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July 1, 2010

Marine Fisheries Advisory

NOTICE OF PUBLIC Comment period

Under current regulations, adopted in 2009, possession limits for the August 1 through December 31 commercial black sea bass fishery are established by the Director after a determination of available quota remaining from the spring fishery. Landings through May 25, 2010 consumed most of the annual Massachusetts quota 90.4% (or 206,616 lbs of the 228,619 lbs quota).

With only 22,003 lbs of quota left available for the August 1 – December 31 period, the Division of Marine Fisheries proposes – and is accepting comments - to establish only a nominal (by-catch) trip limit of 50 lbs. for all gear types.

Environmental factors, particularly warm spring water temperatures, appear to have contributed to elevated catch rates in May, especially in the sea bass pot fishery. If adopted, this strategy will allow for sea bass by-catch in the 4-days per week (Mon.-Thurs.) directed commercial scup fishery, as well as the 5-days per week (Sun. – Thursday) commercial fluke fishery. Comments will be accepted through July 14, 2010.

Written comments must be received by e-mail, (marine.fish@state.ma.us), fax (617.626.1509), or mail (DMF; 251 Causeway St., Suite 400; Boston, MA 02114) and will be accepted until 5PM on Wednesday, July 14, 2010.

Unless otherwise notified by the Director, declarations shall become effective on August 1, 2010.

For further information please visit our website at: www.mass.gov/marinefisheries