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Commercial Fisheries Commission

Meeting 3 | October 6, 2025 | 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Department of Fish and Wildlife Field Headquarters | 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA

Listen-In via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81469995320?pwd=JB5I48nbWut69fwRFGzKq1y2pnODdG.1>

Webinar ID: 814 6999 5320

Passcode: 265560

Agenda

8:45 AM	Arrive, Settle in, Grab Breakfast
9:00	Welcome & Introductions • Review agenda • Review and approve minutes
9:15	Ports and Ports Infrastructure • Update on MA Fishing Ports Survey (5) – <i>Story Reed, DMF</i> • CZM DPA Review and Report (25)– <i>Tyler Soleau, CZM</i> • Mass Ready Act Update (10) – <i>Patrick Field, CBI</i>
10:00	Flounder Presentation • Flounder processing and chokepoints (25) – <i>Frank Mirarchi, South Shore Seafood Exchange</i>
10:25	Offshore Wind • General Update (10) – <i>Brad Shondelmeier, DMF</i> • CFC OSW Workplan Refinement (15) – <i>Patrick Field, CBI</i> • Regional Fund Administrator Update & Prep for October Webinar with them (15) – <i>Patrick Field, CBI</i>
11:05	Other Issues

	• USDA Export Grants (10) - <i>Bonita Oehlke, MDAR</i> • Release of MA Biodiversity Plan (10) - <i>Commissioner Tom O'Shea, DFG</i> • Other
11:30	CFC Annual Report • CFC Discussion of what the group may want to accomplish and include in an end-of-year report to EEA and the legislature
11:50	Public Comment
11:55	Next steps & Closing
12:00PM	Adjourn



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commercial Fisheries Commission

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/commercial-fisheries-commission>

MAURA T. HEALEY

Governor

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL

Lt. Governor

REBECCA L. TEPPER

Secretary

ALLISON BRIZIUS

CZM Director

THOMAS K. O'SHEA

DFG Commissioner

DANIEL J. MCKIERNAN

DMF Director

Commercial Fisheries Commission Charter

The Commercial Fisheries Commission (CFC) is a public body that was established to build industry-wide consensus positions to facilitate the development of broadscale strategies and tools to promote the seafood and commercial fishing industry in the Commonwealth. Its mission is to ensure the needs and interests of the commercial fishing and seafood industries are properly considered in projects addressing ocean planning, offshore energy, and marine conservation; economic interests; port and harbor use, access, and infrastructure; and food systems and security. To achieve this mission, the CFC will meet at least four times per year and provide an annual report to the Massachusetts legislature. Additionally, the CFC will advocate across state and federal entities on behalf of the seafood and commercial fishing industries and develop strategic partnerships to advance the industries' interests. In order to achieve this mission in an orderly and cohesive manner, the CFC will actively avoid redundancies and conflicts between its work and work that is within the domain of other established public entities.

Katie Almeida

Responsible Offshore
Development Alliance

Ed Barrett

MA Fishing Partnership

Roger Berkowitz

MA Seafood Collaborative

Tim Brady

Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat
Association

Gordon Carr

New Bedford Port Authority

Beth Casoni

MA Lobstermen's Association

Aubrey Church

Cape Cod Commercial
Fishermen's Alliance

Al Cottone

Gloucester Fisheries Commission

Vito Giacalone

Gloucester Fishing Community
Preservation Fund

Eric Hansen

Fisheries Survival Fund

Pamela LaFreniere

Center for Sustainable Fisheries

Jackie Odell

Northeast Seafood Coalition

Angela Sanfillipo

Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association

Kevin Stokesbury

UMass Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES COMMISSION

Draft Business Meeting Minutes

June 27, 2025

1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA

In attendance:

Commercial Fisheries Commission: Dan McKiernan, co-chair, Director of Division of Marine Fisheries; Alison Brizius, co-chair, Director of Office of Coastal Zone Management; Hollie Emery; Ed Barrett; Tim Brady; Gordon Carr; Beth Casoni; Aubrey Church; Eric Hansen; Jackie Odell; Kevin Stokesbury, Katie Almeida (virtually). Absent: Vito Giacalone; Pamela LaFreniere; Angela Sanfilippo; Al Cottone; Roger Berkowitz.

Consensus Building Institute (Facilitators): Pat Field, Abby Fullem

Division of Marine Fisheries Staff: Brad Schondelmeier, Bradlie Morgan, Story Reed, and Bob Glenn

Department of Fish and Game Staff: Sefatia Romeo-Theken, Deputy Commissioner

Members of the Public: Alice Stratta; Nathan Raike; Julia Logan; Edward LeBlanc, Annie Murphy; Jynessa Dutka Gianelli; Tricia Perez; Chris Ferro; Lisa Engler; Sam Asci; Ashley Eugloy; Katrina Delaney

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Co-chairs Dan McKiernan, Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), and Alison Brizius, Director of the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), welcomed the group to the Commercial Fisheries Commission (CFC) meeting.

Director McKiernan provided an update on state fisheries management issues in front of the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC). He noted this public body will meet on July 1, 2025 to vote on finalizing emergency regulations to repeal pending changes to regulations affecting lobster carapace size and escape vent size rules consistent with Addendum XXXII to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan.

Dan added that DMF intends to hold public hearings addressing the proposal to require vessel trackers on surf clam vessels. This proposal is part of DMF's updated surf clam management plan being brought to public hearing in response to a recent statutory change that gave DMF sole authority over permitting and managing the commercial surf clam dredge fishery. Prior to this statutory change, case law recognized that this activity

could also be managed and permitted by the Department of Environmental Protection and local Conservation Commissions.

Lastly, Dan described proposed legislation related to commercial fisheries. There is legislation proposed to prohibit the taking of horseshoe crabs for use as bait, which is part of a coastwide push by the conservation community and has gained traction on social media. The second was an act to create a Commercial Fisheries Offshore Wind Mitigation Fund filed by Senator Bruce Tarr. Jackie Odell asked for more information on this, and Dan provided her with the bill. The third was an act providing for a wind farm study filed by Dylan Fernandes. The fourth was an act to provide economic security for fishing industry participants filed by Patrick Kearney and Kenneth Sweezey, which would allow lobster fishermen to collect unemployment benefits during the wintertime closure to protect right whales. Lastly, Dan described a request in the Senate budget for an earmark to DMF for \$60,000 to allow the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) to continue working with the CFC.

Ed Barrett voiced concern about the proposed ban on the taking of horseshoe crabs for bait negatively impacting the fluke fishery due to the propensity for fluke fishermen to catch horseshoe crabs. He asked how this act would impact the medical industry. Dan responded that this act would not impact the medical industry, as the bill focused on restricting the taking of horseshoe crabs for use as bait.

Beth Casoni then highlighted Bill H.4040, which aims to prevent the discharge of radioactive waste. This specifically addresses Holtec International's plan to discharge into Cape Cod Bay following the decommissioning of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant. Director McKiernan and Bob Glenn explained that Holtec is appealing the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) denial of a discharge permit and DMF, DFG, and DEP would likely be asked to weigh in on the issue if the Governor's office takes a position on the bill. Dan added that DMF has already commented against this discharge. However, he recommended individual organizations determine how they'd like to address these issues. Pat Field of CBI emphasized the importance of DMF bringing these bills to the CFC's attention.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Offshore Wind Focus Group Progress

Field then remarked on the significant progress made by the offshore wind (OSW) focus group and Port Profile focus group.

Field explained that one of the key recomgroups from the OSW focus group was for the CFC to interface with the Massachusetts Fisheries Working Group on Offshore Wind

(FWG) to minimize redundancy across the groups. In practice, the FWG will focus on details of specific projects, while the CFC will consider issues raised at the FWG at a higher policy level and develop recommendations. The CFC will meet a few weeks after FWG to allow for these discussions. Four potential actions relevant to the CFC were determined by the focus group: (1) to learn from constructed or in-progress projects in order to better track the effects of OSW development on fisheries and improve monitoring, layouts, and construction practices; (2) to review planning and permitting processes and identify key state leverage points where fishermen can more effectively be involved to generate funds for research or community resilience; (3) to improve economic and compensatory mitigation analyses to better reflect financial impacts on fishing; and (4) to share input on the Regional Fund Administrator's (RFA) claims development process. The overarching recommendation was to wait to submit budget requests to the legislature until next year following this year's annual report.

On the first action—to learn from previous OSW projects—Eric Hansen voiced concern about developers limiting access to relevant data and information that is not publicly available. Pat Field, Jackie Odell, and Melanie Griffin discussed different approaches to address this issue, such as new data stream standardization for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), the new Executive Order on Restoring Gold Standard Science, and NOAA's efforts to standardize data through draft documents. Director McKiernan and Kevin Stokesbury then discussed the projects funded by the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) that aim to collect more meaningful data by including control areas as part of OSW developers' impact studies. Stokesbury and Aubrey Church expressed support for more data transparency. Pat Field suggested compiling information on what data is public and private across developers.

Director McKiernan asked whether this potential action would examine existing VMS data to determine changes in fishing practices due to OSW development. Gordon Carr noted that the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (Mass CEC) is funding a project with the New Bedford Port Authority to determine how to best measure these changes due to OSW.

Ed Barrett and Eric Hansen voiced concerns about neglecting larger spatial trends in fisheries (e.g., displacement of effort or altered fish behavior) and noted how AC to DC conversion towers may affect spawning. Todd Callaghan and Hansen discussed the accessibility of data pertaining to these systems.

Gordon Carr remarked on an additional concern regarding Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute's (WHOI) fishing activity assumptions while conducting economic analyses and called for further research into understanding the assumptions made in these studies.

Field suggested that the OSW focus group develop a plan to learn from previous projects to better understand the outlook of future development and NOAA's role. Beth Casoni voiced a need to understand the impacts of active and future construction. Kevin Stokesbury suggested focusing on improving construction practices rather than investigating economic impact to help inform future designs. Stokesbury and Field then discussed how different OSW farm designs may impact fisheries differently. Jackie Odell added that baseline research on fishing activity in future lease areas should be prioritized. Odell, Barrett, and Church discussed how future development projects should consider the impact of reduced fishing footprints during management closures and emphasized the importance of communication between the fishing community and developers. Church and Casoni suggested dividing the recommendation into lease areas by region or type of OSW development project. Stokesbury suggested the group further research the successful strategies used by other states to inform similar decisions with public data. Field echoed these points and suggested dissecting this issue further with the OSW focus group.

The group then discussed the second potential action—to increase fishermen involvement in generating funds for research or community resilience. Casoni and Field discussed how to include fishermen in the review process such that they have access to funds that may otherwise be directed to the Regional Fund Administrator. Lisa Engler, MassCEC's Deputy Managing Director of Offshore Wind, recommended splitting fishermen engagement and generating monies for the fishing community into two separate actions. She argued that this strategy would create a positive impact on the fishing community beyond generating funding. The group voiced agreement.

On the third potential action—to improve economic analyses to more accurately reflect the impacts of OSW on fishing—the group discussed potentially hiring a consultant to review existing methodologies. McKiernan and Engler voiced support for this action and noted that this undertaking would impact at least three wind lease areas in southern New England. Field added that similar projects have been conducted in California, and this may be informative. McKiernan and Abby Fullem discussed the timeline of the legislature's involvement. Field noted that this action could ease some concerns within the fishing community regarding WHOI's initial analyses. Jackie Odell and Aubrey Church then discussed different considerations for future analyses, such as displacement of fishing effort. Engler then suggested the group flush out ideas to develop a concrete plan to address this issue. She noted potential solutions could include reassessing WHOI's analysis, developing new analyses, or a hybrid approach. Pat Field then suggested the CFC write a pre-scope RFP and address this issue at a later time.

On the fourth potential action—to share input on the RFA’s claims development process—Field noted that the Design Oversight Committee could play a role, which includes Beth Casoni and Brad Schondelmeier. Pat added that CBI will coordinate with the RFA to plan this opportunity for the CFC to share input.

Field added that he will bring these refined actions to the focus groups to address.

Port Profile Focus Group Progress

Story Reed provided an update on the port profile project. Story explained that the port profile project was first conducted 5 years ago and is currently being reassessed. The CFC established a Focus Group (Ed Barrett, Gordon Carr, Beth Casoni, and Aubrey Church) to help DMF reassess the project. The Focus Group met with DMF staff in June.

Topics of interest included what fisheries data should be included (e.g., active vs inactive permits) and separating out wild harvest data from aquaculture. The focus group also examined the two surveys used to collect data from harbormasters and fishers. For the harbormaster survey, the group suggested looking more closely at differences in commercial and recreational use, including defining “commercial” by harbor. They were also interested in learning about harbormasters’ coastal resiliency concerns and recent infrastructure grants that ports have received. For the fishers survey, the group suggested asking respondents about infrastructure projects that have hindered commercial fishers in ports, seasonal lobster trap storage issues, and fishermen commute time. Story emphasized their interest in creating a manageable survey under 15 minutes in length. Director McKiernan asked to clarify the meaning of commute time. Story noted that this would consider the time it takes for fishermen to travel from their home to their slip.

Story then outlined the timeline for this project moving forward. DMF has started fishery statistical analysis and plans to partner with the Urban Harbors Institute of UMass Boston, who worked on the previous port profile project. The goal is to finalize the survey later this summer, conduct survey outreach and write the report in the winter, and report on outreach in spring 2026. Story noted that the CFC will be invited to engage throughout this process.

Eric Hansen asked how survey responses will be categorized to consider differences among commercial industries. Story clarified that the target survey respondents were commercial permit holders and for-hire permit holders, and harbormasters would only be asked questions relevant to commercial fishing and related infrastructure. Ed Barrett emphasized his preference for the survey to focus on commercial fishing separately

from aquaculture. Beth thanked Story for his work on the port profile project and its role in informing industry representatives when speaking with the legislature.

Letters of Support Process

Pat Field noted that in response to the letters CFC members sent to the Massachusetts Food Policy Council concerning the addition of a seat for fisheries and seafood, the request has been filed in three pieces of legislation and is included in Governor Healey's Economic Development Bond Bill.

ResilientCoasts Draft Plan Virtual Meeting

On the *ResilientCoasts* Draft Plan virtual meeting that took place in June, Abby Fullem of CBI asked if anyone had any key takeaways to share with the group. No one did.

Survey Responses

Bradlie Morgan reminded the CFC that at the initial meeting CBI conducted a mentimeter survey to help establish priorities for the public body. CFC members requested DMF also share this survey with their organizations.

Bradlie provided a summary of these survey results.

The survey received 35 respondents, nearly all of which were members of the lobster fishery. Respondents expressed most interest in addressing economic impacts of offshore wind, increasing commercial fishery representation, expanding local seafood markets, and improving port infrastructure, communication around OSW planning, science of fisheries management, and state policy support of commercial fishing. Respondents were least interested in mitigation concerning OSW, shoreside processing, addressing the aging fleet, and adaptive management. Morgan added that these responses are not representative of the entire CFC's constituents, as there was limited representation from fisheries besides lobster. Abby Fullem noted that these responses can be discussed more deeply as the group develops the work plan later.

Charter and Work Plan

Fullem asked if there were any suggested edits to the proposed CFC charter. Beth Casoni suggested changing the wording of the group's mission to clarify the interests of commercial fishing and seafood industries were considered in "economic interests" rather than "economic development". **There were no objections. The edit was adopted by unanimous consent.**

Pat Field then outlined the CFC's work plan. He explained that the focus groups should continue working concurrently with regular CFC meetings to develop specific

recommendations for the annual report. He outlined the plan for September, including focus group meetings, updates from CZM and DEP on Chapter 91, DPAs, and enforcement of Chapter 91; a presentation from MDAR on the MA Food Policy Council; a presentation for the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) on the CFC's work; and a presentation on Maine's Working Waterfront Initiative. Aubrey Church asked about Maine's establishment of a Working Waterfront Information and Technical Assistance Fund and wondered if Massachusetts could replicate this program. Pat noted that the group would investigate this.

Further, Field explained that CFC focus group meetings would take place in October and November, with the full CFC potentially meeting again in December. Field then proposed moving the MDAR presentation on the Food Policy Council from the September 2025 agenda to later meetings. Gordon Carr similarly suggested pushing the EOED presentation to no sooner than December.

Director McKiernan suggested that the Working Waterfront Initiative be prioritized in the annual report to the legislature. Field agreed. Director McKiernan, Director Brizius, and Lisa Engler discussed the importance of addressing port infrastructure and their interest in learning from MassCEC. Alison noted that DPA assessment findings can be shared at the September meeting. She added that the Mass Ready Act introduced a Port Sustainability Commission to examine the needs of ports, especially DPAs, which will have a fisheries representative seat. Beth suggested that collaborative research, innovations in seafood processing, and data used in determining mitigation are addressed by the Fisheries Working Group.

DERELICT GEAR INITIATIVE AND MARINE DEBRIS

Bob Glenn then presented on managing derelict fishing gear in Massachusetts. He outlined the growing issues of derelict fishing gear due to increased fishing effort and changes in gear. Derelict gear has significant impacts on the marine environment and contributes to gear conflicts and public safety issues. Historical state statutes have not differentiated between fishing gear and fishing gear debris, which limited DMF's jurisdiction over managing derelict gear.

In 2022, DMF formed the MA Derelict Gear Task Force to study the issue of derelict gear and to develop solutions for the removal of gear. The Task Force supported amending state law to maintain private property rights for fishing gear but establish a framework to permit and manage the clean-up of fishing gear debris. The legislature supported this amendment, and it was adopted in early 2025. DMF is now in the process of drafting the regulatory framework, which will be subject to review and approval by the MFAC and DFG.

This framework hinges on the definition of what is and what is not “intact” fishing gear. In consideration of what has been done in other jurisdictions, DMF is proposing to define intact trap or pot gear as having at least three of the following requirements: a buoy; a complaint buoy line; identifiable to the permit holder; and configured with appropriate escape vents and ghost panels. This definition ensures that the owner is identifiable, the trap is functional, and the buoy line is identifiable and allows for a gear to be considered non-compliant without becoming fishing gear debris.

Dan asked if a trap is considered not intact if it is crushed on one side. Bob responded that this would be considered not intact. He noted that the framework is intentionally subjective to allow for more effective management.

Commissioner Tom O’Shea noted that this issue was widely supported by stakeholders, and he thanked the DFG policy team for their efforts to push it forward. Glenn and the Commissioner discussed the importance of collaborating with the fishing industry to make this framework possible. Beth Casoni voiced strong support for this initiative.

Aubrey Church and Lisa Engler asked how authorized activity would be regulated.

Bob explained that DMF would authorize the clean-up of fishing gear debris through specific strategies. This includes: (1) providing a blanket year-round authorization to remove and dispose of fishing gear debris from the shoreline; (2) allowing DMF and Massachusetts Environmental Police to remove and dispose of buoyed fishing gear debris in the water year-round; (3) requiring proponents to apply for a special project permits to remove fishing gear during a closed fishing season with each application being reviewed by DMF and permitted based on its merits and the requisite capabilities of the applicant; and (4) enabling mobile gear vessels to bring ashore fishing gear debris incidentally caught during routine fishing operations while maintaining strict prohibitions on molesting fixed fishing gear.

Casoni asked if DMF has noticed a reduction in the amount of gear left behind during closures since starting the abandoned gear removal initiatives. Glenn responded that there’s been a substantial decline in abandoned gear.

Glenn then explained that DMF will seek public comment on best practices for handling fishing gear debris. This includes encouraging fishermen to attempt to return gear to its owner, ensuring gear is disposed of lawfully, and developing a more substantial network of disposal infrastructure.

Todd Callaghan asked if these regulations apply to aquaculture gear. Bob explained that the proposed regulations would not. In the development process, DMF met with representatives from the Massachusetts Shellfish Officers Association and

Massachusetts Aquaculture Association, and it was determined that the best approach would be for DMF to establish a state-wide aquaculture gear labeling requirement and then defer management of derelict aquaculture gear to municipal shellfish officers.

Katie Almeida noted that Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) in Rhode Island recently completed a project to remove derelict gear in state waters and are calling for participants to remove ghost gear in offshore waters. She suggested reaching out to CFRF to learn more. Beth Casoni added that fishermen have expressed interest in obtaining letters of authorization for removing gear balls. Eric Hansen asked how DMF would address mobile gear that hauls up ropeless gear technology. Bob noted that this is a complicated issue that DMF aims to address as ropeless gear becomes more prevalent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Abby Fullem asked for any public comment. There was no public comment.

NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING

Fullem shared deliverables for upcoming meetings: the ResilientCoasts meeting summary, the MDAR response on the seafood industry seat, an updated work plan, and focus group meeting summaries. She asked Aubrey Church to share Maine's Working Waterfront Initiative information at the September meeting. Fullem noted that thoughts on best practices to handle derelict gear can be shared with Bob Glenn during the public comment period. Fullem asked the group to share any final thoughts before adjourning.

Kevin Stokesbury voiced concern about the decision to delay the discussion on seafood processing and research collaboration to a future meeting given labor shortages in working waterfronts and cuts to federal agencies. He argued that these issues directly impact fisheries management. Carr, Stokesbury, and Church discussed how the CFC can address this issue. Field suggested touching base on this topic at their next meeting. Church then explained that she was invited to join the LOC-NESS (Locking away Ocean Carbon in the Northeast Shelf and Slope) project's research trial of ocean alkalinity enhancement in August, but she declined due to some concerns about the project's environmental impacts. Hansen and Tim Brady voiced agreement with Church's concerns. There were no further comments.

Director McKiernan and Director Brizius thanked everyone for their time and attendance. The meeting was adjourned.

MEETING DOCUMENTS

- June 27, 2025 CFC Business Meeting Agenda
- April 8, 2025 Draft CFC Business Meeting Minutes
- April 8, 2025 CFC Business Meeting Key Takeaways
- June 4, 2025 Draft ResilientCoasts Meeting Minutes
- CFC Draft Work Plan 2025
- CFC Draft Charter
- CFC Offshore Wind Focus Group April 30, 2025 Meeting Key Takeaway Summary
- Offshore Focus Group Recommendations Presentation
- Port Profile Focus Group Summary Presentation
- CFC Constituents Survey Responses Presentation
- DMF's Derelict Fishing Gear Management Presentation

UPCOMING MEETINGS

12:30 PM

Monday, September 8th

DFW Field Headquarters

1 Rabbit Hill Rd, Westborough, MA

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES COMMISSION

Draft Business Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2025

100 Cambridge St, Boston, MA

In attendance:

Commercial Fisheries Commission: Dan McKiernan, co-chair, Director of Division of Marine Fisheries; Alison Brizius, co-chair, Director of Coastal Zone Management; Hollie Emery; Katie Almeida; Ed Barrett; Roger Berkowitz; Tim Brady; Gordon Carr; Beth Casoni; Aubrey Church; Al Cottone; Eric Hansen; Jackie Odell; Kevin Stokesbury. Absent: Vito Giacalone; Pamela LaFreniere; Angela Sanfilippo

Consensus Building Institute (Facilitators): Pat Field and Abby Fullem

Division of Marine Fisheries Staff: Brad Schondelmeier, Bradlie Morgan, Jared Silva, Story Reed, and Bob Glenn

Department of Fish and Game Staff: Sefatia Romeo-Theken, Deputy Commissioner

Coastal Zone Management Staff: Todd Callaghan and Tyler Soleau

Members of the Public: Senator Bruce Tarr, Julia Logan, Lisa Engler, and John Regan

Legislators or Their Proxies: Savannah Roth, Steve T., Matt McCormick, Chris, and Will

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dan McKiernan and Alison Brizius—the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and the Director of the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and co-chairs of the Commercial Fisheries Commission (CFC)—welcomed the group and expressed excitement for the potential work to be done. Dan emphasized the value of bringing this diverse group of stakeholders and state agencies. He anticipated interesting future meetings, visions for addressing commercial fishery concerns, and developing pathways for the administration and state legislature to support commercial fishing and the seafood industry.

Dan then introduced Abby Fullem and Pat Field of the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) who have been retained under state contract to facilitate CFC meetings. Abby outlined today's meeting's agenda, and invited each Commission member, DMF staff member, and members of the public to introduce themselves.

Senator Bruce Tarr provided some introductory remarks regarding how this public body came to be and his hopes that it would provide a unified voice to support the commercial fishing and seafood industry.

Commission members introduced themselves and shared their hopes for the CFC. Goals included: creating a unified voice for the industry, identifying and addressing issues proactively, creating a platform for economic support, connecting with legislature and state agencies, developing vision for fisheries to coexist with offshore wind energy development, and addressing critical infrastructure needs.

PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THE COMMISSION AND INITIAL INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Pat Field provided an overview of the legislation relevant to the CFC's work and expressed hope to develop and recommend tools to address sustainability of the fishing industry, responsible development of fisheries, and infrastructure. He then reviewed his findings from scoping interviews with individual Commission members. These findings included how to coordinate responses to and influence outcomes across a diversity of fishery related issues. He reflected on the potential scope of the CFC, including synthesizing issues across the industry to bring a clear focus to issues of critical concern and acting as a liaison to bring a variety of adjacent stakeholders to the table. Potential projects included economic development, infrastructure, large scale offshore wind considerations, representing fishing interests in regulation, sustainable gear and technology, science of fisheries management, and adaptive management. However, he noted that the CFC's purpose was not to address specific regulatory and management issues, and the CFC needed to be cognizant of its relation to other existing groups whose purview it is to weigh in on these matters.

Jackie Odell asked about the role of the Massachusetts Seaport Economic Council. Director Brizius noted that this would be discussed during the meeting.

STATUS OF RELATED EFFORTS

Abby then introduced the speakers who would share statuses of various relevant efforts.

Designated Port Area (DPA) Assessment

Tyler Soleau of CZM presented on the Designated Port Area (DPA) Assessment. The project was meant to promote the use and development of ports and prevent loss of key characteristics such as navigable waterways, industrial operation areas, and land-based infrastructure. CZM, along with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), initiated the DPA Assessment in 2023 and are expected to complete the work this summer. The DPA development process included stakeholder outreach, geospatial economic analysis, and a review of existing data. The project focuses on key categories, including infrastructure and land use, funding, regulations, community engagement, coastal resilience, and criteria of Mass Leads Act. Ed Barrett and Beth Casoni asked about the purpose and scope of DPAs. Tyler noted that DPAs create areas dedicated to specific uses to protect and preserve industries and water access. Senator Tarr added that DPAs help protect working waterfronts and fishing industry, but relevant funding is

limited to the scope of the DPA's purpose. Alison noted that part of the DPA Assessment aimed at addressing these issues. A discussion between Aubrey Church, Tyler Soleau, Eric Hansen, and Senator Tarr followed about the number and location of DPAs. Tyler and Director Brizius noted that although there are currently 10 DPAs in the state, these can be modified through an existing boundary review process and ports can apply to become a DPA.

Alison explained that DPAs were initially created in 1978 to protect heavy waterfront industry areas like Boston and New Bedford and do not encompass all valuable working waterfronts in the state.

Katie Almeida suggested long-term leases from the state could help protect working waterfronts, similar to what is being attempted in Rhode Island. Senator Tarr and Gordon Carr discussed the challenges of mixed uses in ports and how DPAs can protect relevant heavy industries.

Director McKiernan and Senator Tarr then discussed the role of municipalities in port management and infrastructure. From this discussion, the CFC supported contacting the Massachusetts Municipal Association to attend a future meeting to discuss the municipalities' role in supporting port infrastructure needs.

Jackie Odell then asked about impact on transmission lines from offshore wind projects. Gordon Carr noted that DPAs have been used to protect energy transmission in New Bedford and were repurposed for offshore wind needs.

Ed Barrett then asked about the interface between DPAs and DEP's authority under Chapter 91. Director Brizius suggested coordinating with DEP present on Chapter 91 at a future meeting.

Lisa Engler of Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and Beth Casoni discussed sharing previous port assessment work with the CFC.

Massachusetts Ocean Advisory Commission

Todd Callaghan of CZM introduced the Massachusetts Ocean Advisory Commission, which was created alongside the Science Advisory Council through the Oceans Act to better understand resource prevalence and conflicts. The Oceans Act of 2008 required an Ocean Management Plan to be developed. The purpose of the Ocean Management Plan is to protect critical marine habitat and water-dependent uses through management frameworks for ocean-based projects. It considers 12 sensitive habitats, including important fish resource areas identified by DMF, and six water-dependent uses, such as commercial fishing and vessel paths, to inform developers. He noted that the ocean planning area begins three-tenths of a mile from shore.

Todd then introduced the Ocean Development Mitigation Fee Structure. Fees are placed in a trust fund — authorized by the Oceans Act and funded by developers — to support management, protection, restoration or enhancement of marine habitats, resources, and specified uses. The Fee Structure is managed by CZM and the Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA).

Katie Almeida asked if any funds are used to study habitat changes after a cable is installed. Todd explained that this is the responsibility of the developers. A discussion followed between Jackie Odell, Al Cottone, and Todd about requirements governing the depth at which cables are to be buried. Todd noted that, under state law, developers must bury their cables and are required to monitor to ensure that their cables remain buried.

Todd then described some relevant future developments and applications of the Ocean Plan, such as potential offshore sand resource identification, biodiversity initiatives, and adjusting fishery resources maps to consider vulnerability of species.

Kevin Stokesbury asked about offshore sand as a free resource. Todd noted that in addition to state and federal permit fees, sand extraction for beach nourishment may include an Ocean Development Mitigation Fee. Beth and Ed discussed challenges associated with beach nourishment projects.

Seaport Economic Council

Director Alison Brizius discussed the Seaport Economic Council (SEC). SEC invests in coastal communities and working waterfronts through grants focused on innovation, marine economic development, public education, coastal infrastructure, and dredging.

Barrett and Carr expressed support for these grants and called for expanded resources.

Sefatia Romeo-Theken, Deputy Commissioner of DFG, voiced support and shared the use of SEC grants to promote fisheries and pursue harbor infrastructure development projects. Sefatia then noted that compliance with Section 3A of the MBTA Communities Act is required to qualify for SEC grants, which creates a unique set of challenges.

Director McKiernan asked if CFC could pursue SEC grants or similar grants. Pat Field noted that there may be limitations, including the small size of SEC grants and restrictions on private entities. Alison added that these grants can be used alongside federal grants to leverage them and may be appropriate for small communities.

Sefatia called for MassDevelopment to be part of this conversation.

ResilientCoasts Initiative

Director Brizius introduced CZM's *ResilientCoasts* initiative. The project's goal is to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy for coastal resilience to create consistency and provide greater support. Stakeholder engagement informed a draft of analyses this spring. This will create 15 districts across the state and provide strategies and best practices for coastal resilience projects. A draft of this report is being released this spring for public comment. Brizius noted its relevance to the CFC with specific strategies necessary for working waterfronts. She highlighted key features of the plan, including its consideration of areas of housing or economic development, areas of industry at risk, and opportunities for investment. These considerations will inform recommendations for state action.

Aubrey Church voiced support for the program and wished there had been more engagement with fishery stakeholders in its development. Beth Casoni noted she was part of the development process. Alison agreed that more voices can always be involved.

As part of the draft public scoping comment, CZM committed to presenting the initiative to the CFC later this spring.

Seafood Marketing Commission

DMF Deputy Director Story Reed presented on DMF's Seafood Marketing Steering Committee and Seafood Marketing Program. The program was initiated through legislation about 10 years ago with a \$250,000 annual budget. It is advised by a 19-member steering committee made up of diverse industry members and chaired by Director McKiernan. The steering committee meets twice annually. The program's mission is to increase consumer demand for local seafood products and support local fisheries through education and awareness.

In 2024, the program placed an advertisement on Steamship Authority ferries in response to anti-lobster industry advertisements by PETA. Story described the programs' strategies. Strategic partnerships are crucial for the program and are developed through meetings at events like the Boston Seafood Expo. The program also funds social media posts like culinary recipes and mini documentaries on local seafood industry, as well as small grant programs focused on education, video, and outreach. The Program also published a comprehensive a Port Infrastructure Report in 2021.

Dan and Story noted how Wendy Mainardi of DMF has taken on a role with Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) to support seafood industry opportunities to apply for grants, such as Food Security Grants. She also attends the Food Policy Council meetings to advocate for seafood member inclusion. Al Cottone added that seafood traceability would be beneficial to advertise to increase transparency and awareness. Story agreed and voiced interest in DMF pursuing this. Beth thanked the Seafood Marketing Program for supporting the MLA in education and outreach grants.

Jackie Odell praised the DMF for their work to promote commercial fishers and the seafood industry during the pandemic.

Ed Barrett advocated for fishery and seafood industry representation at the Food Policy Council.

Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

Dan McKiernan introduced the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC). The MFAC was originally established as a public body in 1961 to inform the legislature of marine fishery issues. Later in the 1960s, it would be permanently codified as a nine-member body with regulatory oversight body of DMF.

Dan noted that while there may be some overlap between MFAC and CFC interests his intention is to keep these bodies separate and distinct but informed of the others work.

Ed Barrett asked about the body's composition. Dan noted that the legislature only specifies that it contain exactly nine members that are knowledgeable about fisheries and individual members are appointed by the Governor on staggered three-year terms with no term limits.

IDENTIFICATION OF TOPICS FOR DELIBERATIONS BY COMMISSION AT A FUTURE MEETING

Pat Field introduced a real-time Mentimeter poll to identify priority topics for the CFC. Polling responses presented the following priorities:

1. Fishery Economics
 - a. Economic development and stability and port infrastructure were highest priority.
 - b. Seafood marketing issues were identified as the next priority.
 - c. Shoreside processing was the lowest priority.
2. Offshore Wind
 - a. Enhanced input in wind energy policy was the highest priority.
 - b. Developing best practices for mitigation (including DMF-managed funds) and improved communication on wind energy policy and mitigation were identified as the next most important priorities.
3. State Management
 - a. Supporting and involving the fishing and seafood industry in the development of state-wide plans and management programs was identified as the highest priority.
 - b. Other priorities included supporting improved and innovative fisheries management and science programs.

Pat then led the discussion to determine which projects could be pursued by the CFC under each topic of interest.

Director McKiernan identified potential overlap among some of these priorities with other public bodies. This included the Seafood Marketing Steering Committee, the Massachusetts Fisheries Innovation Fund Panel, the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission, and the New England Fishery Management Council.

Carr and Barrett supported approaching the legislature to increase funding for seafood marketing. Carr and Berkowitz then discussed using marketing to support sales of less popular species.

Field suggested asking MDAR to discuss expanding markets for local sustainable seafood with the CFC. Abby Fullem asked about involving seafood representation on the Food Policy Council. Story noted that this may be possible through coordination with MDAR. In response to this, and Barret's earlier comment, there was consensus support among the CFC to draft a letter to MDAR requesting this action. Port infrastructure was discussed next. Pat suggested the SEC as a source of grants for small ports and asked about additional projects of interest.

Aubrey Church suggested working with federal efforts to develop working waterfront infrastructure bills and wondered if a similar approach could be taken at the state level. Dan asked if there would be interest in bringing the Harbor Masters Association and CZM working waterfront personnel to brainstorm potential solutions. Aubrey and Dan discussed the importance of informing harbormasters on the Port Profile Project. Ed, Beth, and Dan noted the differences in capacity and potential involvement of harbormasters. Aubrey added that communities should be included in these conversations to create support and foster collaboration. Al, Aubrey, and Beth then discussed how to share these ideas with coastal communities. Dan noted that community polls have been a helpful part of Port Profile Project.

Pat, Dan, and Story discussed creating a CFC focus group to review the last Port Profile Project and make recommendations for renewing the project. In response, Carr, Church, Casoni, and Barrett volunteered to work on a focus group with DMF-staff on this issue.

Pat noted that the CFC should monitor groups that support port and waterfront infrastructure for future potential projects. Gordon Carr then asked about the Ports Strategic Plan that was led by Mass DOT in 2016. Field committed to sharing this report with the CFC.

Fishermen's training programs were discussed next. Dan suggested planning training programs in community colleges and vocational schools and noted the collaboration currently occurring between the Cape Cod Fishermen's Alliance and Cape Cod Community College.

Jackie Odell and Ed Barrett expressed support for the idea but also concern for the obstacles facing young people as they enter the industry. They suggested waiting to push for training programs until the uncertainty and instability in the field can be addressed. Kevin Stokesbury added that cuts to federal fisheries staff may produce further uncertainty for the industry in the immediate future but may open doors for alternative and collaborative research projects as NOAA Fisheries is likely going to be challenged to do more with less.

Sefatia added that people with technical skills like mechanics, welders, and SCUBA divers can be a valuable part of the fishing industry.

Aubrey advocated for fisherman training. Pat asked if there was an exhaustive list of offered trainings for fishermen. Tim Brady said he would investigate this through the Maritime Academy where he teaches. Ed Barrett reiterated his concern about the value of bringing young people into the industry with no guarantee of success.

Pat and Beth discussed sending the Mentimeter poll questions shared today to Commission members and their constituents to be discussed in the future. CBI and DMF staff would collaborate to accomplish this.

Pat then introduced the topic of offshore wind energy development. Field noted there was substantial uncertainty regarding how projects would proceed under the new administration given their various development statuses.

Pat then discussed the polling results for CFC interest in offshore wind issues.

Katie Almeida asked about the DMF-managed funds. Pat noted that these funds were already negotiated. The Regional Plan Administrator is continuing its state-led effort funded by offshore wind developers, states, and foundations with design oversight committee. Dan McKiernan noted that the CZM Federal Consistency documents, which allow MA to ensure that projects in adjacent federal waters meet state standards and provide mitigation when an impact is anticipated, lacked fishing industry representation, and this could have helped with some of the details of the mitigation.

Ed noted that the fishing industry feels powerless in the offshore wind mitigation process and suggested that mitigation should be the primary focus. He voiced a need for political support for fishery mitigation. Potential mitigation strategies were discussed.

Roger Berkowitz suggested placing responsibility on developers to expand mitigation to the dismantling process. Beth Casoni agreed, noting that mitigation should be considered during both the construction and decommissioning timeline. She suggested the CFC provide guidelines to help fishermen file claims to prove losses due to offshore wind development.

Kevin Stokesbury then noted the immense ecological and environmental impacts due to offshore wind energy that are not yet fully understood.

Eric Hansen added that long-term effects could provide ample mitigation opportunities and suggested using this pause in development to better understand potential impacts and for the state to address these impacts through mitigation.

Beth then added that she is meeting with lobstermen in the next few weeks regarding training on the use of electronic logbooks, allowing fishermen to provide more clear reporting on real time catch data. Ed Barrett called for state legislature to push back on wind energy companies to honor power purchase agreements under the Green Communities Act.

A discussion followed regarding how this group can most effectively address these concerns. Dan suggested developing CFC focus group to discuss how to address offshore wind impact mitigation and minimization and distinguish the role of the CFC from the work being done by the Fisheries and Habitat Working Groups for Offshore Wind. Casoni and Carr suggested this group could bring issues up from the Fisheries Working Group for Offshore Wind and follow up on them for the full CFC. In response, Carr, Barrett, Odell, and Almeida volunteered to form a CFC focus group to work with CZM and DMF on relevant issues.

Carr also piggybacked on Hansen's earlier remark and expressed the need to use the pause in development to better understand various impacts and how best to involve the fishing and seafood industry in the process if and when offshore wind projects move forward.

Ed Barrett expressed his interest in the CFC inviting the Joint Chairs of the Legislature's Utilities Commission to a future meeting to better learn about the fishing and seafood industry's concerns, which could be a powerful tool in future negotiations. Jackie Odell echoed support for focusing on larger offshore wind policy issues related to fisheries rather than technical issues like boulder relocation.

Dan noted that the Fisheries Working Group for Offshore Wind has made great progress on technical issues like boulder relocation. That said, McKiernan and Field both felt there was a role for the CFC in determining if there are consensus positions among industry on this issue.

Odell asked who was responsible for boulder relocation and Field replied that it is managed under the Bureau of Offshore Energy Management's (BOEM) Boulder Relocation Plan and Massachusetts stepped into the issue recently because the state felt the guidelines were insufficient.

There was a discussion on the purpose of the Fisheries Working Group for Offshore Wind. John Regan from the New Bedford Port Authority suggested bringing together all the groups for a meeting to discuss expectations for each group. Pat said he can work with staff to distinguish these groups.

The next topic concerned consulting and engaging with the fishing and seafood industry on state-wide plans. Pat asked about the various plans produced under EEA. Director Brizius stated that CZM could bring plans, like *Resilient Coasts* and the Massachusetts Ocean Plan, to the CFC for discussion and feedback during the development phases.

Pat asked about the Ocean Plan timeline, and Todd and Alison responded that they're beginning outreach and hope to have a draft review later this year. Pat remarked that the CFC can have a role in reviewing plans for development elsewhere, as well, and while the Biodiversity Report is close to finish, there will be additional reports.

Todd and Aubrey discussed how to best include the fishing community in Ocean Plan feedback. Director Brizius indicated that DMF biologist Micah Dean will lead the Ocean Plan's Fisheries Work Group and will update Ocean Plan maps to incorporate more detailed fishing data. Alison suggested involving the CFC in that process. Barrett supported this suggestion.

The last topic dealt with improving fisheries science of fisheries management. Kevin Stokesbury said that with federal changes, data collection will be slower, which will increase uncertainty, and cause management delays. He noted that a potential way to triage this challenge would be through the identification of Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) and using alternative approaches to management and science.

Roger Berkowitz noted innovative solutions point towards applications like eDNA and unmanned surface vehicles and added this will require additional collaboration between academics and state and federal researchers.

Aubrey Church added that there are opportunities to pursue more collaborative research with offshore wind during this pause. Todd added that the state recently passed a bill that requires research exploring eDNA as part of ocean management, which could be useful for the fishing industry.

Dan McKiernan suggested a strategy for the CFC may be to submit letters to Congress and the Administration to push for the federal government to prioritize more innovative and collaborative research.

Jackie Odell added that substantial uncertainty has come from aging fish in assessments as federal portside sampling was substantially cutback. She praised DMF for their efforts to supplement this critical loss but advocated for additional support for improving fisheries science. Barrett and Odell also noted Stokesbury's innovative research on open cod end surveys for groundfish. Casoni asked Stokesbury to present on this work in the future.

Jared Silva then reviewed various administrative issues related to finalizing CFC appointments and Conflict of Interest Law and Open Meeting Law training for public body members.

Field explained that CBI and state agency staff would work to develop a charter and workplan for the CFC to review. Fullem then reviewed the various entities the CFC identified as wanting to engage with at future meetings and other deliverables for state agency staff for future meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

MEETING DOCUMENTS

- Commercial Fisheries Commission April 8, 2025 Meeting Agenda
- Primer of the Commercial Fisheries Commission and Procedures
- Commercial Fisheries Commission Interview Findings
- Enabling Legislation for Commercial Fisheries Commission
- Open Meeting Law Guidelines
- Open Meeting Law Certificate of Receipt
- Conflict of Interest Law Certificate of Receipt

UPCOMING MEETINGS

12:30 PM

June 27, 2025

Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Headquarters

1 Rabbit Hill Rd, Westborough, MA 01581

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES COMMISSION

Draft ResilientCoasts Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2025

Via Zoom

In attendance:

Commercial Fisheries Commission: Dan McKiernan, co-chair, Director of Division of Marine Fisheries; Alison Brizius, co-chair, Director of the Office of Coastal Zone Management; Pamela LaFreniere; Hollie Emery; Katie Almeida; Ed Barrett; Roger Berkowitz; Gordon Carr; Beth Casoni; Aubrey Church; Eric Hansen; Jackie Odell; Kevin Stokesbury. Absent: Vito Giacalone; Angela Sanfilippo; Tim Brady; Al Cottone

Consensus Building Institute (Facilitators): Meira Downie, Pat Field

Division of Marine Fisheries Staff: Brad Schondelmeier, Bradlie Morgan, Story Reed, Melanie Griffin, Kelly Whitmore

Office of Coastal Zone Management Staff: Deanna Moran

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Pat Field of Consensus Building Institute (CBI) started the meeting. Bradlie Morgan of the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) conducted roll call attendance of the Commercial Fisheries Commission (CFC). Alison Brizius, Director of the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and CFC co-chair, described the *ResilientCoasts* project and emphasized the coastal focus of this plan, whereas the Massachusetts Ocean Plan — a separate CZM initiative — will consider environments at least three tenths of a mile offshore.

RESILIENTCOASTS DRAFT PLAN

Deanna Moran presented on CZM's *ResilientCoasts* Draft Plan. She provided an overview of the Plan, including its visions and goals, the process of determining geographic zones to consider, evaluating current strategies, and understanding how they can be applied to different regions. The geographic scope of the Plan considers 78 communities in Massachusetts' coastal zone, with an anticipated addition of 20 communities as climate change progresses over the next 50 years. The Plan's goals are to: improve human health and safety; protect and enhance the value of natural and cultural resources; increase resilience of built infrastructure; strengthen coastal economy; advance equity and environmental justice; and support the capacity of coastal communities. Deanna explained that the initiative was launched in 2023, planned in 2024, and the draft plan was released in May and is open to public comment through June 12. Planning was heavily front-loaded with stakeholder engagement.

Deanna then described the details of the draft Plan's contents. The Plan provides information and guidance to local and regional efforts through identification of near-term adaptation areas (e.g.,

areas with coastal flood risk in the 2030's) to help prioritize action while considering the needs of seven different coastal typologies, including ports and working waterfronts. To track progress and help understand data needs, clear state goals, indicators, and metrics would be included. The 15 proposed districts are grouped based on similar geomorphology and social needs. While these districts encompass coastal areas, they end where Ocean Management Plan areas begin.

She then outlined an example of a district summary. This highlighted characteristics of a district, risks, timeframes, and coastal typologies. Near-term adaptation areas consider the intersection of people and housing, public facilities and infrastructure, and economic needs to determine overall vulnerability. Coastal resilience measures can be used to address different coastal hazards and include ports and working waterfronts. She then described at a high level how state leadership will help implement and support different strategies at various timescales.

Director McKiernan suggested highlighting the reassessment of the Port Profile Project in relation to the *ResilientCoasts* Plan.

Pat Field asked about considerations of fish nursery ground vulnerability. Deanna noted that though natural resources were not included in these analyses, the plan considered salt marshes and dune systems, and next steps could consider nursery grounds.

Ed Barrett asked about beach nourishment projects. Deanna said that these are determined in the plan through comprehensive cost and priority.

Pat Field wondered how the plan prioritized short-term vs. long-term projects. Deanna responded that long-term impact in risk reduction is prioritized.

Eric Hansen asked what action steps would be taken by the state to implement the plan in the future. Deanna noted that the Plan is the roadmap for implementation, and future actions are proposed in both the short and long-terms. These actions would include guidance for districts and training modules, as well.

Roger Berkowitz asked how these plans were developed and if best practices across states were considered. Deanna said that resilience measures and best practices were inspired by successful interventions in other states but also require an understanding of what will work in Massachusetts. She added that the Climate Plan Assessment was heavily considered to understand district-level risks.

Director McKiernan asked about the potential impact of changes in Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) wetland protection on coastal systems. Deanna noted that DEP has been an important working group member and stakeholder throughout this process. The plan considers both strategies to continue on-going practices and shift regulatory programs in the future.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

OTHER BUSINESS AND CLOSING

Pat Field reminded the CFC of its upcoming business meetings in June and September.

Gordon Carr suggested that the CFC present to the Executive Office of Economic Development at a future meeting, which was embraced by the Chairs and facilitators.

Dan noted that the CFC should continue use this format to host topic specific meetings and to engage other entities in a dialogue on issues of concern and then use the more formal meetings for the business of the public body.

Port Profile Update

- UMASS Boston Urban Harbors Institute (UHI) is under contract to manage the project
- UHI is working on incorporating survey feedback from the CFC Focus Group
- Project kickoff meeting during the week of September 22nd
- CFC Focus Group will have the opportunity to test the surveys in October
- On schedule with the previous draft timeline



Port Profile Timeline

Draft Timeline

June 2025

- Meet with CFC Focus Group
- Begin fisheries statistics work

Summer 2025

- Begin work with Urban Harbors Institute
- Finalize survey*

Fall/Early Winter 2025/2026

- Distribute Harbormaster and Fisher Surveys
- Survey outreach*

Winter 2026 – Analyze results and write report

Spring 2026

- Release full report
- Report outreach*



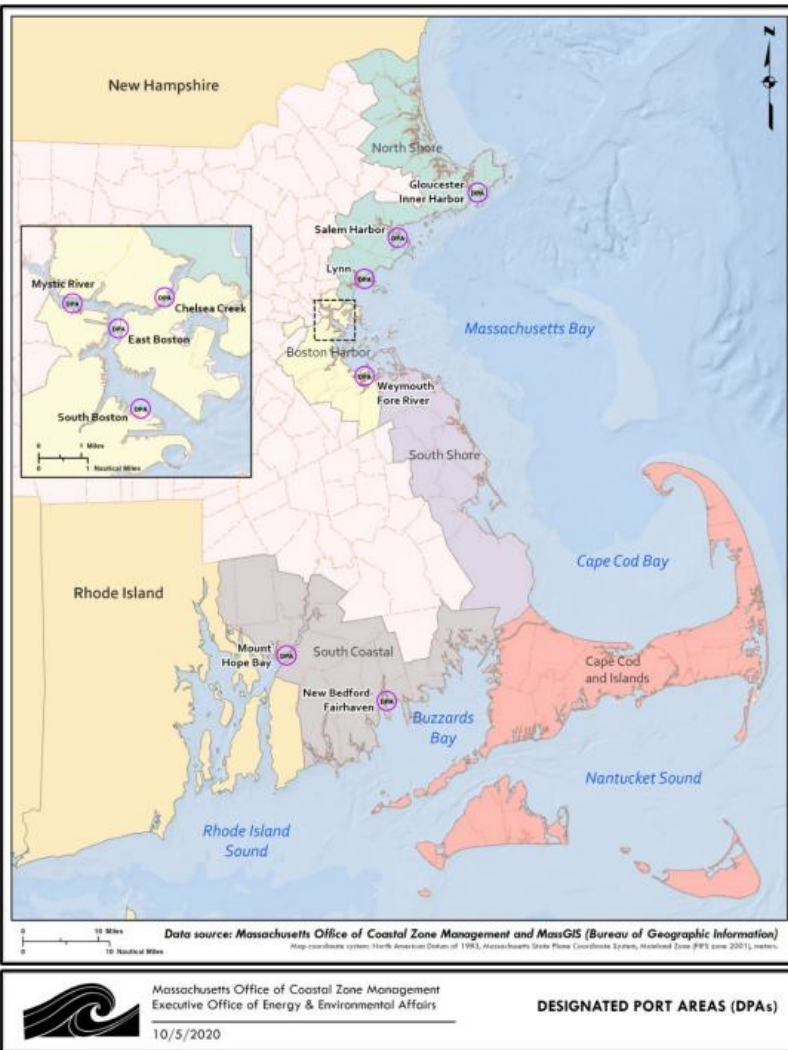
An aerial photograph of a coastal city, likely Boston, showing a large body of water, a bridge, and a dense urban area. The image is partially obscured by a semi-transparent white box containing text.

Massachusetts Designated Port Areas Assessment

Massachusetts Office of Coastal
Zone Management (CZM);
Massachusetts Department of
Environmental Protection (DEP);
and Eastern Research Group
(ERG)

October 6, 2025





Ten Massachusetts DPA's:

- Gloucester Inner Harbor
- Salem Harbor
- Lynn
- Mystic River
- Chelsea Creek
- East Boston
- South Boston
- Weymouth Fore River
- New Bedford – Fairhaven
- Mount Hope Bay

The DPAs represent approximately 2% of the MA coast.

DPA Program Management and Implementation

■ CZM

- DPA Boundary administration
- Federal Consistency review
- Works with municipalities on DPA Master Plans
- Provides technical assistance to communities

■ DEP

- Implements DPA requirements through Chapter 91 licensing

■ Municipalities

- Manage uses in DPAs through implementation of local zoning bylaws, which vary by community



DPA Allowable Uses

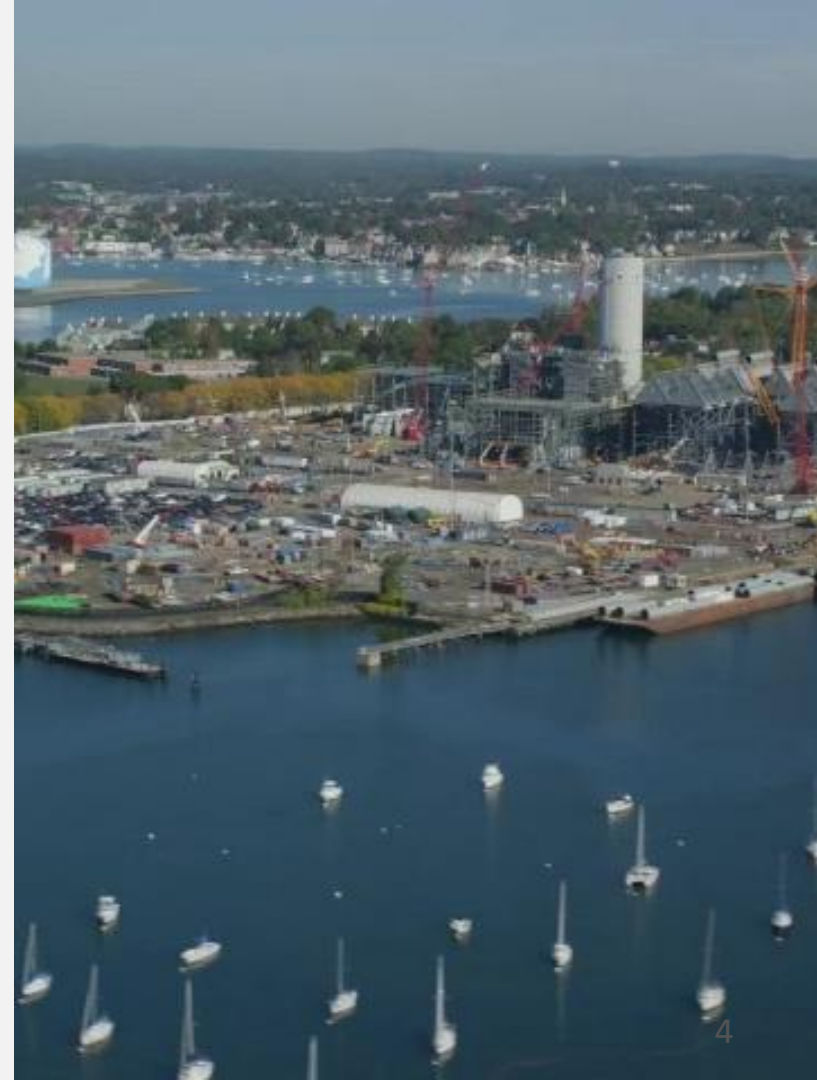
Water-Dependent Industrial
Uses

Accessory Uses

Temporary Uses

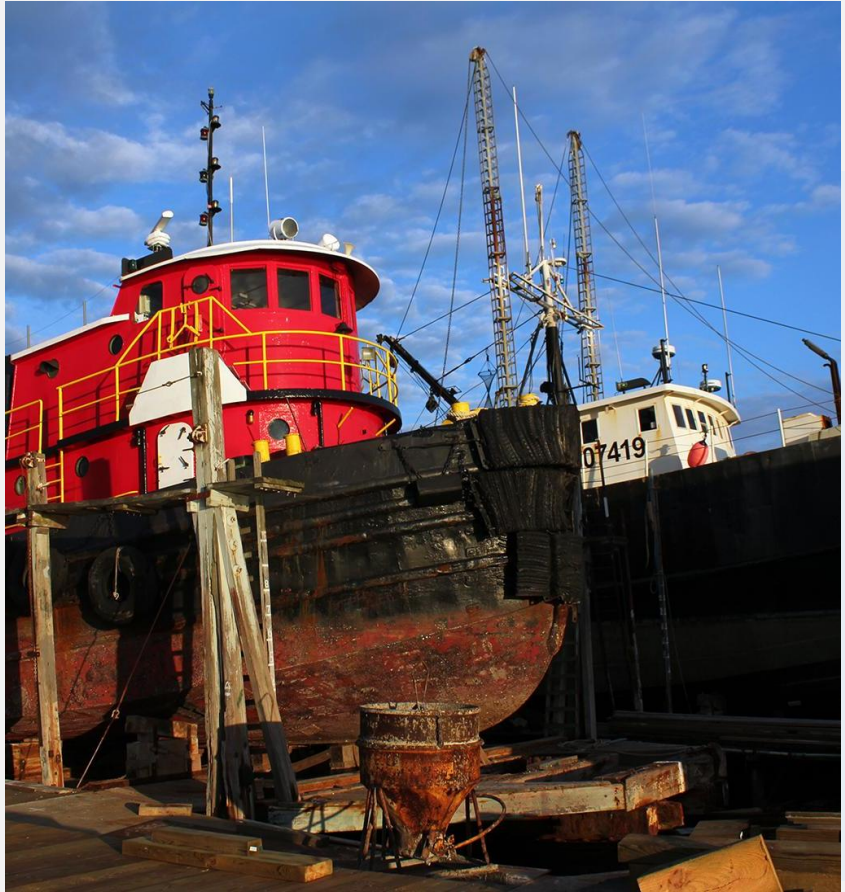
Supporting DPA Uses

Compatible Public Access



DPA Program Assessment

Assessment Goal: The goal of this assessment was to understand the strengths of the DPA program and its ongoing and emerging challenges, and to identify improvements that will enable the program to better meet its goals while considering climate change, community objectives, and future economic demands. It was also intended to meet the requirements of the Mass Leads Act.



Focus Areas of the Engagement



Infrastructure and Land Use



Regulatory Framework



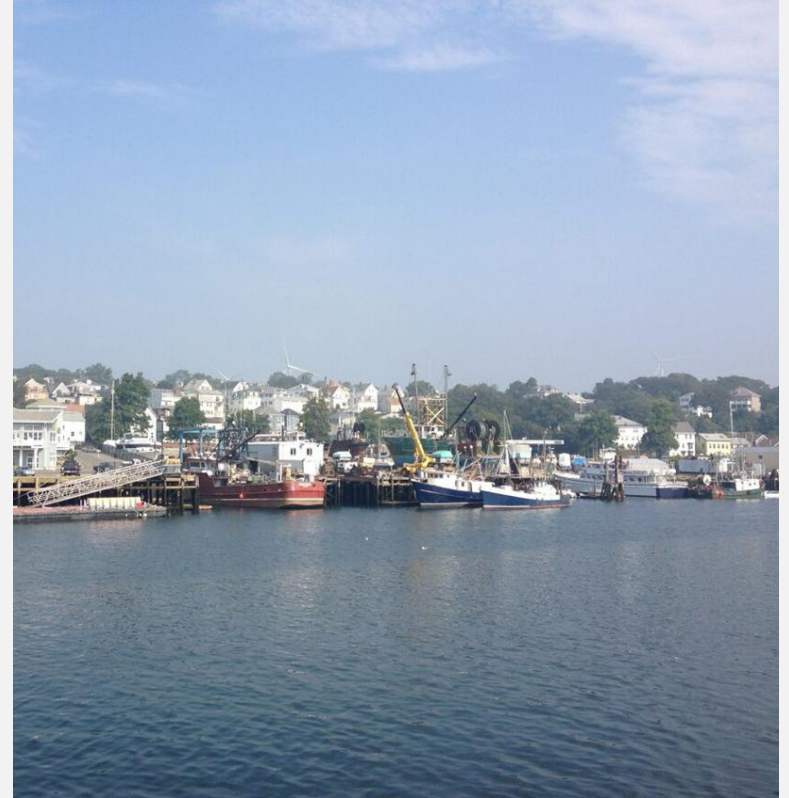
Funding and Financing



Community Impacts



Coastal Resilience



DPA Program Assessment Process



- Document Review
- Stakeholder Engagement
 - 3 Public Meetings
 - Online Surveys
 - Interviews and Focus Groups
- Economic Analysis
- Mass Leads Act Review (Section 295 (c)(ii) (A) through (H))
 - Public Listening Sessions
- Developed Final Recommendations
 - Final Outreach on Recommendations
- Issued DPA Assessment Report July 31st, 2025

Economic Analysis



- Economic analysis looked at the impact of employment within the DPAs only
- Limitations in available data
- Strong indications of economic benefits even with this limited approach:
 - 7,675 jobs
 - \$690 million in wages
 - 2.6 billion in total revenue

What We Heard:

- DPAs provide local benefits, including jobs, goods, and services
- Conflict exists between the needs of the water-dependent industrial use and surrounding communities, particularly related to traffic, pollution, and public access
- Lack of maintenance and investment in aging infrastructure limits functionality
- Funding and financing barriers, especially for private WDI users
- Regulatory process perceived as complex and inconsistently applied
- Strong recognition of the importance of coastal resilience across all DPAs
- Desire for a holistic port vision and planning framework
- Support expressed for establishing a Ports Commission
- Mixed views on expanding/ altering DPA program and allowable uses
- Agreement that public access should be incorporated thoughtfully

Proposed Recommendations



Infrastructure and Land Use



Recommendation 1: Establish a commission on port development to recommend an integrated statewide strategic vision for Massachusetts ports; advise on opportunities for improvement and growth.

Recommendation 2: Develop a series of industry-based needs assessments including i) commercial and recreational fishing, ii) energy, iii) shipping, bulk cargo and goods, iv) transportation and tourism, and v) ocean technology and emerging markets.

Recommendation 3: Integrate DPA considerations into other ongoing initiatives and plans, including the ResilientCoasts Initiative, the Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy (MILUS), the Massachusetts Ocean Plan update, and others.

Recommendation 4: Create an online marketplace that can track DPA vacancies, advertise for water-dependent industrial (WDI) use properties, and allow potential WDI users to identify vacant properties for utilization. Provide technical assistance to property owners.

Recommendation 5: Explore the development of a program to pilot and evaluate new, innovative, or coexisting uses.

Regulatory Framework



Recommendation 1: Develop guidance to clarify existing regulatory flexibility and highlight best practices in key areas to support understanding, consistency and transparency in the review process. Topics include i) flexibility in allowable uses in DPAs (WDI, supporting, accessory, and temporary), ii) Public Access, which is allowable and encouraged in DPAs when designed safely, and iii) The construction of coastal resilience solutions in DPAs, which are also allowable and encouraged.

Recommendation 2: Proactively conduct DPA boundary reviews and periodic DPA assessments.

Recommendation 3: Engage in ongoing permit streamlining initiatives and implement recommendations relevant to permitting in DPAs where identified.

Recommendation 4: Within each DPA, assess compliance with regulatory requirements of the DPA program.

Recommendation 5: Develop best practices for the design of projects adjacent to DPAs.

Funding and Financing



Recommendation 1: Leverage existing funding mechanisms to actively support DPAs, including increasing awareness of eligibility for existing grant programs such as the CZM Coastal Resilience grants, Seaport Economic Council grants, and Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Program grants.

Recommendation 2: Support WDI users and host municipalities in accessing federal resources such as the Port Infrastructure Development Program.

Recommendation 3: Explore mechanisms to allow private WDI users to be considered eligible for funding for projects or activities that provide a direct public benefit.

Recommendation 4: Develop a port infrastructure and facility improvement program that can fund infrastructure improvements and provide technical assistance to both public and private projects for WDI uses in DPAs. Seek new dedicated funding sources or fund existing authorizations to support the program.

Community Impacts



Recommendation 1: Promote opportunities and programs for outreach supporting water-dependent industrial workforce training and fund additional workforce training opportunities. Partner with the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) and others to achieve these outcomes.

Recommendation 2: Develop incentives to incorporate community buffers and public access into projects within the DPA without jeopardizing public safety or causing operational interference.

Recommendation 3: Support efforts to minimize the local impacts of DPA port operations on environmental justice communities and surrounding neighborhoods.

Recommendation 4: Work with partner agencies to develop programs and incentives to decarbonize and electrify port infrastructure (including land-side transportation) to reduce air and noise pollution impacts on port workers and neighboring communities.

Coastal Resilience



Recommendation 1: Integrate consideration of the unique needs of DPAs into the Commonwealth's ResilientCoasts Initiative to ensure that DPA-specific uses are evaluated.

Recommendation 2: Identify funding opportunities for coastal resilience measures to improve WDI infrastructure (for example, bulkheads, seawalls, piers, and docks) for existing and future climate conditions and uses and support municipalities and WDI users in applying for those funds.

Recommendation 3: Support WDI users in the development of operational response and recovery plans to continue access to water and minimize disruptions to operations in the face of increasingly severe coastal storms.

Communication, Engagement, and Technical Support



Recommendation 1: Create communication and outreach materials to improve awareness and understanding of the DPA regulatory processes for stakeholder groups.

Recommendation 2: Conduct outreach and engagement with stakeholders (business owners, WDI representatives, environmental justice community members, local residents, municipal and state agency staff, and others) to help build awareness of the role of DPAs. Identify opportunities to increase connections with the community and improve support within the community for DPAs and WDI use.

Recommendation 3: Develop webinars and provide office hours and other forms of technical assistance to support WDI users and community members in navigating the DPA program.

Recommendation 4: Feature information on DPA uses and activities online and highlight the role of DPAs role in driving the blue economy.

Contact Us – DPA Assessment Project Team

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UNDERUTILIZED & UNDERVALUED FLOUNDER

Frank Mirarchi and Story Reed



October 6, 2025

Massachusetts Division
of Marine Fisheries



Flounder Marketing



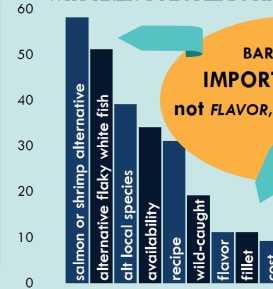
39%
prepared
FLATFISH
at home
this summer



31%
ORDERED
FLATFISH
in RESTAURANT

54%
SAW FLATFISH
on MENU

WHY AREN'T PEOPLE BUYING FLATFISH?



BARRIERS ARE
IMPORTED SPECIES
not FLAVOR, FILLET SIZE OR COST

Seafood Marketing Program

Tasked with
increasing demand

\$250,000/year
program budget

Content creation +
survey + other

Paid advertising
potential 2025/26

SOLE
A common market name used for several species of flounder landed in Massachusetts. Whether you are buying grey sole (witch flounder), lemon sole (blackback flounder), yellowtail sole (yellowtail flounder), or fluke (summer flounder), these locally-caught flatfish are all actively managed and harvested at a sustainable level.

PECAN-CRUSTED SOLE WITH FRESH MANGO SALSA

Serves 4

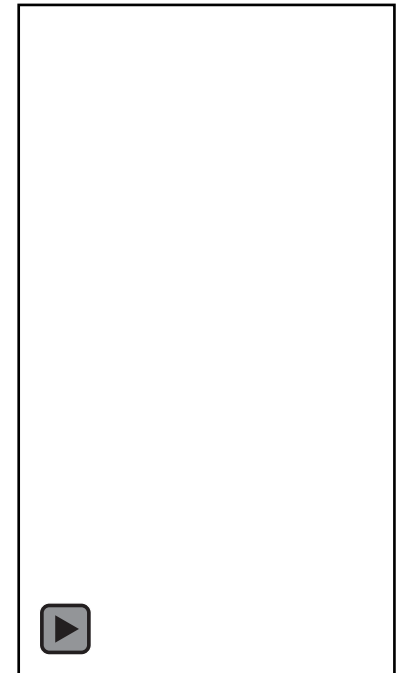
INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. of flounder or sole filets
- 1 c. pecans, chopped
- 4 tbsp. butter, melted
- 1 ripe mango, diced
- ¼ c. red onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp. cilantro, chopped
- 1 lime, juice and zest
- ½ tsp. hot sauce

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 450°F. Combine mango, red onion, cilantro, lime zest and juice, hot sauce, and a pinch of salt in a bowl to make the salsa. Season filets with salt and pepper. Dip both sides in melted butter, then coat one side with the chopped pecans. Place filets pecan-side up on a greased sheet pan. Bake 8-10 minutes, until fish is flaky. Plate and top with a generous spoonful of mango salsa.

mass.gov/dmf



Examining Trends

Underutilized sub-ACLs (quotas)

29% yellowtail

17% winter flounder

25% dabs

94% gray sole

Depressed ex-vessel and retail prices for flounders in the multi-species complex

- Volatile demand from processors



Does Massachusetts lack sufficient “flounder processing” capacity?

Is there a skilled-labor shortage?

Would state-of-the-art cutting machines solve the problem?



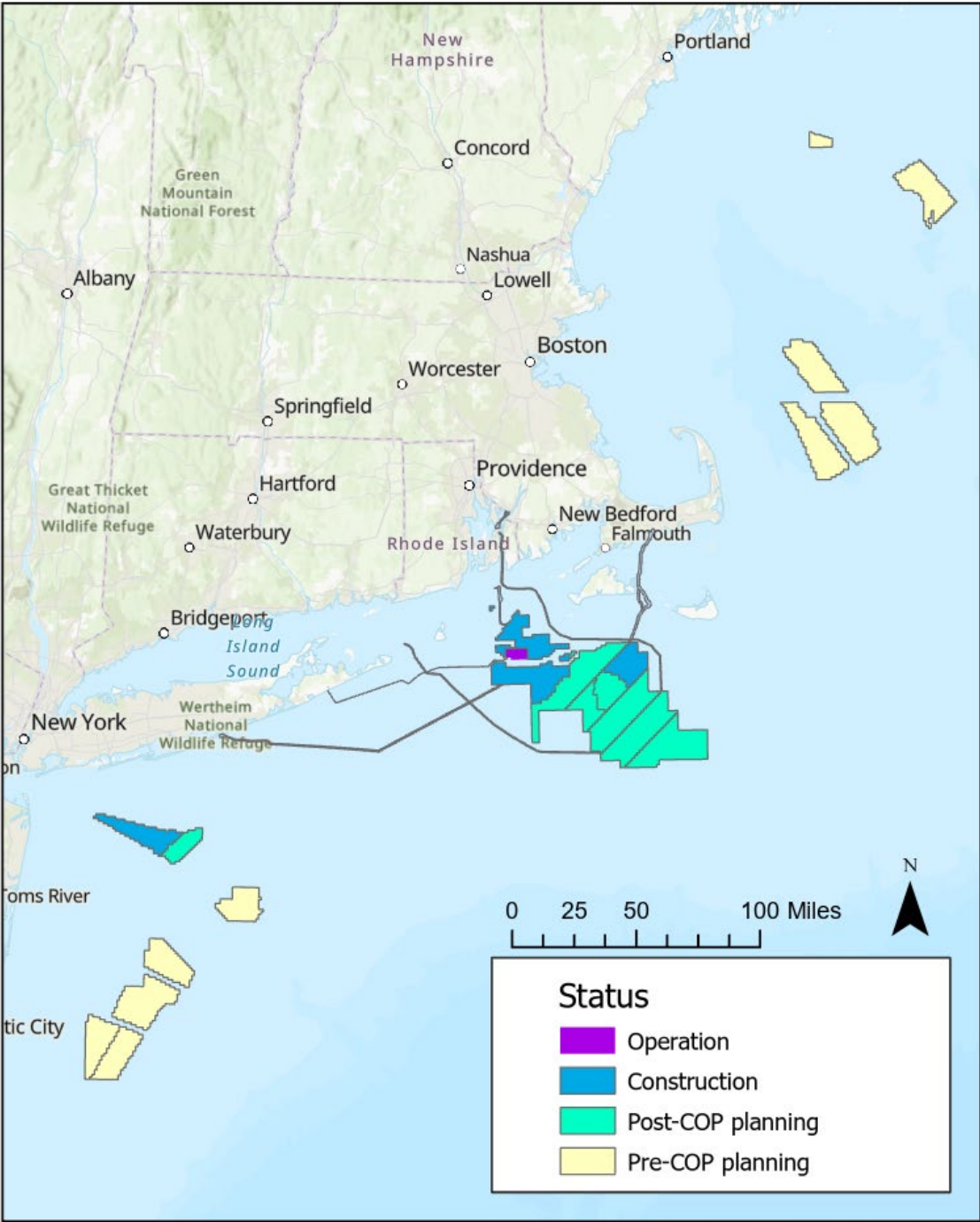
Commercial Fisheries Commission

Offshore Wind Update

September 8, 2025

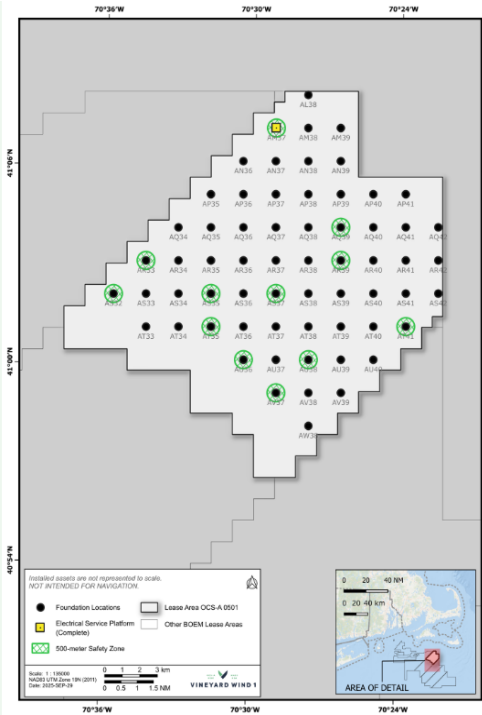
Offshore Wind Project Status

Status	Projects	Activities on the water (lease area and cable routes)
Complete and Operational	South Fork	May see occasional: - post-construction surveys - maintenance operations
Under Construction	Vineyard 1 Revolution Sunrise Empire	Likely to see one or more of: - seabed preparations (e.g., PLGR, boulder relocation, scour protection) - pile-driving - installation of foundations, monopiles, WTGs and OSSs - cable-laying
Planning and Permitting (COP is published)	New England 1 & 2 SouthCoast Beacon Starboard Vineyard Northeast Vineyard Mid-Atlantic	May see occasional: - habitat/fisheries surveys - geophysical surveys - metocean buoys
Planning and permitting (pre-COP)	New York Bight (5) Gulf of Maine (5)	May see occasional: - habitat/fisheries surveys - geophysical surveys - metocean buoys

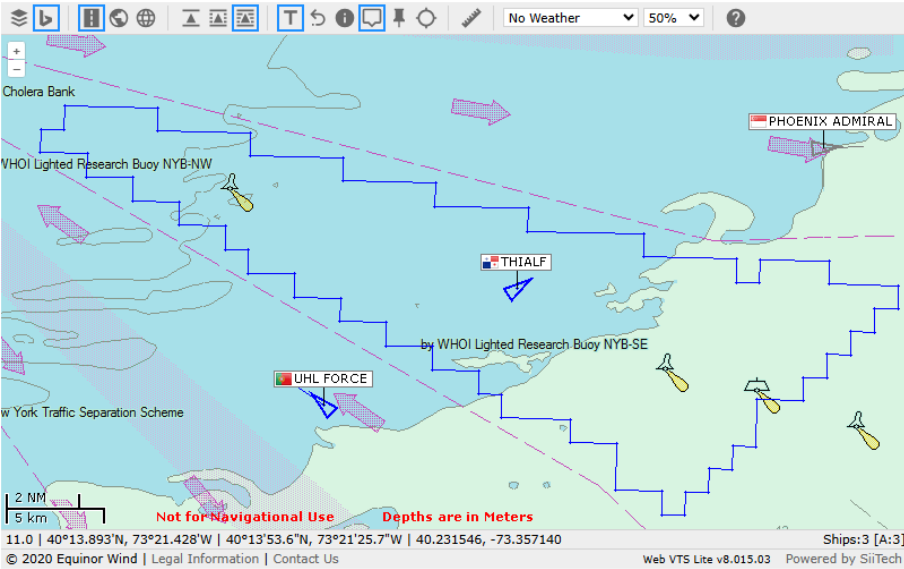


For projects currently Under Construction, activities include:

Project	Most recent update	Specific Activities on the water (lease area and cable routes)
Vineyard 1	September 29, 2025	• Installation of nacelle and blades • Commissioning of WTGs • Surveys to assess export and inter-array cable burials
Empire	September 19 , 2025	• Subsea drilling and testing • Installation of subsea rock and scour protection • Deployment of sound monitoring buoys and bubble curtains • Deployment/maintenance of fish and oceanographic monitoring instruments • Installation of monopile WTG and jacket OSS foundations



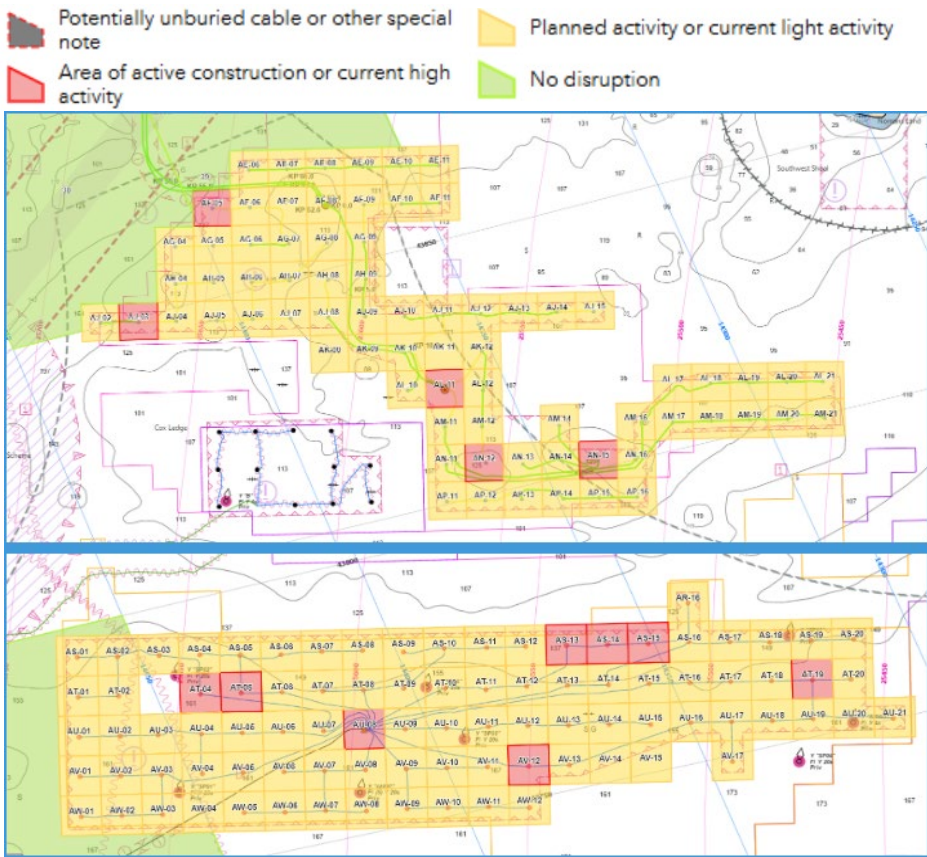
Source: <https://www.vineyardwind.com/offshore-wind-mariner-updates>



Source: <https://www.empirewind.com/environment-and-sustainability/mariners-and-fisheries/>

For projects currently Under Construction, activities include:

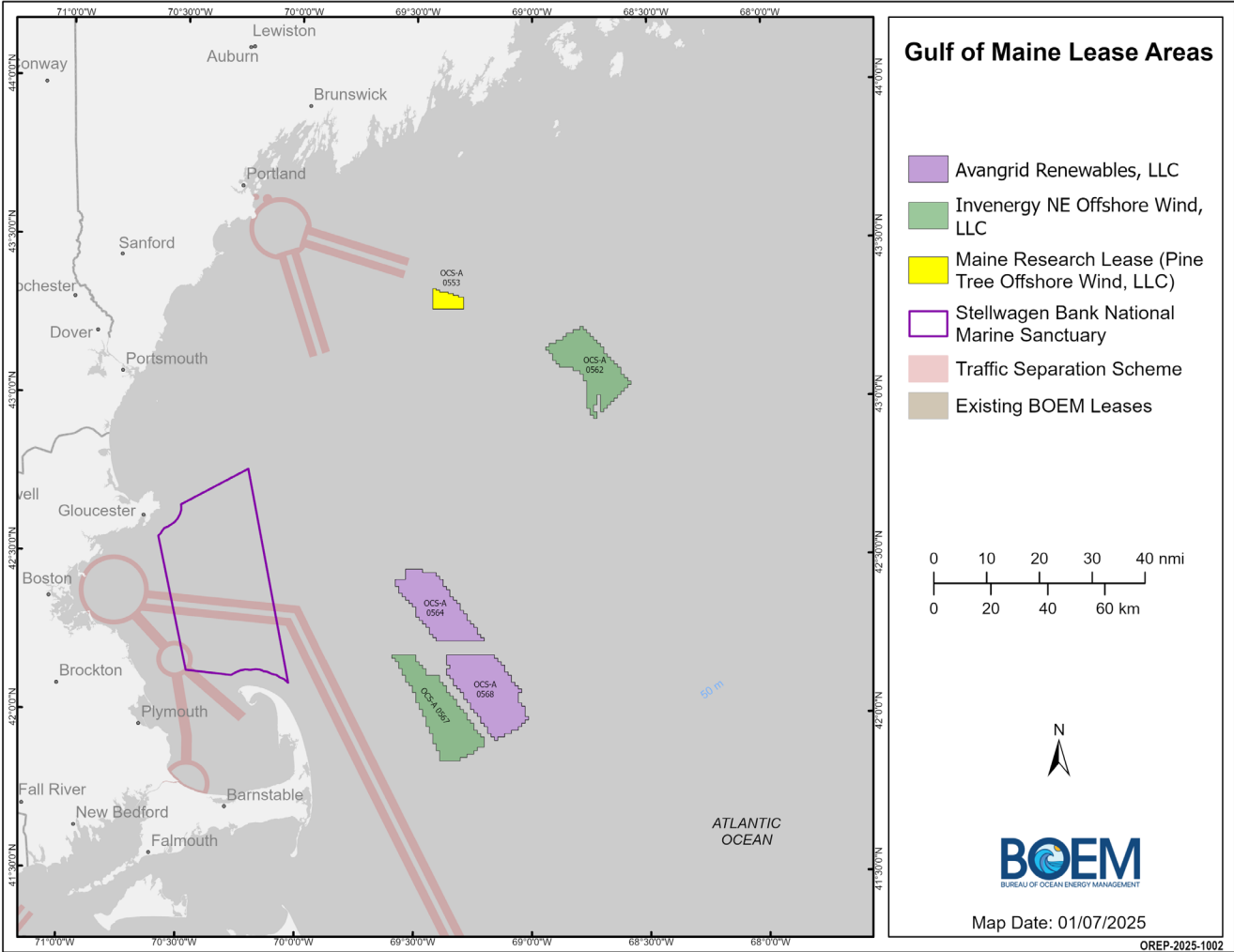
Project	Most recent update	Specific Activities on the water (lease area and cable routes)
Revolution	September 29, 2025	• BOEM issued Stop Work Order on 8/22/25 • Preliminary Injunction issued on 9/22/25 and work commenced that day • WTG installation • OSS installation and commissioning • Seabed preparation and inter-array cable installation
Sunrise	September 29, 2025	• Installation of monopile WTG foundations • Deployment of bubble curtains, sound monitoring buoys, protected species observers • Installation of WTG transition piece • Installation and commissioning of OSS



Source:
https://a2f3e3.emailsp.com/frontend/nL_preview_window.aspx?idNL=1035

For GOM projects currently planning and permitting, activities include:

Project	Specific Activities
Avangrid OCS-A 0564 OCS-A 0568	<u>Communications Plans</u> - Agency - Native American Tribal - Fisheries <u>Project Websites</u> www.ocs-a0564.com www.ocs-a0568.com
Invenergy OCS-A 0562 OCS-A 0567	<u>Communications Plans</u> Granted extension, being drafted, due to be released by 11/30/2025
Maine Research Array OCS-A 0553	Conducting survey and monitoring work



Massachusetts Fisheries Innovation Fund Update

- Fisheries Innovation Fund (FIF): **\$1.75m mitigation fund** created by Vineyard Wind to “support programs and projects that ensure safe and profitable fishing continues” as current and future offshore wind projects are developed
- Priorities: Fishing Innovation, Community, Safety
- Other developers will add mitigation funds to FIF, possibly \$2.3-4.8m in future

Progress Update

- RFP published July 7th, closed August 29th
- **Received 20 Proposals seeking \$3.37m**
- Review proposals Sept-Oct and recommend projects for funding
- Contract with awardees (November)
- Projects can begin January 2026

New FWG Task: Finalize Guidance for AIS on WTGs

Current federal guidance has been described as lacking and allowing for inconsistent application

BOEM (2021):

- AIS transponders should be placed on all SPS (significant peripheral structures) or other significant locations within the wind energy facility and should be capable of transmitting signals marking the locations of all structures within the facility.
- The transponders should be approved by USCG based on the recommendation from the respective USCG district office.

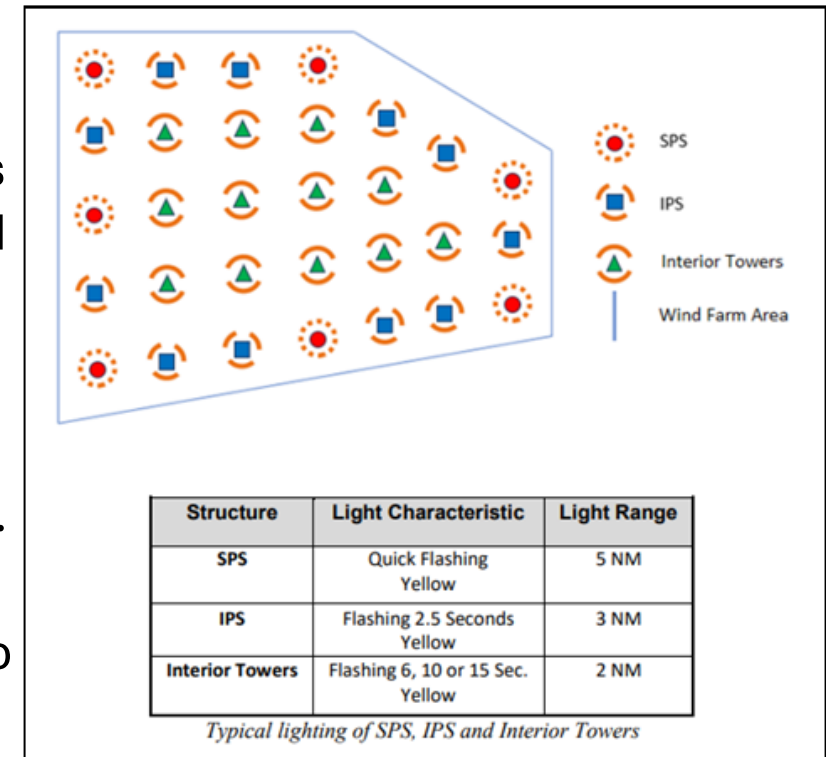
USCG (2023):

- AIS-ATON signals indicate each SPS, and, when a windfarm borders a fairway or has a designated vessel route, that lane may be marked with additional AIS signals. IPS or other Installation, Facility or Structure (IFS) within the farm may also be marked with AIS signals.

History: RODA Joint Industry Task Force 2020 – Survey (40 responses), most preferred all or all peripheral WTGs marked with AIS.

→ Recommend AIS on all WTGs, can be turned off if cluttered

Plan: Convene working group/workshop of industry and AIS experts to advise FWG on preferred AIS guidance to USCG/BOEM (pending)



Questions?





Food
Export
Midwest USA



MA Commercial Fisheries Commission

*Leveraging USDA funding & programs to build new
business internationally*

October 6, 2025

MDAR & USDA funded cooperator: Food Export USA Northeast

- USDA FAS, Market Access Program - line item in the Farm Bill
- Funding for USDA cooperators, including Food Export US Northeast
- MDAR is a member
- BOD: MDAR Commissioner Ashley Randle
- MDAR promotes & manages programs (seafood since 2004)



MA seafood: significant export value

Value (in millions)

2019: \$351,863

2020: \$273,430

2021: \$325,829

2022: \$340,373

2023: \$329,703

2024: \$308,545

Top 5 export destinations: Canada, China, Italy, France & Spain.

China has more than doubled in market size since 2019 The top market destinations vary depending on the species.



USDA Awards to MA seafood

2025: \$230,200

2024: \$232,200

2023: \$275,000

2022: \$228,070

2021: \$318,640

\$1,260,100 over five years



“Branded ” details

Seafood products must be 100% U.S. origin

Processed seafood: at least 50% U.S. grown or harvested by weight

Small-medium size business (SBA)

\$300 admin fee, 6% of requested fund, marketing plan

50% of eligible expenses reimbursed

\$5,000 - \$300,000 award, based on committee approval



“Branded” cost-share reimbursement supports export market development activities

International website development

Foreign market-compliant packaging & labels

Advertising & public relations

In-store promotions & product demonstrations

Marketing & point-of-sales materials

Fees for exhibiting and traveling to overseas trade shows

Fees for exhibiting at SENA, NRA, SFF



Other programs: Intel & Support

Services help seafood businesses understand market opportunities & meet buyers.

- Identify top global markets
- In-depth specific country market research by international in-country representatives
- Vetting of international buyer trade leads
- Buyer introductions & support at international trades shows
- One-on-one buyer meetings at domestic trade shows



Participants

Cape Seafood Inc.

Channel Fish Processing Co.

Darel Co dba Elafood USA

Eastern Fisheries

Ferullo's Seafood

Intershell International Inc.

Lobster Trap Co.

Nantucket Sound Seafood

North Atlantic Pacific Seafood (NAPS)

Northern Wind, Inc.

Ocean C Star, LLC.

PGI Foods Inc.

Red's Best

Rocky Neck Lobster

St. Ours & Company

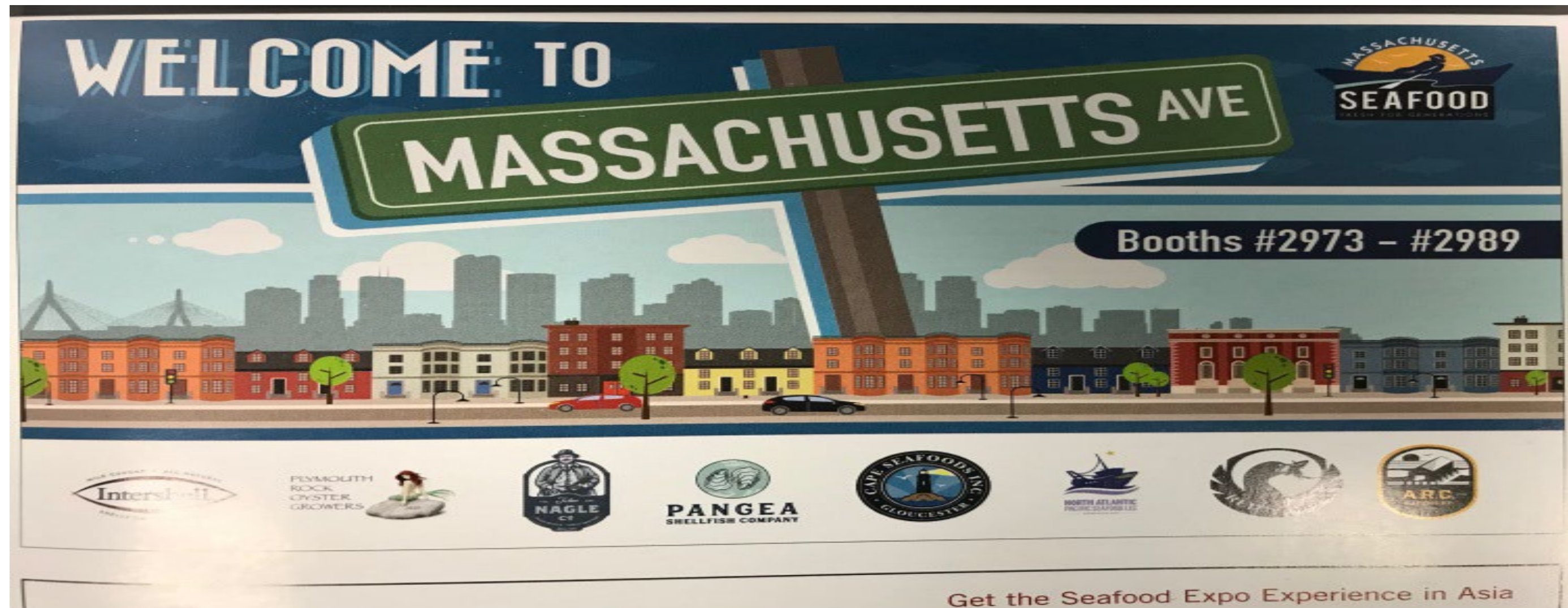
Superior Lobster, LLC

True Foods

Wellfleet Shellfish



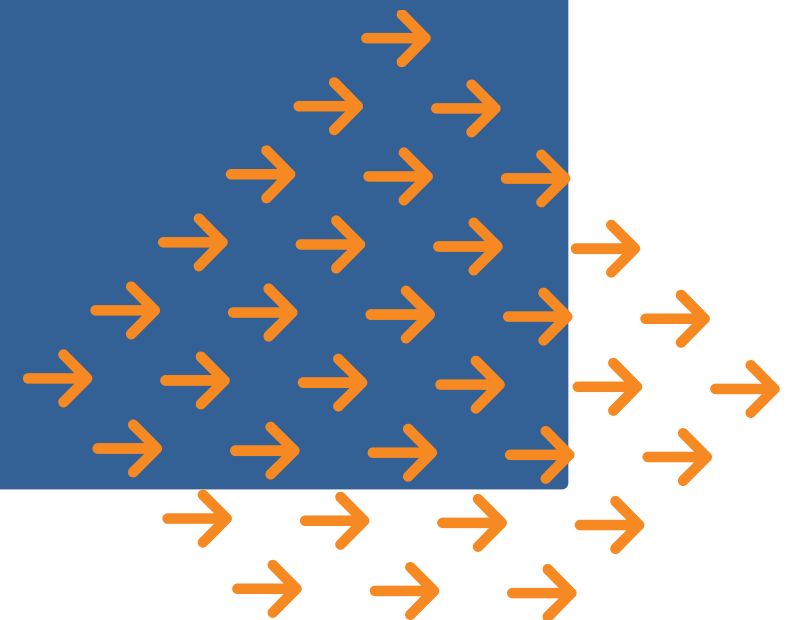
Mass Avenue with DMF since 2019



Thank you!

USDA funded resources help Massachusetts seafood companies strategically develop export business

Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov





Biodiversity Conservation Goals for Massachusetts

Massachusetts Commercial Fisheries Commission

October 6, 2025 | Presented by MA DFG Commissioner Tom O'Shea





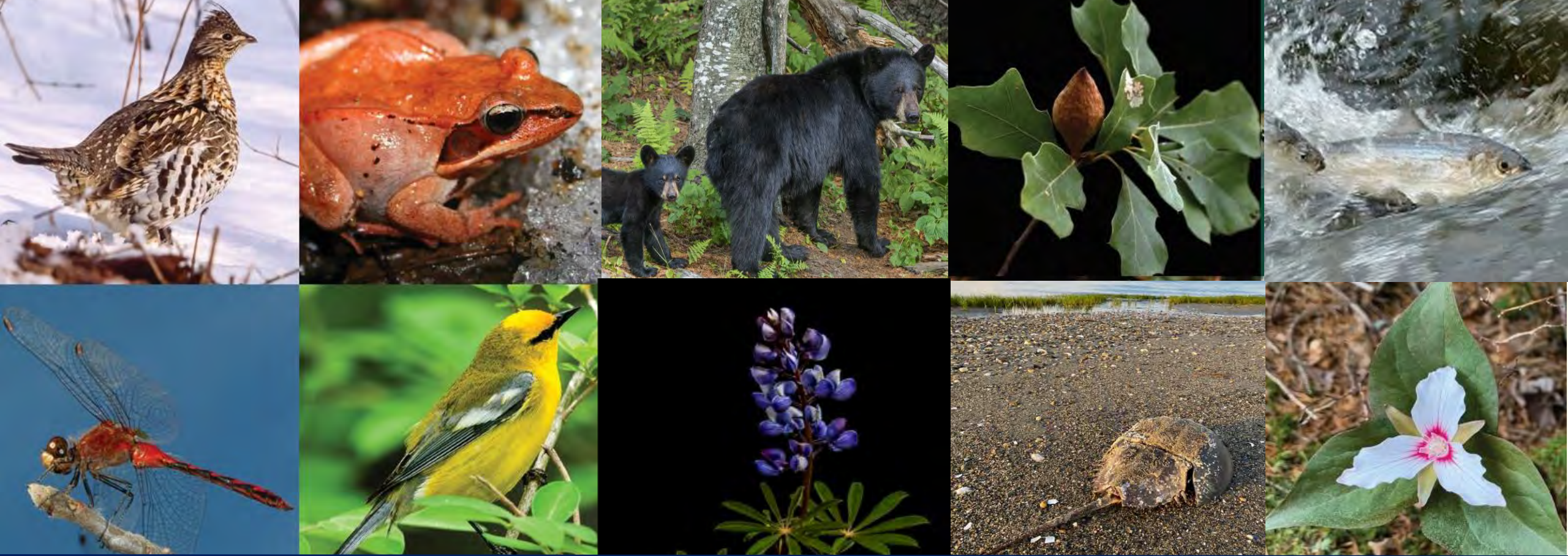
Executive Order No. 618: A WHOLE-OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

In September 2023, Governor Healey **made history** directing the Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game to review all existing efforts to conserve nature + recommend biodiversity conservation goals for 2030, 2040, and 2050.

A GLOBAL MOVEMENT, AT A
MASSACHUSETTS SCALE

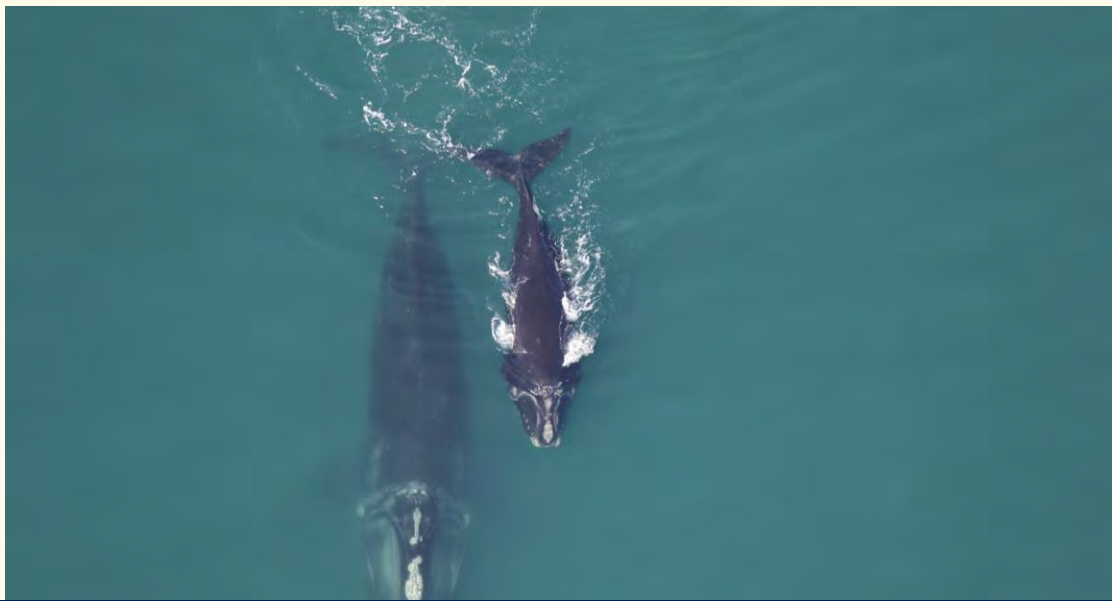
BIODIVERSITY IS A KEY
CLIMATE SOLUTION





BIODIVERSITY IN MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts is home to an **extraordinary variety and abundance of life**. This is biodiversity—all the species, habitats, and complex interactions that have inherent, intrinsic value, anchor our history + culture, and sustain our health, food security, + economy.



BIODIVERSITY IS ALL AROUND US!



BIODIVERSITY SUSTAINS US:

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

FOR EVERY \$1 SPENT ON WATER
RESOURCE PROTECTION:
\$27 ARE SAVED
ON WATER TREATMENT.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE & CARBON SEQUESTRATION



COASTAL WETLANDS
SAVED COMMUNITIES
\$625 MILLION
IN DAMAGES DURING
HURRICANE SANDY IN 2012.

SALT MARSHES CAN STORE
OVER 10x
THE CARBON OF FORESTS
ON A PER-ACRE BASIS.

OUTDOOR RECREATION & TOURISM



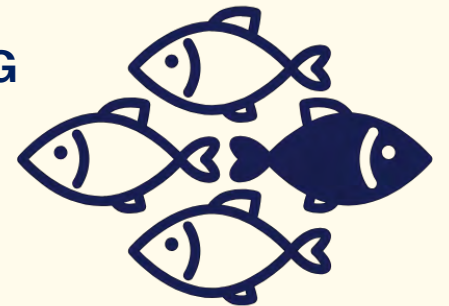
Massachusetts has the fastest-
growing outdoor recreation
economy in the nation.

IN 2023 ALONE, OUTDOOR
RECREATION GENERATED
\$13.2 BILLION
AND CREATED 103,000 JOBS.

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

MASSACHUSETTS' NATION-LEADING
BLUE ECONOMY GENERATED
\$8.3 BILLION
AND CREATED 87,000 JOBS IN 2021.

\$687 MILLION:
EX-VESSEL VALUE OF SEAFOOD LANDED IN 2023.



BIODIVERSITY GOALS FOR MASSACHUSETTS



PROTECT

MOST IMPORTANT
HABITATS FOR SPECIES
& CLIMATE RESILIENCE



RESTORE

MOST IMPORTANT
HABITATS FOR SPECIES
& CLIMATE RESILIENCE



SUSTAIN

HUMAN HEALTH,
FOOD SECURITY,
ECONOMY



CONNECT

EVERYONE
WITH NATURE

A NATURE-POSITIVE FUTURE – WHERE ALL LIFE CAN THRIVE.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AT ALL SCALES



PROTECT—Permanently secure from future harm; development, pollution, climate impacts.

Land conservation, regulatory protections, pollution control, active management.

RESTORE—Transform degraded habitats into healthy, resilient ones.

Invasive species removal, dam removal + culvert upgrades, salt marsh and eelgrass restoration, continued management.

**GLOBALLY RARE
"BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS"**

**REGIONAL—LANDSCAPE &
WATERSHED-SCALE**

**KEY HABITATS FOR RARE
& IMPERILED SPECIES**

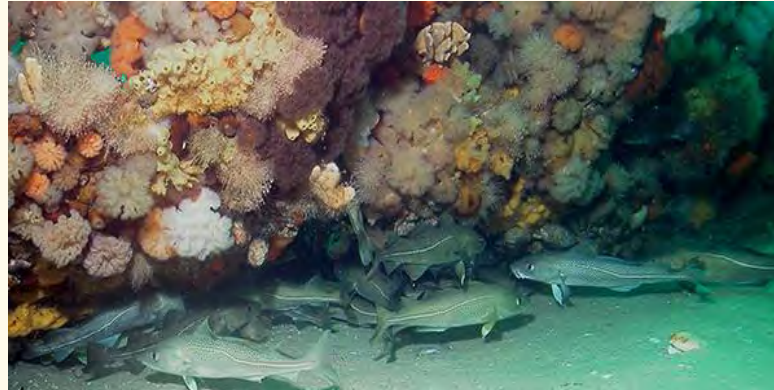
**LOCALLY-IMPORTANT
BIODIVERSITY AREAS**



GOAL #1: PROTECT



**CONVENE MARINE BIODIVERSITY
TASK FORCE**

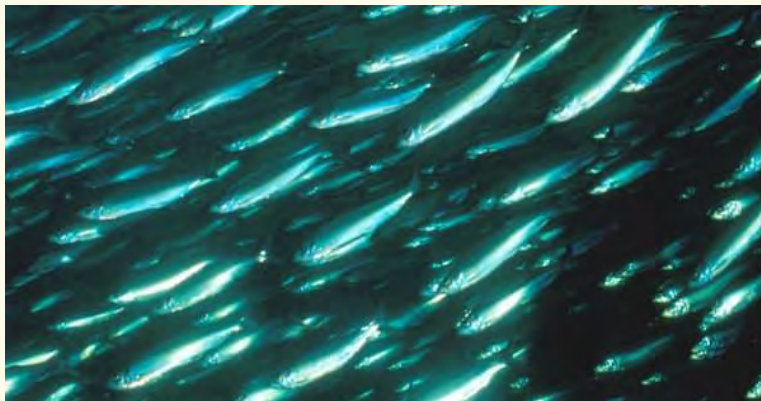


**COMPREHENSIVELY MAP MARINE
HABITATS**



**DRAMATICALLY REDUCE
POLLUTION, PLASTICS**

GOAL #2: RESTORE



**RESTORE FISH PASSAGE IN ALL
COASTAL WATERSHEDS**



**RESTORE MOST IMPORTANT
HABITATS: EELGRASS, KELP,
SHELLFISH, COMPLEX HARD BOTTOM**



**EXPAND ARTIFICIAL REEF & OYSTER
RESTORATION**

GOAL #3: SUSTAIN



ENSURE NO NET LOSS OF SHELLFISH

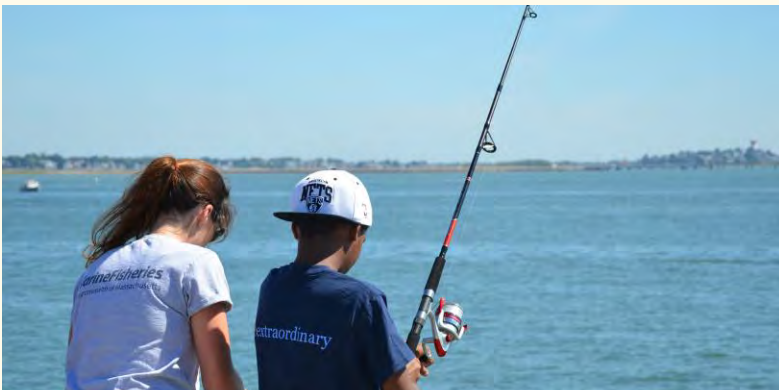


INVEST IN WORKING WATERFRONTS & SEAFOOD MARKETING



SHARE THE CATCH PROGRAM FOR SEAFOOD

GOAL #4: CONNECT



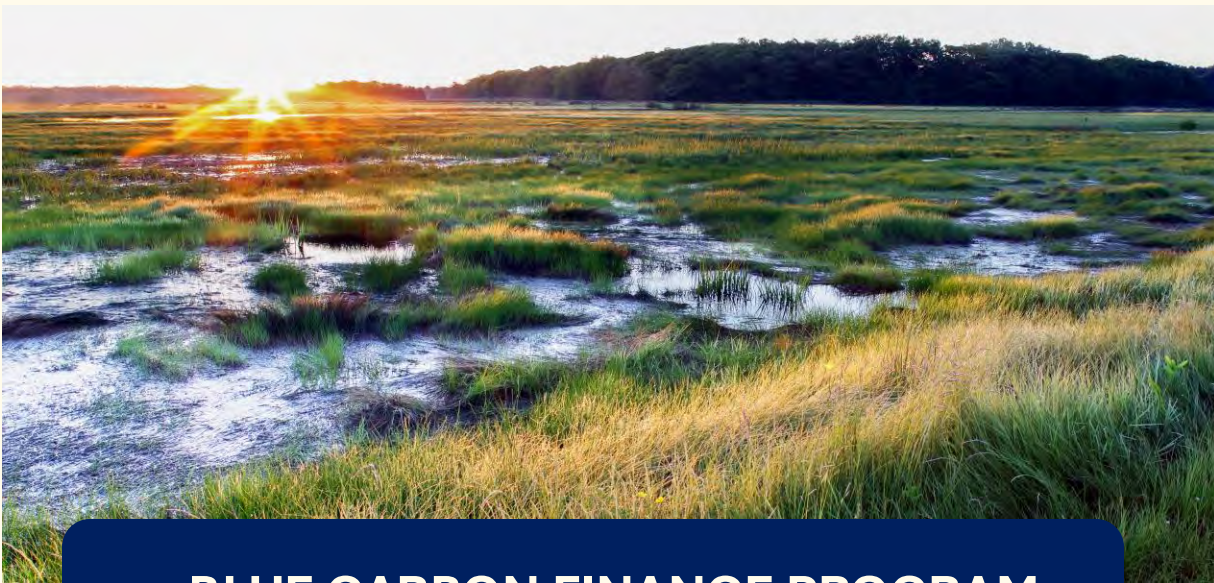
NATURE IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS



NATURE IN THE SCHOOLS



NATURE AT WORK

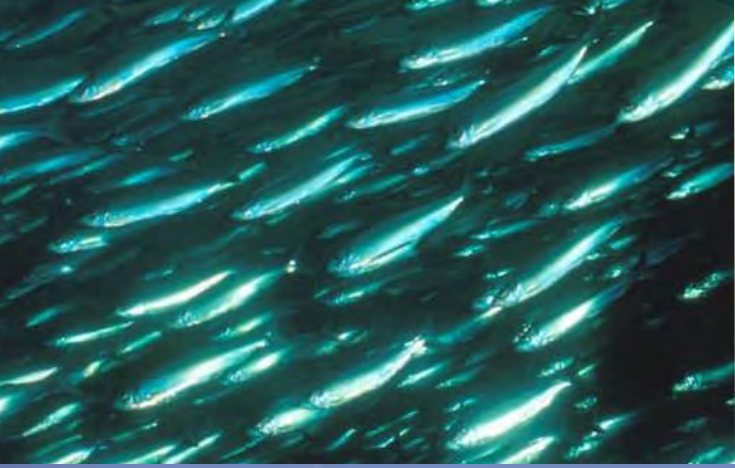


BLUE CARBON FINANCE PROGRAM



CLEANUP OF GHOST FISHING GEAR





STAY IN TOUCH!

Visit our website to learn more
and sign up for the latest news,
updates, and announcements!

mass.gov/biodiversity



MA Commercial Fisheries Commission

October 6, 2025 Meeting

8:45 AM	Arrive, Settle in, Grab Breakfast
9:00	Welcome & Introductions
9:15	Ports and Ports Infrastructure •Update on MA Fishing Ports Survey – <i>Story Reed, DMF</i> •CZM DPA Review and Report – <i>Tyler Soleau, CZM</i> •Mass Ready Act Update – <i>Patrick Field, CBI</i>
10:00	Flounder Presentation •Flounder processing and chokepoints – <i>Frank Mirarchi, South Shore Seafood Exchange</i>
10:25	Offshore Wind •General Update – <i>Brad Schondelmeier, DMF</i> •CFC OSW Workplan Refinement – <i>Patrick Field, CBI</i> •Regional Fund Administrator Update & Prep for Nov. Webinar – <i>Patrick Field, CBI</i>
11:05	Other Issues •USDA Export Grants - <i>Bonita Oehlke, MDAR</i> •Release of MA Biodiversity Plan - <i>Commissioner Tom O'Shea, DFG</i>
11:30	CFC Annual Report •Discussion: goals and components in report to EEA and the legislature
11:50	Public Comment
11:55	Next Steps & Closing
12:00 PM	Adjourn

Work Plan

Oct. Meeting	Nov. CFC-FWG Mtg	Fall Focus Groups
• Ports & port updates • Seafood processing • Offshore wind updates • State updates: • MDAR updates • Biodiversity goals	• Regional Fund Administrator	• Offshore wind? • Ports? • 2025 report drafting

Dec. Meeting	December 31
• MA and ME working waterfront initiative • Review 2025 draft annual report • State updates: • MA office of business development	• Submit 2025 annual report