



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Marine Fisheries
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Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberly Driscoll
Lt. Governor

Rebecca L. Tepper
Secretary

Thomas K. O'Shea
Commissioner

Daniel J. McKiernan
Director

January 30, 2026

Public Hearing and Public Comment Period Scheduled for Draft Regulations Affecting Commercial and Recreational Fishing

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is proposing changes to commercial and recreational fishing regulations for the 2026 fishing season. The proposed amendments seek to: (1) adjust and increase the commercial fishing limits for summer flounder, black sea bass, and scup and recreational limits for bluefish; (2) reallocate quota from the bait fishery for horseshoe crabs to the biomedical fishery; (3) create a uniform sea scallop maximum dredge width rule between state and federal jurisdictions; (4) eliminate outdated and superfluous regulated fishery permit endorsements; and (5) allow any existing Coastal Lobster Permit holder whose corresponding vessel holds a federal lobster trap permit to permanently surrender their Coastal Lobster Permit in a one-time exchange for an Offshore Lobster Permit.

The details on these regulatory proposals can be found in the [Public Hearing Notice](#) with additional background and rationale on DMF's [proposed regulations website](#). DMF will accept **written public comment** through 5PM Friday, February 27, 2026. Please submit written comments by [email](#) to the attention of Director Daniel McKiernan. DMF will also host an **in-person public hearing** on Tuesday February 24, 2026, from 6 – 9 PM at Admiral's Hall located at 101 Academy Drive in Buzzards Bay, MA on Massachusetts Maritime Academy's campus. The public hearing will have a listen-in-only option via Zoom ([register here](#)), and a recording will be posted to [DMF's YouTube channel](#) on Wednesday, February 25, 2026.

DMF will review and consider the input received during the public hearing and public comment period in the development of final regulatory recommendations to be given to the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC). The MFAC is expected to discuss and vote on final DMF recommendations at their business meeting on March 17, 2026, at 1 Rabbit Hill Rd, Westborough, MA. Information regarding this meeting will be published to the [MFAC website](#) at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Please visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.