



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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February 7, 2024

Marine Fisheries Advisory

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD SCHEDULED FOR PROPOSALS AFFECTING COMMERCIAL FISHING — STRIPED BASS, WHELK, SUMMER FLOUNDER, HORSESHOE CRABS, SMOOTH DOGFISH, MENHADEN, MACKEREL, GROUND FISH, SHELLFISH, AND PERMITS

DMF is proposing changes to its commercial fishing regulations for the 2024 fishing season. The draft regulations seek to amend commercial fishing regulations for the 2024 fishing season. If adopted, the proposed amendments will impact commercial fishing rules for striped bass, whelk, summer flounder, horseshoe crabs, smooth dogfish, menhaden, mackerel, and groundfish; refine certain rules affecting the sanitary harvest of shellfish, including having state regulations better conform to the *Vp* Control Plan, and modify permitting regulations affecting commercial permit display and transferability. The details on these regulatory proposals can be found in the [Public Hearing Notice](#) with additional background and rationale provided in DMF's recent memoranda to the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) published on DMF's [proposed regulations website](#).

DMF will accept written comment on these proposals through 5PM on Friday, March 8, 2024. Written comment should be submitted by e-mail to marine.fish@mass.gov and addressed to the attention of Director McKiernan. Additionally, DMF will host two in-person public hearings on Wednesday, February 28 and Thursday, February 29. More details on the times and locations of these hearings are provided below. Please note the scheduled times below are approximate and DMF will move onto the next public hearing item upon completion of the prior.

February 28, 2024

Admiral's Hall at MA Maritime Academy, 101 Academy Drive, Buzzards Bay, MA

5PM – 6PM: Horseshoe crabs.

6PM – 7PM: Whelk, summer flounder, groundfish, smooth dogfish.

7PM – 8PM: Striped bass, menhaden, mackerel.

8PM – 9PM: Shellfish and permitting.

February 29, 2024

DMF's Annisquam River Field Station, 30 Emerson Avenue, Gloucester, MA

5PM – 6PM: Striped bass, menhaden, mackerel.

6PM – 7PM: Whelk, summer flounder, groundfish, smooth dogfish.

7PM – 8PM: Horseshoe crabs

8PM – 9PM: Shellfish and permitting.

DMF will review and consider the input received at these hearings and during the written comment period in the development of any final regulatory recommendations. The MFAC is expected to discuss and vote on final DMF recommendations at their virtual March 19, 2024 business meeting. All information regarding this meeting will be published to the [MFAC website](#) by March 15, 2024.

Please visit our website: www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.