

MARINE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION
Tuesday, March 19, 2024
Via Zoom

In attendance:

Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission: Raymond Kane, Chairman; Michael Pierdinock, Vice-Chairman; Kalil Boghdan; Shelley Edmundson; Bill Amaru; Arthur “Sooky” Sawyer; Chris McGuire; Bill Doyle; and Tim Brady (arrived late)

Department of Fish and Game: Commissioner Tom O’Shea and Julia Hopkins

Division of Marine Fisheries: Daniel McKiernan, Director; Mike Armstrong, Deputy Director; Bob Glenn, Deputy Director; Kevin Creighton, Assistant Director; Story Reed, Assistant Director; Jared Silva; Julia Kaplan; Ben Gahagan; Anna Webb; Alex Boeri; Tracy Pugh; Derek Perry; Steve Wilcox; Melanie Griffin; Nichola Meserve; Stephanie Cunningham; Scott Schaffer; Gabe Lundgren; Kerry Allard; Nick Buchan; and Laura Tomlinson.

Massachusetts Environmental Police: Lt. Matt Bass

Members of the Public: Erin Douglas, Sharl Heller, Jamie Bassett, Beth Casoni, Susan Cayleff, Nora Blair, Bill Sargent, Paul Ward, John Donahue, Helen Mangelsdorf, Heidi Ricci, Michael A, Maureen Ward, Liana DiNunzio, Heather Haggerty, Allie Myers, Susan Linder, Gordon Starr, Will Rhatigan, Kathryn Holmes, Emerson Hasbrouck, Heather Packard, Jen H, Matt Penella, Sarah OToole, Brooke Eaton-Skea, Shirley C, Joe Weinberg, Gary Creamer, John Moran, Rep. Joan Meschino, Drew Bouley, Greg Power, Phil Coates, Sarah Blick, Elaine Abrams, Erik Christiansen, Chris Koehler, Julianna Denum, Betty Zimmerberg, Lizzie Roche, Laura Gill, and Will Poston.

INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Ray Kane thanked everyone for their attendance and called the March 19, 2024 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting to order.

REVIEW OF MARCH 19, 2024 BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Chairman Kane asked if there were any amendments to the March 19, 2024 MFAC business meeting agenda. No amendments were proposed.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 13, 2024 DRAFT BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Kane asked if there were any amendments to the February 13, 2024 draft business meeting minutes. No amendments were sought.

The Chairman then requested a motion be made to approve the minutes. **Sooky**

Sawyer made the motion to approve the February 13, 2024 business meeting minutes. Shelley Edmundson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously 7-0-1 with Chairman Kane abstaining.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Ray Kane welcomed everyone and thanked the MFAC for their continued attendance. He commended DMF staff for getting the meeting materials out early to allow for ample review prior to today's meeting.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Lt. Bass handled the comments for the Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP). During the winter period, MEP's efforts were focused on removing fixed gear abandoned in the right whale closure. With regards to personnel, staffing is now up to 96 officers with four more in the academy. Colonel Sean Santos left MEP and Patrick Moran is serving as Acting Colonel while MEP moves to hire a new Colonel.

Sooky Sawyer noted some complaints from lobster trap fishers regarding trawlers off of Provincetown targeting lobsters and concerns that they may be high grading or not complying with state trip limits. Ray Kane and Lt. Bass discussed to what extent these trawlers are subject to vessel tracking requirements.

Kalil Boghdan and Lt. Bass discussed the recent awards provided to Ofc. Joe Gray.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner O'Shea highlighted his recent meeting with members of the Gloucester fishing community; DFG's the biodiversity workshop and strategic plan; and Seafood Expo North America.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director McKiernan began his comments by discussing shellfish related issues. First, he tackled the re-classification of certain shellfish growing areas in Buzzards Bay due to their proximity to the New Bedford and Fairhaven wastewater treatment plant outfalls. He then discussed the challenges related to potentially upgrading and reopening the Newburyport Shellfish Depuration Plant given the impacts of coastal erosion on the plant's infrastructure and declining fishery performance.

Dan then discussed issues related to the lobster fishery. A federal judge ruled in favor of the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association (MLA) in their lawsuit to repeal the closure of the so-called "Massachusetts Restricted Area" wedge. Accordingly, the area remains open to trap gear and persistent buoy lines. As such, DMF intends to work with NOAA Law Enforcement and the Massachusetts Environmental Police to inspect gear for compliance with buoy line marking and modification requirements. Dan also reminded the MFAC that of MLA's Annual Weekend and Tradeshow on

March 22 and 23 in Hyannis. DMF would host a public hearing on March 22 at 8AM and this hearing would be focused on the state implementation of Addendum XXVII. Additionally, DMF would host its annual roundtable on March 23 at 1PM.

Sooky Sawyer was disappointed by a recent comment letter from DMF regarding the potential closure of the Everett Marine Terminal Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facility and the removal of the LNG pipeline. Sooky noted that this pipeline now provides substantial artificial habitat for the lobster resource. Dan noted that given the development of offshore wind energy infrastructure, DMF was sensitive to creating any precedent to allow such infrastructure to remain in the ocean after it is decommissioned.

ACTION ITEMS

Horseshoe Crab Management

Director Dan McKiernan provided three recommendations to the MFAC regarding horseshoe crab management:

1. Enact a prohibition on the harvest of horseshoe crabs from April 15 – June 7 annually to protect spawning crabs.
2. Establish a uniform bait fishery trip limit of 300 horseshoe crabs per calendar day for all limited entry horseshoe crab endorsement holders. The trip limit would then automatically increase to 400 crabs on August 1 if 50% or more of the quota remains available or automatically decrease to 200 crabs if 80% of the quota is taken before September 15.
3. Complement existing federal harvest prohibitions within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore and the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge.

Director McKiernan then provided the Commission with the rationale for each of the recommendations and recognized how the recommendations may impact hand harvesters, bait markets, and biomedical firms.

Kalil Boghdan expressed concerns regarding continuing to allow the use of horseshoe crabs as bait in a whelk fishery that is declining. Dan agreed that catch and effort are declining in the whelk fishery and that these trends are likely to continue given the status of the whelk resource locally. In 2023, DMF decreased the bait quota to better reflect local bait needs. Should bait demand continue to decrease, he would be open to moving bait quota over to the biomedical fishery.

Chris McGuire stated he strongly supported the recommended in-season, adaptive adjustments to the trip limits and encouraged DMF to continue to apply this strategy to other fisheries.

Chairman Kane sought a motion to approve DMF's recommendation to prohibit all harvest of horseshoe crabs from April 15 – June 7 annually to protect spawning. **Bill Doyle made a motion to approve the recommendation. Chris McGuire seconded the motion. The motion was passed 5-1-2, with Sooky Sawyer voting against, Chairman Kane and**

Bill Amaru abstaining.

Chairman Kane sought a motion to approve DMF's recommendation to establish a uniform bait fishery trip limit of 300 horseshoe crabs per calendar day for all limited entry horseshoe crab endorsement holders. The trip limit would then automatically increase to 400 crabs on August 1 if 50% or more of the quota remains available or automatically decrease to 200 crabs if 80% of the quota is taken before September 15. **Bill Doyle made a motion to approve the recommendation. Shelley Edmundson seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously 6-0-2, with Chairman Kane and Bill Amaru abstaining.**

Chairman Kane sought a motion to approve DMF's recommendation to complement existing federal harvest prohibitions within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore and the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge. **Chris McGuire made a motion to approve the recommendation. Shelley Edmundson seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously 6-0-2, with Chairman Kane and Bill Amaru abstaining.**

Chairman Kane asked if there are any alternative fisheries that the hand harvesters could move into. Dan McKiernan mentioned the green crab fishery or shellfishing but noted potential issues with market for green crabs. Ray Kane proposed DMF and DFG support a bounty program for green crabs on Cape Cod, similar to what is accommodated on the North Shore. Dan stated that this idea was being investigated. Bob Glenn then described the existing bounty program. Several North Shore towns receive state funds to pay harvesters a bounty to harvest green crabs and the harvesters may also sell these crabs to market. This dual-payment approach creates a financial incentive to harvest the crabs, as there is not sufficient market demand.

Bill Amaru stated that the impact from green crabs to softshell clam beds is significant. He advocated for the expansion of a bounty program and he hopes that green crab can potentially take the place of the horseshoe crabs as bait in the whelk fishery.

Dan McKiernan asked Story Reed to speak regarding several seafood marketing programs implemented to promote green crabs. Story Reed discussed several grants that have been provided through the seafood marketing program and noted he could present on this in the future.

Commercial Striped Bass Fishing Days and Primary Purchase Requirements

Given the early closure of the commercial striped bass fishery in 2023 and the pending 7% reduction in the state's quota for 2023, Director McKiernan made several recommendations to the MFAC to adjust the rules affecting the commercial striped bass fishery:

1. Reduce the number of fishing days from three days per week to two days per week to start the season by eliminating Monday as an open fishing day and retaining Tuesday and Wednesday.
2. Automatically add Thursday as an open fishing day on August 1 provided at least

- 30% or more of the quota remains available.
3. Require that both commercial fishers and primary buyers be present at the primary purchase transaction.
 4. Require that primary buyers tag fish upon taking possession at primary purchase.

Kalil Boghdan and Jared Silva discussed how DMF's recommendation intended to constrain the practice of front loading. It was DMF's understanding that a Monday open fishing day likely encourages the front loading by allowing fish to be aggregated over the weekend for sale on Monday morning. By moving the first open fishing day further away from the weekend, the practice may be diminished as the quality of fish held over the weekend will be diminished and the opportunity to front load on a Monday may be reduced given some participants may have weekday jobs.

Chairman Kane sought clarification on whether the open fishing day would run from midnight to midnight. Jared Silva stated that the open fishing days would run from midnight to midnight without any additional landing and handling window.

Chairman Kane asked if DMF wanted to vote on each of DMF's recommendations individually or in aggregate. Director McKiernan supported the MFAC voting on the recommendations as a single package.

Chairman Kane sought a motion. **Bill Doyle made a motion to approve DMF's recommendations as provided. Mike Pierdinock seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously 7-0-1, with Chairman Kane abstaining.**

Commercial Menhaden Season and Automatic Trip Limit Adjustments

Nichola Meserve presented DMF's recommendations to adjust the commercial menhaden seasons and trip limits. These recommendations include:

1. Replacing the June 15 start date for the purse seine fishery with a May 15 start date;
2. Add a conditional date of September 1 to the 50% quota use trigger, such that if 50% quota use does not occur until September 1 or later, the limited entry trip limit will remain 120,000 pounds through 90% quota use (then drop to 25,000 pounds through 100% quota use); and clarify that Friday remains closed to purse seining as long as the 120,000-pound limit remains in effect;
3. Add a conditional date of October 15, such that if at least 10% quota remains at that time, the limited entry trip limit increases to 360,000 pounds, with a requirement for vessels to notify the Division at least 48-hours in advance of landing.

Mike Pierdinock stated his support for these recommendations. He added that he was looking forward to DMF's meeting with the seiners and the Boston Harbor charter boat fleet to address user group conflicts.

Kalil Boghdan asked about participation in the commercial menhaden fishery. Nichola Meserve and Jared Silva explained the tiered permitting system and there were fewer

than ten active boats that are permitted to participate in the limited entry fishery inside the harbors and embayments (“inshore net areas”).

Sooky Sawyer and Jared Silva discussed the trip limits and trip limit triggers that exist should the quota be used.

Chairman Kane sought a motion. **Sooky Sawyer made a motion to approve the recommendations as provided. Kalil Boghdan seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously 7-0-1, with Chairman Kane abstaining.**

Commercial Summer Flounder Trip Limits

Jared Silva provided a background regarding recommendations for the commercial summer flounder trip limits. DMF was recommending the MFAC vote in favor of the following:

1. For the Period I fishery (January 1–April 22), reduce the trip limit from 10,000 pounds to 5,000 pounds.
2. For the Period II summertime fishery (April 23–September 30), adopt a quota use trigger that would reduce the trip limit to 400 pounds for net gear and 250 pounds for hook gear if 75% of the quota is taken before August 1.
3. For the Period II fall fishery (October 1–December 31), change the quota use trigger from 5% to 10% quota remaining and reduce the trip limit from 10,000 pounds to 5,000 pounds should at least 10% of the quota remain on October 1.

Jared added that DMF will also renew the consecutive Daily Trip Limit Program, which does not require a MFAC vote.

Kalil Boghdan asked how accurate the current stock assessment is and how it came to be. Nichola Meserve explained that these recommendations respond to the 2023 stock assessment. This stock assessment demonstrated that while the stock was not overfished, overfishing was occurring despite recent catch limit underages. This was due to the prior assessment overestimating abundance, in large part due to the promising 2018-year class being smaller than initially assessed. The stock is assessed every two years with the next assessment occurring in 2025.

Chairman Kane sought a motion. **Bill Amaru made a motion to approve the recommendations as provided. Shelley Edmundson seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously 7-0-1, with Chairman Kane abstaining.**

Adjustment to May Commercial Groundfish Closure

Jared Silva reviewed DMF’s recommendation regarding the May commercial groundfish closure. This recommendation would move the southern boundary of the closure north from 42° 20’ north latitude (Boston Harbor) to 42° 25’ north latitude (Nahant) resulting in a May commercial closure from 42° 25’ north latitude (Nahant) north to the Massachusetts/New Hampshire maritime border.

Chairman Kane sought a motion. **Sooky Sawyer made a motion to approve the**

recommendation as provided. Bill Amaru seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously 7-0-1, with Chairman Kane abstaining.

Commercial Mackerel Trip Limit for State Waters

Jared Silva reviewed DMF's recommendation regarding the commercial mackerel trip limits for state waters. This recommendation would establish a commercial state waters trip limit for Atlantic mackerel of 5,000 pounds until 80% of the fishing quota is taken that is then reduced to 2,500 pounds for the remainder of the fishing year. Like existing sea scallop and groundfish rules, this would apply to all state permit holders as well as federal permit holders when fishing in state waters. Exempt from this trip limit would be weir fishers who infrequently encounter large quantities of Atlantic mackerel in their gear.

Dan McKiernan clarified that the quota is not a Massachusetts quota, but the annual quota that the feds are also going to manage. Dan McKiernan welcomed questions from the Commission.

Bill Amaru asked several questions about how the trip limits would apply should 100% of the federal quota be taken. DMF was uncertain about the specifics of these federal provisions and would respond to Bill after the meeting. (Incidental limits of 10,000 pounds for limited access fishers and 5,000 pounds for open access fishers are triggered at 80% quota use and these limits continue to apply until the start of the next fishing year. Reactive accountability measures require a pound-for-pound payback from the following year if the Atlantic mackerel ACL is exceeded).

Mike Pierdinock asked about the number of vessels permitted. Anna Webb stated that the number of active state-only vessels was quite low and DMF are still gathering the data and will not have a full picture for several months.

Chairman Kane sought a motion. **Bill Amaru made a motion to approve the recommendations as provided. Bill Doyle seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously 7-0-1, with Chairman Kane abstaining.**

Staying Commercial Whelk Gauge Increase

Director McKiernan recommended the MFAC approve staying the schedule to increase the whelk gauge size until 2027. If approved, the 1/8" gauge increase (from 3 1/8" to 3 1/4") scheduled for 2024 will be implemented no sooner than April 15, 2027.

Kalil Boghdan asked about the comment received from whelk fishers. Dan stated there has been no opposition from the fishers.

Shelley Edmundson asked when the funds for a PhD student will be made available. Dan McKiernan stated DMF would not definitively know until the final budget is signed, which could potentially be late July. He was hopeful this would allow SMAST to bring on this student for the upcoming school year.

Bill Amaru asked what the possibilities are for alternative management strategies for the whelk fishery. Dan McKiernan stated other possible ideas could include include a slot

limit, a quota, trip limits, trap limit reductions, or other measures.

Mike Pierdinock expressed interest in how the range of this animal may be impacted by climate change.

Chairman Kane asked Shelley Edmundson if she received any funding regarding her whelk sex-ratio research. Shelley Edmundson stated she has not received any funding, and the project has yet to be built out. Shelley indicated she would speak to Ray after the meeting about the project.

Chairman Kane sought a motion. **Kalil Boghdan made a motion to approve the recommendation as provided. Shelley Edmundson seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously 7-0-1, with Chairman Kane abstaining.**

Commercial Smooth Dogfish Trip Limits

Director McKiernan recommended the MFAC vote in favor of increasing the regulatorily established commercial trip limit for smooth dogfish from 100 pounds to 300 pounds.

Additionally, DMF received a public comment from industry to include smooth dogfish in DMF's ongoing Consecutive Daily Trip Limit Pilot Program. This program allows permit holders participating in the summertime mixed species trawl fishery south of Cape Cod to land two days' trip limits of certain species (principally summer flounder) that were lawfully caught and retained over consecutive open fishing days. DMF is pursuing this requested accommodation with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Coastal Sharks Management Board (Board). Should the Board approve it, DMF will allow the landing of two daily trip limits of smooth dogfish as part of the program in 2024. He welcomed questions from the Commission.

Kalil Boghdan stated he is in favor of this proposal and asked for clarification regarding the trip limits. Jared stated that the quota has historically been underutilized. There was one dragger who requested the increase to make his trips more profitable. Bill Amaru provided some additional details regarding the smooth dogfish fishery.

Chairman Kane sought a motion. **Bill Amaru made a motion to approve the recommendation. Tim Brady seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously 8-0-1, with Chairman Kane abstaining.**

Amendments to Sanitary Shellfish Harvest and Handling Rules

Chrissy Petitpas reviewed DMF's recommendations regarding the shellfish sanitation and harvest. These recommendations included the following:

1. Revising icing requirements for oysters during the Control Season for *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* so that ice is to be applied in a manner that completely covers loose oysters or bags of oysters and exempts commercial fishers from icing requirements if primary buyers take on the burden of icing at landing and within the time-to-icing window.
2. Clarifying that only ice made from potable water sources may be applied to

- shellfish, including during land-based overwintering.
3. Specifying that the most specific alpha-numeric sequence for a shellfish growing area shall be recorded on the shellfish harvester tag.
 4. Adopting a uniform state-wide night closure for the commercial harvest of shellfish. The closure would apply from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise, except that shellfish harvested in state regulated mobile gear fisheries could continue to occur between 6AM and 6PM during the period of November 1 through the last day of February.
 5. Allowing the primary sale of shellfish to occur at a municipally managed site as an alternative to the landing site as approved by DMF.

Bill Amaru expressed concern that DMF's recommendation regarding the use of potable ice would eliminate the historic practice of using ice made from sea water. Director McKiernan stated he would revise his recommendation to accommodate the use of ice made from sea water from any area classified as Approved or Conditionally Approved in the Open Status.

Chairman Kane sought a motion. **Kalil Boghdan made a motion to approve the recommendation as amended by the Director. Bill Doyle seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously 8-0-1, with Chairman Kane abstaining.**

FINAL PERMITTING ACTIONS

Updates to Permit Transferability Rules

Story Reed updated the MFAC regarding the following final permit transferability rules:

1. Relax the transferability standards for Sea Bass, Tautog, and Fluke endorsements by amending the actively fished threshold from four-out-of-the-past-five-years to two-out-of-the-past-five years.
2. Allow the transfer of latent, but otherwise transferable endorsements, in a transfer to an immediate family member.
3. Modernize the definition of the term "immediate family" to include step and adoptive relationships.
4. Allow for the electronic display of commercial fishing permits.
5. Eliminate the outdated reference to the Coastal Lobster Permit waiting list.

Ray Kane and Story Reed discussed DMF's decision making regarding moving to the transferability standard of two-out-of-the-past-five-years. Story indicated this should increase the potential supply of transferable permits to allow improved access to these fisheries.

Housekeeping Adjustments

Story then discussed three housekeeping adjustments to permitting regulations. The first will allow the electronic display of their commercial fishing permit. The second would enhance the definition of immediate family to extend to step and adoptive family. The last would eliminate outdated reference to waiting list for a coastal lobster permit since DMF

has not and will not use a waiting list for permits.

EMERGENCY ACTIONS TO SET RECREATIONAL FISHING RULES

Black Sea Bass, Scup, and Summer Flounder Limits

Director McKiernan stated he intent to use his emergency rulemaking authority to revise the state's recreational summer flounder and scup measures to achieve mandatory harvest reductions and shift the state's recreational black sea bass season for 2024. He sought support for a set of measures to ensure continuity from emergency rulemaking to the subsequent final rulemaking that will be necessary over the summer.

Dan asked Nichola to speak to the proposed measures. Nichola described the public comment received and provided the Commission with background information regarding the changes to bag limit, open season, and minimum size. Nichola pointed out that for scup and flounder would be two-year measures (2024 – 2025), but black sea bass is just for this year.

Mike Pierdinock stated he has heard favorable comments regarding these new regulations. Mike P. thanked Nichola for pointing out research being done for the stock assessment.

Bill Amaru asked if the black sea bass minimum size is the same. Nichola stated that is correct; only the season is being shifted.

At-Sea Filleting of Striped Bass

Director McKiernan stated his intent to use his emergency rulemaking authority to revise the state's striped bass recreational possession and filleting rules to comply with Addendum II to Amendment 7 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass, as follows:

1. Clarify that striped bass retained in the shore or private vessel recreational modes are to be kept whole—except for evisceration, bleeding, or descaling—while on the waters of this state or any adjacent parcel of land, structure, roadway or parking lot, except if being prepared for immediate consumption;
2. Extend the allowance for for-hire captains and crew to fillet striped bass for their customers while at sea to also include while at dock prior to the customers departing the vessel;
3. Require the racks of striped bass filleted in the for-hire recreational mode to be retained in a manner that does not interfere with species identification or total length measurement until such time as the vessel has docked and all customers from that trip have departed the vessel; and
4. Replace the requirement for the striped bass fillets resulting from the for-hire filleting allowance to have skin intact with a requirement that they have at least two square inches of skin intact.

Nichola explained the rationale behind these changes and explained that they are consistent with for-hire requests for adopting ASMFC mandate in the least burdensome

manner. The changes also respond to public comment to provide flexibility for disposing of racks in a legal manner. Finally, they address long-standing confusion about when processing may occur in private angler and shore modes.

Mike Pierdinock provided an idea regarding bass filleting where the fisher would take a photo of the catch with a timestamp on the photo using the BioProject app. Ray Kane suggested this be brought to the attention of the ASMFC's Striped Bass Board. Dan McKiernan added that Mike P. would be well served by working such a request through the various angler and for-hire organizations along the coast.

Chris McGuire supported Mike Pierdinock's idea. He suggested the "Got One" application. The Nature Conservancy has been working with developers to include length as part of the data collected by this application.

OTHER BUSINESS

Upcoming Public Hearings and Business Meetings

Jared Silva stated the upcoming MFAC business meetings would be held on April 23rd, May 21st, and June 18th. He asked the Commission members if they had any conflicts as some meetings may be in-person.

Bill Doyle asked if it would be possible to have one of the upcoming MFAC meetings at Cat Cove. Nichola stated that outdoor accommodations could be made since the conference room is small and would not accommodate public turnout.

Chairman Kane suggested DMF work to schedule the upcoming meetings for Westborough, New Bedford, and Cat Cove. Jared stated he would look into room availability.

No conflicts were raised with these meeting dates.

Commission Member Comments

Sooky Sawyer stated there is substantial concern from industry from regarding the pending implementation of Addendum XXVII and subsequent changes to carapace size, v-notch, and vent size rules. He anticipated this would be of significant interest at the MLA Annual Weekend.

Mike Pierdinock stated there is Atlantic HMS meeting at 2pm today regarding bluefin tuna, he added the public comment period will go through the end of the month.

Chris McGuire thanked DMF for their work on balancing public interests with the proposals that were approved today.

Bill Amaru thanked DMF and stated he is proud of the way DMF manages resources. He stated a slow bay scallop season was observed across Cape Cod this past year and opined this may be due to climate.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Heidi Ricci from Mass Audubon thanked DMF and the MFAC for the work put into the horseshoe crab memo. She stated she is impressed by the professionalism and the thought that goes into the regulatory changes.

Phil Coates commended DMF for their work. He expressed concerns about the striped bass resource and the management of the striped bass fishery. He stated he will prepare extensive comments and would like DMF to distribute them to the MFAC.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Ray Kane requested a motion to adjourn the March 19 MFAC business meeting. **Bill Amaru made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Tim Brady. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.**

MEETING DOCUMENTS

- March 19, 2024 MFAC Agenda
- February 13, 2024 Draft MFAC Minutes
- Horseshoe Crab Recommendation Memo
- Commercial Striped Bass Recommendation Memo
- Commercial Menhaden Recommendation Memo
- Commercial Summer Flounder Recommendation Memo
- May Commercial Groundfish Closure Recommendation Memo
- State Waters Commercial Atlantic Mackerel Trip Limit Recommendation Memo
- Recommendation to Stay Whelk Guage Increase Memo
- Commercial Smooth Dogfish Trip Limit Recommendation Memo
- Commercial Shellfish Recommendation Memo
- Commercial Permitting Amendments
- Recreational Limits for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass
- Recreational Striped Bass Filleting Rules

UPCOMING MEETINGS

9AM
April 23, 2024
TBD

9AM
May 21, 2024
TBD

9AM
June 18, 2024
TBD