



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Marine Fisheries Advisory

Commercial Fishing Rules for Striped Bass in 2021

Several adjustments have been made to the commercial striped bass fishing rules for 2021. The fishery now opens on the first open commercial fishing day on or after June 16 and the fishery will commence with three open commercial fishing days—Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Accordingly, for 2021, the first open fishing day will be Wednesday, June 16. Beginning October 1, provided the quota has not been taken and the fishery is still open, the number of open fishing days per week will increase to five: Mondays – Fridays. The commercial fishery will close on November 15 should Massachusetts’ annual commercial striped bass quota not be taken prior to this date.

As the open fishing days are now consecutive, commercial fishermen will be afforded the opportunity to fish overnight tides spanning open fishing days. Accordingly, fishermen may retain, land, and sell fish on Monday and then begin fishing again on Monday and continue fishing into Tuesday morning to land and sell fish again Tuesday. However, if doing so, they may not possess or sell more than one limit during any single calendar day.

These new rules differ slightly from years prior when the fishery would open on the first open fishing day on or after June 23, with two open fishing days per week occurring on Mondays and Wednesdays, and then close on December 31 or once 100% of the annual quota was taken. All other commercial striped bass fishing rules will remain the same this year. This includes the 35” commercial minimum size; closed fishing days on the 3rd and 4th of July and Labor Day; and a daily possession and landing limit of 15-fish for boat-based permits when the fishing activity is conducted onboard the vessel named on the permit and a 2-fish limit for all other commercial striped bass fishing activity. Please remember that possession limits are applied to a vessel regardless of how many individual permit holders may be onboard.

The Cape Cod Canal (“Canal”) remains closed to commercial striped bass fishing in 2021. This closure was implemented in 2020 to address numerous and worsening public nuisance and safety issues arising from commercial fishing activity in the area. Under this closure, all striped bass retained from the Canal or possessed within 1,000 feet of the Canal’s shoreline must adhere to the recreational fishing limits—one fish per angler measuring at least 28 inches but less than 35 inches. Exempt from this prohibition are commercial striped bass caught elsewhere that are being transported within 1,000-feet of the Canal to a seafood dealer for sale. The Canal is defined as the most seaward extent of the state pier at Taylor’s Point, to the most seaward extent of the

northern breakwater jetty at the east end, to the seaward extent of the southern jetty at the east end, to the northernmost tip of the peninsula at the end of President's Road in Bourne.

Massachusetts' annual commercial striped bass quota for 2021 will be 735,240 pounds. The 2021 quota is the same as it was in 2020. The state's quota was reduced from approximately 869,000 pounds to this current amount in 2020 in response to Addendum VI to the Interstate Striped Bass Management Plan to achieve a reduction in commercial removals comparable to the reduction achieved by the recreational slot limit and consistent with the effort to reduce the fishing mortality rate to its target level.

Commercial fishermen are required to submit monthly trip-level reports by the fifteenth of the following month, even if their permit is not fished. Reports should be sent to DMF Statistics Project, 30 Emerson Avenue, Gloucester, MA 01930. Failure to submit these reports for all months of the year in a timely manner may result in the non-renewal of a commercial permit and its endorsements in 2022. Blank forms and instructions were mailed out prior to the beginning of the 2021 fishing season; additional copies can be obtained on the [Trip Level Reporting website](#).

For more information on the management of striped bass in Massachusetts, please view our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.