



MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

December 13, 2018 Meeting Summary

This document serves as a brief summary of the December 13, 2018 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. Further details will be captured in MFAC business meeting minutes for this date.

Action Items

Mobile Gear Regulations

The MFAC approved the Division of Marine Fisheries' (DMF) recommendation to amend mobile gear regulations at 322 CMR 4.00. The full details of this recommendation may be found in the December 5, 2018 memorandum from the Director to the MFAC. In summary, the recommendation was to adopt the regulatory language proposed at public hearing with three modifications. The three modifications were to: (1) explicitly allow the use of chaffing gear on the bottom of a trawl net; (2) open April to mobile gear fishing within South Shore Area 3 (Hull to Plymouth); and (3) move slightly shoreward the mobile gear closure boundary within the southwest portion of Cape Cod Bay Area 4 (Plymouth to Provincetown). Final regulations and mobile gear closure maps will be codified and published in early 2019.

2019 Winter I Scup Limits

The MFAC approved the Division of Marine Fisheries recommendation to mirror the federal 2019 Winter I (January 1 – April 30) scup possession and landing limit of 50,000 pounds per trip. The full details of this recommendation may be found in the December 6, 2018 memorandum from the Director to the MFAC.

Future Public Hearing Items

Regulatory Clarifications

The MFAC reviewed three DMF's regulatory proposals to be taken to public hearing this winter. DMF anticipates hearings will be held in February 2019. The proposals are summarized in the bullets below. A more detailed description may be found in the relevant December 5, 2018 memorandum from the Director to the MFAC.

- Close a gap in existing DMF regulations and clearly mandate that commercial fisherman sell their fish only to authorized primary buyers. This would not apply to those commercial fishermen who sell their fish directly to the public under the authority of a Retail Boat or Bait Dealer permit.
- Explicitly prohibit for-hire vessels from taking out patrons on a for-hire trip and fishing under the authority of their commercial fishing permit. This would not apply to for-hire trips when species may be taken and sold under a federal HMS permit or to the sale of recreationally caught but commercially conforming striped bass taken during a for-hire trip.
- Codify a prohibition on the at-sea transfer of trip limit managed species. This ensures DMF's compliance with the ASMFC's FMP for Summer Flounder. Under this proposed rule, bait fish

transferred from a purse seiner to a carrier vessel or sold under the authority of a Bait Dealer permit would be exempt. DMF would also clarify the existing buy-boat allowance.

Discussion Items

Recent ASMFC and MAFMC Meetings

DMF and the MFAC discussed the outcomes of a recent joint meeting of the ASMFC and MAFMC regarding black sea bass, scup and fluke. These meetings focused on the process for setting the 2019 recreational black sea bass measures. Proposed 2019 fishing limits will not be available until late-winter 2019, once the 2018 MRIP harvest estimates are finalized. Additionally, there was some discussion regarding potential future state-by-state commercial fluke quota reallocations. DMF also summarized the recent MAFMC Law Enforcement and For-Hire Workshop and highlighted two issues for the MFAC. First, was the conversation regarding USCG safety inspections for HMS permitted vessels. Second, was the need to clearly define across jurisdictions how recreational fishing limits apply on charter and head boats and how this is addressed in MRIP sampling. .

Addressing the Period I Commercial Fluke Fishery

DMF was asked to consider implementing a program to allow weekly or bi-weekly landing limits for fluke during the 2019 Period I wintertime fishery. DMF noted that it was awaiting the release of a draft Stock Assessment Review Committee report on fluke in late January 2019 and that this report may have implications on fluke quotas in 2019-2021. Accordingly, DMF would not take an action to adjust the Period I fluke fishing limits in 2019, but pending the implications of the report may consider amending them for 2020.

Mandatory Electronic Reporting for Dealers in 2020

DMF indicated its intentions to mandate electronic reporting for dealers in 2020. This mandate would eliminate paper reporting, improve the timeliness of data submission and allow DMF to reallocate staff time from data entry to data auditing to improve the timeliness of data analysis.

Upcoming Meetings

9AM
January 24, 2019
DFW Field HQ
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA

9AM
February 14, 2019
DFW Field HQ
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA

9AM
March 14, 2019
DFW Field HQ
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA

9AM
April 11, 2019
DFW Field HQ
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA

9AM
May 9, 2019
DFW Field HQ
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA

9AM
June 13, 2019
DFW Field HQ
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA

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).