

Rhode Island Commercial Fluke Workshop
January 14, 2013
Hazards Room
URI Graduate School of Oceanography

Proceedings

Executive Summary

A Rhode Island Commercial Fluke Workshop was held on January 14, 2013 at the URI Graduate School of Oceanography in Narragansett, RI. The workshop was hosted by the URI Coastal Institute, in collaboration with the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM). Mark Amaral, of Lighthouse Consulting, served as the facilitator for the event. The workshop was a follow-up to the Rhode Island Commercial Fluke Symposium, held in January 2012. The workshop was designed to build on the open, objective process for evaluating issues and opportunities associated with the management of RI's commercial fluke fishery, with input and involvement from all stakeholders. An online survey was conducted after the Workshop to allow for additional input from fishermen and others who were not able to attend the Workshop. The issues presented and addressed via the Workshop and survey were identical, allowing for an aggregation of responses. Some 30 people attended and participated in the Workshop; 57 people responded to the survey.

The primary goal of the Workshop was to evaluate a set of management options based on key goals and objectives – i.e., the key characteristics of a successful commercial fluke management program for RI -- that emerged from the Symposium. The hope and expectation was that the evaluation process would help to hone in on a set of options that had the most relevance for formal consideration in 2013 (for 2014 implementation). The general approach of the symposium, the follow-up workshop, and the online survey was to begin to resolve, with input from the RI commercial fishing community and others, a program that would engender the most benefit for the RI commercial summer flounder fishery – with such benefits extending to the general public, to seafood consumers, to the commercial industry, and to the resource itself.

Neither the workshop format nor the survey was scientifically designed, so the purpose of the exercise was mostly aimed at getting a qualitative sense of how fishermen view the various management options relative to the set of characteristics that they themselves identified at the Symposium.

Unfortunately, the results of the Workshop and the survey were decidedly mixed, leading to no consensus amongst the various stakeholders in the RI commercial fluke fishery on a management approach that best addresses the characteristics of a successful fluke management program. This outcome is not surprising, given that the fishery has long been known to be the most complex and diverse fishery in the state. Nonetheless, the absence of a clear signal from stakeholders regarding a preferred direction for

management makes future management considerations as challenging and complex as when the post-pilot-program evaluation process was first launched in January 2012.

These Workshop Proceedings include the following sections:

- Background
- Workshop Summary
- Workshop Agenda (Appendix A)
- Key Characteristics of a Successful Commercial Fluke Management Program
- Options for Managing the Commercial Fluke Fishery in RI (Appendix B)
- Facilitated Group Discussion
- Summary of Group Discussion
- Follow-up Survey
- Summary of Survey Results

Background

The goal of the January 2012 Symposium was to have a transparent, objective, and focused discussion regarding the issues and opportunities that need to be addressed in the design and implementation of a successful commercial fluke management program for RI, leading to a shared understanding of those issues and opportunities. The Symposium was held on the heels of a three-year sector allocation pilot program involving the RI commercial fluke fishery.

The central issues and main themes that were presented and discussed at the Symposium are summarized in the Symposium Proceedings issued in April 2012 and available on the URI Coastal Institute website at:

<http://www.ci.uri.edu/SpecialEvents/FlukeSymposium/default.html>

Also in April 2012, DEM Director Janet Coit issued a Response to the Symposium, which further highlighted several main themes and common perspectives that emerged from the event. Additionally, in that document, the Director announced her decision not to pursue adoption of the sector allocation program, or any other alternative approach to commercial fluke management, for 2012, to allow further time to review and analyze proposals. The Director also committed to a continued exploration of fluke management, focusing on outcomes that best serve the State's broad interests; and committed to a follow-up forum aimed at solidifying programmatic goals and objectives and evaluating program design options in an open, transparent way, with input and involvement from all stakeholders. The Director's Response is available on DEM's Marine Fisheries website at: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/pdf/flksmpdr.pdf>

Workshop Summary

The January 2013 Workshop was conducted in response to the Director's call for a follow-up forum. The goals of the Workshop were to: (1) solidify programmatic goals and objectives, and (2) evaluate management options in accordance with those goals and objectives. The objectives of the Workshop were to:

- Understand the purpose for and intent of continuing the conversation;

- Review the outcomes from the first Fluke Symposium and use those findings to inform the ongoing discussion;
- Describe the means, to be employed at the workshop, for comparing and evaluating options for managing RI's commercial fluke fishery;
- Present, compare, and evaluate four conceptual, framework options for managing RI's commercial fluke fishery ; and
- Clearly define the process for formal consideration and final decision-making regarding the review of management options for the commercial fluke fishery for 2014 and beyond, drawing upon the information and perspectives gained from the Symposium and Workshop.

The Workshop was held at the URI Graduate School of Oceanography. The workshop was open to the public; about thirty people attended. The agenda for the Workshop is attached as **Appendix A**.

Key Characteristics of a Successful Commercial Fluke Management Program

Following DEM Director Coit's opening remarks, Judith Swift, Director of the URI Coastal Institute, gave a brief presentation, summarizing six key characteristics of a successful commercial fluke management program identified during the January 2012 Symposium. The outline of that presentation is set forth below.

1. Recognize, Balance, and Protect the Public's Interests in Marine Fisheries

- Conserve and manage the fishery in accordance with the public's interests.
 - From a natural resource perspective, those interests include:
 - Preventing overfishing and achieving sustainable harvests; and
 - Minimizing discards, waste, ecological impacts, and habitat degradation.
 - From a commercial perspective, the public interest generally pertains to:
 - Providing for those who rely upon the commercial fishing industry as a source of food;
 - Supporting those who hold jobs or otherwise benefit economically from being engaged in or affiliated with the commercial fishing industry; and
 - Enabling those who wish to enter the industry.
 - Generally the public interest involves optimizing yield and thereby achieving full, sustainable, effective, and efficient use of available harvest opportunities.

2. Promote Sound and Sustainable Resource Management

- Employ catch limits that are based on scientifically valid stock assessments, with buffers to account for uncertainty.
- Reduce the uncertainty associated with catch limits and allow for maximum, sustainable harvests.

- Use good science, and regulations that can be monitored and enforced.
- Cover management costs.

3. Enhance Safety at Sea

- Support safe fishing operations.

4. Seek to Achieve Fairness and Equity

- Regarding access to, use of, and benefits derived from the resource.
- Taking into account the principles of fairness and equity evoked by RI constitutional law.
- Pertaining not just to industry participants, but to the general public as well.
- To the maximum extent possible/practicable, providing for the good of the whole, rather than the benefit of a few.

5. Recognize the Business Interests of Fishermen and the Overall Economic Value of Commercial Fishing

- Seek to achieve the maximum economic value to the State.
- Provide fishermen, as businessmen, maximum flexibility and the ability to minimize costs, enabling them to operate stable, efficient, and profitable businesses and adjust to variations in markets, ecosystems and resource availability. This includes:
 - Putting more decision-making into the hands of fishermen, e.g., when they can fish and how much they can land.
 - Pursuing bottom-up, incentive-based approaches in lieu of inefficient and overly constraining top-down approaches.
 - Recognizing and accommodating the multi-species nature of the region's fisheries, and the inevitability of certain levels of bycatch.
 - Allowing for and supporting unique business opportunities, e.g., direct sales.
 - Seeking and supporting opportunities to increase economic returns without increasing catch, i.e., value-added approaches.
- Maintain sufficient catch limits to support the economic interests of the industry.
- Scale the industry in accordance with resource availability.
- Provide sufficient profits to keep boats safe, via regular investments in maintenance and upkeep.
- Encourage and support the continued economic viability of shoreside infrastructure and support services, on which the overall economic welfare of the industry depends
- Facilitate the steady flow of fresh, high-quality seafood to the market and offer benefits for all – harvesters, buyers, sellers, and consumers.

6. Recognize and Protect the Unique Nature of the RI Commercial Fishing Industry

- Protect existing jobs.
- Maintain the diversity of the fleet (making it more resilient to changes, including stock fluctuations).
- Avoid consolidation.
- Pursue opportunities to grow and modernize the industry.
- Support harmony; avoid rifts.
- Provide adequate opportunities for future generations to enter the industry.

Options for Managing the Commercial Fluke Fishery in RI

The next item on the Workshop agenda involved a presentation by Jason McNamee, of DEM’s Marine Fisheries Program, that presented and reviewed four options for managing the commercial fluke fishery. The options were offered for discussion purposes only, and were intended to cover a range of potentially viable approaches, from status quo, to a modified version of traditional quota management, to a hybrid catch-share approach. The presentation, in powerpoint format, is attached as **Appendix B**.

Facilitated Group Discussion

Following the presentation on management options, the Workshop participants were asked to compare the options. Participants were divided into five randomly selected sub-groups of approximately 8-10 people per group. Each group was assigned one of the six characteristic categories and asked to compare their category to the four management options. For each category, the sub-group assigned to that category was asked to forge consensus on whether or not each of the four management options addressed the characteristic, and to what extent. The groups were also invited to offer suggested changes to the options that would help to better align them with the characteristics. Answers were noted on pre-made “x-walk” posters, and then each table reported out their findings to all the Workshop participants. Following the Workshop, the results were transferred into electronic tabular form. Those results are provided below.

Characteristic #1: Recognizes, Balances, and Protects the Public’s Interests in Marine Fisheries

Do you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree that the proposed options.....

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Conserves and manages the fishery in accordance with the public’s interests.	Agree (A)	A	Neutral - (N) 1 Strongly	3-A 2-Disagree (D)

			Disagree	
From a natural resource perspective, those interests include:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventing overfishing and achieving sustainable harvests; and 	A	A	N	A 1-D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimizing discards, waste, ecological impacts, and habitat degradation. 	Range from A to weak Agree	A	Weak Agree	A 1-D
From a commercial perspective, the public interest generally pertains to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides those who rely upon the commercial fishing industry as a source of food; 	A	A	A 1-N	N
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports those who hold jobs or otherwise benefit economically from being engaged in or affiliated with the commercial fishing industry; and 	A	A	A 1-N	3-A 2-D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables those who wish to enter the industry. 	Strongly Disagree	D	D 1-A	Mixed
All interests are well served by the proposed approach/programs because it optimizes yield, achieving full, sustainable, effective, and efficient use of available harvest opportunities.	D 1-A	N 1-A	2-A 2-N 1-D	3-A 2-D
Overall, does this option <i>Recognize, Balance, and Protect the Public's Interests in Marine Fisheries</i>	D 1-N	N 1-A	N	3-A 2-D
Suggested changes to the options	Protecting public's interests too broad of a way to word this.			
Option 1. It's all about the egg! Spawning closure 12/months equal allocation	DEM needs to get hands around number of Fluke exceptions and allow entry/exit lottery like is done with CFLs.			
Option 2. Eliminate N.M.F.S. Put money into fish hatcheries. Give kids chance to bring good things to life	Allow sectors in Option 1.			
Option 3. Expand exemption to mobile & fixed gear to land 200 lbs daily on current aggregate program. Why? – mortality reduction				
Option 4. Catch share program discards fluke after share is filled.				

Characteristic #2: Promotes Sound and Sustainable Resource Management

Do you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree that the proposed options.....

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Uses limits that are based on scientifically valid stock assessments, with buffers to account for uncertainty.	A	A	A	Strongly Disagree
Reduces the uncertainty associated with catch limits and allow for maximum, sustainable harvests.	A	A	A	Strongly Disagree
Uses good science and can be monitored and enforced.	A	A	A	A
Cover its management costs.	N	N	N	Strongly Disagree
Overall, does this option <i>Promote Sound and Sustainable Resource Management</i>	A	A	A	Strongly Disagree
Suggested changes to the options Option 1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involve the industry more on a science standpoint - Collaborative research - Advocate for best science at the federal level. - Timely data. - Equal access to research set aside program. 		Equal access to set aside (not auction)	this will be a viable option in the future if stock is rebuilt	

Characteristic #3: Enhances Safety at Sea

Do you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree that the proposed options.....

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Supports safe fishing operations.	N	N	A	N
Overall, does this option <i>Enhance Safety at Sea</i>	N	N	A	N
Suggested changes to the options	Boat size dependent	Boat size dependent	Boat size dependent	It depends on which side of the hybrid model that you are on.

Characteristic #4: Is Fair and Equitable

Do you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree that the proposed options.....

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Is particularly fair and equitable with regard to accessing, using, and deriving benefits from the resource.	D	2-D 1-A	D	50/50
Takes into account the principles of fairness and equity evoked by RI constitutional law.	D 1-Not sure	D	D	50/50
Is fair and equitable not just to industry participants, but to the general public as well.	2-D 2-A	50/50	D	50/50
To the maximum extent possible/practicable, management programs provides for the good of the whole, rather than the benefit of a few.	2-D 2-A	50/50	D	50/50
Overall, is this option <i>Fair and Equitable</i>	2-A 2-D	50/50	D	50/50
Suggested changes to the options Without a fair and equitable process for allocation Auction is necessary to make any option fair and equitable Catch share leaves small independent fishermen on the outside looking in and fish houses owning all allocations. I am not convinced that the Fluke fishery in RI can be fair and equitable.				

Characteristic #5: Recognizes and Protects the Unique Nature of the RI Commercial Fishing Industry

Do you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree that the proposed options.....

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Protects existing jobs.		Agree	3-Agree 1-Disagree	2-Disagree 1-Agree
Maintains the diversity of the fleet (making it more resilient to changes, including stock fluctuations).	Disagree	3-Neutral 1-Agree	2-Agree 1-Disagree 1-?	2-Disagree 1-Agree
Avoids consolidation.	3-Agree 1-?	3-Neutral 1-Agree	1-Neutral 1-Disagree 1-Agree 1-?	2-Disagree 1-Neutral
Pursues opportunities to grow and modernize the industry.	3-Disagree 1-Agree	3-Disagree 1-Neutral	2-Disagree Slightly Agree	2-Disagree 1-Neutral
Supports harmony; avoids rifts.	3-Agree 1-Disagree	3-Agree 1-Neutral	2-Neutral 2-Disagree 1-Agree	2-Disagree 1-Neutral
Provides adequate opportunities for future generations to enter the industry.	Agree	2-Agree 2-Neutral	Agree	2-Disagree 1-Agree
Overall, does this option <i>Recognize and Protect the Unique Nature of the RI Commercial Fishing Industry</i>	2-Agree 2-Disagree	2-Disagree 1-Agree 1-Neutral	Agree	2-Disagree 1-Agree
Suggested changes to the options Concerns about -the number of boats allowed to participate in an aggregate program -the time of the sub-periods -the aggregates quota amounts particularly the summer aggregates Please monitor winter fluke landings so the overage doesn't run into summer landing season and take away from summer quota Need statistical analysis of allocation process. Establishment of a state run RSA is a great idea. However, it should be used for RSA programs only. The RSA should not be used to make up for short falls of sub-periods.	POS data transfer to DEM			

Characteristic #6: *Recognizes the Business Interests of Fishermen and the Overall Economic Value of Commercial Fishing*

Do you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree that the proposed options.....

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Provides the maximum economic value to the State.		Strongly Agree	Need more info on this option	
Provides fishermen, as businessmen, maximum flexibility and the ability to minimize costs, enabling them to operate stable, efficient, and profitable businesses and adjust to variations in markets, ecosystems, and resource availability.	Strongly Disagree But: aggregate helps	A	Need more info on this option	A
Maintains sufficient catch limits to support the economic interests of the industry.	N depends on quota and type of operation	N depends on quota and type of operation	Need more info on this option	A
Scales the industry in accordance with resource availability.	N	N	Need more info on this option	N
Provides sufficient profits to keep boats safe, via regular investments in maintenance and upkeep.			Need more info on this option	
Encourages and supports the continued economic viability of shoreside infrastructure and support services, on which the overall economic welfare of the industry depends	N	N	Need more info on this option	N
Facilitates the steady flow of fresh, high-quality seafood to the market and offers benefits for all – harvesters, buyers, sellers, and consumers.	A	A	Need more info on this option	A
Overall, does this option <i>Recognize the Business Interests of Fishermen and the Overall Economic Value of Commercial Fishing</i>	N	Neutral/ Agree	It depends	It depends
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Suggested changes to the options		Seems to be the most general plan to help all types of fishing		

Summary of Group Discussion

A tally of the results from all six sub-groups yields the following summary:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
1. Overall, does this option <i>Recognize, Balance, and Protect the Public's Interests in Marine Fisheries</i>	D 1-N	N 1-A	N	A-3 D-2
2. Overall, does this option <i>Promote Sound and Sustainable Resource Management</i>	A	A	A	Strongly Disagree
3. Overall, does this option <i>Enhance Safety at Sea</i>	N	N	N	N
4. Overall, is this option <i>Fair and Equitable</i>	No consensus, range from A to D	No consensus, range from A to D	D	No consensus, range from A to D
5. Overall, does this option <i>Recognize and Protect the Unique Nature of the RI Commercial Fishing Industry</i>	No consensus, range from A to D	No consensus, range from A to D	N	No consensus, range from A to D
6. Overall, does this option <i>Recognize the Business Interests of Fishermen and the Overall Economic Value of Commercial Fishing</i>	N	Ranged from N to A	Too vague to consider	Depends

The results suggest that:

- Regarding characteristic #1, management option #1 does not meet the standard; there is no clear consensus regarding the other options.
- Regarding characteristic #2, there is agreement that all of the options meet the standard, except option #4, for which there is strong agreement that it does not meet the standard
- Regarding characteristic #3, the perspectives are neutral with regard to all four options.
- Regarding characteristic #4, there is no clear consensus regarding any of the options except option #3, for which there is strong agreement that it does not meet the standard.
- Regarding characteristic #5, there is no clear consensus regarding any of the options.
- Regarding characteristic #6, there is no clear consensus regarding any of the options.

The results further suggest that no one management option emerged as being either most or least preferred.

Follow-up Survey

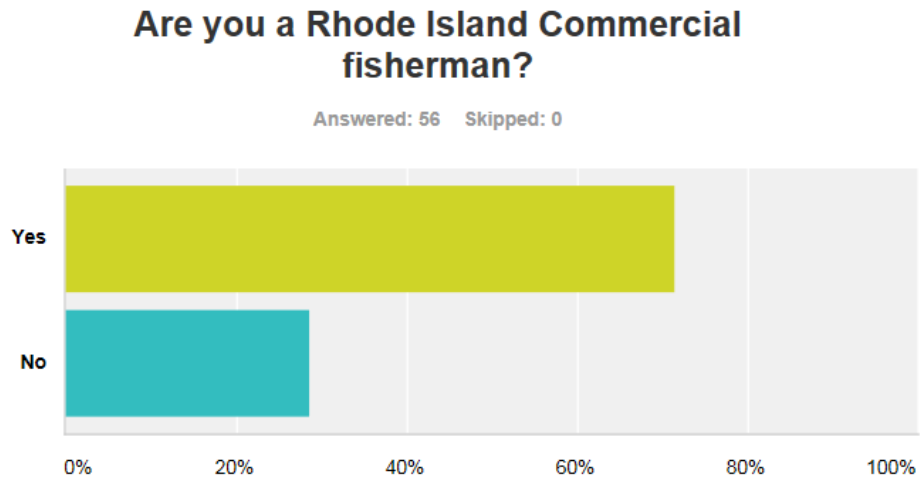
Given the relatively light attendance at the Workshop, and the recognition that there were likely other fishermen and other members of the public who would be interested in commenting on the management options, within the context of the analytic approach employed at the Workshop, a follow-up survey was conducted. The survey was designed to replicate the exact same questions that were posed to the Workshop participants. The survey was created using the free online survey tool called "Survey Monkey". The web address for the survey was: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MDGHJ59>. The survey was disseminated in March 2013 via the DEM Marine Fisheries listserv.

A total of 57 participants took the survey. A total of 56 took the survey on line, and one submitted a paper copy to DEM. The online surveys are presented below. The submitted survey was also reviewed and is presented as a note under the quantified online surveys.

The survey began with three back ground information questions, generally pertaining to the fishing mode (recreational or commercial) of the survey participant and whether they were actively involved in the summer flounder fishery.

Survey Results

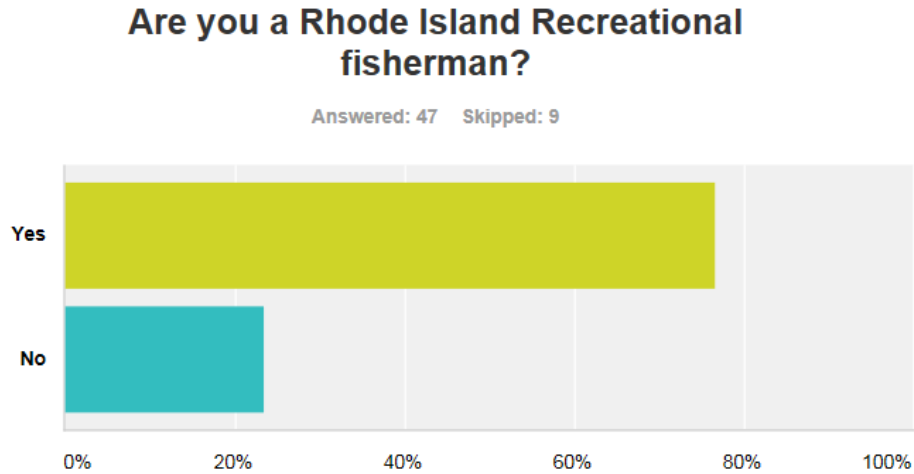
Question 1 asked whether the survey participant was a commercial or recreational fisherman. Approximately 71% of the respondents were commercial fishermen.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	71.43%	40
No	28.57%	16
Total		56

Figure 1 – Graphical and tabular results from online survey to background question 1.

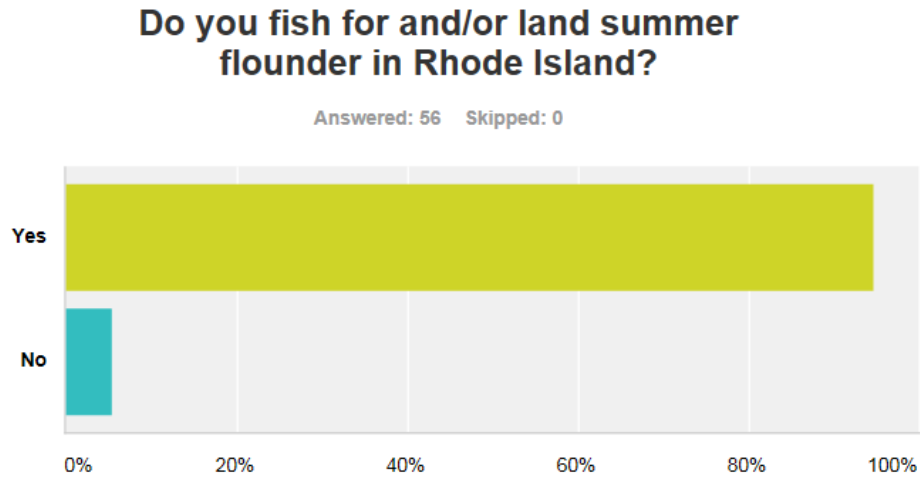
Question 2 asked whether the fishermen considered themselves a recreational fisherman. Approximately 77% of the respondents considered themselves recreational fishermen. This would indicate that many of the respondents participated in both modes of fishing, recreational and commercial.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	76.60%	36
No	23.40%	11
Total		47

Figure 2 – Graphical and tabular results from online survey to background question 2.

Question 3 had to do with the activity of the respondent in the summer flounder fishery. All but 5% of the respondents indicated they fished for summer flounder in RI, so the vast majority of the information from the survey is coming from fishermen who actively fish for summer flounder in RI as either a commercial or recreational (or both) fisherman in RI (Figure 3).



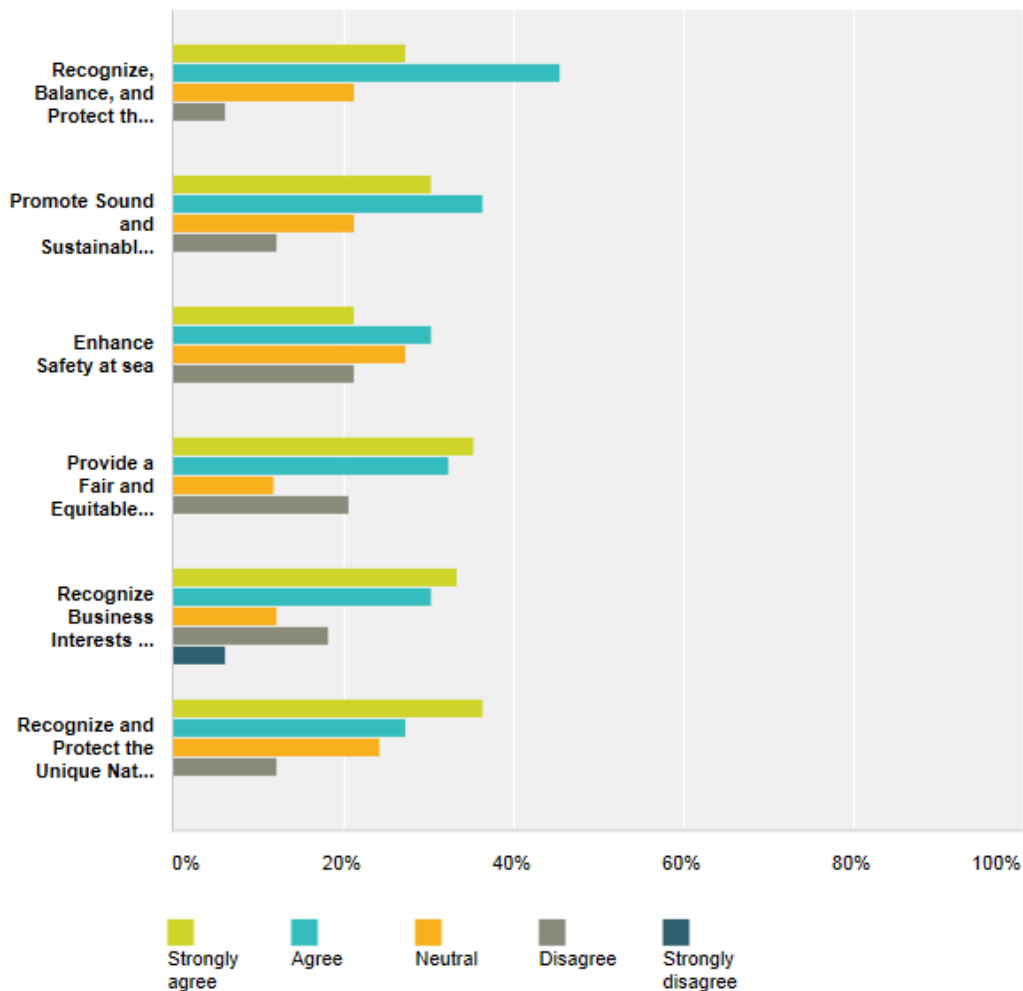
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	94.64%	53
No	5.36%	3
Total		56

Figure 3 – Graphical and tabular results from online survey to background question 3.

The next set of 4 questions went to the crux of the information being sought by the survey. The questions were set up in a matrix format, where the respondent matched up the option with each of the characteristics, as described in the introduction to the survey (which mimicked the introductory information provided at the Workshop), and then indicated how well that characteristic matched up with each characteristic on a five parameter scale -- from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The following is a presentation of the results, along with a qualitative interpretation.

Question 4 asked about the current state of fishery management in RI by seeking the survey participant's opinion on status quo management. The text of the question was:

Option 1: Status Quo or Traditional Approach. This program has 3 sub periods, each with its own allocation: January 1 - April 30 = 54% May 1 - October 31 = 35% November 1 - December 31 = 11% Each sub period has a starting possession limit which may be modified depending on current catch rates during the sub period, with the goal being to maintain an open fishery. There are aggregate landings programs which run in the winter and the summer, but only one aggregate program can be joined by an individual in any one year. From your perspective does this option:



	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Recognize, Balance, and Protect the Public's Interests in Marine Fisheries	27.27% 9	45.45% 15	21.21% 7	6.06% 2	0% 0	33
Promote Sound and Sustainable Resource Management	30.30% 10	36.36% 12	21.21% 7	12.12% 4	0% 0	33
Enhance Safety at sea	21.21% 7	30.30% 10	27.27% 9	21.21% 7	0% 0	33
Provide a Fair and Equitable Program	35.29% 12	32.35% 11	11.76% 4	20.59% 7	0% 0	34
Recognize Business Interests of Fishermen and the Overall Economic Value of Commercial Fishing	33.33% 11	30.30% 10	12.12% 4	18.18% 6	6.06% 2	33
Recognize and Protect the Unique Nature of the RI Commercial Fishing Industry	36.36% 12	27.27% 9	24.24% 8	12.12% 4	0% 0	33

Figure 4 – Graphical and tabular results from online survey to question 4

Based on the results for question 4, it is apparent that many respondents have a generally positive view regarding RI's status quo management for summer flounder, with the exception that the safety at sea characteristic had almost a perfect split in responses. While the majority viewed this option positively, there was certainly a split and there was no clear consensus for this option.

Some respondents added additional text to this survey question; those additional comments are presented below:

65% OF THE QUOTA IS WHEN WE CAN,T ACCES THE PRODUCT . ROD & REEL LAST SEASON / 80% OF MY CATCH WAS MEDS / THAT WAS BEING COULD BY THE MAJORITY OF R&R , WHICH MADE THE PRICE GO DOWN TO 2.00 -2.35 FOR MEDS WHILE WHEN TAUTOG FISHING I SAW ALL JO,S GETTING LANDED BY THE DRAGGERS /OFF SHORE

3/19/2013 12:08 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

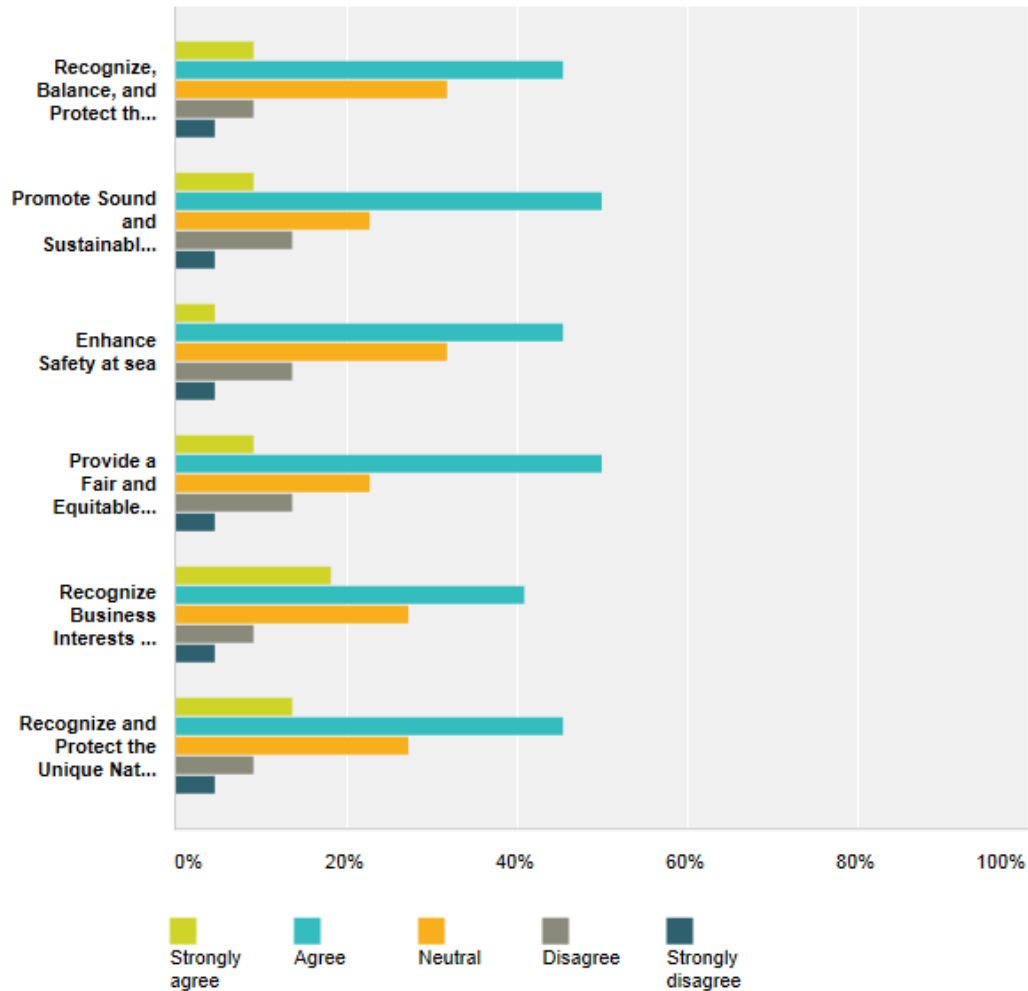
Would like to transit home with a Mass limit.

3/18/2013 7:04 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Question 5 asked whether modifications to the existing system, while maintaining the program elements that currently exist like management through seasons and possession

limits, was something that might better meet the characteristics of a good management program. The text of the question was:

Option 2: Modified Traditional Approach. This program would most likely maintain 3 sub periods, each with its own allocation, but these sub periods or the allocations in the sub periods could be changed. Each sub period would still have a starting possession limit which could be set dependent on the potentially new sub period length or allocation. Aggregate landings programs could be kept, expanded, or ended. From your perspective does this option:



	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Recognize, Balance, and Protect the Public's Interests in Marine Fisheries	9.09% 2	45.45% 10	31.82% 7	9.09% 2	4.55% 1	22
Promote Sound and Sustainable Resource Management	9.09% 2	50% 11	22.73% 5	13.64% 3	4.55% 1	22
Enhance Safety at sea	4.55% 1	45.45% 10	31.82% 7	13.64% 3	4.55% 1	22
Provide a Fair and Equitable Program	9.09% 2	50% 11	22.73% 5	13.64% 3	4.55% 1	22
Recognize Business Interests of Fishermen and the Overall Economic Value of Commercial Fishing	18.18% 4	40.91% 9	27.27% 6	9.09% 2	4.55% 1	22
Recognize and Protect the Unique Nature of the RI Commercial Fishing Industry	13.64% 3	45.45% 10	27.27% 6	9.09% 2	4.55% 1	22

Figure 5 – Graphical and tabular results from online survey to question 5.

Based on the results for question 5, it is apparent that many respondents hold a generally positive view regarding the performance of a modified version of the current management program. Again, while the majority viewed this option positively, there was certainly a split and there was no clear consensus for this option.

Some respondents added additional text to this survey question; those additional comments are presented below:

Aggregate program should not be allowed in state waters during the summer period.. A bit of tweaking could be considered relative to sub-period time frames and quota shifts may as was proposed by DFW at the AP in 2012, but we need to step litely with this in the interest of equity.

3/21/2013 11:07 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I THINK A MORE EQUAL BALANCE OF QUOTA,S MAY HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT .

3/19/2013 12:09 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

very confusing - no clue what you mean here ???

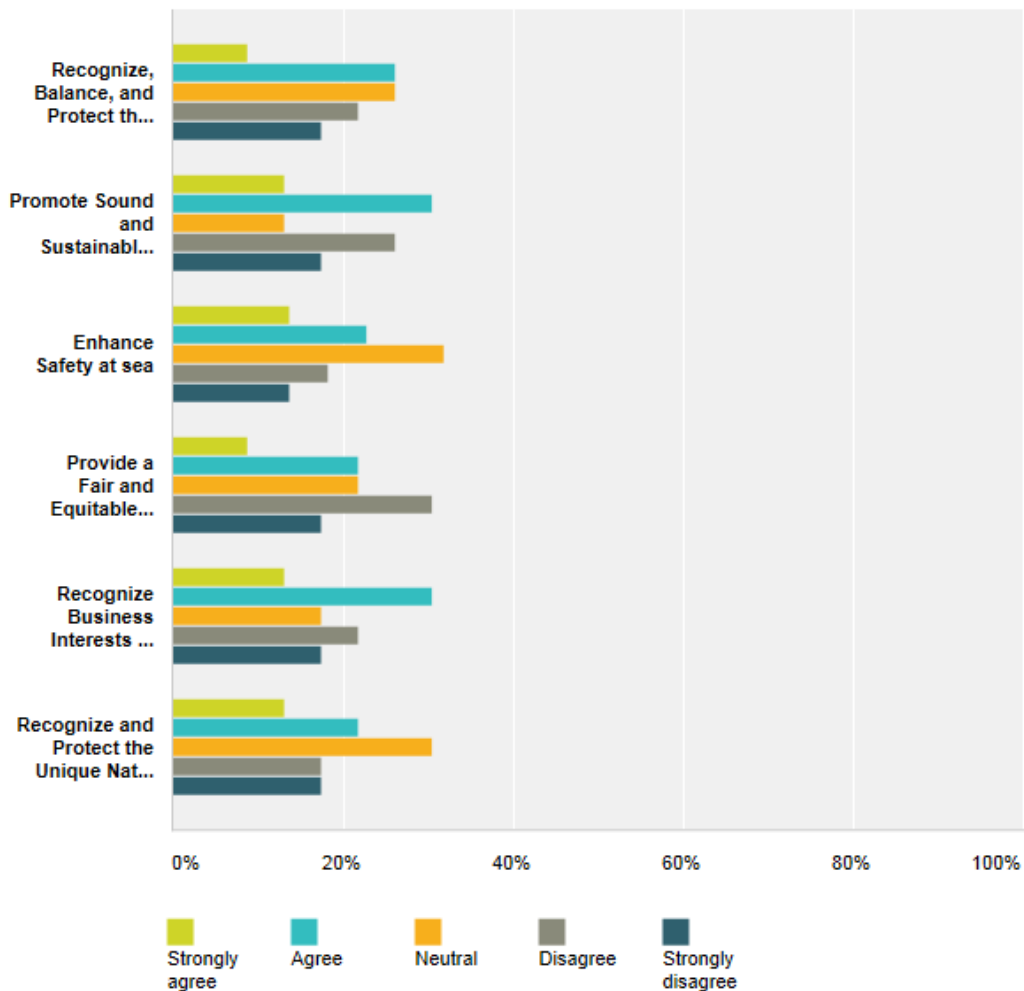
3/19/2013 6:06 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The concept of having sub periods only works if there are limits on participation based on the nature of the period. For example, a marked increase in effort in the summer period would negativly effect the small boat (state water) and recreational fisheries should the aggregate program be expanded or the daily limit raised to high during that period. Without having that specific information it would be impossible to logically respond to these questions.

3/18/2013 11:58 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Question 6 offered another version of a modified approach to the current management program. As an additional element to the existing management program, aggregate programs are run allowing additional flexibility to fishermen. There are currently constraints to a fisherman’s ability to enter these programs, namely the need for a summer flounder exemption certificate. This option would change the existing aggregate program to some degree. The text of the question was:

Option 3: Increased access to the aggregate program. This option would maintain a traditional management program in all other aspects but could change how the aggregate programs function. Some of the options that could be changed are: 1. Add in a third aggregate program to the winter 2 sub period, 2. Remove the summer aggregate program, 3. Increase the time period over which to aggregate landings (currently 1 week, could increase to 2 weeks), 4. Could open limited access to latent summer flounder exemption certificates to allow additional participants. From your perspective does this option:



	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Recognize, Balance, and Protect the Public's Interests in Marine Fisheries	8.70% 2	26.09% 6	26.09% 6	21.74% 5	17.39% 4	23
Promote Sound and Sustainable Resource Management	13.04% 3	30.43% 7	13.04% 3	26.09% 6	17.39% 4	23
Enhance Safety at sea	13.64% 3	22.73% 5	31.82% 7	18.18% 4	13.64% 3	22
Provide a Fair and Equitable Program	8.70% 2	21.74% 5	21.74% 5	30.43% 7	17.39% 4	23
Recognize Business Interests of Fishermen and the Overall Economic Value of Commercial Fishing	13.04% 3	30.43% 7	17.39% 4	21.74% 5	17.39% 4	23
Recognize and Protect the Unique Nature of the RI Commercial Fishing Industry	13.04% 3	21.74% 5	30.43% 7	17.39% 4	17.39% 4	23

Figure 6 – Graphical and tabular results from online survey to question 6.

Based on the results for question 6, there is almost a complete split in feelings toward this option. Overall, the responses would indicate that a majority hold a neutral to negative opinion of this option.

Some respondents added additional text to this survey question; those additional comments are presented below:

Removal of the aggregate program in state waters during the summer period would be a definite plus to the fishery. The summer flounder exemption certificate program should remain intact and not messed with. Regardless of its original intent it has become a safety valve to protect against overexploitation of the resource. It is also a concept upon which several businesses have been modeled.

3/21/2013 11:17 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Adding a third aggregate program and expanding the exemption certificates granted by an entry-exit ratio would allow for more responsible and flexible harvesting of fluke. The aggregate program acts like a mini-version of sectors on a weekly basis. A participant can catch their full aggregate over the course of 2 days and have much less discards and bycatch when compared to catching fluke at 100lbs/day for 7 days in a week.

3/19/2013 12:26 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

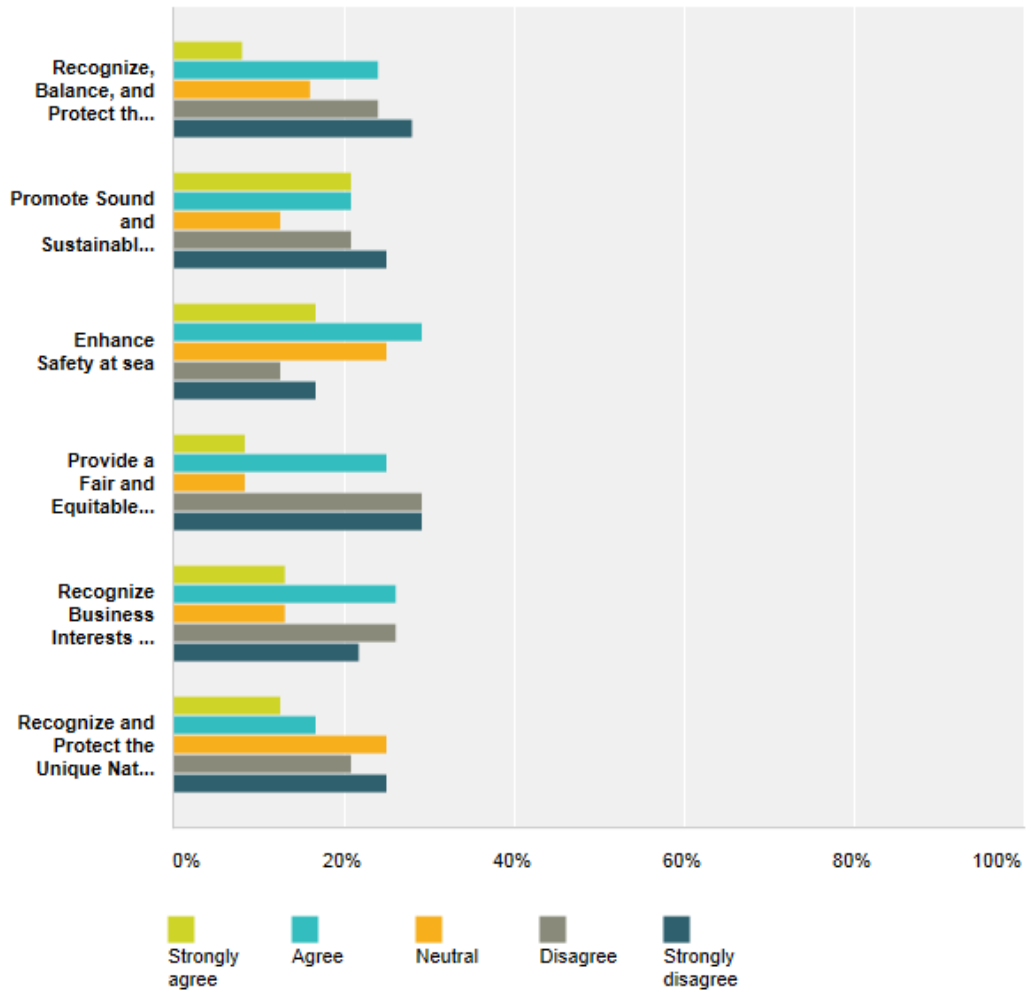
i THINK CATCH SHARE BASE & SECTOR FISHING WILL WIPE OUT 95% OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY I,LL NEVER SEE IT ,INMY TIME BUT ITS HEADING THE PATH OF THE BIG CORPORATIONS / WITH A FEW CONTROLLING OR JUST MAIN HAVING COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE FISHERIES .

3/19/2013 12:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Again, there are too many variables left open to judge the possible benefits or problems with a change to this option.

Question 7 offered an option that was the most different from the current management regime. This option would entertain a voluntary catch share program coupled with a second program that would run as a traditional program managed by sub periods and possession limits. The text of the question was:

Option 4: Hybrid catch share program. This option would run a traditional management program and a voluntary catch share program concurrently. Inclusion in either program would be completely voluntary but would need to be determined prior to the start of the year. The allocation allowed for the catch share program could be set based on participation and/or set at a maximum amount. In addition, the allocation to the catch share program participants could be based on history, a formula, a combination of history and a formula, or administered through an auction program. The catch share program could take the form of individual quotas or a sector type program. From your perspective does this option:



	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Recognize, Balance, and Protect the Public's Interests in Marine Fisheries	8% 2	24% 6	16% 4	24% 6	28.00% 7	25
Promote Sound and Sustainable Resource Management	20.83% 5	20.83% 5	12.50% 3	20.83% 5	25% 6	24
Enhance Safety at sea	16.67% 4	29.17% 7	25% 6	12.50% 3	16.67% 4	24
Provide a Fair and Equitable Program	8.33% 2	25% 6	8.33% 2	29.17% 7	29.17% 7	24
Recognize Business Interests of Fishermen and the Overall Economic Value of Commercial Fishing	13.04% 3	26.09% 6	13.04% 3	26.09% 6	21.74% 5	23
Recognize and Protect the Unique Nature of the RI Commercial Fishing Industry	12.50% 3	16.67% 4	25% 6	20.83% 5	25% 6	24

Figure 7 – Graphical and tabular results from online survey to question 7.

Based on the results for question 7, there is almost a complete split in feelings toward this option. Overall, the responses would indicate a majority hold a neutral to negative opinion of this option. One interesting result, however, is in the safety-at-sea category, where the positive responses slightly outweighed the negative.

This option elicited the most descriptive comments, which are presented below:

There should not be any catch share programs allowed in state waters. Relative to federal waters, this has been a disaster from day one and has resulted in consolidation of the big operators and the demise of the small boat fishery. We can call it catch shares when in fact it is limited access and a "put me out of bussiness card".

3/21/2013 11:26 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Allowing a fisherman to fish a predetermined allocation in a sector-type program creates the most economic flexibility for the fishing operation. It also significantly reduces by-catch of unwanted species and discards of the target species because "hi-grading" would be reduced or eliminated if the vessel is required to bring in all legal-sized summer flounder that are caught. Allocations should be based on historical participation and landings with the option for quota transfer to allow for new participants to gain access. Vessel size or horsepower should not be factored in since historical landings are generally reflective of length/horsepower characteristics, i.e. a larger boat might fish for summer flounder through the winter and land more fish in a given year and thus will be allocated a larger allocation anyway.

3/19/2013 12:26 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I.M NOT FIMILIAR WITH THE HYBRID CATCH SHARE PROGRAM .

3/19/2013 12:13 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Again, if the question asked for input on a specific change I would be able to judge the possible effects of the change.

3/19/2013 12:02 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

You can't get me to say catch shares are better! Already did not work in R.I.

3/18/2013 7:08 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Privitization of a public resource has been a failure in just about all fisheries throughout the world where instituted. The State should steer well clear of these ill advised plans.

3/18/2013 4:56 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

sounds like way too much paper and rules and it seems that it will exempt some people from the fishery completely. the more you regulate the more we will see backyard sales .

3/18/2013 4:45 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Summary of Survey Results

From the background information questions, the characteristics of those participating in the survey can be broadly described as actively fishing individuals who participate in the summer flounder fishery. Both commercial and recreational participants are represented. The survey broadened the response base of fishermen beyond those who were in attendance at the workshop and, and as such, achieved its purpose.

Based on the results of the online survey, there is no clear option that the majority of the respondents prefer. In each case, there is a split opinion, with the balance tipping slightly one way or the other depending on the option. In general, the existing program or a modification thereof elicited a slight majority of positive comments, while the aggregate and hybrid catch share options elicited a slight majority of negative comments. Even in the case of safety at sea, there was no clear preference, with almost all options showing a slight majority of positive responses, thus rendering it an inconclusive factor.

With regard to the written comments that fishermen submitted after each question, there were a couple of common themes. There was a consistent comment about not being able to make informed decisions based on the generality of the questions. However, the questions were general by design, as the intent was to get broad opinion on the general management concepts presented in each case. That point was emphasized at the

Workshop, but was apparently more difficult to convey online. It is unclear as to the level this may have affected the online responses to the various options.

Another common theme in the written comments was a negative feeling towards catch shares with arguments being made about consolidation and a lack of equity in these programs. While most of the comments regarding catch shares were negative, some positive comments were offered as well.

A final theme that came from the written comments was a desire to remove the aggregate program from the summer sub period. This point was made strongly in a couple of instances, even when the aggregate program was not an element of the option being evaluated.

Appendix A

**Rhode Island Commercial Fluke Workshop
January 14, 2013
Hazards Room
URI Graduate School of Oceanography**

Goals and Agenda

Goals

- Understand the purpose for and intent of having this conversation.
- Review the outcomes from the first Fluke Symposium and use those findings to inform today's discussion.
- Describe the means, to be employed at the workshop, for comparing and evaluating options for managing RI's commercial fluke fishery.
- Present, compare, and evaluate four conceptual, framework options for managing RI's commercial fluke fishery.
- Clearly define the process for formal consideration and final decision making regarding the review of management options for the commercial fluke fishery for 2014 and beyond, drawing upon the information and perspectives gained from the Symposium and Workshop.

Agenda

8:00	Registration and Continental Breakfast	
8:30	Welcome and Introductions	J Swift, URI; M. Amaral, Facilitator
8:45	Director's Opening Remarks	J. Coit, DEM Director
9:00	Fluke Symposium I: Characteristics of a successful commercial fluke management program	J. Swift
9:20	Management Options	J. McNamee, DEM
9:45	Break	
10:00	Facilitated Group Discussion: Compare the management options to the characteristics for a successful commercial fluke management program	Facilitator
10:45	Group Presentations	Facilitator
12:00	Thank-you, and Next Steps	J. Coit
12:30	Adjourn	

Appendix B

{Powerpoint Presentation: *Fluke Management in RI: Four Potential Approaches*}



Fluke Management In RI: Four Potential Approaches

Overview

- **The following presentation outlines 4 potential options for fluke management in RI state waters**
- **These options were chosen as those that seem the most viable from previous management discussions**
- **In addition, these are all options that could be enacted in a relatively short timeframe**
 - **The exact amount of time to implement would be dependent on the specifics of the option**
- **Presentation structure**
 - **Each option presented with an option overview first**
 - **The option overview slide is followed by a list of plan elements that could be modified to meet management goals**

1. Traditional Approach – “Status Quo”

- **Option Overview**
 - **This plan has 3 sub-periods**
 - **Winter 1 = 1/1 – 4/30**
 - **Summer = 5/1 – 10/31**
 - **Winter 2 = 11/1 – 12/31**
 - **Each sub-period gets an allocation based in part on historical landings levels and in part on public input**
 - **Winter 1 = 54%**
 - **Summer = 35%**
 - **Winter 2 = 11%**
 - **Each sub-period has a starting possession limit set at the beginning of the year based on historical catch rates, public input, and quota amount**
 - **There are aggregate landings programs that run in the Winter 1 and Summer sub-periods**

Traditional Approach – “Status Quo”

- **Potential Modification Scenario**
 - **Main modifications that occur under status quo are changes to the sub-period starting possession limits**
 - **Possession limits are set prior to each year**
 - **Limits are informed by public input, historical catch rates, and how the performance is projected to function relative to the annual quota**
 - **Catch rates are a function of multiple parameters**
 - **Difficult to model, therefore mid-season adjustments frequently needed**
 - **The main goal/policy the DFW uses for possession limit adjustments is to maintain an open fishery**

2. Modified Traditional Approach

- **Option Overview**
 - **Would most likely have 3 sub-periods**
 - **There are 3 distinct periods where demographics and local biological characteristics change**
 - **Given sub-period structure, allocations would need to go into each period**
 - **Each sub-period would still need to have a starting possession limit set at the beginning of the year**
 - **Changes based on similar parameters as current process**
 - **Would need to be evaluated based on any sub-period changes**
 - **Presumably would maintain aggregate landings programs but could potentially add in a third program in the Winter 2 period**

Modified Traditional Approach

- **Potential Modification Scenario**
 - **Modify sub-periods**
 - Based on migratory patterns of fish, or
 - Demographic shifts in fishermen
 - **Modify allocations**
 - Based on sub-period length, or
 - Historical landings (recent or long term)
 - **Change starting possession limits annually commensurate with quota**
 - New modifications (above) would need to be accounted for when setting limits
- **Note: An add-on in traditional approaches could be withholding % of quota (i.e., 5%) to be used for:**
 - **Covering shortfalls**
 - **Implementing collaborative research projects to better the fishery through technology, strategy, etc.**

3. Increased Access To Aggregate Program

- **Option Overview**
 - **Would maintain 3 sub-periods**
 - **Given sub-period structure, allocations would need to go into each period**
 - **Each sub-period would still need to have a starting possession limit set at the beginning of the year**
 - **Aggregate landings programs**
 - **Could add in a third program in the Winter 2 period**
 - **Could remove the summer aggregate**
 - **Could extend the time period to accumulate landings**
 - **Could open limited access to additional SFECs to allow additional participants**

Increased Access To Aggregate Program

- **Potential Modification Scenario**
 - **Sub-period timeframe, allocation, and starting possession limits could be as current (Option 1) or modified (Option 2)**
 - **Allow new access to the SFECP so more fishermen could participate in aggregate**
 - **Level of new access could be based on**
 - **Existing latent permits**
 - **An ad hoc number of new permits**
 - **Calculated number of new permits**
 - **New access could be allowed**
 - **For resident with history**
 - **Via a lottery**
 - **Other qualification criteria**

4. Hybrid Catch Share Program

•Option Overview

- Would have 2 programs running simultaneously
 - Traditional program per Option 1 or Option 2
 - Catch share program
- Prior to any sub-period allocation, quota would need to be allocated between traditional and catch share programs
- Inclusion in either program would be voluntary but would need to be determined prior to beginning of the year and maintained until following year

Hybrid Catch Share Program

- **Potential Modification Scenario**
 - **Quota allocated to the programs based on**
 - **Ad hoc split**
 - **Determined prior to the season based on interest/application to the catch share portion (see below)**
 - **Quota allocated to the catch share portion based on**
 - **History**
 - **Formula**
 - **Hybrid of history and formula**
 - **Via auction**
 - **Catch share portion could take the form of IQ or sector program**

Summary

- **Option 1 – Status Quo**
 - Only modifies starting possession limits per annual process
- **Option 2 – Modified Status Quo**
 - Potentially modifies sub-periods, allocations, starting possession limits
- **Option 3 – Increased Access to the Aggregate Program**
 - Modifies current aggregate program by adding and/or removing a sub-period, increasing time of aggregation, and/or increasing number of participants by altering SFECP
- **Option 4 – Hybrid Catch Share Program**
 - Runs two voluntary programs simultaneously—traditional and catch share programs