

**Summary of Catch Shares Briefing for Recreational Sector Interests
July 22, 2009 (2-3:30pm)**

Monica Medina, Task Force Chairperson, thanked participants for attending and providing their input on catch shares. She reminded the participants that NOAA is developing a policy, not a regulation, and that catch shares will not be considered a “one-size-fits-all” solution for every fishery. NOAA thinks catch share programs are good tools worth consideration and that any impediments to their consideration need to be remedied.

Ms. Medina described where we are now and where we are going. She described the process by which participants were selected, and stated that the group is not a federal advisory committee – participants are providing their individual thoughts. She wanted to use the time to listen to the participants. NOAA is trying to produce a draft interim policy by mid-August. The draft policy will become effective immediately, but it will be available for public comment for a period of 90 days or more. The agency would like a lot of feedback. The task force will return to all the councils again, and NOAA will engage in substantial public outreach.

Ms. Medina then opened the meeting up to questions and comments:

-In turn, the majority of participants each stated that they do not feel that catch shares are appropriate for recreational fisheries.

-Charter fishermen are at the intersection of recreational and commercial policies. How the catch shares policy will affect them was a major concern.

-Participants pointed out that mixed recreational/commercial fisheries are more complicated in regards to making initial allocations. Some of the allocations between recreational and commercial fisheries have not been re-examined in decades, yet there will continue to be growth in recreational fisheries in the future. One participant stated that once a catch share program has been established for the commercial fishery, the amount of fish available to the commercial fishery will be “memorialized” and it will be harder to reallocate between sectors. It was recommended that current allocations be reviewed and redistributed before instituting any catch share programs. Ms. Medina restated that catch shares are not a one-size-fits-all solution, and will be reviewed separately for every situation.

-Several participants said that they fear being subjected to excessive restrictions if the recreational share is fixed while recreational participation increases. They contended that this will deter many anglers from participating and investing in gear, which may negatively affect businesses.

-Some pointed out that there is very little public support for catch shares because recreational fishermen view commercial catch shares as subsidies, and any NOAA policy should explain fundamental reasons for catch shares and how/why those benefits should be given away.

- Several participants mentioned that the recreational fishery has a higher net economic impact in some fisheries, and that NOAA should favor recreational interests in those cases for their higher contribution to the economy.

-Some participants commented that the commercial fishery has better data than the recreational fishery, and that recreational data improvements will take years to be implemented fully. This lack of data may disadvantage recreational fisheries when it comes to allocation decisions.

-Several participants expressed interest in allowing shares to be transferable between recreational and commercial fisheries, and voiced concern that current catch share programs have not allowed that option on a “free market” basis to the recreational fishery.

-Participants pointed out that recreational fishermen often perceive catch shares as taking a public resource and giving it away to commercial fishermen for free. Some participants encouraged NOAA to consider collecting fees and using the money to improve recreational data.

-Several participants expressed concern that the councils do not have adequate recreational representation, and worry that recreational fisheries will be disadvantaged if the policy is broad and leaves many of the details of catch share programs to the discretion of the councils.

-A participant familiar with highly migratory species (HMS) stated that they do not see how catch shares are appropriate for HMS fisheries that are already subject to national landing limits.

-It was suggested that NOAA consider allocation of privileges or shares to the states for further redistribution, although states likely have no authority to recovery costs or assess a fee. A concern was raised regarding how a catch share policy will work in fisheries that cover both state and federal waters.

-One participant commented that councils need mechanisms to share information. NOAA indicated that the task force is already considering assembling criteria and lessons learned that might aid councils in catch share consideration.

-Several participants each stated that they disliked the speed at which this process is occurring. They encouraged NOAA to go slow once the draft policy is released and take lots of time for public comment.

-The participants were reminded about the NMFS catch shares website, and said that NMFS will post a summary of the three briefings and the task force conference calls. A mailing list will be created based on the list of invitees and participants at the briefings for ongoing communications.

Jim Balsiger, Acting Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries and Task Force participant, closed the meeting for Ms. Medina by thanking everyone for the time that they took to attend the briefing and asked them to continue considering these ideas and send emails if they had any additional thoughts. The session ended at 3:55pm

Participants –

NOAA Representatives

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Monica	Medina	NOAA Special Advisor to the Under Secretary
Mark	Holliday	NMFS Policy Office
Jessica	Dutton	NMFS Policy Office
Jennifer	Austin	NOAA Communications
Sasha	Prybowoski	NOAA Communications
Jim	Balsiger	NMFS Acting AA
Forbes	Darby	NOAA Sustainable Fisheries

In the Room

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Earl	Comstock	Counsel for the Charter Halibut Task Force
Bob	Hayes	Coastal Conservation Association
Matt	Paxton	Coastal Conservation Association
Matt	Dunn	National Marine Manufacturer's Association
Amy	Kenney	Fisheries Leadership & Sustainability Forum

On the Phone

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Jefferson	Angers	Center for Coastal Conservation
Chester	Brewer	Coastal Conservation Association
Jim	Donofrio	RFA
Bob	Gill	Catch Shares Task Force
Russell	Nelson	Bill Fish Foundation
Dennis	O'Hern	RFA
Ed	Sapp	Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Jason	Schratwieser	International Game Fish Association
Tom	St. Hilaire	Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Bob	Zales	National Assoc of Charter Boat Operations