



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Marine Fisheries Advisory

DMF to Renew Wintertime Commercial Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Pilot Program Allowing Possession of Multiple States' Limits when Offloading

For 2021, DMF is renewing a wintertime (January 1 – April 22) pilot program that allows vessels to possess non-conforming quantities of summer flounder and black sea bass while offloading in a Massachusetts' port. Through this program, vessels which are also permitted to land summer flounder and black sea bass in at least one other participating state are authorized to possess non-conforming quantities of these species when landing in Massachusetts. This allowance is contingent on the vessel properly separating and labeling the catch destined for each state, not exceeding the aggregate trip limit for the participating states where they are permitted, and not offloading more than each state's applicable landing limits.

To participate in this pilot program, a vessel must hold a summer flounder permit endorsement in Massachusetts and a similar permit in Rhode Island, Connecticut, or New York. If the vessel holds a black sea bass permit endorsement in Massachusetts and similar permit in another participating state, the pilot program authorization will further apply to this species. Additionally, the vessel must be equipped with a Vessel Monitoring System as required by NOAA Fisheries.

If you meet these qualifying criteria, you may apply for a Letter of Authorization (LOA) to participate in this pilot program by providing DMF with the following information: (1) permit holder name; (2) vessel name; (3) DMF permit ID number; and (4) vessel documentation number. Please provide this necessary information to the attention of Jared Silva by e-mail (jared.silva@mass.gov). DMF will begin to issue Letters of Authorizations in mid-December 2020 for implementation on January 1, 2021.

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