

Final Minutes
Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament
Committee Meeting
October 17, 2005

Members Present

Claude Bain
B. W. Beauchamp
Nancy Cobb
David Elliott
Bill Hall
Jon Lucy
Ken Neill
Craig Paige
Charles Randolph
William Seymour
Christine Snook
Jerry Thrash
John Thurston

Members Absent

None

Public Attendees Speaking

Carolyn Brown
Robert Holtz
Debbie Hurst
Paul Ewing
Alvin Wimbrough
Mark Botello
John Robel

At 6:45 pm Tournament Director Claude Bain welcomed the public to the meeting, introduced the members of the Committee to the public and announced the start of the public comment period. All members of the Committee were noted as present, establishing a quorum for the meeting.

The first speaker was Robert Holtz. Mr. Holtz stated he represented himself and several groups of people he has spoken with who wanted issues brought before the Committee. He had seven points to cover in his presentation.

Point 1: Mr. Holtz stated there was a loophole in Tournament rules that needed to be filled. Currently, only commercial hook-and-line licenseholders were excluded from participation in VSWFT programs, but other commercial fishermen were not excluded. He felt anyone holding a license to sell seafood in Virginia should be excluded from program participation. This is simply a case of being a commercial fisherman or recreational fisherman and commercial fishermen should not be participants in a recreational program.

Point 2: Mr. Holtz stated there was a loophole in the exclusion of commercial hook-and-line licenseholders from program participation. Specifically, holders of seafood landings licenses were eligible. Some of these people are commercial hook-and-line fishermen operating beyond the three mile limit, where no commercial hook-and-line license is needed. In fact, no other license is needed, except federal permits if a fishery is regulated at the federal level. Mr. Holtz stated who knew people commercial fishing offshore who were program participants and felt excluding the holders of seafood landings licenses from program participation would close this loophole. He also stated it would have a minimal impact, since of the 196 licenses only 27 were issued to individuals who would fit as possible commercial hook-and-line fishermen. The rest of

the permits were issued to corporate boats, mainly large trawl operations which would not be impacted.

Point 3: Mr. Holtz felt several species of fish should not be eligible for release Citations, stating they were normally killed and eaten, very difficult to handle and measure safely, and were usually gaffed as the most practical way of getting into a boat. He felt wahoo, dolphin, king mackerel fit into this category.

Point 4: Mr. Holtz stated the minimum Citation size for sheepshead should definitely be raised. His personal preference, based upon catching over 100 fish (tagging 70 fish) was that 30% were Citation fish. He personally favored a 12 pound minimum, but felt a rise to at least 10 pounds was necessary at a minimum.

Point 5: Weigh station scales need more active certification, especially in light of utilizing small increments for Citation minimum – citing the 1 lb., 2 oz. minimum for spot. He took a 20-ounce weight to 6 different scales and found a 5 ounce variation. Need to check all scales right before spot season.

Point 6: Program philosophy should emphasize trophy catches; tournament has gotten too easy especially in the release area and people value Citations less if they are too easy to achieve. Main goal should be trophy catches to qualify and many Citations should be harder to get than at current levels.

Point 7: No Citations for releases should be offered for “food” fish, such as spot, flounder, croaker, roundhead. Only trophy or true game fish, such as red & black drum, cobia, etc., should have release awards available. Mr. Holtz felt anglers currently altered their behavior just to get a Citation release (eg, releasing a fish they target to eat because it makes release award minimums but probably would not reach weight minimums). Anglers should not alter their behavior just for an award; the award should be a part of their usual angling experience and behavior.

Carolyn Brown was the second speaker, and she spoke to two main issues. First, Mrs. Brown felt the program should exclude participation from all commercial fishermen. Anyone possessing a license to sell fish should not be eligible to participate in program awards. Second, she felt the program’s credibility has suffered due to the release program in two ways: because anglers release fish that qualify as releases but are too small to achieve weight awards, and reputation of release awards and anglers registering them for not properly measuring and following minimum standards.

Debbie Hurst, president of the Great Bridge Fisherman’s Association was the final speaker, and she had three issues which were important to her and her club members. First, she reinforced the point of Mrs. Brown that the program’s credibility suffers due to the release awards. She stated they have a reputation or nickname, which she did not mention, that is not particularly favorable [liar’s Citations]. Second, the flounder minimum size should not be raised despite the large number of Citations, She emphasized the huge number of people who fish for flounder and that the consequence of such a huge effort is likely to be a large number of Citations; and, 7 pounds is a real trophy fish. Finally, she felt the Committee should reconsider the spot Citation minimum size, lowering it back to 1 pound.

There was no further public comment, so the public comment period was closed at 7:00 pm and the general meeting commenced.

Mr. Bain stated the Committee members had copies of the minutes of their last meeting on October 18, 2004 and asked if the committee had any corrections or additions. None were noted and Bill Hall moved to accept the minutes; Dave Elliott seconded and they were accepted unanimously.

Mr. Bain stated the Committee would proceed to the published agenda, but would take the items out of order starting with item VII, noting that Mr. Ewing and Mr. Wimbrough were present for that item and they should not be made to wait through the other agenda items for their issue. The Committee proceeded to the appeal by Mr. Wimbrough of the denial of his state record application for a 66 lb., 8 oz. striped bass.

Capt. Paul Ewing was the first to speak regarding the appeal of Mr. Wimbrough. Capt. Ewing provided two handouts to the Committee: 1) the text of an article by Richard Welton from the Chesapeake Angler magazine; and, 2) selected portions of the tournament rules, section 1(b) relating to eligibility. Ewing then stated the rules required recognition of this fish all three sections providing for the exclusion of people from tournament participation had conditions precedent upon their exclusion. Specifically, he felt the rule excluding commercial hook-and-line license holders required they be on a commercial fishing trip. Capt. Ewing operates a charterboat, the trip was a charter/recreational trip and therefore the condition precedent was not met by tournament rules. He continued by describing the fish – a 28 year old fish tagged in the Connecticut River when it weighed 50+ pounds, and stated the fish deserved recognition for itself – not for Ewing, his boat, or mere angler recognition but for the fish itself and its life struggle. Capt. Ewing returned to his contention that the rules did not disqualify holders of hook-and-line licenses with condition of commercial fishing and stated that if the rules intended to keep professionals from competing, then charterboat captains and guides also should not be eligible. He reviewed Mr. Welton's article stating he felt the author left out part of the rules while quoting the rules in his article, because it would show the fish should be recognized.

Alvin Wimbrough, the angler catching the fish, spoke next. He stated he is a commercial scallop fisherman. He fishes all the time recreationally, especially with his son, and felt he should be treated as other recreational fishermen. His commercial hook-and-line license is for striped bass only and he only possesses Bay tags. They were fishing in the ocean, it is illegal to tag ocean fish with Bay tags, and he would not jeopardize his livelihood (sic. scallop fishing) by engaging in any illegal activity. They were recreational fishing plain and simple and it is wrong not to recognize his catch.

Ken Neill reviewed exclusion of commercial hook-and-line fishermen from program participation, stating the exclusion of holders of the license was clear, discussions have occurred almost annually at Committee and it has been affirmed, and the reason is they have become professional rod-and-reel fishermen.

Bill Hall added they are accorded different size and possession limits, which gives them advantages in competitions and that is part of the reason for the exclusion.

Craig Paige expressed support for the contentions of Ewing and Wimbrough stating charterbaot skippers are professionals but they remain eligible when not working and it was not right to treat “professionals” differently.

Ken Neill stated these were good points but were really a matter for future rules changes; the Committee has to look at the rules in force at the time of the catch and make a decision on this fish.

Claude Bain stated he did not feel the semantic argument of Capt. Ewing about the rules requiring a condition precedent was clear; he felt the rule was exclusionary of the mere holder of the license and that was the clear intent of the Committee in passing the rule 5 years ago and in subsequent reviews.

Patrick Steuchel spoke in support of Mr. Wimbrough and the arguments to recognize the fish.

Claude Bain then summarized a brief history of the commercial hook-and-line prohibitions, highlighting the reasons for the exclusion - (commercial fishermen setting state records and winning annual awards while on commercial trips); inability to determine when a trip was commercial or not; and the precedent in the fishery for fishermen to simply view the fact an individual fish was not sold meant the fish was recreational. He acknowledged there were some unfortunate results from a blanket exclusion but no other way to enforce a recreational program.

Dave Elliott stated Welton did leave out part of the rules, but they were not essential to the meaning and we cannot speculate what his motive was in writing the article in the manner it was written.

Chris Snook stated she felt agreement with the contentions of Wimbrough and Ewing about excluding only some professionals and only should affect people on commercial trips. She stated she runs a tackle shop and has a seafood harvesters card for her bait business, which would probably make her ineligible under the suggestions of Mr. Holtz and Mrs. Brown to exclude all people licensed to harvest/sell seafood and she did not favor that idea.

Mark Botello stated there were 5 or 6 people on the boat that day and the rule singled out Mr. Wimbrough as the only one who could not get a state record; he felt that was unfair. The trip was recreational. He stated both Wimbrough and Ewing are professionals but Wimbrough could not participate in the program and Ewing could and that did not seem right to him. If Ewing or one of the other people had picked up the rod, then the fish would be a state record, which is not a logical way to treat the event.

John Robel addressed the Committee as a recreational fishermen who knows the people involved but was not on the boat. He felt Wimbrough deserved recognition for the fish. He owns his own boat, they often go out together with other people, and the fish could easily have been claimed as caught by someone else on board who was eligible. They did not do that, they were honest in every respect, and Wimbrough deserves the Citation. Without specifically stating it, Robel implied program rules would abet people in not being truthful.

Ken Neill again stated the Committee could not go back and change the rules for this fish; the rules in effect when this fish was caught meant Wimbrough was not eligible. Many other people in same situation had been denied awards and consistency and fairness mandating operating under the rules.

Nancy Cobb stated she felt the rules were not vague in their exclusion on holders of commercial hook-and-line licenses.

Paul Ewing again stated to the Committee the rules were inconsistent and unfair in not treating all professionals (charter captains and hook-and-line) the same.

Claude Bain stated the Committee seemed to be confronting two issues: Wimbrough's fish and evaluation of rules for potential changes in the future. The issues needed to be separated at some point to get some resolution of each issue.

Charles Randolph stated he felt the rule was clear before this fish was caught and it did not qualify. This fish is the cause for discussion about rules clarification, which rightfully needed to be a separate discussion.

Wally Beauchamp stated he agree with Ken Neill that rules could not be changed for this fish; need to have a separate discussion on future rules.

Chris Snook stated there was still a problem in commercial hook-and-line situations with the ability to change the nature of the trip, despite original intention.

Ken Neill stated there needed to be a resolution on the one issue, then a move to discuss future rules. Neill made a motion to deny the appeal by Alvin Wimbrough to accept his striped bass as a state record. The motion was seconded by Nancy Cobb and was passed unanimously by the Committee.

Mr. Beauchamp congratulated Mr. Wimbrough on his catch and expressed his regret that it could not be recognized as a state record.

Claude Bain asked the Committee if they wished to take up the issue of changing the participation rules tonight.

Dave Elliott stated it was too big an issue for tonight, a 3-4 person subcommittee was needed to look at the issue and formulate a recommendation to the full Committee for a vote as soon as possible.

John Thurston and Ken Neill agreed with that approach and questioned the time frame.

Jon Lucy stated that it needed to happen this year so rules could be clear for next year's program and asked if the group could be gotten together again.

Nancy Cobb stated that there would need to be some public input in helping to craft these rules.

Craig Paige reiterated his position regarding consistency in treating professionals.

Claude Bain recognized Mr. Holtz who reiterated his belief that all holders of Seafood Landing Licenses should be excluded to bring consistency to the rules, and preference to exclude all commercial seafood harvesters/sellers.

Claude Bain stated the Committee could be reconvened in late November or early December and still provide the time to print Tournament literature and meet notice requirements.

John Thurston and Bill Hall stated this was needed.

William Seymour made a motion to form a 3-4 person subcommittee appointed by the director to report a recommendation to the full Committee by November 20th and to convene a full meeting in late November or early December. This was seconded by Jon Lucy and passed unanimously.

Claude Bain appointed asked for volunteers and accepted Bill Hall, Charles Randolph and Jerry Thrash to join him on the subcommittee.

The Committee then considered two appeals for Citation denials. Both passed unanimously – the first for a white marlin release that the angler attempted to be register but the weigh station was out of forms. Angler and witnessed filed affidavits. Bill Hall moved to accept, seconded by John Thurston and passed unanimously. The second for a flounder with incorrect length that weigh station verified by affidavit as their mistake; Chris Snook moved to accept, seconded by Wally Beauchamp, and passed unanimously.

Claude Bain stated they would return agenda item 1, which was a review of the 2005 program. Since Committee members had all 2005 information in their packets and had several days to review the material, Mr. Bain suggested dispensing with a review of each species. He asked if there were any species not already on the agenda that members felt were worthy of detailed review.

Craig Paige stated Spanish mackerel Citations were up slightly, but since being added to the program only 6-8 fish were registered for awards during most years and a 5-pound minimum was too high for Virginia. It might be right for other areas to the south but not here.

Claude Bain reviewed Citation totals during the 13 years they have been eligible, and noted the large number of Citations in 1992 (the first year) probably was a reflection of both population and identification problems; that was the year prior to producing a poster and an educational effort to help anglers and weighmasters distinguish large Spanish mackerel from small king mackerel. Mr. Bain asked for additional comments.

Jerry Thrash stated 3-pound fish were available in the middle Bay for a period of time, but 4-pound were not common.

Wally Beauchamp concurred that not many 4-pound fish were caught during most years.

Ken Neill reminded the Committee we were trending up in Citation minimums to reflect rue trophies, but 4-pound Spanish mackerel were not commonplace.

After some additional discussion, Wally Beauchamp made a motion to lower the Citation minimum to 4 pounds; this was seconded by Craig Paige; and was passed unanimously.

Mr. Bain asked for additional comments on the 2005 program, and since there were none moved to agenda item III. He introduced the proposals for flounder and sheepshead, stating sheepshead would be considered first.

Bill Hall stated the sheepshead has become a more popular and targeted fish and the increasing Citation numbers indicate the Citation minimum should increase. He felt the preference of Mr. Holtz for 12 pounds was too high and recommended a 10-pound minimum.

Nancy Cobb asked why are there so many more Citations, questioning if it was just a function of year-class strength from 1 or more inordinately strong year classes.

Bill Hall stated it was a function of vastly increased effort and better expertise.

Ken Neill concurred, stating it was hard to hide when you are anchored up at the CBBT, and hundreds of people observe what you are doing.

Claude Bain stated there was very little information on the life history of sheepshead frequenting our waters, which has prompted a 3-year study by Cynthia Jones at ODU of this fish and fishery at the request of the Marine Recreational Advisory Board.

Nancy Cobb stated she did like to see Tournament “rollercoaster” up and down on weights.

Claude Bain stated despite little information about biology – such as whether there is a Chesapeake Bay group of fish or not and whether we are working on a relatively “untapped” group of big fish that is likely to decline – there is one thing we can be sure of if the numbers of fish stay relatively healthy and that is effort will increase. Relatively small numbers of people fish for them now, but the number of people learning how to catch them is growing and the expertise level is increasing.

John Thurston agreed the effort will increase due to the relatively small number of people currently doing it – citing the similarity to the explosion in spadefishing.

Jon Lucy stated spawning and recruitment does appear to occur in the Chesapeake Bay, and that may lead to a group of fish that tend to utilize the Bay.

Craig Paige stated that most of the summer 10 – 11 pound fish are not particularly tough to catch; but late in the year 6 – 9 pound fish seem to predominate, although big fish are still caught.

Charles Randolph asked if raising the minimum would encourage more releasing of fish that might not qualify.

Craig Paige and others stated raising the minimum would have little impact on the number of fish kept – many are kept for their excellent food quality.

Bill Hall stated the fish released were mostly coming from taggers or the fishermen seeking trophy fish, neither of which were primarily interested in taking fish home to eat.

Mr. Bain recognized Sonya Davis who informed the Committee that FMAC was considering a limit on sheepshead.

Claude Bain reviewed the reported lengths on Citation applications for sheepshead for 9, 10 and 11-pound fish. He also reviewed the number and percentage of fish in 2004 and 2005 that would have qualified at 10-pound minimum and 11-pound minimum.

After some additional discussion, Bill Hall moved to raise the minimum Citation size to 10 pounds with a 24-inch minimum size for a release. This was seconded by Craig Paige and passed unanimously.

Claude Bain then introduced the agenda item for flounder, reviewing the 2004 and 2005 data on the flounder catch; reviewing the numbers and percentages of the Citations for those years that would have qualified at 7.5 and 8 pounds; and, reviewing the 2005 season – citing the slow start and the poor weather since September that has hampered catches – which is likely to see more than 900 flounder registered at a 7-pound minimum.

Bill Hall stated this is the most sought after fish in Virginia – at least in the summer – and that 7 pounds is a trophy.

William Seymour stated that 7 pounds might be a trophy, but it takes 8 pounds to “raise an eyebrow” now and the size should go up.

Jerry Thrash stated that in the Middle Bay not that many fish this year and not as many big fish. William Seymour disagreed stating there were lots of big fish in the Middle Bay.

Chris Snook stated that 7 pounds is a heck of a flounder and a trophy. She understood that despite no spring or fall we have lots of Citations and could have had lots more with better weather. However, 90% of her customers come to flounder fish and the numbers are a reflection of the popularity of the fishery. A fishery that popular with that much effort will have more Citations when population is good than other fisheries.

Dave Elliott stated our philosophy is to recognize true trophies, and 7 pounds is not enough; should go up.

William Seymour reiterated this has been a good season and need to go up.

Ken Neill disagreed with the need to raise the minimum on a fish that has so many people targeting them; he also stated that a few of the expert fishermen are accounting for the really large fish and the switch to using live spot around structure has kept numbers of Citations high.

Jerry Thrash stated the numbers of fish were down in his area (Middle Bay) and Chris Snook agreed with that assessment for the Eastern Shore Bayside.

Claude Bain stated the CBBT area fishery was better and more consistent throughout the summer, while apparently areas up the Bay showed some fall off in the fishery. He further stated the management authorities state the population is continuing to expand, although not as fast as their plans dictate and further restrictions in the harvest are on the horizon. The numbers of larger fish could be a pulsing of a few year classes through the population and the job of the Committee is to assess the prospects for the growth to continue – whether there are replacements on the horizon such that Citations numbers will continue to expand.

Craig Paige stated he felt this could be a population spike and would not raise the minimum yet. Given the number of people that target flounder and the hours spent to catch the fish, the number of Citations should be higher than other species when the population is high.

After some further discussion, Bill Hall moved to keep the Citation size at current levels; Jerry Thrash seconded and the motion carried 11-1, with William Seymour voting no.

Claude Bain introduced agenda item IV, a possible change in the spot Citation. He reviewed spot Citation numbers for 2005 (when the Citation minimum was increased to 1 lb., 2 oz.) that showed a large decline from the record year in 2004. He stated that until 1 week ago, he felt the decline would have been evident even if the Citation minimum had stayed at 1 pound but a surge of big spot has occurred in the last 5 days.

Ken Neill stated the last 3 days have produced lots of big fish, with Don Lancaster getting 9 Citations on Saturday; Charles Randolph agreed stating prior to the weekend they were seeing 14-ounce and 15-ounce fish at the upper end, but lots of big fish appeared in last three days.

Claude Bain reviewed the life history of spot, wondering whether the spike of big fish in 2004 was caused by a year class that has now pulsed out of the population. However, he felt the numbers of medium-size spot in the lower Bay has been higher this summer than in many years; this could be a new group of Citation fish in a year. Craig Paige agreed that numbers of medium spot were higher in lower Bay this year.

Jerry Thrash stated the numbers in the Rappahannock during the summer were much smaller than in last several years, and this has been the center of the Bay's spot fishery in recent years.

Nancy Cobb and Charles Randolph stated they favored leaving the Citation level where it is for another year. Ken Neill stated predicting the population was impossible and tough to make a right call.

Claude Bain stated the Committee could table their decision until December, since they have another meeting planned, which would give them a chance to look at the final spot Citation numbers for 2005 since the season for big fish has started so late.

William Seymour moved to table any decision until the December meeting; this was seconded by Bill Hall and approved unanimously.

Claude Bain introduced agenda item II, a continuing review of the expanded release program with emphasis on survivability and handling issues for several species of fish. He stated the issue of gaffing fish ultimately entered for release awards should be addressed by the group.

William Seymour stated he felt a gaffed fish should not be allowed to be entered for a release – it is a fish with a big hole in it. Gaffing a fish through the lip probably would not hurt it, but probably too complicated to deal with in the rules.

Ken Neill disagreed, stating gaffing through the lip is the best way to land and control certain fish. He does it with amberjack all the time, and has a 33% return rate on tagged amberjack handled this way. Dr Wright has similar experience for his tagged return rate. Also, using nets can damage fish, especially the slime layer, and it is hard to say that one method of landing fish is always better than the other – both provide some harm to the fish.

Bill Hall agreed with Ken Neill; he felt the Tournament should provide guidance to gaffing fish but not ban it entirely. Landing black drum, particularly on high-sided boats (charterboats) is relatively easy with a gaff and very tough with a net.

Craig Paige stated gaff through the lower lip is the easiest way to revive a large fish after a fight; providing a way to control it as it is moved through the water with the boat in gear to get oxygen to its gills.

William Seymour did not disagree, but keeping rules simple is a real concern.

Bill Hall again stated outlawing gaffing is not the best answer – cannot regulate morals and ethics; need to provide guidance and permit gaffing through the lip. You have to assume responsible fishermen will use commonsense. Dave Elliott agreed that lip gaffing was necessary to control fish prior to release, using tarpon as a prime example.

Rob Holtz was recognized and stated his earlier comments about gaffing were to keep the rules simple and that lip gaffing was okay; just so long as rules do not get too complicated.

William Seymour stated gaffing through lip would be okay in rules, but also need to spell out releases fish must be in good condition. Jon Lucy agreed that lip gaff was a good release tool and to promote conservation it should be allowed in our rules. Spell out fish should be in good, survivable condition when released.

Several Committee members concurred that gaffing through the lip should be allowed for release under program rules. Ken Neill stated add provision about fish must be in good condition as precedent for releases.

Claude Bain then asked the Committee about survivability issues relating to release eligible fish, and the Committee decided to go through the species list one-by-one.

Black sea bass was the first to be seen as a possible problem. Ken Neill stated most of the Citations are coming from deep water with survivability issues, but the numbers are so small that it is not a biological issue; it is strictly a perception/moral issue. Only would be a real problem if lots of fish involved.

Craig Paige stated there was a problem with sea bass. Jon Lucy stated mortality studies have shown a 50-60% mortality rate for fish not vented (or not vented properly) when fishing in 100-150 feet of water, but some will survive and numbers are small making it not a big issue for the fish population. Paige stated it was still a question of what is the right thing to do.

A continuation of the species review was highlighted by discussions on dolphin, wahoo, king mackerel and tuna. Bill Hall stated a bull dolphin is impossible to handle and get a measurement. Consensus agreement among members that wahoo and king mackerel were not only tough to handle for release, but posed a danger to anglers, as well, even with an estimated length requirement.

Ken Neill felt there should be no releases for tunas. Claude Bain pointed out that the restrictive bluefin regulations made that a release fishery for many people, as they tried to fit into the appropriate size and possession limits; and, he did not feel there was a problem with yellowfin tuna. Mr. Neill stated the yellowfin length was too small.

After some further discussion, Chris Snook made a motion to remove black sea bass, dolphin, wahoo, king mackerel and Spanish mackerel from the release Citation program; this was seconded by Craig Paige and passed unanimously.

Mr. Bain asked if there was any desire on the part of the group to add gaffing of fish. William Seymour made a motion to amend Tournament rules to allow gaffing through the lip only and to require that fish be released in good condition. This was seconded by Wally Beauchamp and passed unanimously.

Claude Bain introduced agenda item V by stating barracuda was erroneously included on the agenda. The barracuda request had been thoroughly considered and rejected by the Committee at the 2004 meeting. Mr. Bain then stated he had a request for a true albacore Citation and asked if there was any discussion from the Committee about it.

Mr. Hall stated there were good numbers of True albacore caught off the northern Eastern Shore and they tended to be similar in size – mostly 30-40 pounds. Dave Elliott asked if there was more than one request for adding this fish to Citation list. Mr. Bain responded there was only one request, but that should not be the critical criteria; really need to determine if this is a true game fish and if there is an active fishery in Virginia.

Nancy Cobb asked what the fishery was like off Virginia Beach. Mr. Bain responded that there was a period during most years (usually a couple of weeks) when there were pretty good numbers of fish available off VA Beach.

Bill Hall stated they were a great food fish and good game fish, targeted by off Eastern Shore and, in fact, whose arrival was awaited by many anglers. He added that if we have a

Citation for false albacore there certainly should be one for true (longfin) albacore. Ken Neill stated there was a lot of excitement when the longfins appear at the Norfolk Canyon.

Bill Hall stated he thought the 45 pound suggested minimum might be too high. Mr. Bain stated he thought the state record stood at 48 pounds [this was in fact an error; record is 68 pounds].

After some further discussion, Dave Elliott moved to establish a Citation with a minimum weight of 40 pound with no release Citation; this was seconded by Wally Beauchamp and passed unanimously.

Mr. Bain stated that was the end of the meeting agenda; and asked if there was any additional business.

Jerry Thrash stated he was concerned about how our sanctioning gaffing through the lip might be interpreted with respect to striped bass, since it is illegal to gaff striped bass. Mr. Bain stated that was a regulation and our Tournament rules require following all State laws and regulations. Mr. Seymour, stating this could be confusing, made a motion for Tournament rules to specifically exclude striped bass from lip gaffing; this was seconded by Mr. Beauchamp and passed unanimously.

Wally Beauchamp made a comment to the public about the high incidence of mycobacteriosis in striped bass in the Chesapeake Bay and warned anglers about handling striped bass. Some general discussion about the disease followed.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.