



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Marine Fisheries Advisory

DMF Proposing In-Season Adjustments to the 2020 Commercial Fishing Limits for Certain Quota Managed Species

In response to fishery performance and quota utilization so far in 2020, and with consideration of market impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, DMF is proposing in-season adjustments to 2020 commercial fishing limits for striped bass, black sea bass, and summer flounder. These proposals are described in the bullets below.

- **Striped Bass**. DMF is proposing to add open fishing days to the 2020 commercial striped bass season. Beginning on September 1, 2020 Tuesdays and Thursdays will be added to the commercial fishery. This will allow commercial fishing four days per week (Mondays – Thursdays). Then, effective October 2, 2020, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays will be added to the commercial fishery. This will allow commercial fishing seven days per week.
- **Black Sea Bass**. DMF is proposing to add open fishing days to the 2020 commercial black sea bass season. Beginning on August 31, 2020 Mondays and Wednesdays will be added to the commercial fishery. This will allow commercial fishing five days per week (Sundays – Thursdays). Then, effective October 2, 2020, Fridays and Saturdays will be added to the commercial fishery. This will allow commercial fishing seven days per week. Additionally, DMF is proposing to increase the daily trip limit for pot fishermen from 400 pounds to 500 pounds effective Sunday, August 30.
- **Summer Flounder**. Beginning on August 23, 2020 DMF is proposing to increase the commercial summer flounder trip limit for trawlers from 400 pounds to 600 pounds. Vessels participating the [Period II Summer Flounder Pilot Program](#) will be subsequently allowed to possess and land 1,200 pounds taken over a two-day trip. Then on October 4, 2020 DMF is proposing to increase the commercial summer flounder trip limit to 1,000 pounds and eliminate closed fishing days (Fridays and Saturdays) allowing commercial fishing seven days per week.

In-season adjustments to commercial fishing limits for the late summer and fall period is a routine action by DMF. The purpose of proposed actions is to provide active commercial fishermen with additional access to these quota managed fisheries during the fall. This will let these businesses fish around worsening seasonal weather, which typically has a limiting impact on commercial fishing effort. They will also allow for commercial fishermen to have greater access to remaining quotas. As of August 1, 2020 approximately 25% of the state's 735,240

pound 2020 striped bass quota has been taken, 20% of the state's 728,565 pound 2020 black sea bass quota has been taken, and 48% of the state's 786,399 pound 2020 summer flounder quota has been taken.

The Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission will review and vote on these proposals at the August 20, 2020 business meetings. If approved, in-season adjustments will be announced on August 21, 2020 and will be in effect for the remainder of 2020 or until 100% of the relevant 2020 commercial quotas have been taken.

Instructions for Public Comment

DMF will be accepting public comment on these proposals through 12PM on Monday, August 24, 2020. Please address all written comments to Director Dan McKiernan. All comments are to be submitted to DMF by e-mail (marine.fish@mass.gov) or by post (251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114).

For more information about the management of marine fisheries in Massachusetts, contact DMF at 617-626-1520 or visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.