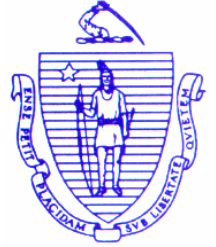




Paul J. Diodati
Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Marine Fisheries
251 Causeway Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 626.1520
Fax (617) 626.1509



April 21, 2006

Marine Fisheries Advisory

**MASSACHUSETTS MARINE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION
APPROVES NEW REGULATIONS**

At an April 7, 2006 business meeting, the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFC) approved Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) proposals for new rules affecting recreational and commercial fishing for scup, recreational fishing for summer flounder (fluke), bluefin tuna purse seining, and squid trawling.

Seine vessels are prohibited for one year (through December 31, 2006) from fishing bluefin tuna in Cape Cod Bay prior to the General Category tuna quota being reached. Once the General Category tuna quota has been reached seine vessels may enter the Bay until the end of the year or until all tuna quotas have been reached, whichever comes first. The Commission voted to sunset this restriction after this season.

Recreational scup fishery season extended through September at a 25-fish possession limit. (322 CMR 8.06). The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) approved a liberalization of interstate plan specifications for recreational scup fishing in 2006. Last year's four-month season, May-August is extended through September for 2006. The scup recreational bag limit of 25-fish per angler will apply and private vessels with two or more persons aboard will be limited to 50-scup per vessel. Similar to last year, individuals fishing aboard for-hire vessels during May through June are able to possess up to 60-fish.

Commercial scup fishermen fishing with pots and hook-and-line gear may fish on Sundays during the summer-period directed fishery that begins on August 1st (322 CMR 6.28). Sunday has been a no-fishing day during the directed fishery period that begins on August 1st. Increasing the fishing week from a 4-day to 5-day period (Sunday – Thursday) should not result in significant changes to the quota-driven season length given the general trend of fishery landings over the last several years. Last year, *Marine Fisheries* twice acted to increase the commercial trip limit to ensure the quota was harvested.

Fluke recreational minimum size increased by a half-inch to 17 ½" (322 CMR 6.09). This compliance measure with the interstate plan is designed to affect a 10% reduction in

the state's recreational harvest. A minimum size increase was the preferred option *in lieu* of seasonal closures or reduced bag limits.

Squid fishermen using mobile gear are subject to a 2,500-lb. daily trip limit when 80% of any of the federal quarterly quotas has been reached (322 CMR 6.39). The federal management plan for *Loligo* squid requires federally permitted vessels to comply with a daily trip limit of 2,500 lbs. once 80% of any of the seasonal quotas has been reached. This rule would require trawlers (without federal squid permits) fishing in state waters to comply with the same trip limit. Furthermore, this regulation deters federally permitted squid vessels from fishing in state waters with a non-renewed permit as a means to avoid the federal trip limits.

Other Actions: The Commission did not approve a proposal to allow retention of black sea bass by scup pot fishermen and no action was taken on a public petition to allow inshore access for squid trawlers during May 1 – 14 from Succonesset Pt. in Mashpee to Pt. Gamon in Yarmouth. These issues were discussed at public hearings on March 28th.

For further information please visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.