industry meeting that an area above Capt. Billy's Restaurant at Popes Creek, MD be included in the next oyster survey if possible. The area used to be a productive oyster bottom and the condition there now is not known.

The recommendation to plant the Piankitank River seed on Ragged Point was developed several months ago, however because of the continuation of the draught, VIMS, VMRC and PRFC staff decided that the seed should be put farther up river. Gum Bar was selected and this portion of the program is already underway.

Commissioner Taylor-Rogers moved *to approve the 2000 Oyster Repletion Program recommendations as presented*. It was seconded by Commissioner Williams and unanimously approved.

Mr. Douglas F. Jenkins, Sr. asked about the status of Heron Island. The Executive Secretary stated that the experiment was set up to compare the effectiveness of several different repletion techniques; bagless dredging, fresh shell planting, a McKenzie cultivator and a control area where nothing was done. This experiment was started in 1995 and is designed to run through March 31, 2001. A full report from the scientists should be available next year when the experiment is completed. After that, Heron Island should revert to being an open harvest area.

**Friends of the Potomac**

Mr. Mike Harwood was not present. The Executive Secretary stated that Mr. Mike Harwood had spoken to him last December about addressing the Commission at the last meeting, however he was asked to come to the April meeting. Mr. Harwood has asked to speak to the Commission and was expected at today's meeting. He has sent some literature regarding the Friends of the Potomac, which was included in the meeting packets.

**Finfish Advisory Committee Report**

Capt. Jim Drummond presented the following report of actions taken at the last Finfish Advisory Committee meeting held on March 23, 2000 at 6:30 p.m.

1. Commercial Hook and Line Fishery – At their October 1999 meeting, this committee reviewed a proposal to either increase the number of commercial hook and line licenses or issue additional tags to current license holders. The committee requested additional data on why the commercial hook and line striped bass harvest has been so low during the past several years.

Staff questioned most of the hook and line fishermen who returned their tags in person at the end of the season. No single, consistent or particular reason for not using their tags was attained, many said they just didn't go fishing. A data table was presented to the finfish advisory committee comparing quotas and harvests of striped bass for this fishery for the past five years. The allowable quota has been 88,000 pounds for the last three years. In 1999, 16,812 pounds (19%) was harvested, and 10,866 pounds (12%) and 15,432 pounds (17%) for the previous two years respectively. In 1996, the quota was 37,900 pounds and 10,365 pounds (27%) was harvested. Staff further reported that, based on the average size fish taken during the last three years in this fishery if all hook and line striped bass tags were used only 55% of the allowable quota would be harvested.

After a great deal of discussion the committee voted to allow an additional 20 commercial hook and line licenses be issued through a random license drawing with the stipulation that registrants must hold a valid commercial license of any kind from either Maryland, Virginia or the PRFC. *(11 yes, 1 no, 3 abstentions – motion passed)*

The committee then voted that there be a 10% increase in tags issued to both current and future hook and line license holders. *(10 yes, 1 no, 4 abstentions – motion passed)*

A motion was then made to increase the cost of registering for this particular drawing from \$5.00 to \$25.00. *(11 yes, 4 abstentions – motion passed)*

2. Summer Flounder – The Committee recommended the following season, size and creel limits for summer flounder which are the same as those for Maryland's portion of the Chesapeake Bay: *(unanimous)*

Minimum Size Limit: 15"  
Daily Catch Limit: 8 fish per person  
Season: May 15 through December 31

The committee agreed that if the opening date was changed by Maryland the Potomac's opening date should be adjusted so the season dates are the same.

3. Gill Nets – In order to clarify regulations, a motion was made by John Osakowicz and seconded by Dennis Newton to allow gill netters to set two separate 100 yard pieces of net in their one licensed location rather than a single 200 yard piece of net with a requirement that the pull-up buoys on each piece of net display the gill net tag number for that location. *(13 yes, 2 abstentions – motion passed)*

4. New Business

Pound Net Presentation – Chris Hager of VIMS reported that he needed to schedule a meeting with the pound netters to present information on the pound net cull ring study.

Pound Net Tape – A motion was made by David Bradley and seconded by John Dean that current regulations on marking pound nets be amended to include the following: *(13 yes, 2 abstentions – motion passed)*

On the first day of driving stakes, the pound netter shall attach the metal tag and reflective tape to the outside (channel end) pole. The remaining tape must be attached within 15 days, or upon completion of the stand, whichever comes first.

Spawning Areas – Marvin L. Harley expressed his concern over the Corp of Engineers allowing dredge spoil from Mattawoman Creek, Alexandria and Mount Vernon to be dumped in the Whitestone Point area, which is the best spawning area for shad on the Potomac River. Mr. Harley asked other committee members to attend the next PRFC meeting to aid him in getting something done about this.

Pound Net Locations – Mr. Douglas F. Jenkins, Sr. stated some gill net fishermen are having a hard time locating their nets in the specific description as written on their license. He suggested having the GPS location provided on the license. Capt. M. Ray Jewell stated law enforcement and PRFC are aware of this problem and are looking at possible solutions.

Tagging – Mr. Robert Stoner stated watermen are having problems in his part of the river where they have to put the tags on the fish before moving to the next net. This is a problem when the winds pick up, there is not time to fish the other nets, and fish are gilling on the nets. Why can't the Commission allow the captain to fish his nets and get out of the wind and put the tags on there. This will cut down on the mortality of the fish. Mrs. Jewel Hudson stated that the desired effect is that the fish be tagged before leaving the Potomac River not once you get into the tributaries.

Striped Bass – Mr. John Osakowicz asked if the maximum size limit on striped bass in the Potomac could be the same as in Maryland, which is 36". Jim Drummond stated that the sampling data for the Potomac only supported a 35" maximum. Virginia was able to achieve the required 14% reduction on age 8+ fish by shortening their season. Any changes must be approved by ASMFC.

The Chairman thanked Capt. Jim Drummond for the Committee Report and a job well done.

Hook and Line

Currently there are about 120 licensees and less than 20% of the quota is being caught. Approximately half of the licensees are returning over 90% of their tags at the end of the season. The Executive Secretary stated that hook and line license holders who had returned tags were asked why they hadn't used them and the answers varied widely. It was estimated that based on the average size and number of striped bass caught by the existing hook and line licensees, the number of licenses could be increased by 60 or so, with minimal risk of going over the PRFC set striped bass quota for that gear type.

Commissioner Parran asked what the qualifications were in order to be able to get one of these licenses. The Executive Secretary responded that when the license was originally issued the applicant simply had to be a resident of either Maryland or Virginia. In 1983 when the licenses were first initiated, it was estimated that there were about 1 1/2 to 2 dozen commercial hook and line fishermen who were catching and selling fish, but it was not known exactly how many fish they were catching. The first year this license was sold, there were 26 issued. Then the Commission, in an effort to reduce the recreational striped bass catch, reduced the creel limit from 10 fish per person per day to 5 under Amendment 2 of the Striped Bass Management Plan. At that time, there was no creel limit, quota or tagging system the commercial hook and line licensees. They were simply required to report their total catch. License sales then went from about 2 dozen licenses the first year to 212 licenses the next year before the Commission put a moratorium on the issuance of any new hook and line licenses. Since then, through attrition the number has been reduced to around 120 license holders. Today it is a limited entry fishery with a limit of 120 licenses. If any license(s) become available, they are issued via a random drawing. The Executive Secretary clarified that this license is to catch and sell fish and is not just a "rockfish license". The Commission also has a procedure whereby anyone currently holding a gill net license can turn in their gill net license and get a hook and line license in its place.

Capt. Drummond commented that currently the commercial hook and line licensee is issued only 100 striped bass tags. The recreational season starts June 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through December 31<sup>st</sup> with a 2 fish per day limit, that is a lot more than 100 fish. Under current regulations, an individual can hold multiple gill net licenses, each with a quota of 100 tags, even though he can only set 2 nets, he gets a quota for each license held. Each person is allowed only one commercial hook and line license, and therefor only one quota, but if you transfer a gill net license over to hook and line license, you can receive the additional quota. If you only have a single hook and line license you can not combine additional licenses and increase the quota. He suggested allowing current hook and line license holders to be able to attain additional allocations. The Executive Secretary explained that the hook and line license is an individual license whereas the gill net license is a gear license. Staff does not support multiple quotas for individual licenses.

Mr. John Dean stated that the harvest needs to be as close to the quota as possible because if ASMFC sees that the quota is not being caught they may restrict the quota even more.

Commissioner Rice said he believes that, of the 120 commercial hook and line licenses sold, only about 20 or so are people who are really commercially fishing. He thinks that any additional licenses should be directed toward the commercial fisherman. He also thinks the Commission should allow more than the recommended 20 licenses. The Commission needs to look at the quota that is being harvested by the recreational segment as well. The problem he sees is that some licensees are afraid to use their 100 striped bass ID tags at the beginning of the season, because, if they wait long enough, maybe the price per pound will increase or larger fish become available.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Parran ***to add an additional 40 hook and line licenses***. Motion was withdrawn when no second was forthcoming.

The Executive Secretary stated that staff does not support the Finfish Advisory Committee's recommendation of increasing the number of striped bass tags issued by 10% at this time. In addition, staff feels that the legal officer must address the committee's stipulation that applicants must hold a current commercial license. The legal officer stated that the Potomac River is a body of water that is accessible, except with a few regulations, to anybody in the United States. The privilege of competing for a license to fish should be open to anyone with the qualification that they be a citizen of this country and at least 14 years of age. Whether they currently have a license should have no bearing on whether or not they can pay the fee and take a chance on the drawing.

Commissioner Rice asked if it was possible to make any additional licenses, issued by virtue of the Commission increasing the number available, non-transferable for some period of time. This may discourage people from "stuffing the drum" with multiple names in order to better their own chance of winning. The Legal Officer said that would depend on how a motion and any resulting order were worded. The Executive Secretary noted changing the current \$5.00 registration fee to \$25.00 would require a regulation change, and therefore, a public hearing must be held.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Rice, seconded by Commissioner Williams and unanimously approved:

***“To modify Order 98-08 so as to allow an additional 40 commercial hook and line licenses to be issued through the provisions of Regulation I, Section 1(d), i.e., registration during December and January followed by the random drawing. Such licenses would become effective in 2001 and these licenses shall be non-transferable for a period of 5 years.”***

Commissioner Rice then moved ***that the registration fee for the commercial hook and license drawing will be \$25.00 per registration.***

There was some discussion on the fee of the drawing. The Legal Officer asked that the cost of the drawing be deferred until the next meeting. The Executive Secretary suggested that if the registration fee is to be increased, it should be increased for every limited entry drawing. Commissioner Pruitt agreed. The Executive Secretary then asked what would happen if 2 of the 120 licenses aren't renewed and become available under the drawing system next year, would those 2 licenses be available for \$5.00 and the 40 new licenses for \$25.00? Commissioner Rice withdrew the motion.

Commissioner Rice then made a motion ***“that the 40 additional hook and line licenses could only be transferred upon to the death of the license holder, as provided in Regulation I, Section 1(e).”*** The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and unanimously approved.

### **Summer Flounder**

The Executive Secretary stated that staff supports the recommendation for a minimum size limit of 15”, a daily catch limit of 8 fish per person and the May 15 through December 31 season. This would be the same as the Maryland portion of the Bay.

### **Gill Nets**

The Executive Secretary stated that years ago, when 400 yards of net was allowed to be fished in a stand, they were routinely fished as two pieces. This practice has continued although the length of the net has been reduced to 200 yards. The committee's recommendation is an enforceable solution to a problem in the upper river where the tides run very strong. Staff supports this change. He noted that this requires a regulation change and needs to be scheduled for a public hearing.

### **Pound Net Marking**

The Executive Secretary stated that this is a clarification of an existing regulation, which staff supports. This also needs to go to public hearing.

### **Spawning Areas**

The Executive Secretary remarked that the Commission had voiced its concern over the same issue when the dredging project that Mr. Harley spoke about was in the public hearing stage several years ago. The Commission had objected to the proposed dredge spoil placement sites at that time.

### **GPS Locations**

The Executive Secretary reported that staff had begun working with the pound netters from the Coan River to Smith Point in order to begin developing a GPS supplemental information for the fixed gear licensing system. Staff agreed with Mr. Jenkins but stated that it will take some time. He stated that more work needed to be done because there are slight differences between these machines depending on the quality of the machine, whether you have calibrated your machine, if it's a differential GPS, and/or your skill on using the machine. He also reported that they intend to survey all net locations in that section of the river within the next couple of months and begin to reissue licenses to better describe their actual locations. The new license description would also incorporate the GPS information.

A motion was made by Commissioner Taylor-Rogers, seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved:

***“To advertise the gill net and pound net marking recommendations for the next available public hearing.”***

Commissioner Rice asked if the GPS locations would be available for next spring’s gill net season. The Executive Secretary stated that they are going to each location starting with the pound nets and if the system works in 2001 then maybe in the 2002 license year gill nets would be able to be incorporated. Mr. John Dean asked that a variable be included with the GPS because when you are driving the pound nets you can’t hit the same spot every time.

**Finfish Harvest Report**

The following 1999 finfish landing report was presented. Striped Bass retained its position as the most valuable species this year, followed by croaker. Last year eel had been second. The menhaden harvest was up almost a million pounds from the prior year.

Potomac River Commercial Finfish Landings for 1999

<u>Species</u>	<u>Pounds</u>	<u>Dockside Value</u>
Striped Bass	653,266	\$855,778
Croaker	1,190,138	368,943
Summer Flounder	45,484	66,407
Eel	163,351	65,340
Catfish	236,852	49,739
Spot	108,326	43,330
Gizzard Shad	418,582	25,115
White Perch	29,227	21,043
Mackerel	31,945	20,764
Sea Trout	68,749	19,250
Bullhead	76,319	14,501
Spotted Sea Trout	10,427	14,076
Bluefish	53,564	13,927
Alewife	26,656	2,932
Yellow Perch	3,180	1,113
Carp	10,746	1,075
Roe Shad	1,049	776
Winter Flounder	963	770
Butterfish	575	426
Buck Shad	1,142	126
Hickory Shad	595	119
Red Drum	186	115
Puffer (Sugar Toad)	44	53
Black Drum	17	5
	<u>3,131,383</u>	<u>\$1,585,723</u>
Menhaden	<u>4,860,883</u>	<u>\$340,262</u>
	<u>7,992,266</u>	<u>\$1,925,985</u>

**Striped Bass 1999 Harvest Report**

The preliminary 1999 Striped Bass Harvest Report, which will be submitted to ASMFC, was presented. The Executive Secretary noted that the weight/length table needs to be added before sending to ASMFC.

**TABLE 1**  
**Preliminary Estimates of Striped Bass Harvest**  
**Potomac River – 1999**

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Pounds</u>	<u>1999 cap</u>	<u>Mean Per Fish Pounds</u>	<u>Effort Data (Units)</u>
<b>Commercial</b>					
Gill Net	59,013	439,093	572,000	7.4	2,544,510 (yds)
Hook and Line	3,821	16,812	88,000	4.4	3,525 (hrs.)
Pound Net	26,375	189,092	193,600	7.1	1,350 (net days)
Miscellaneous	<u>1,366</u>	<u>8,269</u>	<u>26,400</u>	6.0	270 (gear days)
Sub-Total	90,575	653,266	880,000		

<b>Charter</b>						
Spring	157	2,509		15.9	200	(hrs.)
Fall	<u>1,937</u>	<u>15,258</u>		7.8	1,209	(hrs.)
Sub-Total	2,094	17,767	80,000			
<b>Recreational</b>						
	Included within MD/VA NMFS-MRFS Data		640,000			
<b>ASMFC Mandated Adjustments</b>						
Poaching (15% of Harvest)	13,586	97,990		7.2		
Hook & Release Mortality (8% of released fish)						
Commercial & Charter	474	2,762		5.8		
Private (from '98)	<u>3,484</u>	<u>6,620</u>		1.9		
Sub-Total	19,693	126,169				

TABLE 2  
Commercial Data by Month, Area, Gear and Size  
Potomac River – 1999

By Month	Jan.	Feb.	March	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Pounds	46,217	42,312	253,612	40,570	5,184	1,156	11,101	45,844	137,478	69,792	653,266
%	7	6	39	6	11	1	1	7	21	11	100
Numbers	7,632	6,110	33,225	4,814	962	314	2,134	7,428	17,464	10,492	90,575
By Area	Upper		Upper		Lower		Lower				Total
	Middle		Middle		Middle		Middle				
Pounds	13,304		182,812		140,115		317,035				653,266
%	2		28		21		49				100
By Gear	Gill Net		Pound Net		Hook and Line		Miscellaneous				Total
Pounds	439,093		189,092		16,812		8,269				653,266
By Size			Mixed		18"— 6 lbs		6 lbs & up				Total
Pounds	288,622		102,559		262,085						653,266
%			28		72						100

**ASMFC Issues**

Menhaden - The Executive Secretary reported that ASMFC voted at their February meeting to add all interested parties to the Menhaden Management Board. This would allow the PRFC a seat on the Menhaden Management Board. They are currently working on Amendment 1 to that plan. One of the options being debated is to remove industry from the board, because it is the only board that has industry members on it. Currently there are 3 industry and 5 non-industry members on the board. Commissioner Pruitt remarked that the other ASMFC Management Boards should add industry to their boards instead of taking the industry off this one.

Striped Bass Management Plan – ASMFC is asking the states if they are interested in hosting a public information meeting on the proposed Amendment 6 to the Striped Bass Management Plan. One feature of this amendment will be dealing with allocation and how many fish will be allowed to be caught on the coast and how many will be allowed to be caught in the Bay. There will be a debate on whether or not there should be a single 24-28” minimum size limit throughout the entire range of this species. There is support from the coastal states to have a 24 or 26” minimum size limit everywhere, including in the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River. Such a limit would have a substantial impact on our recreational and commercial fisheries. Commissioners Pruitt and Taylor-Rogers supported holding a meeting at the Potomac River Fisheries Commission Office. The Executive Secretary stated that he would contact ASMFC and arrange for a meeting.



Update Orders

The Executive Secretary stated that the only change that needed to be made was to the summer flounder.

Commissioner Rice made *a motion to approve Commission Order #2000-06 with the open season for summer flounder of May 15<sup>th</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>, a 15” minimum size limit and an 8 fish per person daily creel limit.* The motion was seconded by Commissioner White and unanimously approved as follows:

ORDER #2000-06  
(Replaces #2000-04)

2000 RECREATIONAL and CHARTER  
FISHING SEASON, SIZE AND CATCH LIMITS

THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION, having found it necessary to comply with certain provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA) and the provisions of Regulation III, Sections 9, 10, 11, and 13(b), **HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS:** recreational and charter seasons, size limits, and catch limits provided for in Regulation III, Section 9, 10, and 11 shall be for the species named therein as follows:

Species	Season	Size Limit	Catch Limit
American Eel	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	6" min.	50 per person
Atlantic Croaker	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No Limit	25 per person
Black Bass (Large or Small Mouth)	March 1 - June 15	15" min.	5 per person
	All other times	12" min.	5 per person
Black Drum	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	16" min.	1 per person
Black Sea Bass	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	10" min.	No limit
Bluefish	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No Limit	10 per person
Catfish:Bullhead	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	6" min.	No limit
Channel	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	8" min.	No limit
White	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	10" min.	No limit
Pike or Chain Pickerel	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	No limit
Red Drum	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	18" min. - 27" max.	5 fish with only 1 over 27"
Shad (American or Hickory)	C L O S E D		
Spanish Mackerel	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	10 per person
Spot	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	No limit	No limit
Spotted Sea Trout	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	10 per person
Striped Bass	P U B L I S H E D S E P A R A T E L Y		
Sturgeon (Atlantic or Shortnose)	C L O S E D		
Summer flounder	May 15 - Dec. 31	15" min.	8 per person
Tautog	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	No Limit
Weakfish	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	14" min.	10 per person
White perch	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	6" min.	No limit
Yellow perch	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31	9" min.	5 per person

AND IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED: this Order #2000-06 shall become effective May 14, 2000 shall supersede and repeal Order #2000-04, and remain in effect until further notice.

Ellen Cosby reported that Virginia would be adopting matching regulations for summer flounder for the Virginia tributaries of the Potomac River.

Surplus Equipment

The Executive Secretary reported that a NEC P6300 Printer and a NEC Silentwriter 2 Model 90 Laser Printer needed to be declared as surplus. A motion was made by Commissioner Parran; seconded by Commissioner Williams and unanimously approved *to declare the items listed above as surplus and be disposed of accordingly by the Executive Secretary.*

The Executive Secretary noted that the Virginia-Maryland joint annual audit is scheduled for the week of April 24<sup>th</sup> and there should be an audit report at the next meeting.

**Other New Business**

**Eel Study** – The Executive Secretary stated that one of the requirements of the ASMFC Eel Management Plan is to conduct a Young-of-Year type elver survey. PRFC is working with MdDNR and VIMS and the survey began on March 26<sup>th</sup> on the Maryland side and March 28<sup>th</sup> in Virginia. The locations were chosen based on the plan outline, and the work is expected to be complete by the end of the month. A report should be available at the September meeting. This survey is being funded through our federal grant.

**Pound Net Cull Ring Study** – The Executive Secretary reported that the pound net cull ring study, which has been done over the past several years, has resulted with a better design of a cull ring. PRFC will be submitting a grant request to the federal government in order to underwrite the cost of manufacturing the cull rings so that they can be distributed to the watermen at a reasonable cost.

**Satellite Station** – Mr. Bob Bowes thanked the Commission and the Finfish Advisory Committee for extending the striped bass trophy season through the month of May. He also asked if the Commission had considered putting a satellite station in Leonardtown, MD. The Executive Secretary stated that currently there is an agreement with MdDNR where you can renew all of your licenses at the DNR Southern Maryland Regional Office in Prince Frederick just across the Benedict Bridge. Commissioner Taylor-Rogers stated that there has been discussion about relocating some of the regional offices and she would keep his request in mind.

**Hook and Line Quotas** – Capt. Jim Drummond asked the Commission again to allow current hook and line license holders to be able to purchase additional quotas. The Chairman noted the Commission's lack of action on that issue meant that the Commission did not want to make any changes.

**Oil Spill** – Commissioner Taylor-Rogers reported that 110,000 gallons of #6 crude oil had been spilled in the Patuxent River. There is currently a closure of all shellfish harvesting, by the Maryland Department of the Environment, from McGruder Ferry Landing downstream to the bridge. There also is a navigational ban in effect by the US Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency in order to keep boats from going in and out of the areas that are boomed for protective purposes to keep the oil contained. She announced telephone numbers for public information on fishing in the Patuxent River. Fish and shellfish have been collected and tissue samples are being taken, the results of these tests should be available within a few days. Currently it is not thought there will be a need for a ban on finfishing.

The earlier press reports of 80,000 gallons being captured turned out to be an oil/water mix. Only about 20,000 gallons of the 110,000 gallons has actually been recovered. There are five skimmers on the site and they are ditching around Swanson Creek. It is hoped that most of the oil can be collected by the end of next week.

The pipeline from Stuart Petroleum to PEPCO had ruptured during the normal maintenance cleaning. PEPCO reported turning off the valves at both ends of the pipe within 30 minutes of being informed of the break, however we don't know how long it took until PEPCO was informed of the leak. They are currently digging to find out where the rupture occurred. PEPCO has announced not only their sincere apology for this event occurring but also said that they will be fully responsible for the clean up cost. This is the worst oil spill that the state of Maryland has ever had. There is severe damage to the area. It will take approximately 3 years to figure out the extent of the damage and probably another 7 years to figure out what will recover and what won't.

**Senior Discount** – Mr. Douglas F. Jenkins, Sr. asked why all gear types for people age 65+ were not \$5.00. He feels that it is discriminatory not to have it for all licenses. The Executive Secretary explained that the reduced license fee is for the exclusive use of the licensee and if a senior citizen hires a crew to work the license then they are not eligible for the reduced fee.

There are several questions about the existing regulations concerning the late filing fee and how many people are allowed aboard a commercial hook and line vessel if they have a discounted license. Chairman Birkett asked that the Finfish Advisory Committee and Staff review the reduced license fee regulation.

**Appointment of Building Committee**

The Chairman appointed a building committee and charged them with developing a scope of work for the expansion of the building as well as selecting an architect and an engineer before going to final construction. One of the problems this committee is going to face is that they do not have any money because it was spent in the purchase of the property.

The Chairman appointed Commissioners Taylor-Rogers and Pruitt to serve on the building committee together with the Executive Secretary and Legal Counsel.

**Appointment of FY 2000-2001 Budget Committee**

The Chairman appointed Commissioners Kellam and Williams to serve as the budget committee.

**Date and Place of Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for June 16, 2000 at 9:30 a.m. in Colonial Beach, VA.

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Gordon M. Birkett, Chairman

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John T. Parran, Secretary