



MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

June 18, 2020 Meeting Summary

This document serves as a brief summary of the June 18, 2020 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. This MFAC meeting was held virtually. All meeting materials are available on the [MFAC's past meeting website](#).

Discussion Items

DMF and the MFAC discussed the agency's recent emergency action to close the Cape Cod Canal to commercial striped bass fishing activity. DMF staff explained the rationale for this decision citing concerns related to non-compliance with striped bass fishing regulations, as well as public nuisance issues highlighted by the Army Corps of Engineers, the MA Environmental Police and local police departments. DMF indicated that public hearings would be held in late-July or early-August to take comment on whether or not to extend this rule past the 90-day emergency period. The MFAC would then vote on a final recommendation at the August 20, 2020 business meeting. There was some discussion among the MFAC both in favor of and in opposition to this action.

DMF then provided an overview of ongoing efforts to address the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic was having on the state's fishing and seafood industries.

- DMF staff reviewed the development of spending plans for federal CARES Act relief. These spending plans were being developed through industry working groups for each of the four affected sectors (seafood processing, commercial fishing, aquaculture, and for-hire fishing). DMF anticipates applications will be sent out later this summer. More details may be found on DMF's [CARES Act website](#).
- Due to the pandemic, the for-hire fishery was closed through Memorial Day. Additionally, social distancing procedures and self-quarantine guidelines for out-of-state travelers has constrained economic activity in the for-hire sector. To mitigate some of these impacts, DMF is exploring a conservation equivalency proposal through the Atlantic States Marine Commission that would allow the for-hire sector to recoup some lost fishing opportunity from this spring during the fall through a season extension.
- DMF's Seafood Marketing Program is exploring initiatives to promote the local consumption of local seafood.
- MFAC members also explained how the pandemic and current reopening process was affecting their businesses.

DMF staff provided an overview of the development of the MA Ocean Plan mapping layer for recreational fisheries, as well as an update on the Vineyard Wind project and fisheries mitigation funding.

Upcoming Meetings

The next MFAC business meeting is scheduled for August 20, 2020. The meeting location is to be determined. For more information, view the [MFAC's website](#).

If you would like to obtain any materials regarding past or upcoming MFAC business meetings, please contact Jared Silva at DMF (617-626-1534 or jared.silva@state.ma.us).