



## MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission February 13, 2024 Meeting Summary

---

This document serves as a brief summary of the February 13, 2024 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. This business meeting was held virtually via Zoom. All meeting materials are available on the [MFAC's past meeting website](#) and the meeting recording has been published to [DMF's YouTube Channel](#).

### Discussion Items

*Interstate Fisheries Management Update.* DMF briefed the MFAC on the recent winter 2024 meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

1. Lobster. The American Lobster Board: initiated Addendum XXX to Fishery Management Plan (FMP) address impacts on foreign (e.g., Canadian) imports of American lobster under Addendum XXVII to the FMP; the Technical Committee's work on how a possible New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) action on sea scallop access in Closed Area II may impact the lobster fishery; action to stay federal trap cuts for Lobster Management Areas 2 and 3; the implementation of the electronic tracker program for federal trap permit holders; and the decision to not pursue management action in response to the Jonah crab stock assessment.
2. Striped Bass. The Striped Bass Board approved Addendum II to the FMP for implementation by the states by May 1, 2024. This maintained the 28" to 31" slot limit and 1-fish bag limit for the ocean recreational fishery; required rack retention in states that allow filleting; adopted a 7% cut to the commercial quota; and established a tool to stock assessments through Board actions rather than addenda. For 2024, Massachusetts will have to respond to the rack retention requirement, as DMF does allow the for-hire fleet to filet fish. DMF will provide an opportunity for public input at the February 21 virtual stakeholder meeting ([Zoom Registration](#)).
3. Spiny Dogfish. Specifications were set for 2024 – 2026. Despite objections from NOAA Fisheries, the following coastwide quota levels were set: 10.70 mlb for 2024, 10.97 mlb for 2025, and 11.22 mlb for 2026. The 7,500 pound trip limit for the Northern Region (ME – CT) was retained.
4. American Eel. Two addenda were initiated to continue Maine's glass eel fishery and to consider revisions to the coastwide yellow eel quota. Massachusetts is not impacted by either addenda.

DMF also briefed the MFAC on anticipated recreational fishing limits for black sea bass, scup, and summer flounder. To achieve recreational harvest targets for 2024, a 28% cut in the recreational harvest of summer flounder and a 10% cut in the recreational harvest of scup are required coastwide. DMF has developed a series of potential options to adjust season, size limit, and bag limit to achieve the requisite cut in summer flounder harvest in Massachusetts. Massachusetts has also worked with Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York to develop region-wide options to meet the mandate. For black sea bass, status quo may be maintained for 2024 with a minor allowance to adjust the season so that Massachusetts' fishery may continue to open on the third Saturday in May. More information is available in this [DMF Advisory](#).

*Federal Fisheries Management Update.* DMF briefed the MFAC on the January 2024 NEFMC meeting. The briefing focused on the Council's proposed amendments to NOAA Fisheries for recreational fishing limits for cod and haddock. DMF also discussed the NEFMC's draft Amendment 10 to the Atlantic

Herring FMP. This draft amendment considers measures to better obtain optimum yield while accounting for the role this species plays as forage in the ecosystem and addresses user group conflicts and bycatch of shad and river herring.

*Mobile Gear Fishery Issues.* DMF discussed its February 1 industry stakeholder meeting. The meeting's primary purpose was to address a variety of burgeoning issues related to the sea scallop dredge fishery and the retention of sea scallop shellstock. Following the meeting, on February 8, DMF released a comprehensive [policy guidance document](#). The meeting also provided an opportunity for DMF to address the trawl fishery and provide an overview of expected quotas and regulatory changes for the summertime trawl fishery south of Cape Cod in advance of the public hearings scheduled for February 28 and February 29 ([Public Hearing Notice](#)). Lastly, DMF provided a short update on its surf clam dredge pilot program to improve geo-spatial management through electronic monitoring.

#### **Next Meeting**

The MFAC will meet virtually via Zoom on March 19, 2024. Please check the [MFAC's website](#) for additional information.