

Forum on Fishery Management for the Future

Panel of Experts:

R. H. Schaefer, Acting Director, Northeast Region, NMFS (moderator); W. G. Gordon, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA; A. E. Peterson, Jr., Director, NMFS Northeast Fisheries Center; J. Pike, Staff Member, U.S. Congress; A. D. Guimond, President, Stonington Seafood; G. C. Radonski, President Sport Fishing Institute; R. L. Martin, Chairman, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; and L. Sloan, Executive Director, National Federation of Fishermen.

The moderator called upon each panelist to provide a brief commentary of their views on the future of fisheries management prior to opening the forum to audience participation.

The wide range of topics broached by the panelists in their opening remarks provided fuel for the lively discussions that characterized this well attended forum. Following are the panelist's opening remarks and other highlights of discussions and questions excerpted from audio tapes.

Remarks and Discussion

Mr. Schaefer:

"As you all know, until 1977 U.S. management authority beyond the territorial limits was through the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries, and the territorial waters authority rested in the individual states. We are all familiar with the background of the effect of the foreign fishing fleets that existed off the Mid-Atlantic and New England coasts, which was one of the primary reasons and the impetus for the extension of U.S. authority to 200 miles with the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. In the 9-year period of time since passage, we have put various fish-

eries under management plans. We have seen some success stories, and we have seen some stories that aren't so successful, but we have gained a variety of experience with management operations under that Act.

"We have also seen significant changes in fisheries and fishing patterns. It is estimated right now that the current capacity and effort of the U.S. fleet is approaching the level of foreign fleets that were off the New England coast 10 years ago. We have seen new fisheries developing, for example, squid. A new batch of 100-foot+ freezer vessels are coming on line. The changes which have occurred in the last 10 years, in my opinion, will accelerate in the future. What we need are management systems, in my view, that are dynamic and can adjust to these and future changes. Also, management must be cost-effective, because it is expensive, we are discovering, to manage the stocks. I will now turn the microphone over to Al Guimond, and ask him to address the issue."

Mr. Guimond:

"I wonder if we are talking about the management of resources or the management of people who are trying to harvest the resources. As a council member and past chairman [New England Fishery Management Council], I have seen for almost 9½ years a variety of management ideas put forward. We have had quotas, trip limits, tried minimum mesh sizes, and closed seasons, and it seems like we still don't quite get the major point. There is very, very little that can be done in a management regime at this time that will do anything for the people or the resource. As a result, it seems that everybody keeps saying that limited entry is the answer. It may be, but I think there has been too much emphasis placed on limited entry. It is no more important to me, as a man-

ager, than fish size, or mesh size, or area, or seasonal closures. If we raise the magic wand today and have limited entry in every fishery in New England, it wouldn't change things very much or very fast, because the problem is that there are too many people fishing and we need to find the best way to get them to redirect fisheries or to change habits.

"I am a believer in free enterprise. The more I look at the last 9 or 10 years, the more I am coming to the conclusion that in some resources we may not have the ability to truly impose management regimes of any type that will either be acceptable to the industry or acceptable to the government from a national standards point of view, or accommodate political reality. The moral dilemma that I have with limited entry is that if you are going to shut the door to protect the resource, you're really protecting it for the people who put the resource in that condition to begin with. I don't know if that is exactly what we are supposed to be doing. I am beginning to shift more and more to what I call economic management, for example, trying to make people go out at certain times of day, certain times of the week. So, from a management point of view, I think that in the '80's we first have to define who it is, or what it is, we are trying to manage.

"Another overriding consideration is, who are the true managers? Is it the Councils or is it the Federal Government? I think Congress intended it to be the Councils through the public process. So, the challenge of the '80's is to look beyond that which we have been trying to do, and pick a date in the future and plan to start from that point and not try to deal with what happens between now and then."

Mr. Schaefer:

"Thank you very much, Al. I will now turn the mike over to Bill Gordon."

Mr. Gordon:

“Looking at some of the early history of the fisheries in the United States, I have read that a fellow named Cabot Lodge came to Gloucester Harbor and Cape Cod Bay, well over a hundred years ago, and noted in the ship’s log that the fish were so thick they pestered his boat. I suspect a lot of fishermen would like to see that situation again today. And then, the fellow named Tom Jefferson submitted to the President a proposal to pass the first subsidy to American fishermen in 1808—repealing the Salt Tax—saying that the industry was in deep financial difficulties, its markets taken over by the foreigners, its resources decimated by the foreigners, and its fleet, in a sense, done away with by the foreigners. And then along came Baird, a hundred years ago, and the reason why he could successfully petition the Congress for money to build the first *Albatross*, and the first fisheries lab here, was because resources were declining.

“Throughout the history of this nation, we have had a policy of open access to our fisheries. And in our 200-odd years as a nation, there has been a steady stream of requests by the fishing industry for government support for one reason or another. I think people ought to carefully evaluate how fisheries have developed in this nation as a resource that was open to all. In the same period of time, other resources were open to all as well.

“If one looks at history at the turn of the century, one finds open fields in Maine with stone fences and no trees; and as the white man moved westward, he cut all the trees down and stopped when he reached the Pacific Coast having cut down everything that was readily available. We no longer manage trees that way. We no longer manage our grazing lands that way. We no longer turn cows loose in the commons of our villages to graze as they may. A long time ago, lands were brought into some degree of management when much of the land was taken over in private ownership. We should bear this in mind as we go on.

“In the early 1940’s, Americans be-

came concerned about the effect of expanding foreign fishing fleets, and in response the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries, known as ICNAF, was founded in 1949. It was initially looked upon with some hope and favor, but was soon damned as the unbridled foreign fishing of the early 1960’s came into being. Again, it was founded on the precept of common property.

“It is also interesting to note that in the 1940’s a creature known as the recreational fisherman started raising his voice, decrying the overfishing that was ruining the sport—and that constituency has grown in numbers and in strength since. Records today indicate that some 64 million anglers exist in the United States; it is now the third largest outdoor activity, after swimming and bicycling. Many coastal communities depend on fishing to maintain tourism and other ancillary activities.

“But ICNAF was not enough, so in 1976 the 200-mile bill [MFCMA] was passed, and it created the [Regional Fishery Management] Councils. It may surprise some, but the Councils do manage some fisheries in this country. It is their responsibility to effect management plans. In the absence of activity by the Councils, the Secretary of Commerce has the discretion to invoke a management regime. It is noteworthy that the Secretary has not, I repeat not, done much preemption of the Councils during the period of their existence. Some of the preliminary management plans that were done (by the Federal Government), so that foreign fishing activities could continue in 1977, are still in place, as amended by the Secretary, because the Councils were satisfied that the Secretary was doing an adequate job.

“So, I would ask, how can we utilize the resources that our 200-mile economic zone legally bestowed on the United States, and fulfill the moral obligation that was espoused by this nation, that what was surplus to the needs of Americans be passed on to the foreigners by allowing them to fish in our zone? Can we continue the ideology that any person may enter the fishery who has the wherewithal to buy the boat and the gear, and can we then keep those

resources in a high degree of productivity? Through the council system, should we not consider change in how we manage the last renewable living resource in this country that is open to all those who can pursue it, capture it, bring it ashore, and process, sell it, or take it for recreational purposes? Let me close by pointing out that, even today, as this nation faces its greatest deficit in its history, the industry, in one location or another, is still asking the government for a subsidy.”

Mr. Schaefer:

“Thank you very much, Bill. Our next speaker will be Allen Peterson, Director of the Northeast Fisheries Center. Allen.”

Mr. Peterson:

“It is very difficult to serve on this panel at the culmination of a week of excellent presentations by very brilliant fishery scientists and managers and try to unearth some things that have not already been said. So, I would like to take a couple of moments to really look into the future of fisheries management, and perhaps even answer one of the questions that Bill just asked. I think one of the dilemmas that we face in the country today is that fisheries management is very distinct and different from resource management. Resource management is only one component of the fisheries management process. I think one of the problems that we have seen in the fisheries management, despite the history that Bill just related, is that it still is very much an evolving process and we are still in very much a pioneer atmosphere. I think that is rapidly changing, however, due to technological advances and the change in world situations; and those of you who have read the book, “Megatrends” can appreciate that we now live in a global society and the pioneer aspects of the U.S. fishery are drawing to an end.

“I look at the evolution of fisheries management as not being very different from the settlement of the West, with the open ranges and the first fences being built, and wars that went on between those who built the fences and those who wanted the open range, through the

development of the enterprises that we see today. I think that the fishing industry is right on the verge of having those fences put up.

“Dr. Larkin, in his comments this morning, mentioned that one of the things that he thought was needed, in terms of future research, was some experimental fisheries management. I would submit to you that that’s what we have been doing for the past hundred years, but not with any design. Much of what we have been doing has been trial and error. I suspect that if we really are to be successful we should try to evaluate the effects of management in a context of a research function. I think this kind of trial and error process is one that has led us to a lot of change in management schemes, that the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act is probably just another piece of that evolving process, and I suspect it will not be around for many generations to come. I think we have seen tremendous instability in the fisheries, and in the near future that instability will continue.

“The basic problem is the one that Bill was alluding to, and it is the one that we have not really attempted to address in a very effective fashion, and that is reducing common property by ownership. That continues to be the essence of the problem in fisheries management, and everything else around it, whether you approach it from a resource point of view or an economics point of view or whatever, relates to that one problem. Until we solve that problem, we are not going to succeed with fisheries management. The fact that several in the Fisheries Service may come to have similar views, I can assure you, is because of a merging of thoughts based on collective experiences over the years. I think that, in the future, all of our fish resources will be sold as rights to the fishing business, just as is our oil, gas, timber, land resources, or anything else that we now have as government property. I think it is proper to deed them to private sectors for purposes of profit, recreation, or anything else. Those of you from the fishing industry, don’t get too alarmed over that kind of statement, because I really don’t believe it is going to happen, certainly not in my gen-

eration. I think the fishermen we have today will be the beneficiaries of muddling through for the next 15 to 20 years, at least.”

Mr. Schaefer:

“Thank you very much, Allen, for those remarks. Our next panelist to address these issues is Jeff Pike, from Congressman Studds’ office. Jeff.”

Mr. Pike:

“I’m not the anticipated Gerry Studds, as most of you can see. My experience is as a commercial fisherman, working on the staff of the Merchant Marine Fisheries Committee, and contacts with Council representatives. It is from that perspective that I would like to add a few comments on the Federal role in support of fisheries management in the future. I think, from the congressional standpoint, that we will not be seeing new programs coming into place, we will not be seeing major infusions of Federal dollars coming into our fishing industry and fisheries management. In fact, I would venture to say that we will see less of that, in terms of elimination of the Capital Construction Fund or perhaps of the Title XI loan guarantees as a way of saving dollars. What I think will happen is that Congress will continue to support a strong research program—and I just point to the *Albatross IV* behind you and indicate that if it were not for Congress that vessel would not be there today; in fact, if this Administration had its way we might not have as many people here today as we do. So, in that sense, I think that there is deep commitment in Congress to continue sound research, but I think one point made this morning was that we have to look at ways to do that more efficiently—and I think that is a very valid point and something scientists must look at.

“As far as the Management Councils are concerned, I think that they are going to have a very tough challenge in the next couple of years. They are going to have to improve a system which, like it or not, will address issues such as controlling domestic fishing effort, allocation of surpluses, more fishing in general, and allocations of stocks and

species among the various users. I would emphasize to the Councils that they must take on those issues because, if they don’t, and if it evolves to a point where Congress is expected to resolve those, then it most likely will be a political solution which, in many cases, would not be an optimum solution, at least from the business standpoint or the managers’ standpoint. I would reemphasize that we cannot expect Congress to want to, nor necessarily to solve questions such as limited entry which has been brought up today.

“One question affecting all managers, which it seems to me we need to answer, is do we want an efficient fishing industry, capable of competing in world markets, operating efficiently with top products, or would we rather reserve jobs and keep our heritage and culture like we have in the past and essentially manage socially what goes on in the industry? We pretty much muddled through that to this point, and I am not saying that those questions have to be answered, but certainly some of the opportunities which we would like to see will be foreclosed if we don’t address those specific questions. Contrary to what some people may think or believe, I personally believe that the industry itself is ready to take on some sound conservation measures that are both logical and practical.

“It was brought up earlier that the quota system fell on its face simply because, as I understood it, vessels were not making enough money. I suggest that there could have been ways to improve that quota system. But, as I see it, the problem then was that people saw that there were fish there and their catches were up, and they did not want restrictions. Now things have changed, catches are down, and the reality is that if we don’t control fishing effort it will get worse. So I think that the industry is ready to adopt some sound conservation measures that are both logical and practical. I underline the term practical, because we find ourselves, in the scallop fishery, with a management plan that manages our scallop industry on an average meat count, and the problem with that is that we don’t know how big a scallop is until it is opened. I think that

we have to look at ways in which we can apply practical and common-sense controls on our fishermen, and I think that they are ready to accept them.”

Mr. Schaefer:

“Thank you very much, Jeff, for your remarks. Our next speaker is Gil Radonski, from whom we heard some remarks on this morning’s panel.”

Mr. Radonski:

“The way things are going presently bodes well for the future as far as recreational fishermen are concerned. Just a few years ago, I don’t think recreational fishing interests would have been included in a celebration such as this and in discussions of where we are going with future research and management needs. We have been arguing for years that the fishing industry is made up of two segments, recreational and commercial, and I was very pleased that this word is getting through all the way to Congress as Jeff Pike has mentioned. So, I think we are making progress.

“I would like to briefly reiterate some of my remarks from this morning. When I left off, I was talking about the resolve of the Federal government to do fishery research. I am also concerned about the resolve of the government to do fishery management. Many of the points that I would like to make have already been made by Allen Peterson and Bill Gordon and several other speakers here. The fact is that the fishery resources of the United States are common property resources and it is explicitly the responsibility of government, state or Federal, to manage them.

“We know that management requires data—and data collection, whether it be economical, biological, or sociological, is costly, while the allocation of dollars to manage fishery resources is dwindling. Presently, appropriations for management are driven by the economic climate rather than by the value of the resource, and I think that is a clear abdication of the stewardship responsibility of government. If not from Federal appropriation, where is the money to come from for the management? After a successful 7-year battle to amend the Dingel-Johnson Act with the Federal

Aid for Sportfish Restoration Act, commonly known as the Wallop-Breaux Amendments, I am ready to say, ‘Let the user pay.’ The landings tax on commercial fisheries can be passed on to the seafood consumers, and sportfishermen can be taxed through a fishing license. Such taxes are politically unpopular, but then most taxes are unpopular.

“We heard yesterday from Carl Sullivan and today from Al Peterson and Bill Gordon, when they referenced the precedent of using harvest fees for managing our national forests. People who harvest the timber from our national forests, which are managed for multiple-use purposes, don’t just go in and cut down the trees and haul them off; they have to pay for them. We see farmers grazing cattle on public land; it is not done for nothing, they have to pay for that privilege. The right to drill for oil on the outer continental shelf has to be purchased. So, I think the precedent is set, and at some point we are going to have to start paying for those fish out there. The fact remains that our fishery resources are being systematically overfished and there are tough allocation decisions looming on the horizon. I think we are going to have to start getting facts so that we can make those allocation decisions.”

Mr. Schaefer:

“Thank you Gil. Our next panelist to speak is Bob Martin. Bob.”

Mr. Martin:

“First of all, I extend to the Laboratory congratulations on its Centennial Celebration. Greetings from Pennsylvania! For those of you wondering why Pennsylvania would even be involved, we are Idaho’s counterpoint on the east coast. We have been placed on the endangered species list along with Idaho, the Western Pacific Council, and the Caribbean Council by certain legislators. So, I am going to try to get my licks in now.

“I would like to offer possibly a different viewpoint. I am probably the least qualified or experienced on actual fishing of any of the panelists up here. By profession, I am involved in business management. I would like to offer a lit-

tle different perspective on ‘what does it mean to manage fish?’ Why should it be different from any other management? Whether it be corporate American business, nonprofit hospital, whatever, management is management.

“I think one thing could be pointed out, if you like to study words. As you know, first of all, the subject of this panel is ‘History of Management Strategy for the 1980’s and Beyond.’ I would just query the word ‘strategy’—as originally used in historical combat to mean the planning before the engagement. I think we have already planned for the engagement, and that was the passage of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Strategies have already been laid out on the table for you. It is not a question of management strategy at this time, it is how you actually implement the strategies that have been set forth. Tactics are what have to be looked at now. Are we, in fact, using correct tactics in order to implement the strategies under the Act?

“I will make a few comparisons between management of the fisheries resource as opposed to management of any other concern, which I will call nonfisheries management. Nonfisheries management looks for the greatest return for the investment, financial stability through economic downturns and upturns in the marketplace. Its objective is to conserve and manage its corporate assets.

“Now, let’s look at fisheries management. The primary objective is to achieve continued optimum utilization of the living marine resources for the benefit of the nation. If you add to that, trying to achieve resource stability, both in manpower and in natural resources (fishery issues), through economic downturns and upturns in the marketplace, there is added something that does not appear in the general world of business. You have to consider not only the economics, but also the sociological aspects as well as the biological. In the nonfisheries management world, you have to contend with the labor force, whether it be unionized or nonunionized. On the fisheries management side, the Service has to contend with the Administration, Congress, Councils, and

industry. That creates a different situation from the normal, traditional management regime, and it is something that must be accepted and understood. Fish are not going to tell us whether or not they agree with our management plan. But there is a question as to whether or not we must have acceptance from those whom we manage, whether it be in the processing or harvesting sector. We have had some successes with our management plans; we have also had some failures.

“This seems to be a year of regurgitation over the failures and frustrations that we have had over the last 9 years in trying to understand what the Act is all about. Our management tactics, in order to achieve the strategies under the Act, must be dynamic—you have heard that many times before. I think what we have to do in this year of reorganization is, first, get through it, and second, reassess our positions and have everybody begin using the system.

“What you have in the Council system is the best form of arbitration that can be established. Stop and think about it: If the system is used properly, you not only get input from the public, you get input from the Government, and you get input from those people whose lives are on the line, if in fact there is a change that could affect their way of life. So, it is a good system. I believe that over the next year there is going to be a commitment from the Councils to sit down with members of the National Marine Fisheries Service, with members of NOAA, and Congress, and say, ‘Hey listen, let’s stop the backbiting, let’s stop rehashing things of the past, let’s sit down and actually try to work this out.’

“From a professional point of view, I think the Act is a well written document. It allows a free dynamic which allows us to fit the times. I think we will find this year that our successes will come more rapidly than they have in the past. At some point, although there are some who may not believe it, the Councils will, in fact, have adopted plans on all those species which need to be managed. The role of the Councils will then be to implement. So, if there is going to be a change in strategies over the next 3 years, it is going to be one of trying

to understand what the Act is all about and going through what we consider to be an implementation stage. I think we can accomplish it.

“I remind all of you, coming as I do from central Pennsylvania, that at home no one knows what the National Marine Fisheries Service is. No one knows what NOAA is, except for what they see on television through the Weather Service. Certainly, no one knows what the Department of Commerce is. Keep that in perspective. If we are going to, as Bill said, preserve the last common resources available, it must be a national issue and not a coastal issue. If we want the nation’s support, the nation has to understand what is involved here, and I would suggest to you that they don’t understand what is going on.”

Mr. Schaefer:

“Thank you Bob. Our last panelist to speak will be Lucy Sloan. Lucy.”

Ms. Sloan:

“In terms of looking at a strategy for the 1980’s and beyond, I think the concern about strategy is what to plan for at different points. But if we are going to look at what we propose to do in the 1980’s and beyond, I think we first are going to have to accept that both overfishing and optimal yield are highly subjective terms, and how we act in relation to those terms is, in fact, almost inevitably a matter of reactions rather than actions.

“Bill made the point that the stocks have been declining since the beginning of history in the fishing industry in this country. Well, we could probably then say, ‘I wonder what the current plan about overfishing is all about?’ Being the devil’s advocate, I think the question of arbitrarily saying ‘overfishing’ means that we don’t have stocks at the maximum possible level that they once were. It is something that is not accurately considered.

“We have debated long and loud over what optimal yield means. But, in fact, when we were working on the legislation, when we looked at what optimal yield meant, there was a general acceptance that optimum yield might very well mean that, particularly in mixed-species

fisheries, overfishing would be a part of optimal yield strategies. Probably one of the best examples we have of that in New England is the potential conflict between the two goals of the Atlantic Demersal Finfish Plan. First, it says that we are looking for maximum flexibility to move among the different fisheries with minimal regulation. Then we say, ‘However, if any species catch causes an unacceptably high risk of recruitment failure, we will force restrictions on the 20-plus species in the management plan.’ Unacceptable risk is a subjective judgment, and I think one of the frustrations that fishermen have with the whole question of management is that it is a trap which sometimes reaches the level of an art.

“At no time have I been comfortable with calling the ADF a Plan. It has led periodically to the question of, ‘Do we need to manage, do we need the complicated management processes which we have established for ourselves?’ There are fishermen who would advance the idea that with unrestricted fisheries, long before we get to the point where the mammas can’t find the pappas, we run down the catch per unit effort to the point that will cut down on the number of vessels in the fisheries. I don’t think, frankly, that is the best way to do it, but the question comes up increasingly often.

“I think that we do need some sort of understanding of why we want to manage, and I do not think there is a great deal of agreement. I think what we have to do is look at balancing the plan with the benefits to the industry and to the Nation of using the resource. I was interested in Bob’s comment that this was an arbitration process, because I think that’s right. I get very frustrated with people who say the Council system has become too political. Good grief, the Council system was never anything but political. That was the point. The political process has made this country what it is. Regulations which are not acceptable to those on whom they are being imposed are not going to work, because you can’t legislate against ingenuity which circumvents regulation.

“So, what I would like to do would be to look at how we strengthen the

Council system, how we use the system which we created under the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. I wouldn't want a job on the Council, but as a representative of fishermen, and while I strongly support the Council system, I reserve the right at any time to disagree with any Council about any action. And I think that is one way of using the Councils effectively. There are specific areas for improving what we want to do about Atlantic commercial finfish and making sure that the Councils are an integral part of any proposal for dealing with Canadians and any other fishery nation with whom we are to have bilateral or multilateral relationships. I think we have to understand what overfishing and optimal yield mean to us at different times, in different fisheries, and that we have to strengthen and use more effectively the council systems."

Discussion and Questions

Mr. Gordon:

"I would like to respond to the question that Bob put in his remarks—I'm sure he understands the answer: 'Do we need agreement among those whom we've regulated?' The answer is, 'No.' For example, when lawyers go to trial and select jurors, they have an opportunity to reject a juror if they think he is biased or may be against their interests. The Council members, however, are made up of people from all over the United States, nominated by Governors, and appointed by the Executive Branch. A jury is supposed to learn the facts, not reflect their biases. They make decisions based on fact, not individual desires, interests, or the like. I would leave you with the question, 'Do you think the council system is functioning adequately, based on fact, or is there some other way we can make a selection of Council members that might get a less biased group of them?'"

Mr. Martin:

"First of all, I think it is a good analogy, but I think it is a rhetorical question. I wish I knew what the answer was—I think it is something that has to be said, so, essentially from my point of

view, one of the difficulties of being a manager is that too often it is the perception of those who are being managed that they must agree with the management system. I suggest to you that if you are always going to have those whom you manage agreeing with you, then you are not going to be managing. I don't know of any industry, any kind of business, where those who are managed by regulations are going publicly to say, 'We agree that we want to be managed.'"

Mr. Gordon:

"I think we have a system that doesn't work, right?"

Mr. Martin:

"I think the council system does work. But I think that we have to be a little careful that we don't look to the short term, as opposed to the long term. Our Council has 19 voting members. It takes time to get 19 people to understand what the problem is, and they come from all walks of life. It is a political process, but that's what makes it work. If I have a commercial fisherman voting one way, I know why he's voting that way. The same with others voting on a particular issue, whether it be foreign ventures or whatever. I know where their interests are coming from. That is what makes the process work; it works by majority.

"I think we have to be careful that we don't look to some past failures in the short term and because of that conclude that the system doesn't work. That is not to say that everything is perfect; there has to be better cooperation amongst all the participants. My own personal thought on how the Council selection process can be improved is that we should have longer terms so we can have continuity. Three years is too short. For somebody who is not accustomed to dealing in this business, the first year is like stepping halfway; you have no idea what you're talking about. The second year you may feel comfortable because you are starting to learn the history. The third year you become valuable as a manager."

Ms. Sloan:

"Don't misunderstand; I am not saying those people being regulated have

to agree, but what I am saying is to listen to them when they tell you, 'You give me something like a six-inch mesh and I'll just fish with a three-inch mesh, and you won't be able to enforce it.' Fishermen are right in the middle. They are businessmen who depend upon a healthy resource, and so they say, 'Give us rational regulations.' It is because they know regulations can be gotten around, and they are trying to conserve the stock."

Mr. Guimond:

"Gil, is it your thought that your group is going to actively support the licensing of all recreational fishermen in the collection of fees?"

Mr. Radonski:

"No. I do, however, support recreational fishermen paying their just share of the costs."

Mr. Guimond:

"Regarding limited access, the question is, what do you see from the recreational point of view as any willingness to accept the limitation that there will not be new people who will have the opportunity for recreational fishing?"

Mr. Radonski:

"Well, we manage recreational fishermen in a different way. Recreational fishermen have been accustomed to extreme regulations for many years. They do readily accept—maybe not readily accept, but they do accept—reductions in bag limits, shorter seasons. They are accustomed to management within the context of what the fishery can produce; and regulations, developed through fishery scientists, establishing what that fishery can produce have been accepted by recreational fishermen. There is more benefit from the recreational fishery than protein production, there is protein production and recreation."

Ms. Sloan:

"I have said over the years, frequently, that my people have the feeling that fishers are not constituents of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and that my people are unwelcome perturbations in the system. I would point out

that one of the reasons we justify having a lab to rededicate today is because all the research is needed to utilize a national resource.”

Mr. Gordon:

“I would like to point out that the annual consumption of fish in the United States is now perhaps 13.6 pounds per capita. We hear the New England Medical Association say that if a person were to eat two meals per week of fish it would contribute to preventing coronary disease. That would equate to the doubling of per capita consumption. I asked the question once, ‘Where can the increase come from?’ We certainly can’t do it with haddock, cod, yellowtail flounder, and some of our other resources. We are going to end up importing a lot more products, and if we don’t import wisely then we will be forever faced with a scenario of buying from somewhere abroad where people are perhaps more cynical and would rather get the dollar than feed their own people. But, the consumer in the United States is the boss, and I think we sometimes lose sight of that, whether the person wants to eat fish, or look at it, or simply feel comfortable that the ocean has productivity to maintain. The public wants a multiple choice, and if we don’t manage appropriately they aren’t going to get it.”

Mr. Peterson:

“Just one other comment, for Lucy, I think. We recently had a Secretary of the Interior who said that the only good resource was a used resource, and I don’t think that met with full public acceptance.”

Ms. Sloan:

“What I said was that the point of doing the research was to continue to have a resource to utilize. The implication was not in the short term, and the resources about which the Secretary of the Interior was talking were not renewable.”

Audience Question:

“I think it has been made pretty clear in recent years that the marine mammals of the world consume far more finfish

than does man. Is anybody willing to talk about an amendment of the Marine Mammal Protection Act so that this impact can be considered; is that a future management strategy that we can ever talk about?”

Ms. Sloan:

“For years I have tried to get marine mammal management considered within the Fishery Conservation and Management Act. I think that until we have an understanding of how we are going to manage our ecosystem, we cannot exclude the significant mammal component of the ecosystem from management. I think it is particularly hard for fishermen, because the mammals are getting a better break than the fishermen.”

Mr. Gordon:

“I think there will be changes in management in time, but it is going to come only after a much better understanding and presentation to the public of what the various agencies are about and where they all fit together. It is going to be extremely costly to generate some of that information; and those who oppose, or those who would say, ‘Let’s preserve mammals in their current state,’ are going to have to be really sold on this one. There is no doubt in my mind that we are already beginning to see stress in populations of marine mammals because of the inability of the environment to support them at the levels they have come up to recently. We need to really get on to understanding at what level we should be maintaining mammals, given that we want long-term balance.”

Audience Question:

“A couple of comments were made that people who are being managed don’t have to agree, and that is acceptable, and we are willing to make management decisions whether they agree or not. I have seen in the FCMA where it is written that if you want to use limited entry it has to be approved by some of the people it is being implemented on. Given the political pressures for limiting the uses of limited entry, such that only the players who agree

could be put on it, is there going to be a chance of really doing something without their approving it first, or not?”

Mr. Gordon:

“I’ll take a stab at that. First of all, the amendment [to FCMA] hasn’t passed, and I will admit that it is not likely to be. But, even with it in place, I suspect that it wouldn’t be very long until you would find an industry group that would endorse it, and Councils who would come up with the necessary two-thirds vote. The fee side of it—that’s one that I think is going to plague us in the future—is getting closer and closer to reality, in my view, and I feel that it will come about for a lot of reasons. I think that the public will ask for it.”

Mr. Guimond:

“From the perspective of a Council chairman, consensus on the question of limited entry was that the law as written did not give you adequate ability to really impose limited entry, given restrictions on the collection of the fees. Our consensus would be to either change the law, make it workable, or take it out completely. A political compromise is probably going to pass this bill today, because there is no other way of addressing the political sensitivity that some people hold with limited entry. Probably some small fisheries will come to the fore if the measure goes through, and will petition the local Council or Councils to form some kind of limited entry program. I think you will see that happen, but I think the question is whether or not limited entry is going to have any real impact on the majority of the industry. With this amendment, I think what you are doing is eliminating one tool that the manager has to work with, because first you have to get the Council to agree that it wants to study the issue, by a two-thirds majority, and then you have to get the majority of the people affected to agree to it. How are you possibly going to define who is affected? I may be out lobstering and you may be concerned about the limited entry program on x,y,z species, and I may want to have that option today but I say, ‘Why be one of those fishermen?’ Are we going to have to look

back and say, 'You have to obtain 50 percent of your income from that particular species,' or what? I don't see the amendment helping with the management problem. It is a political reaction to what the industry didn't want."

Audience Question:

"Gil, this morning you mentioned that the allocation between recreational and commercial segments of a particular fishery should be made more on a dynamic basis than on historical precedent. Yet, if we are to move toward a limited entry basis, it seems to me that this demands, for at least a significant period of time, that division be made and set so that various forms of limitation of effort could be imposed on each counterpart. How do we do that if we don't use the historical basis for making that allocation?"

Mr. Radonski:

"I don't know that effort limitation should be necessarily tied in with allocation. Limited entry is dealing within the allocation, not in the allocation itself. If a segment of the fishery is allocated to the commercial fishery, limited entry is another issue. I don't see where the two are related. The allocation has to be made between user groups, and I am talking about the allocation between recreational and commercial."

Questioner:

"What you just said was that limited entry is applied after allocation, but how do we make that allocation if we don't use the historical basis, even if it is subject to significant change, for example, every year or every 2 years? It seems to me to be very difficult to then go to any type of limited entry within an allocation. I think you said that the historical basis was not a good basis for allocation, and I am asking you what else is a good basis for that allocation besides the historical?"

Mr. Radonski:

"The relative economic value of the fisheries. In many cases, we know that recreational fisheries are far less efficient than commercial fisheries, and the money spent in pursuing each unit or

each fish is much greater in recreational fisheries. If we are dealing with a fishery like the Cape mackerel, it might have as much or greater value as a recreational fishery than as a commercial fishery. I am saying that we might not even have the economic data. Incidentally, the Oregon Department of Fish and Game, according to Jack Donaldson, has recently made the decision that they will no longer allocate on historical units of the fishery."

Questioner:

"I would just like to respond to that. I think the issue is probably not worth worrying about in terms of what will be the basis for allocation. I think history will quickly show us that even if we had accepted what will be the basis of allocation, all the political types of decisions are made on the economic value of the fishery and based on whether the fish is worth more in the market or whether it is worth more personally in the social sense."

Audience Question:

"There is another component of fishery management, if we are looking at the fisheries as human activities, that has not been discussed here, and I think it ought to be raised and at least brought to the surface. This is the fishery development program, the system of subsidizing rather extensively the commercial fisheries. I have heard some vigorous criticism by unsubsidized people about unfair competition from the potential subsidies in the fishing industry, and I am wondering to what extent has the fishery development program contributed to over-investment in various sectors, and what traditional fishermen—unsubsidized fishermen—may have suffered from the increased competition due to subsidies?"

Mr. Gordon:

"The government has reduced the Small Business Administration and done away with Public Health Service—free medical care—for seamen. By and large, the government is full of indirect subsidies. Currently, I hear noises about solving the fish problem with government grants. The State of Alaska put an

awful lot of money into fisheries development there. You could go on. In other states they are doing the same. So, whether they want it or not, it is there. If they don't want it, then I would certainly welcome a march on Washington to convince the Congress to abolish those subsidies—I could save a lot of time on the Hill."

Mr. Peterson:

"I won't make the judgment that subsidies are right or wrong in the industry, or even what constitutes a subsidy. That obviously is a political decision. But I think there is an issue here that is forced on us. If you look right behind here, you will see five commercial vessels tied up at the dock. That piece of property is owned and subsidized by the Town of Falmouth. If you brought in your 75-foot yacht, you would not be able to park at that dock; you would have to go downtown and pay a fee to tie up your boat. I don't know if the subsidy is good or bad—I can't make a judgment. Public laws treat the fishing industry very differently than most other private enterprises."

Audience Question:

"This panel has the focus of management for the future. There are legitimate roles the government can play. Are our Federal dollars being used for the exclusive advantage of one or two individuals, by a program that gives them economic benefits at the cost of the taxpayer? The answer to that is, 'no.' It is easy to talk about a couple of hundred-million dollars in a certain program, but you don't understand the program, where the money comes from and where it goes to—who gets the money to pay salaries for administration of the program? Getting back to the question of the future management, how will we pay for the cost of management?"

Mr. Pike:

"You would have to start with all of NOAA's budget. You would have to look at the state and see what state and Federal money they get. What would happen if none of that money was there? What would we lose? And that is the thing I want people to start thinking

about, because the time of the budget crunch hasn't really come yet. We think it has been tight with the Federal budget so far—wait until the next couple of years, because now reduced Federal spending is a priority in the current administration. You may want to make a conscience decision to have no management, because the cost of that management is far greater than what we get in return.”

Audience Member:

“My crystal ball for the future of the '80's and '90's goes something like this. Fresh fish is going to come into the United States and the east coast from all over the world, and it's going to come from Canada in much greater amounts than the last few years. People from all over the world are going to be sending fresh fish to this market. The price of fresh fish here in New England will fall and become stable, because there will be a world market, while the world market declines for frozen fish. By 1990, I imagine most of what we know as the commercial fishing industry here on the east coast will be gone. A few commercial boats which manage to work very efficiently with modern technology, using procedures for keeping their fish very fresh on board, will be competing in a very narrow, retail, specialty gourmet market, but will not be fishing for the mass buying market. Those are the people who will stay in business in fresh fish. There are still going to be a lot of fish out there, and the

stocks will come back when the fishing pressure decreases from our own domestic fishermen. But they are not going to be able to afford to fish, so we will have a lot of fish available for the recreational fishermen. Our biggest trouble will be allocating the resources to foreign fishermen who can fish the stocks under a subsidized scenario rather than having to make it in the free enterprise system we provide here in New England.”

Mr. Gordon:

“To some degree, I agree with you. There are profound changes ahead in the fishing business. The United States is a seafood-hungry nation. I think that to meet this demand we need to just about double our present landings, and I don't see that on the horizon in the present structure of the industry. But, I think you perhaps overstated the changes. I see an ability in the U.S. fishing industry to respond to this need to some extent.”

Audience Question:

“Anyone can respond to this—the issue seems to be that fish tissues, particularly the estuarine fishes, are becoming more and more contaminated with toxins of man-made origin. What impact is this having, or is it going to have, on the future if it increases in the fish populations? What impact is that going to have on the fisheries—what is the role of the Fisheries [NMFS] in responding to this?”

Mr. Gordon:

“Let one story show up in the newspapers that seafood is poisoning somebody, regardless of what the product is—whether it's oysters or clams taken from polluted waters around Long Island, or the cancerous fish incident that various broadcasting companies played up very large—and this will receive widespread, repeated showing. Every time this occurs, consumption decreases in the short-term and it has economic effect. I think it is safe to say that in some estuaries, and increasingly even in inland areas, you are finding fish with neoplasms or some aspect of them, and basically a fair amount of environmental stress is being placed on the fish. I'm not sure where it is going to end, but I am increasingly concerned, not only with that aspect, but in general, regarding the productivity of estuaries affected by careless wetland and drainage-basin use. It is a public policy, a political issue, that is of growing concern to everyone.”

Mr. Schaefer:

“Our time is up. I would like to thank you all, panelists and audience, for a very interesting and provocative exchange of views and ideas.”

The spirited dialogue at this forum consumed the allotted time of 2 hours and left the participants, audience and panelists alike, with much to think about concerning fisheries management in the latter part of the twentieth century.