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# *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

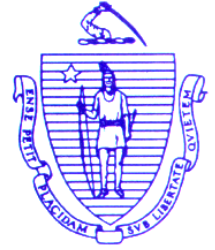
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April 16, 2020

*Marine Fisheries Advisory*

### **Commercial Striped Bass Fishing Regulations for 2020**

Massachusetts' 2020 commercial striped bass fishery quota is 735,240 pounds. This represents a reduction compared to prior years, consistent with actions taken by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to end overfishing. The Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission approved DMF recommendations to increase the commercial striped bass minimum size limit to 35" total length and adjust the commercial open fishing days to Mondays and Wednesdays. These changes are effective on May 1 and are explained in greater detail below.

No changes are being made to the commercial fishing season or bag limits. The commercial fishery will open on June 24, with a 15-fish possession limit for commercial fishermen fishing under the authority of a boat-based permit and aboard the named vessel, and a 2-fish possession limit for all other commercial fishermen. All possession limits apply to the permit holder or the vessel regardless of the number of trips taken in a day or the number of commercial fishermen onboard a vessel.

The commercial striped bass minimum size limit is being increased from 34" to 35". This change, along with the adoption of a slot limit in the recreational fishery (28" to less than 35"), will result in the commercial and recreational fisheries being segregated based on the size of fish they are allowed to retain. Commercial fishermen will only be able to retain fish measuring 35" or greater, whereas recreational fishermen will only be able to retain fish measuring 28" to less than 35". This is expected to improve enforcement and compliance. All size limits are based on total length, which is the straight line length from the anterior most tip of the jaw or snout with the mouth closed to the farthest extremity of the tail with the forks squeezed together. With this change, DMF is rescinding two regulatory provisions that addressed the retention and sale of fish by fishermen holding both commercial and recreational fishing permits. First, commercially permitted fishermen fishing recreationally on a closed commercial fishing day during the commercial fishing season are no longer required to clip the right pectoral fin of any fish they retain. Second, dual for-hire and commercial permit holders are no longer authorized to sell unwanted striped bass taken by their for-hire clients during a recreational fishing trip.

The open commercial fishing day schedule is also being adjusted from Mondays and Thursdays to Mondays and Wednesdays. This will help ensure fish is more readily available for weekend markets and may improve utilization of the available quota.

For more information, please visit our website: [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)