



MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

December 10, 2020 Meeting Summary

This document serves as a brief summary of the December 10, 2020 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. This MFAC meeting was held virtually. All meeting materials are available on the [MFAC's past meeting website](#). The full meeting can be viewed on [DMF's YouTube page](#).

Action Items

The MFAC unanimously reviewed an Open Meeting Law complaint filed regarding the September 24, 2020 MFAC business meeting. The MFAC found the complaint to be erroneous and determined the sought after remedy could not be accommodated. A written response was unanimously approved and will be sent by DMF to the complainant and the Attorney General's Office.

The MFAC also approved two DMF recommendations. The first action was to increase the Period I (January 1 – April 22) commercial summer flounder trip limit from 1,000 pounds to 2,000 pounds. This was done in response to an anticipated quota increase of 29% in 2021. The second action was to establish the Winter I (January 1 – April 30) commercial scup trip limit at 50,000 pounds consistent with the federal trip limit for this period. This was done to allow vessels fishing offshore to land lawfully harvested scup in Massachusetts ports.

Future Rule Making

The MFAC then reviewed a recent petition to rescind the permanent bluefish strikenet closure in southeastern Cape Cod Bay. The item was debated and concerns were raised regarding the impact it may have on the recreational and for-hire sectors who rely on this area to fish for bluefish in the summer and fall. DMF determined the petition would be brought to public hearing this winter to allow for additional public comment.

Public hearings on proposed protected species regulations affecting fixed gear fisheries were held on December 8 and 9, 2020. DMF and the MFAC briefly discussed the hearings and the comments received. DMF expects to make a final recommendation to the MFAC at their January 7, 2021 business meeting.

Discussion Items

DMF staff provided an overview of the key topics discussed at the November 19, 2020 MFAC Law Enforcement Sub-Committee. DMF anticipates that several of these discussion items will likely result in future adjustments to regulations. The MAFMC will meet with the ASMFC's Bluefish Board and Scup, Black Sea Bass and Summer Flounder Board at next week's MAFMC meeting. DMF staff provided an overview of the anticipated discussions. DMF and the MFAC reviewed potential meeting dates for the first half of 2021; these meeting dates will be published in early 2021. The oyster fishery update discussion item was postponed until January 7, 2021 due to a scheduling conflict.

Presentation

DMF biologist, Dr. Tracy Pugh, provided the MFAC with a presentation on dissolved oxygen monitoring in Cape Cod Bay to better understand the recent development of hypoxic zones that produced fish kills.

Other Business

Commission member Bill Amaru raised concerns regarding time-of-year restrictions on harbor dredging. DMF continues to be engaged with Bill on this issue and it will be discussed further at the January 7, 2021 business meeting. Commission member Mike Pierdinock also provided an overview of ongoing ICCAT deliberations.

Upcoming Meetings

The next MFAC business meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2021. The meeting will be held virtually via Zoom. Information regarding the meeting will be published on the [MFAC's website](#). If you would like to obtain any materials regarding past or upcoming MFAC business meetings, please contact Jared Silva at DMF (617-626-1534 or jared.silva@state.ma.us).