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Marine Fisheries Advisory

COMMERCIAL FLUKE FISHERY TO CLOSE THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2007
Landings permitted until 8 PM on Thursday

Current landing and dealer reporting information indicates that the Commonwealth's summer period commercial quota (458,000 lbs) for the 2007 summer flounder (fluke) fishery will be reached by Thursday, July 26. Therefore, after Thursday, July 26, 2007 commercial fishermen are prohibited from landing or possessing fluke through October 31, 2007 . The fishery may be re-opened on November 1, 2007 .

This action is taken consistent with DMF regulations 322 CMR 6.22(2)(a) that establishes seasonal allocations of the state's annual quota:

"(a) Seasonal Quota Allocations. The annual quota shall be split with 15% allocated to the Winter I period from January 1 through April 22, 70% allocated to the Summer period from April 23 through October 31, and 15% allocated to the Winter II period from November 1 through December 31."

Since 1993, the seasonal allocations of the states fluke quota have been maintained at 30% for the winter fishery and 70% for the summer. In 2006, DMF enacted regulations splitting the winter fishery allocation into two periods (I and II) each allocated 15% of the annual quota. This action was taken to prevent unexpected overages in the winter fishery from usurping quota from the summer fishery.

The 2007 fluke fishing year began on January 1 st with a federally mandated 30% reduction in quota. The 2007 quota of only 654,285 lbs. is the lowest since quota management was established in 1993. The Winter I directed fishery was closed after just 7 days because the landings were high and projected to reach the 15% target (98,000 lbs.).

Based on the best available data and projections, there may be approximately 8% of the annual quota (52,000 lbs) remaining for the limited fishery in Winter II (November – December). However, if higher landings are documented through late reports, the remaining balance on the

quota will be lowered accordingly. DMF will issue a future advisory prior to the next opening of the commercial fluke fishery.