



# *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

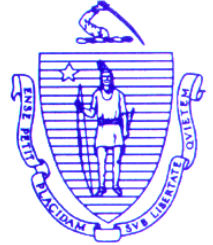
## **Division of Marine Fisheries**

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November 13, 2019

*Marine Fisheries Advisory*

### **Scoping Meeting to Discuss Management of 2020 Commercial Period II Summer Flounder Fishery**

The Division of Marine Fisheries will hold a scoping meeting to discuss the management of the 2020 commercial Period II (June 10–December 31) summer flounder fishery on December 4, 2019 at the John Curtis Free Library located at 534 Hanover Street in Hanover, MA. The meeting will run from 2:15PM to 3:45PM. If you are unable to attend but wish to comment, please do so in writing through e-mail to the attention of Jared Silva ([jared.silva@state.ma.us](mailto:jared.silva@state.ma.us)) by December 9, 2019.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss management of the Period II fishery beginning in 2020. The 2019 MA commercial fishery struggled to utilize an 80% increase to its quota under the existing rules. DMF made several mid-season adjustments to increase access to the quota, including: eliminating closed fishing days, increasing daily possession limits, and establishing a pilot program allowing trawl fishermen to land two daily limits of summer flounder lawfully caught and retained over consecutive open fishing days. With similar or greater quota expected for several years, consideration should be given to formally adopt these or other measures to better utilize the quota. Additionally, the conditions of the Letter of Authorization (LOA) seasonally issued to trawlers to retain a horseshoe crab bycatch when fishing for summer flounder deserve review given this year's full use of the horseshoe crab quota.

Possible specific proposals may include: 1) renewing the two-daily-limits-over-consecutive-days pilot program and potentially starting it earlier in the season; 2) adopting a regulation that automatically opens additional days and/or increases possession limits after a set date, particularly if a certain percent of the summer flounder quota remains; and 3) reducing the horseshoe crab LOA's bycatch limit or invalidating the LOAs once a certain percent of the horseshoe crab quota is harvested. Input on other ideas to facilitate use of the summer flounder commercial quota in a way that benefits the fleet is welcome.

This scoping meeting will be the first step in developing a potential regulatory proposal. Following this meeting, DMF will discuss potential proposals at the December and January Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission business meetings and then may go to public hearing in February 2020.

For more information regarding the management of marine fisheries in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, please visit our website at [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).