**Appendix 9**

**FISHERY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: U.S. VIRGINIA EASTERN OYSTER—TONGS, DREDGES, CAGES**

**Principle Performance Indicator 3.2.2**

Fishery Specific Management System

Decision Making Processes

The goal of managing the oyster fishery in Virginia is to produce sustainable harvests while conserving the oyster resource.

Virginia management of the Eastern Oyster population shall follow the Precautionary Approach (PA). In this case, the PA may be defined as the following: in the absence of scientific data, resource management shall implement conservation measures to protect the standing stock.

The following management objectives are available to resource managers:

1. Substrate planting for oyster ground enhancement or F0 recruitment
2. Population of F1 oysters to be transplanted and/or conserved
3. Sub-market oysters to be conserved
4. Market oysters to be harvested
5. Brood stock areas not currently involved in rotational harvests
6. Harvest seasons
7. Rotational harvest areas
8. Gear types
9. Control date
10. License transferability
11. Other management strategies

The goal of implementing any of the above management measures is to allow for maximum sustainable yield (MSY). This will fluctuate over time due to recruitment, fishing pressure and environmental factors. Implementing new strategies shall be determined over a period of three to five years as this is the lifespan for most eastern oysters.

Conducting robust data collection on and assessing populations of standing stocks, annual recruitment and rotational area harvests will aid in implementing sound management measures that target MSY. Should science determine abundance below the threshold as determined by resource managers then management objectives shall be implemented. In the absence of scientific assessments managers shall implement the PA when determining possible management objectives to implement. Stakeholders shall have input in the process through advisory boards but the PA shall be observed to implement conservation measures to protect resource abundance.

Resource management has the collaborative cooperation of scientific institutions and advisory boards to determine the PA for sustainable harvests and ensuring future resource availability.