

Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Crab Management Advisory Committee (CMAC) Meeting Summary
380 Fenwick Road, Fort Monroe, VA
Tuesday, August 20, 2024 – 4:00 P.M.

Members Present

Tye Burns
Marshall Cox
Kenneth Diggs
Spencer Headley
J.C. Hudgins
Chris Moore
Bernard “Wayne” Morris
Pete Nixon
Tom Powers
Nathan Reynolds
Cory Rice
Mark Sanford
John “Ed” Tankard III (chair)

VMRC Staff Present

Lt. Col. Herbert Bell
Andrew Button
John Cosgrove
Alexa Galván
Pat Geer
Brooke Lowman
Shanna Madsen
Nancy McElligott
Capt. Chris Miller
Lisa Pyle
Jill Ramsey
Ethan Simpson

Others Present

Ed Arnest
Zoe Benson
Jerome Bonnaville
Jordan Ferre
Elena Hoay
Doug Jenkins
Curtis Jenkins
Rom Lipcius (VIMS)
Lynnee Morris
Ron Owens (PRFC)
Gabby Saluta (VIMS)
Mike Seebo (VIMS)
Tim Wivell

4 other members of the public

Members Absent

Ernest George
Johnny Graham

Meeting summary was prepared by Jill Ramsey. Meeting was facilitated by Kristina Weaver (Weaver Strategies LLC).

I. Opening Remarks and Introductions

Upon confirming quorum was present, Kristina called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM. Kristina introduced herself to the group and gave five minutes for the group to review the memo that was distributed via email answering the committee’s questions from last meeting.

II. Presentation

Alexa Galván presented to the committee the meeting goals for the evening. The goal for this meeting was for CMAC to provide recommendations on how to implement a crab dredge fishery. Ms. Galvan stated that the goal for the outcome of this meeting is to have a CMAC recommendation and for CMAC to inform a staff recommendation to bring the Commission at the October 28, 2024 meeting. Staff was looking for recommendations on the following topics: conservation equivalency, quota amounts, eligibility for licenses, area for harvest, seasons, gear

restrictions, and other measures. Ms. Galvan reminded the committee about the packet that they received in their email from last meeting and asked for any clarifying questions they might have about those topics. Dr. Rom Lipcius provided answers to the questions that were directed at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) at the last meeting.

III. Discussion

Ms. Weaver led the committee in a discussion surrounding the staff presentation to develop a regulatory framework for the winter crab dredge fishery. The committee decided that instead of offering recommendations on a crab dredge framework, they would offer broader proposals related to crab management and seek consensus on those. The following are the four committee proposals that were brought forward and the results of the committee polling.

1. Spencer Headley proposed opening the winter crab dredge fishery from January 1 through February 28 with a 1.5 million pound quota and using most of the established criteria from the October 2013 dredge plan. This plan includes no conservation equivalency (CE) for the 2025 fishing year. Mr. Headley's proposal would revise the gear restrictions to allow divers and only allow transfers in the case of death or between immediate family members. After the 2025 season data is complete then CE can be considered for future seasons. Mr. Headley would like to see new harvesters allowed to enter the fishery after the first year if the number drops below a certain amount.
2 in favor of proposal as stated, 11 against
2. Nathan Reynolds proposed opening the crab pot fishery year-round with no season closures and not opening the crab dredge fishery.
9 in favor of proposal as stated, 5 against
3. Chris Moore proposed not opening the dredge fishery until after the new stock assessment is complete in the spring of 2026. At that time CMAC can revisit options based on the results.
5 in favor of proposal as stated, 7 against
4. Cory Rice proposed a formal motion to recommend opening the crab pot season through December 31, 2024 and thereafter the season will be March 1 through December 31. The dredge fishery will not be considered until after the stock assessment results in spring of 2026. Ken Diggs seconded the motion.
The motion passed 8 in favor, 5 against.

IV. Next Steps

Staff will present CMAC's recommendation to the Commission as a request for public hearing on September 24, 2024. On October 28, 2024, staff will present at the Commission the public hearing and the Commission will vote to establish new crab regulations. The public may offer public comment at either of these meetings or online through the agency website or Virginia Town Hall.

V. Public Comment

Mr. Jeremy Bonnaville, a Virginia crab buyer, made public comment regarding the market for winter dredged crabs in Virginia. He stated that after we closed the dredge fishery in 2008 Virginia lost its share in the market. His business currently buys dredged crabs from Delaware but they are not worth nearly as much as the pot caught crabs that are coming up from the southern states that time of year.

There were no other public comments.

VI. Adjourn

Meeting was called to a close at 6:36pm.