



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Marine Fisheries Advisory

UPDATE ON 2024 COMMERCIAL STRIPED BASS FISHERY INCLUDING CHANGES TO COMMERCIAL FISHING DAYS AND PRIMARY SALE RULES

Massachusetts' commercial striped bass fishery will open this year on Tuesday, June 18 with a 683,773-pound quota. This year's quota has been reduced by 7% in response to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's adoption of Addendum II to the Atlantic Striped Bass Interstate Fishery Management Plan. Considering this quota reduction and recent fishery performance, DMF has eliminated Monday as an open fishing day to prevent an early season quota closure. The fishery will start with open fishing days on Tuesdays and Wednesdays; should at least 30% of the quota remain available on August 1, Thursdays will be added as an open fishing day. The fishery will be closed on Wednesday, July 3 this year to avoid user group conflicts between commercial fishers and recreational boaters.

The commercial minimum size remains unchanged at 35 inches. The release of previously retained legal sized fish for larger fish ("high-grading") is prohibited. Commercial fishers may eviscerate striped bass at sea, but the fish must be otherwise landed whole and in-the-round and the fish may not be mutilated in any manner that would interfere with their measurement.

The daily limit will remain unchanged this year at 15 fish for boat-based permit holders fishing onboard the vessel named on the permit and 2 fish for all other fishing activity. These daily limits apply regardless of the number of permits held, commercial fishers onboard a vessel, or trips taken in a day. With consecutive open fishing days, commercial fishers may fish overnight tides spanning two open fishing days provided they do not possess or sell more than one limit during any single calendar day.

Commercial fishers may only sell striped bass to primary buyers on open commercial fishing days. Both the primary buyer and the commercial fisher must be present at this transaction. Dropping fish off at an unattended dealer facility is unlawful. Additionally, primary buyers must tag the striped bass upon taking possession of striped bass at primary purchase. Striped bass tags will be distributed to primary buyers in late-May/early-June.

The Cape Cod Canal remains closed to commercial striped bass fishing. Therefore, all striped bass retained from the Canal or possessed within 1,000 feet of the Canal (unless caught elsewhere and being actively transported to a dealer) must adhere to Massachusetts' recreational fishing limits. For 2024, the recreational striped bass fishery is subject to a 1-fish per angler daily bag limit and a slot limit of 28" to less than 31".

Commercial fishing for striped bass may not occur during the same trip as recreational fishing for striped bass. Commercial fishers are reminded of the requirement to report all striped bass harvested under the authority of a commercial permit on forms provided by the Division; this includes all fish sold and kept for personal use. Rod-and-reel and handline are the only authorized gear to harvest striped bass.

For more information, please visit our website: www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.