



Meeting Wrap-up

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State Directors' meeting



General Points

- American eel – NER- will provide States with a current update of the status review being conducted by FWS
- States, individually or through the Commissions need to get involved in providing input on MSA reauthorization
- NOAA Fisheries will explore ways that the States can get more involved in the Agency's budget process



Aquaculture Discussion

- As soon as the Aquaculture Bill is cleared for distribution we will distribute it to the States and Commissions for review and comment.
- CA will provide more information to NMFS on its concern relative to Mexican bluefin tuna aquaculture so the issue can be raised at Mexico bilaterals.
- We need to focus on endemic v exotic species - we don't want invasive species.
- States need to be kept informed of aquaculture activities as partners- and not treated the same as NGO's; also need to get Commissions and Councils involved.
- NOAA Fisheries should not issue permits until have all needed information. However, EFPs may be best way to get started- as a sort of pilot program that won't give permanent rights.



MPAs

- MPAs are a critical state issue- States must pay attention to the MPA nomination system-there is a lot of public interest for more MPAs.
- States need to get involved in MPA State advisory committee- most current members represent CZM agencies, but need to have State fisheries agencies involved, as well.
- The FACA will be getting report out in June- need forum for States to get involved in review of recommendations that the FACA provides to Agency.

• Ocean Action Plan

- NMFS will investigate feasibility of establishing an Ocean Trust fund, as recommended by the Ocean Commission, even though no monies available at this point.
- At the first meeting of the “AQUA” box- they had asked for input from states, but the inclination has been to work with State CZM agencies, rather than fish agencies. Therefore, state fish agencies need to work within states to ensure there will be one State voice- for both fisheries and CZM
- whatever the process is- need to be sure state Fish Directors are informed on where they need/can be involved—also- state water quality agencies need more clarity



State Funding discussions

- We should all look again at providing funds for State-Council liaison positions (\$100K/state would go a long way to support State participation in Council process). States should work together to get additional \$s and to ensure they are not taken from NMFS base budget.
- NMFS will establish a group with States/Commissions to work to determine how funds, from both base budget and earmarks are spent - and to identify what needs are and are not being met- (including conduct of a grant program evaluation.)

EFH

- NMFS will put together a fact sheet explaining the difference between EFH and Critical habitat.
- NMFS should track and report the numbers of successful vs non-successful, EFH consultations.



National Data Workshop

- Meeting participants should review the hand-out- on the National data workshop and get their feedback to NMFS.
- Project intent is to develop a universal system we can all use - and to drop duplicate systems and improve existing systems. NMFS will need buy in from all states & their fishermen.
- NMFS will work with 3 Commission Executive Directors to set up the meeting and agenda.
- NMFS should investigate why Texas recreational data are not accounted for in National summaries of recreational catch/landings.



Cooperative Research

- Industry data must be peer reviewed in order to be able to use data in a creditable process.
- NMFS will provide a breakout of cooperative research dollars that go to the States vs to NMFS.
- Cooperative research should be supported, but such funding should not be at the expense of long-term State funding for needed activities.
- We need to take better advantage of cooperative research for gear technology- bycatch issue isn't going away- we need to partner more with states and our Pascaguola lab



NRC studies

- NMFS will report results back to states for all 3 studies
- Need to address data confidentiality issues for recreational data and VMS
- Need to address increasing refusal rates for interviews from the head-boat fishery.
- Need to work to get around data confidentiality issues, not just to share information between agencies but to gain stakeholder confidence that data will not go to others (e.g., telemarketers).



MSA Reauthorization

- NMFS should consider using existing programs, such as in the Gulf, as a pilot for ecosystem approaches to management
- States have difficulty identifying 3 qualified and interested nominees for Council seats, adding 3 additional seats to ensure balance would be even more difficult.
- Noting that simple language relative to EFH lead to significant and complicated regulatory guidance, NMFS needs to consider more simple approaches when we move to incorporate ecosystem based approaches to management.
- Need to resolve just how NEPA will or will not be incorporated into MSA actions, separately or within the MSA process itself.



Ecosystem approaches to Management

- States need to be fully involved in the process, in a meaningful way. They have a unique role that is important.
- A well informed public- needs to be defined, and the process can not be driven by the number of of emails received, but by substance.
- The public needs to be not only informed but engaged as stewards- public has to accept some responsibility.
- Need to work toward a more efficient use of funds--- but-also need new investment of funds, not just redistribution of current funding levels.



Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan

- State directors need to be involved in directing the nations recreational fishing policy.
- States should be notified as soon as regional teams are established and these teams must include the States.

Joint Enforcement Agreements

- States should check the “Fix-it” list from NMFS Enforcement and provide input about whether they concur with list for their State/region
- States want continued support for JEAs
- NMFS will schedule a meeting with States and enforcement leaders this fall to review JEA program- will include discussions about how funds are allocated among states.
- Should work to get funding into line item
- NMFS will discuss with, and provide additional information to, American Samoa, on the Cooperative Enforcement Program



Comments from the NOAA Administrator

- NOAA wants to ensure we all have needed data to make correct decisions. The States should have a big voice in this to ensure we address their needs for fisheries management. Encourage the States to think about how to deal with these needs.
- State Federal partnerships are critical to all we do.



PR Hot issues

- Ship strike strategy; Ocean Noise; Marine Animal & Ocean health; Reauthorization of ESA & MMPA; Proposed listings; Status reviews; 2005 recovery plans
- Eastern oyster-petition to list- NMFS will be meeting with NE State Directors to discuss need and process for review in May. Will also schedule meeting with other States.
 - We need to be sure review for listing does not have negative impact on push for aquaculture.
- NMFS will put together list of proactive successes that have prevented need for reactive actions.