

Bycatch Subcommittee
Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee
August 12, 2004

The Bycatch Subcommittee of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) met on Thursday, August 12 in conjunction with the August 2004 meeting of the full committee.

Members present:

Jim Gilmore
Rod Moore
Ralph Rayburn (Chair)
Larry Simpson (Advisory)
Chris Dorsett (invited guest member)

Members absent:

Bob Fletcher (involved in recreational working group)
Mel Moon (absent from full committee meeting)

The subcommittee reviewed and adopted the proposed agenda and then reviewed the minutes of its December 2003 meeting. While no changes were suggested, with the transcripts available on line, it was recommended that a process of rectifying minutes with the unedited transcript be undertaken.

The committee reviewed the “Evaluating Bycatch: A National Approach to Standardized Bycatch Monitoring Programs” Technical Report reflecting on the work of the National Bycatch Work Group lead by Dr. Joe Powers and being finalized for publication. The subcommittee suggested that an addition in the “Acknowledgments” of the report might have mentioned that the MAFAC reviewed the Groups report during its December 2003 meeting and found it “established a reasonable and substantive basis on which to establish a national standardized bycatch reporting system.”

While subcommittee member, Mel Moon, who also is a member of the Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee, was absent, the subcommittee reviewed the minutes of the Committee’s April 2004 meeting conducted in Key Largo, FL. It was noted that Mr. Moon was taking an active role in the “National and Regional Coordination” Subcommittee of the Committee.

The Subcommittee then considered the proper response to the periodic bycatch update request of the Committee made during its December 2003 meeting. The subcommittee recommends that periodic reports on the status of implementation of regional bycatch plans be presented at each committee meeting either as a presentation is warranted or at least an insert in meeting materials.

The Subcommittee then considered the appropriate relationship with the Protected Resources Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service. In discussion it was suggested that a diverse assemblage of issues exist with realized impacts characterized as bycatch. Many of these are overseen by the Protected Resources Office of NMFS and therefore would justify an oversight role of protected resources by the subcommittee. Further identified in later discussion, the subcommittee recommends that as new members are appointed to MAFAC and subcommittee

structure is considered, the expansion or realignment of the subcommittee to include a purview over issues related to secondary impacts of fisheries activities and resource protection be included in the subcommittee's charge with an appropriate name change such as "ecosystem impacts."

Discussion then turned to items the subcommittee wished to consider at its January 2005 meeting. These included consideration of response to coral petition including EFH impacts, review of sea turtle/longline issues to include circle hook requirements to include potential consideration for international export of these technologies and review of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council's efforts in ecosystem management.

Finally, the subcommittee requested that Rod Moore reflect on his service to MAFAC and provide insight on how the Committee and the Subcommittee might be more effective in accomplishing the goals established in the MAFAC Charter. Items discussed included how the subcommittee structure might be reoriented to better accommodate the general category of issues that could be focused through the subcommittee process to better facilitate committee discussion and actions. Mr. Moore also advised on how to elevate the profile of MAFAC to engage in the full range of its responsibilities as advisor to the Secretary of Commerce. In conclusion the subcommittee expressed appreciation to Mr. Moore for his dedicated leadership and service to MAFAC and the subcommittee as well as his untiring efforts to secure a sustainable fishery regime at the national and regional levels.