



**David E. Pierce**  
*Director*

# *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

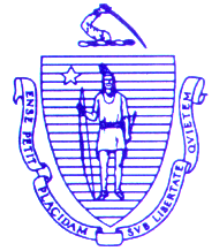
## **Division of Marine Fisheries**

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September 23, 2015

### *Marine Fisheries Advisory*

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT ON SPECIFICATIONS AFFECTING COMMERCIAL SCUP POSSESSION AND LANDING LIMITS DURING THE SUMMER AND WINTER II PERIODS**

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Under the provisions of M.G.L. Ch 30A and pursuant to the authority found in M.G.L. Ch. 130 §§ 17A & 80 and 322 CMR §§ 6.28(9)(d) & 7.01(7), the Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) is accepting comment on two proposals affecting commercial scup possession and landing limits for 2015.

The first proposal is to increase the commercial scup possession and landing limits for the remainder of the summer (May 1 – October 31) period. Existing limits are 800 pounds per day for all gear types and 4,000 pounds per calendar week for trawl fishermen participating in the 2015 Summertime Weekly Scup Aggregate Landing Limit Pilot Program (Pilot Program). DMF is proposing to increase the daily possession and landing limit for all gear types up to 1,500 pounds. As a result, participants in the Pilot Program will be authorized to land 10,500 pounds of scup per calendar week.

The purpose of this action is principally to allow scup being caught in large volumes in federal waters to be landed in Massachusetts. If scup remain in state waters, it will also provide state waters commercial fishermen with enhanced access to the remaining 2015 commercial May 1 – October 31 scup quota. Massachusetts fishermen have currently landed about 50% of this 1,785,122 million pound quota.

The second proposal is to establish Massachusetts' 2015 Winter II (November 1 – December 31) possession and landing limit. The federal 2015 Winter II commercial scup quota was set at 3,384,700 pounds. However, due to a coast-wide underage of 2,084,256 pounds during the federal 2015 Winter I period (January 1 – April 30), the 2015 Winter II quota was increased to 5,468,726 pounds. As a result, the National Marine Fisheries Service increased the federal 2015 Winter II possession limit from 12,000 pounds to 18,000 pounds. *Marine Fisheries* is proposing to complement the federal 18,000 pound limit for this period.

The Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission will vote on these two proposals at their business meeting on October 8, 2015. If approved, the new summer period limits will be effective on Friday, October 9, 2015 and the Winter II limits on November 1, 2015. All trawl fishermen participating in the 2015 Summertime Weekly Scup Aggregate Landing Limit Pilot Program will receive revised Letters of Authorization to reflect potential changes to their weekly aggregate limit.

Public comments will be accepted until 5PM on Wednesday, October 7, 2015. Written comment may be submitted to Director David Pierce by e-mail to [marine.fish@state.ma.us](mailto:marine.fish@state.ma.us) or by post sent to 251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114.

**For more information regarding the management of scup in Massachusetts, please visit our website ([www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)) or call the Division of Marine Fisheries at 617-626-1520.**