



**Daniel J. McKiernan**  
Acting Director

# *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

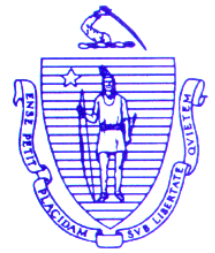
## **Division of Marine Fisheries**

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400

Boston, Massachusetts 02114

(617)626-1520

fax (617)626-1509



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Governor

**Karyn E. Polito**  
Lieutenant Governor

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November 21, 2019

### Marine Fisheries Advisory

## **2020 Period I Summer Flounder Management Changes: Changes to Trip Limit Increased and Pilot Program Implemented**

DMF is making two changes to the management of Massachusetts Period I summer flounder fishery beginning in 2020. The Period I fishery occurs from January 1 through April 22 and is allocated 30% of the state's annual commercial summer flounder quota. These changes are designed to provide additional access to the period's quota allocation; in 2019 the Period I fishery only landed 10% of its quota allocation. DMF anticipates Massachusetts 2020 summer flounder quota will be set at approximately 786,000 pounds (subject to change based on a forthcoming operational stock assessment).

The Period I possession and landing limit will be doubled, with the limit increasing from 500 pounds to 1,000 pounds per trip. Additionally, the month of January will be open to commercial fishing at this revised limit; January was previously closed to commercial summer flounder fishing. Unless otherwise notified, this 1,000 pound trip limit will remain in place throughout Period I until 25% of the period's quota allocation is taken when the limit will be reduced to 100 pounds.

Massachusetts is also implementing a pilot program for the 2020 Period I summer flounder fishery. The pilot program will allow vessels - who are also permitted to land summer flounder in adjacent states (e.g., Connecticut and Rhode Island) - to possess non-confirming quantities of summer flounder when landing in Massachusetts. This allowance is contingent on the vessel not exceeding the aggregate trip limit for the participating states where they are permitted and not offloading more than the state's 1,000 pound landing limit.

To participate in this pilot program, a vessel must hold a summer flounder permit endorsement in Massachusetts and a similar permit in a neighboring participating adjacent state (e.g., Connecticut and Rhode Island). Additionally, the vessel must be equipped with a Vessel Monitoring System as authorized 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's permit ID number; and (4) vessel documentation number. Please provide this necessary information to the attention of Jared Silva by e-mail ([jared.silva@state.ma.us](mailto:jared.silva@state.ma.us)), phone (617-626-1534), or fax (617-626-1509). DMF will begin to issue Letters of Authorization in mid-December 2019 for implementation on January 1, 2020.

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