



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
Lt. Governor

BETHANY A. CARD
Secretary

RONALD S. AMIDON
Commissioner

DANIEL J. MCKIERNAN
Director

September 2, 2022

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Reminder on Bluefish Possession Limits

As DMF has enacted several changes to its recreational and commercial bluefish regulations in recent years, this advisory serves a reminder regarding the current bluefish regulations.

Recreational Fishery

The recreational bluefish fishery has a 3-fish per angler bag limit for anglers fishing from shore or private vessel. Anglers fishing onboard a for-hire vessel during a for-hire trip are subject to a 5-fish per angler bag limit. This limit applies per angler per calendar day. There is no recreational size limit for bluefish, allowing anglers to retain small bluefish (“snapper blues”) for personal use.

A recreational permit is required to fish for bluefish unless younger than 16 years old; fishing onboard a licensed for-hire vessel during a for-hire trip; exempt for disability; or a non-resident holding a valid recreational fishing permit from New Hampshire, Rhode Island, or Connecticut.

Commercial Fishery

Any commercial fisher may retain, possess, land, and sell bluefish under the authority of their commercial permit. A species-specific bluefish endorsement is not required to commercially harvest this species, including to fish commercially with rod and reel gear. However, certain limited entry endorsements may be required to use regulated gears to take bluefish (e.g., bluefish gillnets, sink gillnets).

The commercial bluefish fishery is subject to a 5,000-pound daily trip limit and a 16” minimum size. The minimum size applies as a total length measured from tip of the snout to end of the tail and not as a fork length measured from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail.

As hook and line gear is used in both the recreational and commercial fisheries, there may be some confusion as to how these rules apply. To clarify, once an angler possesses bluefish in excess of the applicable recreational fishing limit, a commercial fishing permit is required and all fish must be at least 16” in total length. The retention and possession of snapper bluefish by commercial fishers is prohibited.

If anglers are commercially fishing for tuna, they may retain bluefish as bait. If they possess bluefish in excess of the recreational limit, then the 16” commercial minimum size applies; if they possess bluefish smaller than 16” then the number of fish kept may not exceed the recreational fishing limit.

Commercial fishermen are not required to sell their catch and may keep bluefish for personal use. However, all bluefish caught and sold must be reported on their commercial trip level fishing reports.

For more information regarding the management of bluefish in Massachusetts, please visit our website (www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).

