



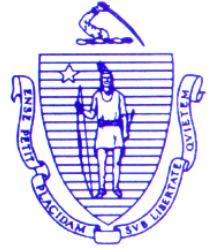
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Deval Patrick
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Secretary
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January 17, 2014

Notice of Public Hearings Scheduled for February 11 and 12, 2014 Commercial Striped Bass Tagging and Management

Under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 30A § 2 and pursuant to the authority found at M.G.L. c. 130 § 2, 17A, 21, 80 and 100A, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission have scheduled public hearings and a public comment period to accept comment on proposed regulations to amend 322 CMR 6.00 and 7.00 affecting the commercial striped bass fishery.

1. **Commercial Striped Bass Tagging (322 CMR 6.07)**. To comply with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's interstate management plan for striped bass, DMF is proposing to establish a point-of-sale striped bass tagging program. This proposal subjects seafood dealers and/or food establishments to the following requirements:
 - a. Primary buyers of striped bass are to affix a DMF-issued, lockable, single-use, tamper-evident, and non-transferable striped bass identification tag ("striped bass tag") through the mouth and the gills of the striped bass immediately upon purchase and transfer from a commercial fisherman.
 - b. Striped bass tags must remain affixed to the whole striped bass until the fish is processed into fillets. If the fillets are packaged and re-sold, the striped bass tag must accompany the fillets. If portions of processed or filleted striped bass are being sold directly to the consumer the tags are to remain on the premise of the seafood dealer or food establishment until all portions are sold. Once all portions of the striped bass are sold, the tag is to be cut into two pieces and discarded.
 - c. The number of striped bass tags available to primary buyers will be dictated by the size of the annual quota. DMF will make striped bass tags available to all primary buyers of striped bass prior to the start of the season. The quantity of the striped bass tags initially received by primary buyers will be based on striped bass purchasing history. Additional tags may be made available upon request to DMF.
 - d. On an annual basis, primary buyers shall return their unused striped bass tags to DMF and submit a striped bass tag accounting report on forms provided by DMF. These items are due to DMF after the close of the commercial striped bass season and within 30-days of a written request from the Director. Future participation as a primary buyer of striped bass may be restricted for failure to comply.
2. **Commercial Striped Bass Management (322 CMR 6.07, 7.01, 7.04 and 7.07)**. To improve market conditions, fish availability, regulatory compliance and fishing safety, DMF is proposing

a number of changes to the commercial striped bass management and permitting regulations. The proposals include :

- a. Reduce the number of open commercial fishing days to as few as two per week;
- b. Reduce the commercial striped bass daily trip limit from the current 30 fish per day limit to as low as 10 fish per day for commercial boat permit holders and just 2 fish per day for holders of individual or rod and reel permits;
- c. Open the commercial fishery earlier than the current July 12 opening date. New opening dates from June 1 through July 11 will be considered;
- d. Prohibit for-hire permit holders from engaging in commercial striped bass fishing with clients aboard ;
- e. Prohibit dealers from purchasing more than one daily trip limit from a commercial fisherman during a calendar day, regardless of the number of permits that individual has in his/her possession;
- f. Establish a control date for all commercial striped bass regulated fishery permit. The control date may be used to limit entry into the commercial striped bass fishery in the future. Options include:
 - i. March 6, 2008 – the control date for all other hook and line fisheries; or
 - ii. September 8, 2013 – the close of the most recent commercial season; and
- g. Beginning in 2015, require all commercial striped bass regulated fishery permit endorsements be applied for or renewed by the last day of February in any calendar year.

Public Hearing Schedule

**February 11, 2014
6:00 PM
Plymouth Harbor Radisson
180 Water Street
Plymouth, MA 02360**

**February 12, 2014
6:30 PM
Gloucester High School Auditorium
32 Leslie O Johnson Road
Gloucester, MA 01930**

Public comments will be accepted until 5:00 PM on Friday, February 21, 2014. Please e-mail all public comments to jared.silva@state.ma.us or send to the attention of Jared Silva at 251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114.

For further information or to obtain a copy of the full proposed regulations please contact Jared Silva by phone (617-626-1534) or through e-mail (jared.silva@state.ma.us).