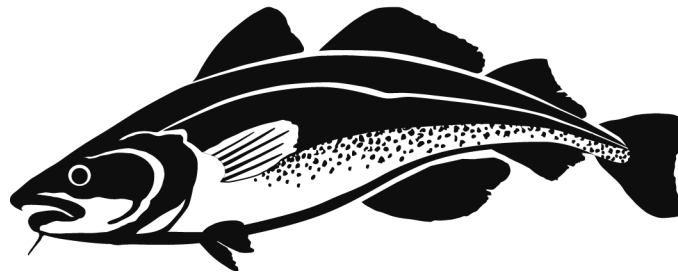


**Public Hearing:  
Implement Addendum XXXII to American  
Lobster FMP**

**May 19, 2025**

**Marine Fisheries**  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



# Public Hearing and Comment

Under the provisions of G.L. c. 30A and pursuant to the authority found at G.L. c. 130 §§ 17A, 21, and 104, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is taking public comment on a series of recently enacted emergency regulations amending 322 CMR 6.02 to implement Addendum XXXII to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster.

DMF will accept written public comment through 5PM on Friday, May 23, 2025. Please submit written comments to Director Daniel McKiernan by e-mail ([marine.fish@mass.gov](mailto:marine.fish@mass.gov)). Full text of the regulations may be found on [DMF's website](#) along with additional relevant background information.



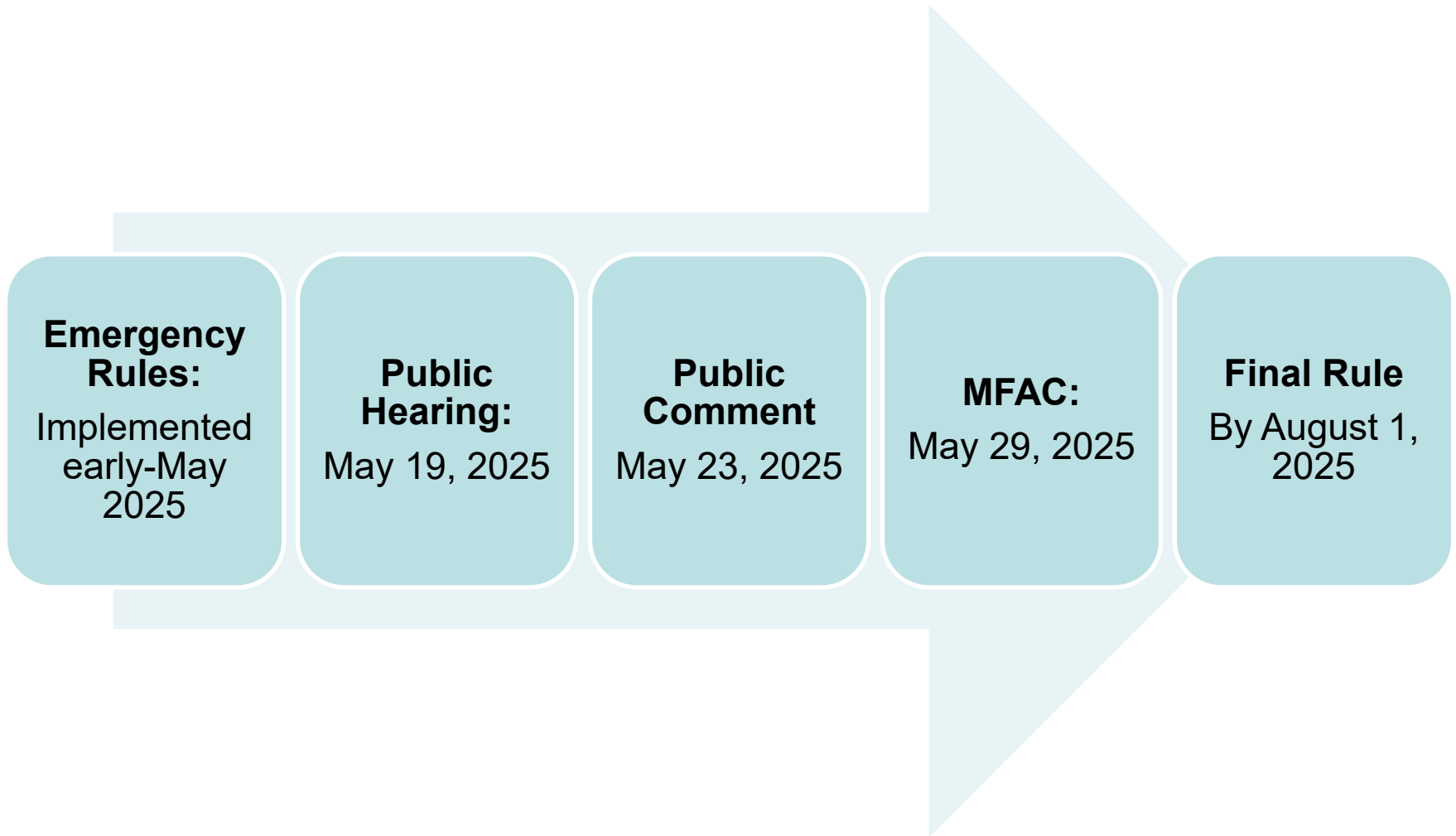
# Public Hearing Agenda

## 1. **Implementing Addendum XXXII**

- a) Development and Implementation of Addendum XXVII
- b) Unraveling of Addendum XXVII
- c) Development and Implementation of Addendum XXXII



# Timeline for Rule Making



May 19, 2025

Massachusetts Division  
of Marine Fisheries



# Background on Addendum XXVII

- August 2017: Board initiated Draft Addendum XXVII to enhance spawning stock biomass of GOM/GBK lobster stock and standardize management measures across and within LCMAs.
- Following 2020 benchmark assessment, Board reinitiated work on Addendum XXVII to increase overall protection of spawning stock biomass of the GOM/GBK stock
  - Settlement surveys over the past five years have consistently been below the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of time series
  - Declines in recruit abundance in ventless trap and trawl surveys for the GOM/GBK stock since 2020 assessment
  - Could indicate future declines in recruitment and landings
- May 2023: Board approved Addendum XXVII for implementation for June 1, 2024.
  - Standardization measures for OCCLCMA (1/8" v-notch and 6 3/4" max size) and LCMA 1 and 3 (trap tag issuance) to be implemented immediately.
  - Schedule to implement additional gauge adjustments and escape vent rules based on recruitment abundance trigger.
- October 2023: Implementation deadline moved back until January 1, 2025.
  - Recruitment abundance trigger reached requiring additional measures be implemented for June 1, 2024.
  - Delay responded to concerns about international commerce, Canadian lobster importation, and gauge availability.
- October 2024: ASMFC approved Addendum XXXI to delay implementation of all aspects until July 1, 2025.
  - Provided additional time for Canada to consider adopting complementary measures to reduce potential trade barriers and cross-jurisdiction impacts.



# Addendum XXVII Requirements

Effective	LCMA1 and Recreational Gulf of Maine	LCMA 3	OCCLCMA and Recreational Outer Cape	Seafood Dealers
<b>July 1, 2025</b>	<p>Limit trap tag issuance to trap allocation with no extra trap tags awarded.</p> <p>Minimum carapace size increase from 3 1/4" to 3 5/16".</p>	<p>Limit trap tag issuance to trap allocation with no extra trap tags awarded.</p>	<p>Establish 6 3/4" maximum carapace size for state waters.</p> <p>V-notch standard changes from 1/4" sharp v-notch without setal hairs to 1/8" v-notch with or without setal hairs for state waters.</p>	<p>Minimum carapace size increase from 3 1/4" to 3 5/16".</p> <p>Establish 6 3/4" maximum carapace size for state waters.</p> <p>V-notch standard changes from 1/4" sharp v-notch without setal hairs to 1/8" v-notch with or without setal hairs for state waters.</p>
<b>July 1, 2026</b>	No Changes	No Changes	No Changes	No Changes
<b>July 1, 2027</b>	<p>Minimum carapace size increase from 3 5/16" to 3 3/8".</p>	N/A	N/A	<p>Minimum carapace size increase from 3 5/16" to 3 3/8".</p>
<b>July 1, 2028</b>	<p>Trap escape vent size change from 1 15/16" by 5 3/4" rectangular or 2 7/16" circular diameter to 2" by 5 3/4" rectangular or 2 5/8" circular diameter.</p>	N/A	N/A	
<b>July 1, 2029</b>	N/A	<p>Maximum carapace size decrease from 6 3/4" to 6 1/2".</p>	<p>Maximum carapace size decrease from 6 3/4" to 6 1/2".</p>	<p>Maximum carapace size decrease from 6 3/4" to 6 1/2".</p>



# State Implementation

- DMF adopted regulations to implement Addendum XXVII in December 2024.
- Commercial Fishery Rules
  - Trap tag issuance standardization for LCMA 1 and 3 went into effect immediately.
  - LCMA 1 minimum gauge increase and standard v-notch and maximum gauge size for OCCLCMA to go into effect on July 1, 2025.
  - Additional minimum size gauge increases and escape vent adjustments for LCMA 1 and maximum gauge decreases for LCMA3 and OCCLCMA were scheduled to go into effect over four years (2026 – 2029) annually on July 1.
- Seafood Dealers
  - Dealers were prohibited from buying non-conforming lobster but were given 90-days (through 9/30/25) to unload inventory of previously purchased non-conforming lobsters.
- Recreational Fishery
  - Gulf of Maine Recreational Area: Adopted complementary minimum size gauge increases and escape vent changes for.
  - Outer Cape Recreational Area: Adopted complementary maximum size gauge changes. No change to v-notch rule because recreational fishery has a state-wide 1/8" v-notch standard.



# Unraveling of Addendum XXVII

- Throughout process there were concerns that industry would ultimately balk at implementing addendum due to economic issues related to trade with Canada, market access, and issues of equity in the disputed “grey zone” in the EEZ along Canada border.
- DMF indicated that should states (i.e. Maine) back away from implementing addendum that DMF would not hold its industry to stricter standards than fishers in same LCMA.
- In January 2025, Maine announced it would not be implementing Addendum XXVII. Shortly thereafter, New Hampshire announced it would similarly pursue non-compliance.
- Recognizing challenges faced as the largest lobster producing state was moving towards non-compliance, ASMFC Lobster Board initiated and approved Addendum XXXII at its February 2025 meeting.
- Board found it necessary and compelling to address frustrations with Maine and New Hampshire’s actions and drafted letter to both states expressing disappointment in outcome, expressing harm done to process, and insisting Maine and NH commence discussions about alternative conservation strategies.





# Development of Addendum XXXII

- Draft Addendum XXXII initiated in February 2025.
- Addendum sought to repeal all pending gauge and escape vent changes to be implemented through Addendum XXVII prior to July 1, 2025.
- Standardization of OCCLCMA v-notch rules and LCMA 1 and LCMA 3 trap tag rules were not included in the repeal.
  - MA delegation to Lobster Board made a motion to include OCCLCMA v-notch standardization rules in Addendum XXXII, but motion did not receive a second.
  - OCCLCMA is not required to v-notch and state waters fishery has had most liberal v-notch standard in region.
  - Having a very liberal ( $\frac{1}{4}$ " ) v-notch standard for the approximately 40 state-only OCC state-only permit holders has meant the state-wide possession standard for v-notched lobsters in commerce is the same  $\frac{1}{4}$ " - resulting in the inability to enforce the possession rules in commerce.
- At May meeting, ASMFC Lobster Board approved Addendum XXXII for implementation.



# State Implementation

- DMF can maintain more the more conservative measures contained in Addendum XXVII.
- DMF committed to ensure our industry is not held to stricter standards than fishers in same LCMA.
- Emergency rule making initiated in April 2025 to rescind relevant gauge size and escape vent changes for commercial fishery, seafood dealers, and recreational fishery.
- Emergency rules went into effect in early May 2025 and remain in effect for 90-days.
- DMF seeks to make these emergency rules permanent.

## Summary of Commercial and Recreational Lobster for Gulf of Maine and Outer Cape Under Emergency Regs

Lobster Management Area	Minimum Size	Maximum Size	Escape Vent	V-Notch Standard
LCMA1	3 ¼"	5"	1 15/16" by 5 3/4" rectangular or 2 7/16" diameter	Any v-shaped notch ("zero-tolerance")
OCCLMCA (State)	3 3/8"	N/A	2" by 5 3/4" rectangular to 2 5/8" diameter.	1/8" deep with or without setal hairs
OCCLCMA (Fed)	3 3/8"	6 ¾"	2" by 5 3/4" rectangular to 2 5/8" diameter.	1/8" deep with or without setal hairs
Gulf of Maine Rec	3 ¼"	5"	1 15/16" by 5 3/4" rectangular or 2 7/16" diameter	1/8" deep with or without setal hairs
Outer Cape Rec	3 3/8"	N/A	2" by 5 3/4" rectangular to 2 5/8" diameter.	1/8" deep with or without setal hairs



# Questions and Comments

May 19, 2024

Massachusetts Division  
of Marine Fisheries



**Please submit written public comment:**

DMF will accept written public comment through 5PM on Friday, May 23, 2025. Please submit written comments to Director Daniel McKiernan by e-mail ([marine.fish@mass.gov](mailto:marine.fish@mass.gov)). Additionally, DMF will host an in-person public hearing.  
and Comments

