



# Potomac River Fisheries Commission



MARYLAND - VIRGINIA

*"Potomac River Compact of 1958"*

## **Minutes of the Regular Meeting Potomac River Fisheries Commission Colonial Beach, Virginia June 7, 2024**

**Commissioners Present:** Chairman, Jamie Green (VA), Phil L. Langley (MD) – Vice Chair, S. Lynn Kellum (VA) - Secretary, Lynn Fegley (MD), Robert A. Boarman (MD), Spencer Headley (VA), William L. Rice, Sr. (MD), and Dr. Jim Wesson (VA)

**Officers Present:** Ronald W. Owens, Executive Secretary, Ingrid Braun-Ricks – Chief Fisheries Scientist & Administrative Officer, Jack J. Billingsley– Legal Officer, Cathy Friend – Admin. Asst.

**Law Enforcement Present:** VMRC – Capt. Ron Cagle, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Bruce Straughan, and Capt. Herbie Bell; MD NRP –

**Public Attendees:** John Dameron, Chip Crowder, Doug Jenkins, Gale Willett, Bill Kilinski, Dennis Edwards, John Morris, John Dean, and Sam Dorough. Online Attendees: Pat Geer, S. Meyers

Chairman Green called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Rice and the Invocation was given by Commissioner Wesson.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Commissioner Fegley made a motion to move the public hearing item, Reg. II, Sec. 2(g)(1) regarding bulk oyster tagging to the last item under the public hearing and seconded by Commissioner Wesson. Commissioner Fegley stated that the NSSP representative can be on the line later in the agenda. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

### **Consideration of Minutes – March 8, 2024**

*Motion made by Commissioner Rice to approve the March 8, 2024 meeting minutes as presented and seconded by Commissioner Headley. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

Before moving to public comment, Chairman Green asked if the Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources, Travis Voyles, would like to address the commission. Mr. Voyles thanked the Virginia representatives for their service and the Maryland representatives for being great partners.

### **Public Comment**

John Dean would like to have the Commission consider extending the crab season to December 15<sup>th</sup>. Staff noted that this is not on the agenda and could be discussed as the last item under crab issues.

## **Blue Crab Winter Dredge Survey Results**

Mrs. Braun-Ricks started with the Chesapeake Crab Management Cycle noting that winter dredge survey was completed from January through March 2024, and the results were received in April. The Bay jurisdictions, CBSAC, and the BCAC committee meet in May to discuss those results and potential management actions that would take place in July for the next fiscal year. The blue crab stock assessment is slated to be completed by the spring of 2026. The stock assessment committee will meet monthly until the completion of the stock assessment. Once completed, an independent peer review workshop will take place to review what the committees have suggested.

The 2024 winter dredge survey estimate of total blue crab abundance showed an estimate of 317 million crabs, a slight decrease from the 2023 value of 323 million crabs.

Juvenile blue crab abundance (Age 0) is estimated at 138 million crabs, an increase from the 2023 estimate of 116 million crabs.

Adult female blue crab abundance showed an estimate of 133 million crabs, a decrease from 2023 estimate (152 million). The female abundance remains between the target of 196 million crabs and the threshold of 72.5 million crabs.

The percentage of dead crabs found during the 2024 dredge survey was 1.00% of all crabs, 0.80% juveniles, 0.00% adult female, and 5.20% adult males. It was noted by CBSAC that this is the 6<sup>th</sup> low year for mortality.

The 2023 total commercial blue crab landings in the Chesapeake Bay were approximately 46 million pounds, of which PRFC harvest in 2023 was 3.4 million pounds (8% of the total).

Female exploitation rate in 2023 was 25% which is just below the target of 28%, a decrease from 2022 when the exploitation rate was above the target.

Male exploitation rate in 2023 was 34%, which decreased to the conservation trigger from the previous all-time high of 39% in 2022. This value does not represent a fishing threshold or target, but instead warns managers that the male component of the stock is being more heavily exploited than has occurred throughout the majority of the time series. CBSAC intends to explore the contribution of male blue crabs to the population in the upcoming benchmark stock assessment.

The stock status for the Chesapeake Bay blue crab fishery is based on female-specific (adult) reference points including adult female abundance and female-specific exploitation rate. In 2023, adult female abundance was above the overfished threshold (72.5 million), and the female-specific exploitation rate was below the exploitation target (37%), therefore the blue crab stock is not considered overfished, nor is overfishing occurring based on the reference points.

The CBSAC recommends continued precautionary management focused on protecting mature females and juveniles to maintain a healthy spawning stock. As well as continued conservation minded measures to protect males given that the conservation trigger for male harvest has been exceeded several times in recent years, and substantial changes aren't necessary due to the current abundance being similar to the last few years and that management has already adjusted.

Commissioner Headley asked who sets the female target and do we know if that is the right target. Staff responded that the targets are set by the Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee, a group of scientists from each jurisdiction, as well as academia from VIMS and the Univ. of Maryland, Center of Environmental Science. The reference points were set in the 2011 blue crab stock assessment and were adopted by each state. There hasn't been an update to the reference points since the last assessment but will be reviewed as part of the current stock assessment that is scheduled to be completed in 2026. Commissioner Fegley concurred that the current reference points are set via the stock assessment analysis. There is some concern over the productivity of the stock because the female abundance is at a level where we should be seeing more consistent juvenile abundance. There is a good chance that we will see those reference points change substantially. Commissioner Headley continued the conversation by stating that VIMS has stated that their juvenile abundance numbers could be off 60% - 80% and where do we go to try to improve that. Commissioner Fegley responded that the new stock assessment should address this and it's important to know that when the exploitation is calculated, the juvenile abundance is adjusted upward. Commissioner Headley further asked if the Potomac River keeps separate numbers when the winter dredge survey is done? Staff responded that we do not get individual winter dredge survey data for just the Potomac River since all crabs in the Chesapeake Bay are considered as one stock.

### **Crab Harvest Report**

The preliminary crab landings for 2024 show 4,413 bushels hard crabs, 964 lbs peeler, and 18 lbs soft crabs. The April landings are slightly lower than the 2023 values continue to be higher than the 38-year average. A similar effort was also seen compared to last year. The total hard crab landings for 2023 were 86,984 bushels.

Sammie Dorough handed out a paper to each of the Commissioners for their review. He feels that the catfish are being overlooked as to why the population is dwindling.

### **BCAC Summary** – May 30, 2024

The committee met to discuss the crab landings report, review the 2024/2025 proposed bushel limits orders, and to discuss the public hearing items. There was a motion to raise the female bushel limits to 20, 25, and 30 bushels, respective to the 300, 400, and 500 pot licenses. Motion passed 7-3-0. There was a motion to explore the possibility of extending the crab season until December 15, 2024. Motion passed 9-1-0.

Order 2024-07 was shown to reference the season dates for the 2024 crab season which passed at the March 2024 Commission meeting. The BCAC wanted to discuss having the crab season extended to allow them to pull the pots but not keep any crabs during that extension. The committee stated that both VA and MD have seasons that extend into December. Historically, the Commission has only extended into December by one week once due to a weather event that prevented pots being pulled by November 30. Referencing the legal notice put out in Maryland for 2023, Commissioner Fegley noted that no male or female crabs may be kept after November 30<sup>th</sup>. The crab committee in Maryland was offered to extend the season to December 15<sup>th</sup> but with lower bushel limits. The Maryland season remained status quo for 2024. VC Langley asked what the effort is during the last couple months of the season and staff responded that in September and

October, there remains above average effort but it typically decreases in November. Commissioner Headley stated that, in Virginia, it was discussed due to the temperature of the water being warm longer and the price of crabs higher during the end of the season, it should be considered further. Staff noted that this order can be looked at during the September Commission meeting since it is an order and doesn't require a public hearing.

**Order 2024-08 River Wide Female Crab Harvest Limits for Management Year 2024-2025**

The order is being presented as status quo. The BCAC recommended increasing the bushel limits to 20, 25, and 30 bushels per pot limits. Commissioner Headley asked what the latency was, and staff noted that in recent years there is a 45% latency in the crab pot fishery. There were several in the audience that spoke in support of increasing the female bushel limits. John Dean stated that, in the Maryland crab meeting, they talked at length about this and came up with a different option. This option would be a total bushel limit (males and females) of 24 bushels per 300 pot, 32 bushels per 400 pot, and 40 bushels per 500 pot, stating this is similar to Virginia. The other option they didn't vote on was 14 bushels per 300 pot, 19 bushels per 400 pot, and 24 bushels per 500 pot for females only, however, there was no second to this motion. Commissioner Boarman asked Mr. Dean if the Commission extended the season, would they be good with lower limits to offset the extension. Mr. Dean was okay with lower limits in December stating that they make the most money on females during October and November. With a later migration down the river, he thinks this would take the pressure off the oyster season as well. Commissioner Boarman is trying to preserve the resource and fine the line to give the watermen what they want. Mr. Dean suggested lowering the female bushel limits for July and August and then raise the limit for October and November. Commissioner Fegley noted that the bushel limits change monthly in Maryland and the committee is offered several options.

*Motion made by Commissioner Headley for status quo on bushel limits except for October and November. October and November bushel limits would be 20, 25, and 30 bushels respective to license pot limit. September 2024 and April 2025 through June 30, 2025, will be 12, 16, and 20 bushels respective of pot size. Seconded by Commissioner Kellum. Commissioner Fegley offered a friendly amendment to request staff to consider whether an offset would be needed in the spring 2025. Friendly amendment was accepted by the maker of the motion and seconder of the motion. Commissioner Rice offered a substitute motion to include 8-, 12-, and 16-bushel limits respective of pot size for July and August. The substitute motion was seconded by Commissioner Headley.*

**O R D E R #2024-08 (replaces #2023-09)**

**RIVER WIDE FEMALE CRAB HARVEST LIMITS FOR MANAGEMENT YEAR 2024-2025**

**THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION**, having found it necessary for the preservation of the crab population, having considered the protection, promotion, growth and conservation of the crab resources, and pursuant to its authority under Regulation I, Section 7(a) and Regulation VII, Section 7.

**HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS:** it shall be unlawful for any commercial crab pot licensee to take or catch, or attempt to take or catch, more than the below limits in the Potomac River during the following seasons, as follows:

- (1) Eight (8) bushels for 300 pot licenses; twelve (12) bushels for 400 pot licenses and sixteen (16) bushels for 500 pot licenses of female crabs per day from July 1, 2024 through August 31, 2024;
- (2) Twelve (12) bushels for 300 pot licenses; sixteen (16) bushels for 400 pot licenses and twenty (20) bushels for 500 pot licenses of female crabs per day from September 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024;
- (3) Twenty (20) bushels for 300 pot licenses; twenty-five (25) bushels for 400 pot licenses and thirty (30) bushels for 500 pot licenses of female crabs per day from October 1, 2024 through November 30, 2024; and,
- (4) Twelve (12) bushels for 300 pot licenses; sixteen (16) bushels for 400 pot licenses and twenty (20) bushels for 500 pot licenses of female crabs per day from April 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025.

**AND IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED:** this Order #2024-08 shall become effective July 1, 2024 supersedes and repeals Order # 2023-09 and will remain in effect through June 30, 2025.

**Order 2024-09 River Wide Male Crab Harvest Limits for Management Year 2024-2025**

Presented as status quo for 12/16/20 bushels respective to license pot limits.

***Motion made by Commissioner Headley to approve Order 2024-09 as presented and seconded by Commissioner Fegley. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.***

**O R D E R #2024-09 (replaces #2023-10)**

**RIVER WIDE MALE CRAB HARVEST LIMITS FOR MANAGEMENT YEAR 2024-2025**

**THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION**, having found it necessary for the preservation of the crab population, having considered the protection, promotion, growth and conservation of the crab resources, and pursuant to its authority under Regulation I, Section 7(a) and Regulation VII, Section 7.

**HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS:** it shall be unlawful for any commercial crab pot licensee to take or catch, or attempt to take or catch, more than twelve (12) bushels for 300 pot licenses; sixteen (16) bushels for 400 pot licenses and twenty (20) bushels for 500 pot licenses of male crabs per day from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 in the Potomac River.

**AND IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED:** this Order #2024-09 shall become effective July 1, 2024 and will remain in effect through June 30, 2025.

**Order 2024-11 Crab Pot Random Drawing Registration Fee**

Staff has identified three crab pot licenses available for potential lottery – two unexpired and one combined. The BCAC recommended no license raffle and to adjust the total number of licenses to 398. The order sets the random drawing fee at \$100. Commissioner Rice noted that since there may be individuals that come back to request to have their unexpired crab pot reinstated, that we hold off on this order until September. Executive Secretary, Ron Owens, stated the reason this is being brought up today is so we can put it in this year's budget. With that being said,

Commissioner Rice responded that we need to adjust the number of licenses to 400 and go from there. Mrs. Braun-Ricks stated the that next order to be reviewed by the Commission will set the number of crab pot licenses.

After some discussion whether this order should be deferred until the September commission meeting due to individuals being able to come back and request a reinstatement of their crab licenses that didn't get renewed by the end of April, a *motion was made by Commissioner Wesson to approve Order 2024-11 as presented with three crab pot licenses available for lottery and seconded by Commission Fegley. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

## **O R D E R 2024-11**

### **CRAB POT RANDOM DRAWING REGISTRATION FEE**

**THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION**, having identified three (3) Crab Pot Licenses that were not renewed and became available for a random drawing, will conduct a random drawing for three (3) Crab Pot Licenses during the next commercial license renewal period, starting on November 1, 2024, and pursuant to its authority under Regulation I, Section 1(d)(1), **HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS:**

1. The non-refundable registration fee for the 2024/2025 Crab Pot random drawing shall be set at \$100;
2. Persons desiring to obtain a limited entry fishing license, by random drawing, shall register with the Commission between November 1<sup>st</sup> and the last business day of January that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday;
3. The registration shall include the person's name and address and the non-refundable fee of \$100;
4. No person may register more than once per year per fishery and the registration shall be for this year's random drawing only;
5. Notice of being selected will be mailed to the person selected at the address shown on the registration form;

**BE IT FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED:** that this Order #2024-11 shall become effective November 1, 2024 and remain in effect until January 31, 2025.

### **Order 2024-12 Limited Entry Crab Pot Fishery**

*Commissioner Rice made a motion, based on the above referenced discussion during Order 2024-11 – Crab Pot Random Drawing Registration Fee, to adjust the number of crab pot licenses available from 401 to 400. Commissioner Boarman seconded the motion. Legal counsel, Jack Billinsley, noted that by adjusting the number of licenses to 400, we would be circumventing the regulation that says any crab pots not renewed must be placed in a lottery and doesn't think we can do that. Under advisement of legal counsel, Commissioner Rice withdrew his motion and to instead approve Order 2024-12 as presented and seconded by VC Langley. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

**ORDER #2024-12 (replaces #2023-19 “Revised”)  
LIMITED ENTRY CRAB POT FISHERY**

**THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION**, having acted to declare the crab pot fishery a limited entry fishery and pursuant to its authority under Regulation I, Section 2 (d)(1), **HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS:** that the maximum number of crab pot licenses allowable in the Potomac River for any license year shall be four hundred and one (401). **AND IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED:** that this Order #2024-12 shall become effective June 17, 2024 supersedes and repeals Order #2023-19 “Revised”, and will remain in effect until further notice.

**Oyster Harvest Report**

Oyster taxes collected to date are \$74,987.00. The estimated dockside value is just under \$1.5 million. There were 100 hand tong, 239 hand scrape, and 19 registered buyer licenses were sold in this past oyster season. OMR had 14 participant and 3 crew licenses. Total bushel of oysters harvested was 32,429 bushels with 52% of the total harvest coming from Jones Shore, 30% from the hand tong only Lower Cedar Point, and 6% from Cornfield Harbor. OMR harvest to date is 743 bushels from Ragged Point and 2,640 bushels from Cobb Island. Chairman Green noted that the two states have stepped up in their budgets for the first time in a long time for more resources. Executive Secretary noted the funding from Virginia has pledged \$200,000 over a two-year period for oyster restoration/revitalization and Maryland has a \$100,000 placeholder line item for one year for when the budget is approved at the end of June.

**Summary of OCAC Meeting** – May 28, 2024

The OCAC met to discuss the 23/24 harvest report, to get an update on oyster projects, and review the relevant public hearing items. There was no quorum present for this meeting.

**Oyster Projects Update**

Great Neck – Completed (5/14/2024) with 6,452 bushels of fresh shell placed over an area of 5 acres and a cost of \$50,000.

Old Farm – To be completed with 4,320 bushels of wild seed placed over 9 acres at a cost of \$54,000.

Lower Cedar Point – To be completed with 8,000 bushels of wild seed planted over 16 acres at a cost of \$100,000.

Potential funding sources on the horizon include the Supplemental Environmental Project on Heron Island Bar and the Oyster Revitalization Project to be funded by Virginia and Maryland.

**ASMFC Summary of 2024 Spring Meeting**

Striped Bass – The PRFC’s revised Addendum II Implementation Plan was approved, a recreational release mortality workgroup was discussed, and the 2024 stock assessment update will

be presented at the ASMFC annual meeting in October.

American Eel – Addenda VI: Maine’s Glass eel quota remains status quo for three years.

Addenda VII: The Yellow eel coastwide cap was reduced to 518,281 pounds.

Cobia – Draft Addendum II on recreational allocation, harvest target evaluation, and measure setting. Public hearings will be joint with Maryland and Virginia. Virginia’s public hearing will be held in person on June 12, 2024, from 6 – 8 p.m. in Fort Monroe, VA, and the joint public hearing will be held via webinar on June 24, 2024, from 6 – 8 p.m.

### **Annual Compliance Reports**

Emailed to the Commission for the three species with reports due so far.

### **Summary of FFAC Meeting** – May 28, 2024

The FFAC met via webinar to discuss the Hook & Line/Gill Net Limited Entry order, ASMFC issues, public hearing items, and a discussion of a small mesh gill net study proposal. There was no quorum present for this meeting.

### **Small Mesh Gill Net Study Proposal**

The PRFC had a small mesh fishery in the 1980’s for targeting American Shad. Past proposals sent to the FFAC and the Commission asked for staked/anchored gill nets but failed to move forward due to the low catch of the target species and a high bycatch of juvenile striped bass. Maryland and Virginia both have active drift gill net fisheries and the PRFC can use these as a template for a future study. Studies done by both states have shown that the bycatch for drift gill nets is much lower than staked/anchored nets.

The subcommittee met on April 16, 2024 with the goal of determining if this gear combination has any concerning bycatch of striped bass and whether it can become an economical fishery for PRFC. The target species would be white perch, bluefish, Spanish mackerel, and menhaden. The pilot study key elements would include:

- A drift gill net with mesh sizes ranging from 2 7/8” to 4” *[Max. length of net 1200 ft.]*
- 3-4 waterman for the study. We have three confirmed, 1 from VA and 2 from MD
- Harvest would be July 1 – October 31, 3 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- Harvesters must remain with the net while fishing
- Four fishing days per month per waterman and minimum one day with a PRFC observer. If PRFC had an intern, then more/all trips could be observed. *[During Commission discussion, it was suggested for 7 fishing days/month/waterman and must make all trips available to a PRFC observer. Commissioner Headley stated that he feels they should be able to work more than 7 days per month to make it feasible to the waterman.]*
- The area for the study fishery would be south of a line between St. Clements and Nomini Bay

The FFAC members did not voice any concerns moving this forward.

Commissioner Headley was concerned with only four fishing days per month with the study saying it seems too little time being that it’s a clean fishery and the mesh size is specifically

targeted for a specific fish. He would like to see more days. If the Commission would like to see more days for the study, then PRFC would need to consider having an intern for this extra time out of the office. Chairman Green asked if there must be 25% observation since the people typically picked to do the study are watermen that we are sure will present all the information in a timely manner. Staff responded that previous studies had 100% observation, but PRFC doesn't have the staff for that and therefore considered 25% observation. From Maryland's perspective, Commissioner Fegley stated that the coverage would be really valuable and supports the plan how it is laid out. When asked, it was noted that the length was not discussed. Commissioner Rice noted that the twine size of the net indicates how much bycatch is caught and should be discussed as well. Monofilament net was discussed. VP Langley asked what the maximum length of the net would be and Chairman Green noted that Virginia's is 1200 feet.

*Motion made by Commissioner Rice to accept the proposal as presented with Commission amendments and giving staff the ability to make adjustments and/or suspend the study as needed. Seconded by Commissioner Wesson. Commissioner Headley offered a friendly amendment to increase the number of fishing days per participant to 15 days per month. Commissioner Rice accepted the amendment. Commissioner Fegley stated she would oppose the motion because she feels that observer coverage is critical. Commissioner Fegley made a substitute motion to put the proposal in place with up to 15 days per month pending the Commission getting an intern to provide the observations. Substitute motion seconded by Commissioner Rice. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

#### **Order 2024-10 Commercial Hook & Line/Gill Net Limited Entry**

Staff explained that due to the 20 gill nets licenses converting to hook and line licenses during renewal, the proposed order reflects this change in limited entry participants. The maximum number of licenses shall be 205 for hook and line licenses and 710 for gill net licenses.

**Motion made by Commissioner Rice to adopt Order 2024-10 as presented and seconded by Commissioner Fegley. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.**

### **O R D E R #2024-10 (replaces #2023-08)**

#### **COMMERCIAL HOOK AND LINE AND GILL NET LIMITED ENTRY**

**THE POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION**, having found it necessary for the preservation of the striped bass (rockfish) population to impose restrictions on fishing for striped bass and pursuant to its authority under Regulation I, Sections 2(i)(1) and 2(l)(2):

**HEREBY DECLARES AND ORDERS:** the maximum number of commercial hook and line licenses shall be two hundred and five (205), and the maximum number of gill net stands shall be seven hundred and ten (710).

**BE IT FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED:** no more than five (5) Commercial Hook & Lines Licenses may be issued to or renewed by any natural person in any given year.

**BE IT FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED:** the provisions of Regulation III, Sec. 13(d) entitled "Individual Striped Bass Allocation Transfer from Gill Net to Commercial Hook and Line" shall be allowed provided the sum total of gill nets and commercial hook and line licenses do not exceed nine hundred and fifteen (915).

**AND IT IS FURTHER DECLARED AND ORDERED:** this Order #2024-10 will become effective, June 18, 2024 shall supersede and repeal Order #2023-08, and remain in effect until further notice.

### **Public Hearing**

Amend Reg. I, Sec. 4 Suspension or Revocation of License – Amending the language will allow the Commission to set the time frame for a suspension or revocation independent of whether a license has been reinstated in their respective states. As the regulation reads now, Mr. Owens stated that the intention of the amendment is to remove the clause that ties a period of ineligibility to offender reinstatement by Maryland or Virginia and gives the Commission the ability to set the time frame for suspension or revocation independent of the action taken by Virginia or Maryland. It gives the Commission authority over the Potomac River itself. The advisory committees would like the language changed to allow a person to apply for a license, but not grant the license until they have had a hearing before the Commission. Neither the Commission nor the public had any comments.

***Motion made by Commissioner Rice to adopt amended Reg. I, Sec. 4 Suspension or Revocation of License as presented.*** Commissioner Fegley noted that this original regulation went into place because of individuals that were losing their license in Maryland and were coming to the Potomac River to work. The watermen were the ones who started this concern. She is asking if this in any way the amended language would dilute the initial concerns for the reason of this regulation. Commissioner Rice does not think it would affect that because it puts the decision in the hands of the Commission. Commissioner Boarman’s concern is whether this amended language allows us to bring an individual before the Commission before they buy the license. Mr. Billingsley, Legal Counsel, feels that if we leave the second sentence in “The Commission may, after a hearing, refuse to issue a license or licenses, or, may suspend or revoke existing licenses...” then the Commission has the ability to make it a process that staff will not issue a license until that individual appears before the Commission. It was noted that staff is in support of the process. After some more discussion about how to amend the language and to give legal counsel time to review the language again, a ***motion was made by Commissioner Fegley to table this regulation until the September Commission meeting. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Boarman. There was no opposition to deferring this regulation and motion passed unanimously.***

Amend Reg. I, Sec. 5(d) Reduction of License Fees -This regulation amended the language from “a single boat or vessel used by the licensee...” to “a natural person using a license to...”. This is a housekeeping item for items missed under the original amendment of the motion that didn’t capture these items. There was no public comment.

***Motion made by Commissioner Wesson as presented and seconded by Commissioner Headley. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.***

Repeal Reg. I, Sec. 2(d)(5) CP ID Tags/Decals Fee and Replacement – This request is from the BCAC to remove the requirement of using crab pot identification tags and associated regulations (Reg. VII, Sec. 3(b) Identification of Pots). They don’t feel that the tags are effective for accountability and the effort in maintaining the tags throughout the season. This would take effect for the 2025 season.

Public Comment:

Dennis Edwards spoke in support of repealing the requirement because they are a lot of unnecessary work in maintaining the tags. John Dean also spoke in support of repealing the requirement.

VP Langley asked how these tags affect their enforcement. Lt. Bailey, DNR Police, stated it doesn't really affect their enforcement. 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Straughan, VMRC, spoke that the tags are easier for enforcement as they are usually more legible, easier to read to determine whose pot it is.

Commissioner Fegley stated she would oppose this repeal as there is evidence that these do aid in enforcement. Commissioner Rice agreed with Commissioner Fegley's statements.

Several audience members spoke regarding this regulation. (Dennis Edwards, Chip Crowder, Sammy Dorough, John Morris). A letter received from Monica Scheneman was read into record. Staff's recommendation is to keep the CP ID tags/decals in regulation.

***Motion made by Commissioner Kellum to approve the regulation to repeal as presented and seconded by Commissioner Headley. A roll call vote was taken with two in favor (Kellum, Headley) and six not in favor. Motion failed 2-6-0.***

Amend Reg. I, Sec. 2(d)(5) CP ID Tags/Decals Fee and Replacement – Due to the rising cost of materials, staff would like the ability to set the fee for the CP ID tags and decals by order each season. This order would be set each September, ahead of the December renewal season start. If the Commission does not pass this amended regulation, the cost to the Commission for the decals will be about \$5,000 as the current fee of \$75 does not cover the cost of the decals for each crabber using them. Each crabber will be given the opportunity to switch their current preference prior to ordering. There will be different price points offered for tags and decals, not by pot size.

Public comment: John Dameron, Dennis Edwards, Sammy Dorough

***Motion made by Commissioner Rice to accept the regulation as presented and seconded by Commissioner Fegley. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.***

Amend Reg. II, Sec. 2(g)(1) Identification Tags Required and/or Adopt New Reg. II, Sec. 2(g)(2) – Bulk Identification Tags Required - To add language to allow for bulk oyster identification tags and add the word “accurately” within the regulation. Definitions were presented under Reg. II for Individual Wild Shellfish ID Tag (Sec. 1(m)), Bulk Wild Shellfish ID Tag (Sec. 1(n)), Single Lot (Sec. 1(o)), Conveyance (Sec. 1(p)). As a reminder, the PRFC must follow the NSSP rules for Maryland.

Public comment: Bill Kilinski spoke in support of using bulk tagging. Commissioner Rice thanked Mr. Kilinski on behalf of the Commission for all of his help with the oyster fishery. John Dean asked about the cost of the bulk tags and staff responded the fee hasn't been set yet. It was suggested by Commissioner Headley, and concurred by Chairman Green, to reach out to Maryland or Virginia to see who they order their bulk tags from and potentially piggyback on their orders. Chairman Green stated to contact Chief Adam Kenyon to see if there is a way for the PRFC to get them cheaper.

***Motion made by Commissioner Boarman to adopt all amendments for bulk tagging as presented***

*and seconded by Commissioner Headley. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

### **Delinquent Seafood Catch Report Hearings**

James Fowler – Delinquent oyster reports. Absent.

*Motion made by Commissioner Boarman to suspend his licenses until he appears before the Commission and seconded by Commissioner Wesson. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

Dennis Dent – Delinquent finfish reports. Absent

*Motion made by Commissioner Wesson to suspend his licenses until he appears before the Commission and seconded by Commissioner Kellum. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

Christopher Lee Marvel – Delinquent oyster reports – 2<sup>nd</sup> offense. Absent

*Motion made by Commissioner Wesson to suspend his licenses until he appears before the Commission and seconded by Commissioner Headley. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

### **Executive Session**

*Motion made by Commissioner Boarman to go into executive session at 12:31 p.m. and seconded by Commissioner Kellum.*

*Reconvene from executive session at 12:53. There was a poll taken that the matters only pertaining to items related to the executive session were discussed. Each Commissioner was polled, and all voted in approval of the motion.*

### **Third Quarter Disbursements and Cash on Hand**

The actual third quarter disbursement is \$342,101 (27% of projected budget) with the year-to-date fiscal is \$959,295 (76%). The actual third quarter revenue is \$452,562 (36%) with the year to date fiscal at \$1,393,704 (110%).

*Motion to approve the financial reports as presented by Commissioner Headley and seconded by Commissioner Rice. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

### **Budget Committee Report** (Langley/Kellum)

Vice Chairman Langley stated they were able to balance the budget with a few adjustments. Each Commissioner was provided a copy of the budget worksheets. He recognized Virginia (\$148,000) and Maryland (\$175,000) for the increased appropriations. There were some salary adjustments for the staff, including changing Mrs. Braun-Ricks' position to Assistant Executive Secretary as of July 1, 2024.

**Proposed FY '24 – '25 Budget**

*Motion made by Commissioner Headley to approve the budget as presented and seconded by Commissioner Wesson. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.*

POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION  
2024-2025 DISBURSEMENTS BUDGET

2024-2025 BUDGET

PERSONAL SERVICES:

101-109 Compensation of Commissioners & Salaries	\$355,891
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CONTRACTUAL SERVICES

201 Advertising	12,000
202 Agent Fees	1,500
204 Postage	9,500
205 Telephone	5,000
207 Internet Service/Website	3,500
208 Electric Current	5,000
209 Freight Expenses	1,000
212 Lease of Equipment	9,000
214 Membership Dues & Subscriptions	8,000
220 Travel Expenses	
Meetings Away from Office	10,000
Meeting In Office	
221 Water Service	1,318
224 Photographic Services - Charts	150
230 Computer Support	20,000
270 Repairs to Equipment	500
275 Building Maintenance	9,277
280 Financial Account Service Charge	25
281 Bank Charges	500
290 ACFCMA**	103,000
293 MDTA Bridge Project	100,000
294 ACCSP Project	207,512
295 MD One-Time Allocation	72,620
298 Truist Merchant Fees	540
299 Other Contractual Services	15,000
	594,942

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

301 Automotive Expenses	10,000
313 Office Supplies	10,000
330 Household Furnishings & Supplies	2,600
332 Licenses, Tags, Report Books	55,000
400 Resale Supplies	<u>6,000</u>
	<b>83,600</b>

CURRENT CHARGES & OBLIGATIONS:

240 Insurance: Surety bonds, fire, auto liability, workmen's comp.	<u>9,720</u>
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	<b>9,720</b>
<u>PENSION AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS:</u>	
510 Retirement	39,881
511 Group Life Insurance	3,857
512 Group Health Insurance	69,446
513 Employer's FICA	20,267
513 Employer's Medicare	4,740
514 Deferred Compensation Match	3,000
515 VLDP	757
516 Mission Square - 457 B Co. Match	<u>1,023</u>
517 Mission Square - 457 B Vol. Co. Match	<u>2,558</u>
	<b>145,529</b>
<u>CAPITAL OUTLAY:</u>	
801 Office & Other Equipment	0
801 Furniture & Fixtures	0
803 Auto	<u>0</u>
	<b>0</b>
<u>DEVELOPMENT &amp; REPLETION EXPENSES:</u>	
331, 333 & 335 Seed Oysters/Shell/C&C	105,000
336 Oyster Management Reserve	3,000
339 Artificial Reef Construction/Transportation	<u>0</u>
	<b>108,000</b>
<u>CAPITAL RESERVES</u>	
98 (101) Reserve - future oyster work/hatchery	0
99 (102) Reserve - future retiree health insurance	35,000
TOTAL	<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> \$1,332,682

\*Partially supported by ACFCMA (Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act) funds

\*\*Fully supported by ACFCMA

POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION  
2024-2025 BUDGET  
RECEIPTS

	<u>2024-2025 BUDGET</u>
CLR - Commercial License Registration	107,000
 <u>SALE OF LICENSES:</u>	
Fish	80,000
Crab	69,000
Clam	0
Fish - Recreational	45,000
Crab - Recreational	2,000
<u>OYSTER:</u>	
OMR License	0
OMR Identification Tags	1,500
OMR Bushels Inspection Tax	1,500
Planting Surcharge Fee (RPS)	<u>0</u>

<b>OMR Subtotal</b>	3,000
Oyster Licenses	35,000
OLS - License Surcharge	40,000
White Identification Tags	15,000
Registered Buyer	850
Oyster Bushels Inspection Tax	<u>65,000</u>
<b>Natural Oyster Subtotal</b>	155,850
APPROPRIATIONS BY STATE:	
Maryland	175,000
Virginia	148,750
SPECIAL GRANTS:	
Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act	103,000
MDTA Bridge Project	100,000
ACCSP Project	207,512
SPECIAL - Md One-Time Allocation	72,620
INTEREST ON SAVINGS (C/D's)	20,000
RESALE SUPPLIES:	700
LICENSE DRAWING	10,000
SHIPPING & HANDLNG (65-58)	750
CPID (65-58)	30,000
Truist Merchant Fees (65-60)	0
MISCELLANEOUS: Confiscated Property, Sale of Tags, Etc.	<u>2,500</u>
TOTAL	1,332,682

### **Old Business**

There was no old business brought before the Commission.

### **New Business**

The Commission was given a slate of new members and reappointments for the advisory committees to approve. New nominations included Chris Dollar to the FFAC and Lee Deihl and Francis Warring to the OCAC.

***Motion made by Commissioner Rice to approve all nominations and reappointments to PRFC advisory committees and seconded by Commissioner Headley. There was no opposition to the motion and passed unanimously.***

Mr. Owens let the Commission know that the PRFC is now able to take credit card payments with a 3% convenience fee.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on September 6, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

Meeting Adjourned 1:04 p.m.

June 7, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

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Jamie Green, Chairman

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S. Lynn Kellum, Secretary