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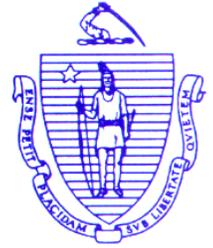
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January 22, 2016

Marine Fisheries Advisory

DMF Scoping Meeting Scheduled for February 8, 2016: Potential Changes to Summertime Fluke Limits

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has scheduled a scoping meeting to discuss potential changes to the summertime fluke limits. The meeting is scheduled for:

February 8, 2016

1:00 PM

Plymouth Public Library

132 South Street

Plymouth, MA 02360

The 2015 summer flounder (fluke) stock assessment update demonstrated that while the fluke resource is not overfished, overfishing occurred in 2014. This stock status change was primarily a result of four years of below average recruitment into the fishery, leading to fewer summer flounder being available than prior models had predicted, and consequently overfishing under previously adopted quotas.

As a result, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reduced the 2016 coast-wide commercial fluke quota by about 30% to 8.12 million pounds (mlbs). Further reductions for 2017 and 2018 are scheduled in order to end overfishing within three years. (See NMFS's [final rule](#) for more details.)

Through the Interstate Fishery Management Plan, Massachusetts receives 6.82% of the coast-wide quota, or 554,047 lbs for 2016 (down from 760,795 in 2015). The state then divides its annual quota among two seasonal periods. Period 1 (February 1–April 22) receives a target allocation of 30%, and Period 2 (April 23 – Quota Dependent) receives the remaining quota. The fisheries are then further managed by trip limits, minimum sizes, and closed fishing days.

With the reduction in the state's fluke quota, DMF has scheduled the scoping meeting to gauge industry interest in adjusting the trip limits and fishing days for the summertime (Period 2) fishery. The purpose of potential adjustments would be to extend the period of time when quota is available and fluke may be landed, and thereby possibly reduce the regulatory discarding of fluke. Following this scoping meeting, DMF will review regulatory options with the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission and hold a public hearing prior to implementing any changes.

For more information about fluke management, please visit our website:

www.mass.gov/marinefisheries