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Marine Fisheries Advisory

**MFC FINALIZES WINTER FLOUNDER MEASURES FOR STATE PERMIT
HOLDERS, COASTAL SHARK COMPLIANCE MEASURES, RAINBOW
SMELT POSSESSION LIMIT & REVISED BLUE CRAB LIMITS –
Surface gillnet rules also confirmed**

At September and October 2009 business meetings the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFC) approved the following regulations:

1. Winter Flounder (322 CMR 6.03) – effective October 30, 2009

Gulf of Maine

State Waters Groundfish Endorsement (GE) permit holders will be limited to a daily trip limit of 250-lbs. of winter flounder. Recreational fishermen will be limited to the *status quo* 8-fish bag limit for winter flounder but will be prohibited from landing or possessing winter flounder during September and October.

Southern New England

State Waters Groundfish Endorsement (GE) permit holders will be limited to a daily trip limit 50-lbs. of winter flounder. Note federal permit holders are prohibited from landing or possessing winter flounder. Recreational fishermen will be limited to two winter flounder per day during the *status quo* open fishing periods in the spring and fall.

2. Coastal Sharks (322 CMR 6.37)

MFC approved rules to remain in compliance with the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Coastal Sharks, including:

- a. establishing recreational and commercial minimum size limits, possession limits, and gear restrictions;

- b. prohibiting possession of some species, filleting of sharks at sea, and finning of sharks; and
- c. establishing additional standards for disposition of commercial and recreational catch.

The coastal shark plan was predicated on current federal rules; state rules will become effective October 30th.

3. Rainbow Smelt (322 CMR 6.09)

Effective October 30th there will be uniform 50-fish daily limit for rainbow smelt harvested by recreational and commercial fishermen from coastal waters of the Commonwealth.

4. Blue Crab (322 CMR 6.19)

Effective October 30th the legal minimum size for blue crabs will increase to 5” and daily possession limit will decrease to 25-crabs. These rules apply to both commercial and recreational harvesters to better support conservation of local blue crab populations.

5. Surface Gillnets

The MFC approved DMF’s proposal to clarify that the prohibition on use of gillnets south and west of Cape Cod during April 1 through November 15 does not apply to persons:

- a. using surface gillnets less than 250-square feet to take bait for personal use in the Inshore Restricted Waters (exempt from permit requirements); or
- b. fishing surface gillnets with a permit (in accordance with 322 CMR 4.14) and fishing in the Inshore Restricted Waters as defined in 322 CMR 4.02.

For further information go to www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.