



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Marine Fisheries Advisory

COMMERCIAL STRIPED BASS FISHERY TO OPEN ON JUNE 19

The Massachusetts commercial striped bass fishery is scheduled to open Monday, June 19, 2023. This is the first open fishing day on or after June 16. The season will commence with three consecutive open fishing days—Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays—and with closed fishing days of Thursdays–Sundays. Additionally, the commercial fishery will be closed on Monday, July 3; Tuesday, July 4; and Monday, September 4 (Labor Day). On October 1, provided the quota has not been taken, Thursdays and Fridays will be added to the open fishing day schedule, thereby allowing the commercial fishery to occur five days per week (Mondays–Fridays) with closed fishing days on Saturdays and Sundays.

During any open commercial fishing day, commercially permitted fishers may retain striped bass in accordance with the commercial fishing limits. As open fishing days are consecutive, commercial fishermen may fish overnight tides spanning open fishing days. For example, fishermen may retain, land, and sell fish on a Monday and then begin fishing again on Monday and continue fishing into Tuesday morning to land and sell fish. However, in doing so, they may not possess or sell more than one limit during any calendar day. On closed commercial fishing days, all striped bass fishing activity must adhere to the 2023 recreational rules.

For 2023, the commercial size limit remains 35" or greater; the release of previously retained legal sized fish for larger sized fish ("high-grading") is prohibited. The commercial possession and landing limit is 15 fish for boat-based permits when fishing activity is conducted onboard the vessel named on the permit and 2 fish for all other commercial striped bass fishing activities. Commercial possession and landing limits are applied to the vessel regardless of how many permit holders may be onboard. Rod-and-reel and handline are the only authorized gear to harvest striped bass.

The commercial quota for 2023 is 700,379 pounds. This quota is reduced from 735,240 pounds—the allowable quota under the interstate management plan—in response to an overage of 34,861 pounds in 2022. The 2023 commercial fishery will close on November 15 or once 100% of the quota is taken, whichever occurs sooner. Commercial fishermen are reminded of the requirement to report all striped bass harvested under the authority of a commercial permit on [forms](#) provided by the Division; this includes all fish sold and kept for personal use.

The Cape Cod Canal ("Canal") is closed to commercial striped bass fishing. This closure was implemented in 2020 to address numerous and worsening public safety and nuisance issues. This closure requires striped bass retained from the Canal or possessed within 1,000 feet of the Canal

to adhere to the recreational striped bass limits. Exempt from this are striped bass caught elsewhere that are being transported directly to a seafood dealer.

Commercial fishing for striped bass may not occur aboard a vessel at the same time as recreational fishing for striped bass. For 2023, the recreational striped bass fishery is subject to a 1-fish per angler daily bag limit and a slot limit of 28" to less than 31". This slot limit was modified from 28" to less than 35" by a coastwide emergency action to address concerns about increased recreational fishery removals in 2022. Recreational fishers are required to use circle hooks when fishing with natural baits and are prohibited from gaffing striped bass.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) recently initiated the development of an Addendum to the interstate fishery management plan to consider new commercial and recreational measures for striped bass beginning in 2024. The purpose of this action is to reduce fishing mortality to the target level to achieve stock rebuilding by 2029. The addendum is expected to be brought out to public hearing this fall. Please refer to the ASMFC's [press release](#) for more details.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.