A meeting of the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council’s Blue Crab Advisory Committee was held via in person and webinar on May 1, 2025 to discuss New Jersey’s Blue Crab Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) draft. This FMP which is required by law will provide a framework for managing Blue Crab.

Staff presented work that has already been completed for the FMP which includes:

Overview of species biology – Marine Fisheries Council recommended that the state be separated between the Atlantic Coast and Delaware Bay. Also recommended was separating the commercial and recreational fisheries.

History of landings and regulations – Staff presented a history of commercial landings along with landing separated by region and gear. Also presented was the number of commercial and recreational license holders.

Summary of population trends from surveys – Staff presented population trends for surveys conducted by Marine Resources Administration for both Delaware Bay and Atlantic Coast.

Advisors provided valuable feedback including updating survey years, differences in how pounds per bushel and price per pound change throughout the year, the number of recreational licenses sold, recreational traps and recreational reporting.

Staff asked advisors for their input on parts of the FMP that haven’t been completed such as fishery goals and objectives. Advisors were presented with goals and objectives for the FMP, along with the defining optimum yield. Advisors did not have issues with the goals and objectives presented. Discussion between staff and advisors included earlier start dates, minimizing ghost gear, co-operative research, ecological impacts, biodegradable pots and increased enforcement.

At the conclusion of the meeting staff informed advisors that additional comments are welcomed. Staff will update the draft with comments. Additional meetings may be scheduled before the FMP is released for public comment.

**Attendees (\* represents virtual)**

Marine Fisheries Council: Barney Hollinger\*, Jeff Kaelin\*, Bob Rush

Blue Crab Advisors: William Tirri, Bill Muermann, Lou Tocci, Jonathon Wade, Joe Haase, Dusty Cheesman, Joe Wagner\*

Staff: Jeff Brust, Colleen Brust, Mike Celestino, Matt Heyl, Mike Auriemma