



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114

p: (617) 626-1520 | f: (617) 626-1509

www.mass.gov/marinefisheries



CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
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Secretary

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Marine Fisheries Advisory

Commercial Menhaden Fishery to Transition to Episodic Event Set Aside Fishery Effective June 18

Massachusetts' commercial menhaden fishery is projected to have harvested 100% of the state's 5,422,022-pound quota for 2021. Accordingly, the Commonwealth's Quota Managed Menhaden Fishery will close effective at 12:01am on Friday, June 18, 2021 ([Closure Notice](#)). However, Massachusetts has also been granted approval by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to opt into the 2021 Episodic Event Set Aside Fishery effective 12:01am on Friday, June 18, 2021 ([Legal Notice](#)). The Episodic Event Set Aside for 2021 is 4,285,786 pounds.

The following rules apply during the Episodic Event Set Aside Fishery. Limited entry fishery participants (those that hold a valid regulated fishery permit endorsement for menhaden) are restricted to a 25,000-pound trip limit ([Statement of Permit Conditions](#)). All other harvesters are restricted to a 6,000-pound trip limit and are reminded that the [new rules](#) regarding maximum purse seine size, catch storage, and volumetric equivalency continue to apply during the EESA fishery. All vessels are restricted to harvesting menhaden from only within the waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth and are required to land in Massachusetts ports. Additionally, daily catch reporting is required.

The Episodic Event Set Aside is a provision of the interstate fishery management plan that sets aside 1% of the annual coastwide commercial quota for the northeast states' shared use should they utilize their available state-specific quota and high abundances of menhaden remain available in state waters prior to September 1. Access to the set aside requires prior approval from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Multiple states are expected to be harvesting from the set aside at the same time this year. Based on state reports of EESA use, the Commission will determine when the set aside has been exhausted and the Division will close the EESA Fishery accordingly. At that time, the Division will also announce whether the commercial fishing for menhaden will be restricted to the state's incidental catch and small-scale fishery limit, or if a quota transfer has been secured allowing for the Quota Managed Fishery to reopen.

For more information about the management of menhaden in Massachusetts, contact DMF at 617-626-1520 or visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.