



**MARINE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION  
BUSINESS MEETING AMENDED AGENDA**

**10:00AM**

**Tuesday, July 1, 2025**

**Via Zoom**

**Link: <https://tinyurl.com/5edb56bs>**

**Call In: 1-305-224-1968**

**Webinar ID: 878 5961 0808**

**Passcode: 133589**

1. Call to Order and Routine Business (10:00 – 10:15)
  - a. Introductions and Announcements
  - b. Review of July 2025 Business Meeting Agenda
  - c. Review and Approval of May 2025 Draft Business Meeting Minutes
2. Agency Updates (10:15 – 11:00)
  - a. Office of Law Enforcement: Personnel, Recent Operations & Marine Fishery Incidents
  - b. Department of Fish and Game: Recent Meetings and Events and Department-wide Activities and Projects
  - c. Division of Marine Fisheries: Personnel, Recent Meetings and Events, and Agency Activities and Projects
3. Action Item (11:00 – 11:30)
  - a. Renewal of Recommendation on Regulations to Implement Addendum XXXII to Lobster FMP
4. Discussion Items and Updates (11:30 – 12:30)
  - a. Interstate Striped Bass Management and Reconvening MFAC Focus Group
  - b. Federal Fisheries Management
  - c. Offshore Wind Energy
5. Other Business and Public Comment (12:30 – 1:00)
6. Adjourn (1:00)

All times provided are approximate and the meeting agenda is subject to change. The MFAC may amend the agenda at the start of the business meeting.

**Future Meeting Dates**

**TBD**

**MARINE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**Draft Business Meeting Minutes**  
**May 29, 2025**  
**SMAST East**

*Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission:* Raymond Kane, Chairman; Shelley Edmundson, Clerk; Arthur “Sooky” Sawyer; Bill Amaru; Tim Brady; and Kalil Boghdan. Absent: Bill Doyle and Chris McGuire.

*Division of Marine Fisheries:* Daniel McKiernan, Director; Bob Glenn, Deputy Director; Story Reed, Deputy Director; Kevin Creighton, Assistant Director; Nichola Meserve; Melanie Griffin; Bradlie Morgan; Jared Silva; Tracy Pugh; Kelly Whitmore; Erin Burke; Anna Webb; Leah Crowe; Emma Fowler; and Manali Rege-Colt.

*Massachusetts Environmental Police:* Colonel Christopher Mason; Captain Jack Chapin; and Lieutenant Matt Bass.

*Members of the Public:* Beth Casoni, Julia Logan, Sam Blatchley, Jamie Bassett, Matt Belson, Brendan Adams, Nick Kowaleski, and Sophia Weinstock.

**INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Raymond Kane called the May 29, 2025 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting to order.

Ray noted that the MFAC generally holds its annual elections at a May or June meeting, corresponding with the end of the state’s fiscal calendar. In advance of the May meeting, and in anticipation of there being no June meeting, Jared Silva circulated an e-mail among MFAC members to gauge interest in holding annual elections and there was little interest in changing officers. Ray sought the MFAC confirm this.

**Bill Amaru moved for discussion a motion to retain current officers, and Shelley Edmundson seconded the motion.**

Kalil Boghdan supported maintaining the current officers given the likely turnover of the MFAC in the coming months given his pending retirement from the MFAC at the end of his term in August and the existing vacant seat. Tim Brady indicated that he was currently serving on an expired term and was not seeking reappointment.

The Chairman then asked about the status of appointments and reappointments. Director McKiernan indicated that Commissioner Tom O’Shea was working on several appointments and reappointments, and Dan expected a full Commission to be appointed by the fall. Kalil and Ray spoke to the urgency of completing these appointments as soon as possible given Mike Pierdinock’s seat has been vacant since October 2024, and two current members were not seeking reappointment.

There were no further comments and there was unanimous consent to maintain the existing MFAC officers for the time being.

### **REVIEW OF MAY 29, 2025 BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA**

Chairman Kane asked if there were any requests to edit the May 2025 MFAC business meeting agenda. No requests for amendments were made. **Tim Brady made a motion to approve the agenda and Shelley Edmundson seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.**

### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF APRIL 23, 2025 DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Kane asked for edits to the April 24, 2025, business meeting minutes. Shelley Edmundson noted that Sooky Sawyer is listed as both present and absent. Additionally, she requested a spelling change on page six, changing "warning waters" to "warming waters". No further edits were made.

**The Chair called for a motion. Tim Brady moved to approve the draft minutes as amended. Bill Amaru seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Kane and Shelley Edmundson abstaining (4-0-2).**

### **OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT: PERSONNEL, RECENT OPERATIONS, AND MARINE FISHERY VIOLATIONS**

Captain Jack Chapin began his comments by acknowledging the joint DMF and MEP effort to remove abandoned trap gear from the wintertime fixed gear closure. Chapin then provided an update on recent marine fishery violations stemming from the recent Northern Gulf of Maine scallop season, as well as rod and reel fishing activity for scup, striped bass, and tautog. He also anticipated enforcement and compliance issues related to this year's expected recreational Atlantic bluefin tuna rules.

Chapin then discussed operations. MEP's new offshore patrol boat is operational, allowing for an expanded patrol radius and additional patrols in Nantucket Sound. On personnel, they are looking to bring on one additional field officer before the end of this fiscal year and bring on seven additional officers by the end of the calendar year. He noted MEP is exempt from the current hiring freeze when hiring officers, but not administrative staff.

Chairman Kane, Bill Amaru, and Kalil Boghdan asked about the recent striped bass violations. Captain Chapin noted the violations involved both recreational harvest and size limits. Lt. Matt Bass and Captain Chapin discussed how social media drives fishing activity to certain discrete locations which results in certain areas becoming hot spots for poaching.

Chairman Kane, Jared Silva, Tim Brady, and Lt. Bass then discussed the administrative, non-criminal, and criminal actions that can be taken in response to fishery violations. Jared noted that while DMF has taken actions on recreational fishing permits, it is not the most effective tool given individuals who are willing to break fishing limits are also likely

willing to fish without a permit. He contrasted this with the commercial fishery where the permit is needed to sell fish, and many permits and appurtenant endorsements are limited entry. Lt. Bass explained the fine structure for criminal and non-criminal fishery violations.

Bob Glenn thanked MEP for their collaboration with gear haul out this winter. Chairman Kane asked if the frequency of incidents of abandoned gear was decreasing. Bass and Chapin concurred that it was.

Colonel Chris Mason and Kane then discussed MEP personnel and the need for additional capacity. Mason remarked on the loss of a few anticipated hires late in the hiring process and hoped that MEP would eventually be able to increase their capacity to 160 officers.

## **DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES: PERSONNEL, RECENT MEETINGS AND EVENTS, AND AGENCY ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS**

Director Dan McKiernan began his comments by outlining the recent meetings he attended. The Council Coordinating Committee met in New Bedford and brought together leadership from all eight fishery management Councils, three fishery Commissions, and various state and federal fishery managers to discuss common issues. The Northeast Region Coordinating Council also met, which brought together leadership from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC), and NOAA Fisheries. With NOAA's significant staffing losses and anticipated future cuts, federal capacity is limited and may prioritize fishery-independent surveys and opening fisheries on-time over protected species and habitat programs.

Dan then described two recent federal executive orders: (1) Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation, and (2) Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness. The latter has sparked some concern that the regional Council process will be bypassed in favor of fast-tracking rules through the Secretary of Commerce. However, it may also encourage NOAA Fisheries to find creative ways to improve efficiency in the fishing industry (e.g., fluke mesh size changes, allowing retention of surf clams and ocean quahogs on the same trip, modernizing vessel upgrade rules, and shifting the start of the fishing year for certain species).

The Chairman and Nichola Meserve remarked on how shifting the start of the fishing year could allow for more clearly informed regulations for species like black sea bass.

The Director then discussed the reallocation of Interjurisdictional Fisheries Grant Funds from Conservation Engineering to a Fisheries Monitoring Program. This has been part of DMF's effort to improve portside sampling in collaboration with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC).

Dan noted DMF was currently in the process of reviewing the petition the Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance provided DMF and the MFAC at the April business

meeting to close horseshoe crab harvest in Duxbury, Kingston, and Plymouth. DMF will review its analysis with the MFAC at a summertime meeting and debate whether or not it should be brought to public hearing. Kalil agreed with this process and urged Commissioners to read the document thoroughly.

Chairman Kane asked Shelley Edmundson about conch sex and aging research. Shelley noted that the Martha's Vineyard Fishermen's Preservation Trust is not actively pursuing conch research.

Director McKiernan added that DMF paused the scheduled size-at-harvest increases for three-years (2024-2026). This was done to accommodate the development of a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the channeled whelk fishery by SMAST. However, this work was never funded. Accordingly, over the next two-years the MFAC and DMF will have to decide how to move forward with managing the channeled whelk fishery absent this MSE.

Chairman Kane asked if DMF had updated its channeled whelk stock assessment. Bob Glenn stated that DMF assessed the channeled whelk stock in 2019 and has not revisited the information. However, fishery dependent data suggests the stock remains depleted.

Kalil, Ray, and Dan then discussed issues facing the market for whelks over the past few years.

Lastly, Dan shared that DMF would host its first ever "Marine Quest" event on Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup> at the Cat Cove facility in Salem. Shelley added that Martha's Vineyard Fishermen's Preservation Trust "Meet the Fleet" event will be held on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### Approval of Regulations Implementing Addendum XXXII to Lobster FMP

Director McKiernan outlined the history of Addenda XXVII, XXXI, and XXXII to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster and implementing state regulations.

In 2023, the ASMFC approved Addendum XXVII to the Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) to adopt lobster conservation measures to bolster the spawning stock biomass and standardize rules across the Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) that fish on the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) stock. In 2024, the MFAC approved complementary state regulations which DMF promulgated in early 2025 to be effective for July 1, 2025. However, immediately follow the promulgation of state regulations in 2025, Maine announced it would be unable to enact a final rule given significant pushback from its industry and New Hampshire indicated it would follow Maine's lead and act to repeal its pending rules implementing Addendum XXVII.

Consequently, at its February 2025 meeting, the ASMFC's Lobster Board ("Board") initiated draft Addendum XXXII to repeal aspects of Addendum XXVII. The Board preferred this course of action as opposed to pursuing a potential non-compliance determination. Addendum XXXII repealed the carapace size and escape vent rules in Addendum XXVII, but not the trap tag rules for Lobster Conservation Management Area

(LCMA) 1 and LCMA3, and v-notch standardization rules for Outer Cape Cod LCMA (OCCLCMA) and LCMA3.

In response, DMF filed emergency regulations to implement Addendum XXXII to maintain a state regulatory program that promotes stability in markets and equity among fishers within the same LCMA. DMF's proposed recommendation sought to finalize these regulations beyond the 90-day emergency period. Should final rules not be approved, the emergency rules would expire later this summer (July 24), and state rules would revert to those adopted under Addendum XXVII.

Kalil asked to clarify the administrative process for and feasibility of adopting second emergency action if today's proposed motion is not approved. Dan responded that DMF could potentially pursue such an action, but it would require legal review and sign off from the administration.

Chairman Kane, Kalil Boghdan, and Bill Amaru asked to clarify the impact and purpose of today's proposal. Jared Silva and Director McKiernan noted that if approved the emergency regulations would be codified as final rules. However, if rejected, all regulations made through Addendum XXVII, codified in January 2025, would go into effect upon the expiration of the emergency rules later this summer.

The expiration of the emergency regulations would significantly disrupt the seafood industry and lobster fishery in the Commonwealth. Specifically, the dealer sector would be unable to import and possess non-conforming sized lobsters (i.e., between 3  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and 3  $\frac{5}{16}$ ") lawfully caught in Maine and New Hampshire and would be required to liquidate previously purchased non-conforming product within 90-days; Massachusetts LCMA1 fishers would be subject to a more restrictive carapace size than their counterparts in Maine and New Hampshire, putting them at a competitive disadvantage; the recreational fishery in the Gulf of Maine would have their minimum size increase in-season; there would likely be a shortage of readily available 3  $\frac{5}{16}$ " gauges for fishers, dealers, and enforcement given this is a novel size limit for lobsters along the Atlantic coast; and state-only OCCLCMA fishers and recreational fishers in the Outer Cape would become subject to a 6  $\frac{3}{4}$ " maximum size standard. Additionally, the standardized v-notch rule for the OCCLCMA and LCMA3 would remain in effect regardless of the outcome of today's vote because a repeal of this rule was not included in Addendum XXXII nor implementing state regulations.

Dan acknowledged that this standardization affected about 30 state-only OCCLCMA permit holders who would see their v-notched lobster possession rule go from  $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep sharp "v" shaped notch without setal hairs (" $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch standard") — the least restrictive rule along the coast — to  $\frac{1}{8}$  deep v-shaped notch or indentation with or without setal hairs (" $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch standard") — the same as federal OCCLCMA permit holders and LCMA 3 permit holders (as well as all across all LCMAs in Southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic). The Director also reiterated his preference to adopt the  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch standard across the OCCLCMA as it would enhance enforcement and compliance at docks and in markets. Jared reiterated that if the recommendation were to fail, there is likely going to be a shortage of 3  $\frac{5}{16}$ " gauges available to fishers, dealers, and enforcement.

Amaru expressed frustration with the failure for the management process to include a repeal of the v-notched lobster standardization rule. He noted that Addendum XXXII repeals all the gauge and escape vent changes that were to effect, where the preponderance of lobster harvest occurs, but maintains a rule change that will impact only a small number of permit holders in Massachusetts. He argued the small Outer Cape fishery should not have to carry the conservation burden for the region, that this inaction was unfair, and DMF should not deviate from the longstanding management plan that the OCCLCMA fishers agreed to (that which was in place prior to Addendum XXVII).

McKiernan appreciated Amaru's frustration but noted that reinstating the 1/4-inch standard for state-only OCCLCMA fishers was outside the scope of the current regulatory process.

Sooky Sawyer agreed with Amaru. Sooky noted that he voted against the state implementation of Addendum XXVII. However, these rules impacted the entire GOM/GBK fishery and not just a small subset of Massachusetts fishers. He felt it was unfair and unacceptable that Addendum XXXII and implementing state rules maintained the v-notch standardization rule affecting only a small number of permit holders, while repealing the biological measures that effect LCMA1 where most of the country's lobster harvest occurs. With that said, Sooky acknowledged that if the MFAC did not approve DMF's recommendations the state's lobster and seafood industry would be negatively impacted once the emergency regulations expired. To balance these issues, Sooky argued that Massachusetts should move ahead to repeal the v-notch standardization rule and not concern itself with complying with the FMP given Maine and New Hampshire had already leveraged non-compliance to obtain the outcome they wanted for their industry.

the Director noted that Addendum XXXII merely paused the development of conservation measures for LCMA1. He anticipated the Lobster Board would review the stock assessment this fall and move ahead with a new addendum to implement new rules for 2027. Sooky countered that measures affecting the OCCLCMA should similarly be paused. Sooky also expressed frustrations with the ASMFC circumventing the LCMT processes in the development of Addenda XXVII and XXXII.

Kalil asked for the total number of active commercial lobstermen in the state, and Story Reed said there are around 650.

**Kalil Boghdan made a motion to adopt the Director's recommendation. Shelley Edmundson seconded the motion.**

Tim Brady voiced support for the management strategy that was in place prior to the adoption of Addendum XXVII and objected to maintaining state regulations that adopt the 1/8" standard in the OCCLMCA while moving to repeal the other measures contained in Addendum XXVII.

Amaru and Sawyer reiterated their previously stated concerns.

The Chairman remarked about the political nature of votes at ASMFC. Amaru expressed disappointment with the politics around this issue. The Director disagreed with the Chairman's views on the politics of this issue at the ASMFC. Dan argued that there are

longstanding concerns about the 1/4-inch standard for the state-only OCCLCMA fishers at the Board and these sentiments are heightened now that we are moving into a period of lower abundance.

Shelley asked to clarify the consequences of the proposed motion on Maine and New Hampshire. The Director responded that neither Maine nor New Hampshire have adopted Addendum XXXII, so approving this motion would make Massachusetts regulations equivalent to neighboring states in LCMA1.

Kalil asked if it would be possible to amend today's recommendation to include a repeal of the v-notch standardization measure. McKiernan and Silva explained that such an action outside the scope of the current rule making initiative. Accordingly, it would have to be adopted through a subsequent regulatory action and would result in Massachusetts not upholding the FMP. The Director reiterated his support for the interstate fishery management process and the v-notch standardization measure.

Sooky and Ray asked if it would be possible to delay the implementation of the v-notch standardization rule. Silva and McKiernan noted this rule was already in place and an amendment to its implementation would require a subsequent regulatory action.

Sooky reiterated his interest in preventing regulatory impacts to only a small number of OCCLCMA fishers when conservation measures were delayed for the preponderance of the industry that fishes on the GOM/GBK stock.

The Director noted that DMF sea sampling data for the OCCLCMA indicates the likely loss of landings attributable to v-notch standardization is projected to be between 2-4%. He felt the 25% loss figure being stated by industry was not supported by the available data.

Dan then explained the history as to why there are two disparate v-notched lobster standards among OCCLCMA fishers and why there is such little support at the ASMFC for the state-only OCCLCMA fishers to maintain the 1/4-inch standard.

Sooky and Dan discussed the history of conservation equivalency strategies in the lobster fishery and diverging rules across LCMAs. Dan explained that in the early 2000s, the lobster fishery was managed under a so-called "F10 approach" — the rate at which fishing reduces the estimated egg production per harvestable lobster to 10% or less of a non-fished population. In the development of conservation strategies at that time, LMCA1 fishers wanted to pursue mandatory v-notching and a zero-tolerance v-notched lobster possession rule stock-wide. The OCCLCMA fishers did not support this program and developed a conservation equivalency which achieved a similar projected egg production by moving to a larger minimum carapace size. Then in 2010, the federal government adopted the 1/8-inch standard for OCCLCMA fishers with a federal permit, but a commensurate change was not adopted for state permit holders through the FMP or unilaterally by DMF until Addendum XXVII.

Then the Director stated his support for v-notch standardization. He argued this would enhance enforcement and compliance and thusly benefit conservation over the long term.



**The Chair called the vote, and the motion failed (2-3-1) with Kalil and Shelley voting for, Bill Amaru, Tim Brady, and Ray voting against, and Sooky abstaining.**

The Director remarked on the likely complications created by this vote.

Shelley asked how this would impact the regulations affecting the OCCLCMA fishery. Jared and Dan explained that the state-only OCCLCMA fishers would not get reprieve from the v-notch standardization by this vote and will be subject to a maximum carapace size of 6  $\frac{3}{4}$ " once the current emergency rules expire.

Brady sought to explain his no vote. He stated he votes first for the resource and then for the fisherman. He viewed the regulatory action as being unfair claiming it overturned the conservation measures for the majority of the fishers while retaining measures affecting only a small group of Massachusetts fishers. Accordingly, he could not support this action.

### **FUTURE PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

#### Modernization of Surf Clam Management Rules

Jared Silva provided background context and history on the surf clam fishery. He explained that surf clam management has been based primarily on 12 and 20 ft depth contours, as well as management areas to avoid user-group conflicts. Following a recent statutory change that gave DMF sole authority over permitting and managing the commercial ocean quahog and surf clam dredge fishery, DMF is proposing to bring an updated surf clam management plan to public hearing later this year for potential implementation in 2026.

The initial proposal includes: (1) requiring active vessels to install and maintain an operable real-time electronic tracking device (like those required of federal lobster and Jonah crab trap permit holders); (2) eliminating the use of seasonal depth contours and discrete management area closures in favor of creating polygons using GPS coordinates to establish closed fishing areas that are inclusive of the 12' depth contour and existing management closures while also protecting sensitive marine habitats (e.g., eel grass); (3) expanding seasonal closures in lower Cape Cod Bay to protect aggregations of egg bearing and new shell lobsters; (4) lifting the night closure for surf clamming from February 1 – April 30; and (5) maintaining the prohibition on surf clam and ocean quahog dredging north of Point Allerton in Hull pending additional review and subsequent rulemaking. Jared explained that DMF has collaborated with the fleet and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in developing these management plans.

A pilot program found that the electronic tracking devices worked effectively to track vessels in real time, differentiate fishing behavior, and notify vessel operators when they have entered or exited a regulated area. Jared then clarified that the proposed vessel tracker requirement would apply to permit holders who intended to participate in the fishery and would not apply to those who merely held the permit.

The Director provided additional context on the history of surf clam management and how

lawsuits involving Provincetown ConCom regulations gave DMF and DEP joint authority to manage this fishery, which created various complexities and ultimately resulted in DMF seeking and obtaining a legislative amendment to regain sole management authority over this fishing activity. Dan noted that public comment will contribute helpful perspective on potential gear conflicts and closures, particularly around Herring Cove.

Kalil asked about the feedback DMF received from municipalities, particularly Shellfish Constables. Dan stated that there was general support for DMF's proposal, but Provincetown officials remain concerned about the impact of this fishing activity on the benthic habitat around Herring Cove.

McKiernan, Silva, and Bass discussed how this would greatly enhance the enforceability of the state's spatial management program for this fishery but would require DMF to codify the complete set of coordinates that establish the closure boundary in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations.

Ray and Jared remarked on the fleet's desire to avoid eel grass to prevent gear fouling and the additional habitat protection benefits.

There were no further questions or comments.

#### Framework for Managing Derelict Gear

Bob Glenn introduced DMF's proposal to establish a framework to permit and manage the cleanup of fishing gear debris. Legislative amendments were made in 2024 to eliminate the property rights previously granted to fishing gear debris, and instead provided DMF, DFG, and the MFAC with the authority to permit and regulate the removal of fishing gear debris from Commonwealth waters and shores.

A key aspect of this regulatory framework will be the ability for DMF to adequately define what is and what is not "intact" pot and trap gear. To do this, DMF reviewed the frameworks established in other states (e.g., Florida, Washington, and California). Based on this review, DMF is proposing to define intact trap or pot gear as having at least three of the following requirements: a buoy; a complaint buoy line; identifiable to the permit holder; and configured with appropriate escape vents and ghost panels. This definition ensures that the owner is identifiable, the trap is functional, and the buoy line is identifiable and also allows for a gear to be considered non-compliant without becoming fishing gear debris and losing its property rights.

Bob then explained how DMF would authorize the clean-up of fishing gear debris. This includes: (1) providing a blanket year-round authorization to remove and dispose of fishing gear debris from the shoreline; (2) allowing DMF and MEP to remove and dispose of gear debris in the water year-round; (3) requiring proponents to apply for a special project permits to remove fishing gear during a closed fishing season with each application being reviewed by DMF and permitted based on its merits and the requisite capabilities of the applicant; and (4) enabling mobile gear vessels to bring ashore fishing gear debris incidentally caught during routine fishing operations while maintaining strict prohibitions on molesting fixed fishing gear.

Bob explained that DMF is also seeking public comment on best practices for handling fishing gear debris. This includes encouraging fishermen to attempt to return gear to the owner, ensuring gear is disposed of lawfully, and developing a more substantial network of disposal infrastructure. Lastly, Bob discussed derelict aquaculture gear, which will be addressed primarily through the municipality but with the potential for a state-wide requirement to label aquaculture gear with permit holder information.

Kalil asked about the legality of collecting buoys and displaying them, and Bob noted this is not currently legal.

Chairman Kane asked about the infrastructure available for disposing of fishing gear debris, particularly dumpsters at ports. Bob, Story, and Jared discussed approaches to effectively manage dumpster infrastructure, noting that DMF's trap crusher could be used to help this effort. Kane and Brady noted the challenges of dumpster location and monitoring. Bob Glenn wondered about incentives for this process, and a discussion followed about how to incentivize fishermen to dispose gear, such as financial support.

Amaru expressed strong support for this effort.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS AND UPDATES**

### Interstate Fishery Management and May ASMFC Meeting

Nichola Meserve provided interstate fishery management updates.

With regards to spiny dogfish, Addendum VII to the Spiny Dogfish FMP was finalized to prohibit overnight soaks of gillnets in sturgeon bycatch hotspots. While this action does not directly impact Massachusetts state waters, it could affect spiny dogfish landings in New Bedford, which is a principal port for landing and processing these fish. Additionally, the spiny dogfish quota was reduced by about 1.5 million pounds for 2025 but this 2025 quota is still larger than what was landed in 2024.

Nichola moved on to discuss joint ASMFC-MAFMC efforts to finalize a new methodology to set recreational fishing measures for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish and the development of an amendment to consider sector separation in these recreational fisheries.

Nichola also briefed the MFAC on meetings of the ASMFC's Sea Herring and Northern Shrimp Sections. For sea herring, specifications for the upcoming fishing year were finalized and effort controls for Area 1A (Inshore Gulf of Maine) were set. Regarding northern shrimp, Amendment 4 to the FMP was finalized to allow for multi-year harvest moratoria to be set while establishing temperature- and recruitment-based "wake-up triggers" to evaluate the potential for reopening. Nichola also noted that the ASMFC Lobster Board approved Addendum XXXII, which was discussed at length earlier in the meeting.

Kalil asked about the status of northern shrimp stock. Bob Glenn explained that warming conditions in the Gulf of Maine have contributed to declines in abundance in this region. However, the Gulf of Maine is the southern extent of these shrimps' range, and the population remains strong in more northern waters. Kalil asked if there is a recreational

fishery for the species. Glenn indicated that there is not a recreational fishery for these shrimp species.

Bill Amaru asked for an update on the experimental shrimp fishery this past winter in the Gulf of Maine. Bob Glenn reported that there were very few landings, and in turn, this engendered support for moratoria and wake up trigger approach in Amendment 4.

Nichola then presented on striped bass management and the ASMFC's pending development of Addendum III to support stock rebuilding strategies starting in 2026. At present, there is some uncertainty as to what extent management may be necessary to rebuild the striped bass stock by the 2029 deadline as the Striped Bass Board awaited final 2024 harvest data.

Chairman Kane asked Nichola discussed expectations as to when the catch and harvest of striped bass will begin to decrease as the strong 2015- and 2018-year classes begin to age out of the fishery. The conversation then transitioned to discussing the 2025 young-of-the-year survey in the Chesapeake Bay. Nichola stated these data will be available in the fall and there is some tepid optimism about this year given environmental conditions this past winter and spring were favorable for a good young-of-the-year production. Boghdan asked how the recent stanza of poor recruitment may affect the population moving forward. Nichola noted that the impacts of this will really begin to be felt around 2030.

With regards to Addendum III, the Striped Bass board was developing various measures to reduce fishing mortality (e.g., commercial quota cuts, first-ever recreational seasons, and modified recreational size limits) and enhance regulatory accountability (e.g., standardized total length measurement, mandatory commercial harvester tagging). Nichola noted the various challenges Massachusetts would face if it were to move forward with a point-of-harvest tagging program. Silva asked about the specific parameters that would define a no-targeting closure. Nichola indicated that these were still being developed, and the Striped Bass Board was grappling with distinguishing between a no harvest closure and a no targeting closure.

Nichola noted that DMF will use the striped bass FAQ page to keep fishers up to date with the state of striped bass management.

Director McKiernan noted that DMF will likely reconvene the MFAC's Striped Bass Focus Group to help the agency navigate the various complicated striped bass management challenges.

## **DMF PRESENTATION ON PROTECTED SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

DMF staff provided a two-part presentation regarding protected species management and science. The first aspect of the presentation focused on ongoing efforts to develop a passive acoustic monitoring program to detect right whales along the Atlantic coast and the recent deployment of real-time and archival monitoring units around Massachusetts coast. The goals of this project include understanding spatial and temporal presence of

NARW in state waters, increasing effectiveness of dynamic management, and informing the development of future conservation strategies. The second aspect of the presentation focused on experimental fisheries to explore the use of on-demand (“ropeless”) fishing gear, including a state reimbursement program that allows commercial trap fishers to purchase up to \$25,000 in on-demand gear.

Leah described the main threats facing North Atlantic right whales (NARW), including vessel strikes and fishing gear entanglements. Current monitoring strategies include visual surveys and passive and active acoustic monitoring. Visual surveys provide substantial data on individual whales but are limited to monitoring whales at the surface. Passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) allows for continuous monitoring and substantial data collection, and requires active vocalization, accurate target signals, and correct detection. DMF has deployed both near-real time monitoring buoys and archival monitoring loggers in state waters. In determining PAM locations, DMF considered current monitoring efforts, NARW sightings, space use conflicts, regulatory needs, and commercial fishermen insight.

The Chairman asked about the condition of humpback whale populations, and Leah and Bob responded that although they are endangered in Massachusetts, the Gulf of Maine population is no longer considered federally endangered.

Kalil asked about other PAM devices near Massachusetts waters. Leah noted that NOAA has used similar monitors near wind farms to understand construction constraints. The Chairman and Leah discussed the 5-10 km range of detection of PAM devices. Bob Glenn, Kevin Creighton, Erin Burke, and Director McKiernan then discussed funding requirements and sources for future monitors and data storage. The Chairman and Leah discussed the range of NARW on the east coast and potential impacts of wind energy.

Erin Burke then presented on DMF’s on-demand gear grant program. On-demand gear is experimental and currently requires special authorization with the use of gear from a gear library.

Jared Silva, Erin Burke, Kalil Boghdan, and the Chairman discussed the use of a phone application like the Buoy app as a virtual gear marking system. Erin noted that fishermen would be required to update their trap locations when they haul gear. There is some uncertainty concerning how environmental factors, such as tide, impact virtual gear marking.

Director McKiernan noted that the nature of on-demand gear may not allow for co-existence of buoyed and non-buoyed gear in one area, but more research is required. Erin, Bob Glenn, and Bill Amaru then discussed the importance of conducting more studies in complex systems, like Provincetown, to better understand how to minimize gear conflict. Lt. Matt Bass suggested using regular trap gear to test the virtual gear marking instead of on-demand gear to work in high density areas.

Ray asked about the timing of new regulations, and Erin and Bob discussed how on-demand gear would not be a required change through regulation in 2029.

Kalil asked about the costs of using on-demand gear for lobstermen. Erin responded that on-demand gear systems may cost up to \$4,000. This raises more questions about scaling up on-demand gear in the future.

Beth Casoni then asked about the number of lobster traps fished by on-demand gear and the permitted areas. Erin and Bob responded that this is determined on a case-by-case basis. Dan noted the impact of the new administration on the program's implementation.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Chairman asked if there is anything to be added to the next meeting's agenda. Dan noted there will likely be an additional meeting before the anticipated August meeting to follow up on lobster management.

Sam Blatchley spoke on behalf of the Outer Cape Lobstermen's Association. He thanked DMF and staff for today's meeting and presentations. He urged DMF to bring forward new lobster management regulations that would adopt the provisions of Addendum XXXII but also include a repeal of the v-notch standardization measure.

There were no further comments.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There were no further questions or comments. **The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn. Bill Amaru made the motion to adjourn meeting. The motion was seconded by Kalil Boghdan.**

## **MEETING DOCUMENTS**

- May 29, 2025 MFAC Business Meeting Agenda
- April 24, 2025 MFAC Draft Business Meeting Minutes
- March 27, 2025 MFAC Final Business Meeting Minutes
- Memorandum on the Final Rule Making to Implement Addendum XXXII to the American Lobster Management Plan
- Public Comment on the Emergency Regulations to Implement Addendum XXXII to the American Lobster Fishery Management Plan
- Proposed Future Public Hearing Item to Modernize Surf Clam Management
- Proposal to Establish Framework to Permit and Manage the Clean-Up of Fishing Gear Debris
- Summary of the May 2025 ASMFC Meeting
- DMF's Passive Acoustic Monitoring Presentation
- DMF's On-Demand Gear Grant Program Presentation

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

10AM  
Tuesday, July 1, 2025  
Via Zoom



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

(617) 626-1520 | [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)



MAURA T. HEALEY  
Governor

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL  
Lt. Governor



REBECCA L. TEPPER  
Secretary

THOMAS O'SHEA  
Commissioner

DANIEL J. MCKIERNAN  
Director

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC)

**FROM:** Thomas O'Shea, Commissioner   
Daniel J. McKiernan, Director 

**DATE:** June 20, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Request to Renew Prior Recommendation to Adopt Emergency Carapace Size and Escape Vent Regulations Implementing Addendum XXXII as Final

#### Recommendation to Renew Prior Motion

We are requesting that when the MFAC meets again on July 1, 2025 that you renew a motion to adopt the emergency regulations implementing Addendum XXXII to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster (FMP) as final rules. This includes:

1. For Lobster Conservation Management Area 1 (LCMA1) permit holders, maintain a 3 1/4" minimum carapace size and an escape vent size of either 1 15/16" by 5 3/4" rectangular or 2 7/16" diameter circular and rescind all pending minimum carapace size and escape vent size changes.
2. For LCMA 3 permit holders, maintain a 6 3/4" maximum carapace size and rescind all pending maximum carapace size changes.
3. For federal permit holders in the Outer Cape Cod (OCC) LCMA, maintain a 6 3/4" maximum carapace size and rescind all pending maximum carapace size changes.
4. For state-only commercial permit holders in the OCCLCMA, maintain having no maximum carapace size and rescind all pending maximum carapace size changes.
5. For seafood dealers, rescind all pending minimum and maximum carapace size changes, which correspond with the recommendations for commercial harvest size limits above.
6. For recreational fishers in the Gulf of Maine Management Area, maintain a 3 1/4" minimum carapace size and an escape vent size of either 1 15/16" by 5 3/4" rectangular or 2 7/16" diameter circular and rescind all pending minimum carapace size and escape vent size changes.
7. For recreational fishers in the Outer Cape Management Area, maintain having no maximum carapace size and rescind all pending maximum carapace size changes.



### **Follow Up on May 2025 MFAC Meeting**

Since the unravelling of portions of Addendum XXVII to the FMP — precipitated by Maine and New Hampshire’s reneging on the carapace and vent size changes for LCMA1 previously approved in Addendum XXVII — and the consequent development and approval of Addendum XXXII to FMP, the Healey-Driscoll administration has prioritized ensuring that Massachusetts fishers are not subject to stricter standards than fishers who fish the same LCMA but under rules of another jurisdiction. This position was shared at the Annual Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association meeting and was met with broad support by the many members in attendance. In response, DMF adopted emergency regulations to implement Addendum XXXII on April 25, 2025<sup>1</sup> with a May 27, 2025 recommendation to the MFAC to adopt these emergency rules as final regulation.

The May 27 recommendation sought to finalize the repeal of the carapace size and escape vent rules so they would not go back into effect once the emergency rules expire. However, the MFAC voted this recommendation down (2-3-1) at their May 29, 2025 business meeting. Notably, the debate surrounding DMF’s recommendation was not focused on the proposed action to repeal the pending carapace size and escape vent size changes, but rather the perceived unfairness of Addendum XXXII — and implementing state regulations — in not also repealing the pending uniform v-notched lobster possession standard for the OCCLCMA.

Recall that draft Addendum XXVII proposed a coastwide v-notched lobster possession standard of  $\frac{1}{8}$ ” depth with or without setal hairs (“ $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch standard”) for the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank lobster stock affecting all commercial fishers in LCMA1, LCMA3, and OCCLCMA. However, during the public process for the addendum, LCMA1 fishers across the range expressed a clear preference to maintain their more conservative v-notched lobster possession standard of any v-shaped notch with or without setal hairs (“zero tolerance”). As a result of this preference, standardization measure adopted in the final addendum did not extend to LCMA 1 and focused instead on making the  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch standard uniform across OCCLCMA and LCMA3. Effectively, this ended the allowance for about 30 active state-only OCCLCMA permit holders to maintain the least restrictive v-notched lobster standard along the coast —  $\frac{1}{4}$ ” deep sharp “v” without setal hairs (“ $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch standard”) — by applying the  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch standard to these fishers and bringing them into line with the existing rule for federal OCCLCMA permit holders and LCMA 3 permit holders. DMF implemented this change back on January 3, 2025<sup>2</sup> alongside the other requirements of Addendum XXVII and the  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch standard is scheduled to go into effect for state-only OCCLCMA permit holders July 1, 2025.

While we understand the perspective of those MFAC members who voted against the recommendation in May, we are worried about the potential impacts of this vote on Massachusetts broader seafood industry. The emergency regulations are scheduled to expire on July 24, 2024 and should this occur, state regulations will revert back to those adopted on

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<sup>1</sup> Emergency regulations are effective when filed, remain in effect for a 90-day period, and may be renewed for additional 90-day periods if warranted.

<sup>2</sup> This regulatory action was first approved by the MFAC at the April 23, 2024 business meeting by a vote of 5-2-1 with an implementation date of January 1, 2025. It was then approved again by the MFAC, with a modified implementation deadline of July 1, 2025, at the October 29, 2024 business meeting by a vote of 6-0-2.

January 3, 2025 (conforming to Addendum XXVII)<sup>3</sup>. As a result, the Massachusetts seafood dealer sector will be unable to import and possess non-conforming lobsters between 3 ¼” and 3 ⅝” that were lawfully caught in Maine or New Hampshire; nearly 600 active Massachusetts LCMA1 permit holders and more than 80% of our near 5,500 non-commercial lobster permit holders will face an abrupt and unexpected increase in their minimum carapace size; and there will be a shortage of gauges readily available for fishers, dealers, and enforcement to determine compliance with the 3 ⅝” minimum carapace size — a unique size limit coastwide. Based on DMF sea sampling data from 2019 – 2023, it is anticipated that the increase in the minimum carapace from 3 ¼” to 3 ⅝” for Massachusetts LCMA1 fishers will result in a 10% loss of catch and this will also put our fishers at competitive disadvantage compared to Maine and New Hampshire LCMA1 permit holders who will continue to be able to retain lobsters at a 3 ¼” minimum carapace size.

Moreover, the May 29 vote does not provide the state-only OCCLCMA permit holders with any reprieve from the pending implementation of the ⅛-inch standard on July 1, 2025. This rule is unaffected by the recently enacted emergency regulations as well as DMF’s recommendation to adopt these emergency rules as final regulations<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the “no” vote taken by the MFAC does not accomplish the desired repeal; such a repeal is beyond the purview of the current rule making initiative. DMF cannot pursue such a repeal taking a separate state regulatory action which in turn would bring the state regulations out of compliance with the FMP. Further, an expiration of the emergency rules will result in the implementation of a maximum carapace size of 6 ¾” for state-only OCCLCMA permit holders, which is repealed under the current emergency regulations.

While it may not have been the MFAC’s intent, the May 29 vote suggests it is the MFAC’s position that DMF either needs to pursue a separate regulatory action to repeal the ⅛-inch standard for the state-only OCCLCMA fishery and go out of compliance with the FMP<sup>5</sup> or let the emergency rules expire and revert back to the Addendum XXVII management program. Both of these actions would be counter to DMF’s longstanding positions that DMF strongly supports the interstate fishery management process and is unwilling to put the Commonwealth into non-compliance with the FMP and that we are committed to maintaining a management program that promotes stability in markets and equity among fishers within the same management area.

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<sup>3</sup> This includes immediately eliminating the so-called oversized lobster allowance and adopting a 6 ¾” maximum carapace size for state-only OCCLCMA permit holders and recreational fishers in the Outer Cape Cod Management Area, consistent with federal OCCLMA permit holders; increasing the minimum carapace size from 3 ¼” to 3 ⅝” for LCMA1 permit holders and recreational fishers in the Gulf of Maine Management Area; and adopting a state-wide minimum carapace size of 3 ⅝” and a maximum carapace size of 6 ¾” for seafood dealers and providing them 90-days to liquidate any existing inventory of previously purchased non-conforming product. It will also place back onto books the scheduled carapace size and escape vent changes to go into effect in subsequent years affecting LCMA1, LCMA3, and OCCLCMA.

<sup>4</sup> The emergency regulations sought to repeal the July 1, 2025 implementation of the pending Addendum XXVII carapace size and escape vent regulations consistent with Addendum XXXII. Addendum XXXII did not include a similar repeal of the v-notch and trap tag standardization measures contained in Addendum XXVII. Massachusetts’ delegation to the ASMFC’s Lobster Board made a motion at its February 2025 Board Meeting to include a repeal of the v-notch standardization measure in Addendum XXXII. However, according to the published business meeting minutes, the motion failed 1-8-1 and was therefore not moved forward into Addendum XXXII. Note that in DMF’s April and May memoranda to the MFAC, it was stated that the Massachusetts delegation’s motion failed to obtain a second and was therefore not included in Addendum XXXII.

<sup>5</sup> The non-compliance process is procedurally complicated. However, under federal law at 16 USC 5100 et seq., if a state does not implement a coastal fishery management plan, the ASMFC may find the state out of compliance and notify the US Secretary of Commerce of this determination. The Secretary of Commerce may then take action to intercede and place a moratorium on fishing in the fishery in question.

With this in consideration, we have convened a meeting of the full Commission on July 1, 2025 to renew DMF's May 27, 2025 recommendation. As a matter of procedure, the Director may make a recommendation to renew a previously failed (as we have set forth here), any Commission member may make a motion to renew the recommendation. If that motion receives a second by another Commission member, this will reopen the motion for further deliberation and a vote. If a renewed motion is made and approved, then DMF will be able to adopt final regulations before the July 24 expiration of the current emergency rules.

# DMF's Recommendation

## **Proposal to Renew May Motion:**

Proposal to approve as a final rule the emergency regulations that were enacted by DMF to implement Addendum XXXII of the American Lobster Management Plan. These rules were enacted in late April and remain in effect for up to 90 days, ending July 24th.

(Note: Chapter 130 requires all final regulations to be approved by a majority of the MFAC. Without approval, the Addendum XXVII (27) regulations go into effect.)

The impacts of approval include the following: SEE FOLLOWING SLIDE



# DMF's Recommendation

## Proposal to Renew May Motion:

1. For Lobster Conservation Management Area 1 (LCMA1) permit holders, maintain a 3 ¼" minimum carapace size and an escape vent size of either 1 15/16" by 5 ¾" rectangular or 2 7/16" diameter circular and rescind all pending minimum carapace size and escape vent size changes.
2. For LCMA 3 permit holders, maintain a 6 ¾" maximum carapace size and rescind all pending maximum carapace size changes.
3. For federal permit holders in the Outer Cape Cod (OCC) LCMA, maintain a 6 ¾" maximum carapace size and rescind all pending maximum carapace size changes.
4. For state-only commercial permit holders in the OCCLCMA, maintain having no maximum carapace size and rescind all pending maximum carapace size changes.
5. For seafood dealers, rescind all pending minimum and maximum carapace size changes, which correspond with the recommendations for commercial harvest size limits above.
6. For recreational fishers in the Gulf of Maine Management Area, maintain a 3 ¼" minimum carapace size and an escape vent size of either 1 15/16" by 5 ¾" rectangular or 2 7/16" diameter circular and rescind all pending minimum carapace size and escape vent size changes.
7. For recreational fishers in the Outer Cape Management Area, maintain having no maximum carapace size and rescind all pending maximum carapace size changes.



# Emergency Rules Under Addendum XXXII

Effective	LCMA1 and Recreational Gulf of Maine	LCMA 3	OCCLCMA and Recreational Outer Cape	Seafood Dealers
July 1, 2025	<del>Minimum carapace size increase from 3 1/4" to 3 5/16".</del> Maintain 3 1/4" minimum carapace size.		<del>Establish 6 3/4" maximum carapace size for state waters.</del> Maintain no maximum carapace size for state-only OCCLCMA and recreational fishers and 6 3/4" maximum size for federal OCCLCMA.	<del>Minimum carapace size increase from 3 1/4" to 3 5/16".</del> <del>Establish 6 3/4" maximum carapace size for state waters.</del> Maintain 3 1/4" minimum carapace size and no maximum size.
July 1, 2027	<del>Minimum carapace size increase from 3 5/16" to 3 3/8".</del> Maintain 3 1/4" minimum carapace size.		<del>No Changes</del>	<del>Minimum carapace size increase from 3 5/16" to 3 3/8".</del> Maintain 3 1/4" minimum carapace size and no maximum size.
July 1, 2028	<del>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.</del> Maintain 1 15/16" by 5 3/4" rectangular or 2 7/16" diameter escape vent.			
July 1, 2029		<del>Maximum carapace size decrease from 6 3/4" to 6 1/2".</del> Maintain 6 3/4" maximum size	<del>Maximum carapace size decrease from 6 3/4" to 6 1/2".</del> Maintain no maximum carapace size for state-only OCCLCMA and recreational fishers and 6 3/4" maximum size for federal OCCLCMA.	<del>Maximum carapace size decrease from 6 3/4" to 6 1/2".</del> Maintain 3 1/4" minimum carapace size and no maximum size.

July 1, 2025

Massachusetts Division  
of Marine Fisheries



# History of Addendum XXVII and State Implementation

- 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.
- April 2024: MFAC approved (5-2-1) state regulations to implement all aspects of Addendum XXVII and complementary rules for seafood dealers and recreational fishers for January 1, 2025.
- 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.
- October 2024: MFAC approved delaying implementation to July 1, 2025 consistent with Addendum XXXI
- December 2024: DMF promulgated final regulations implementing all aspects of Addendum XXVII and complementary rules for seafood dealers and recreational fishers.



# State Rules Under Addendum XXVII

Effective	LCMA1 and Recreational Gulf of Maine	LCMA 3	OCCLCMA and Recreational Outer Cape	Seafood Dealers
<b>July 1, 2025</b>	Limit trap tag issuance to trap allocation with no extra trap tags awarded.  Minimum carapace size increase from 3 1/4" to 3 5/16".	Limit trap tag issuance to trap allocation with no extra trap tags awarded.	Establish 6 3/4" maximum carapace size for state waters.  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.	Minimum carapace size increase from 3 1/4" to 3 5/16".  Establish 6 3/4" maximum carapace size for state waters.  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.
<b>July 1, 2026</b>	No Changes	No Changes	No Changes	No Changes
<b>July 1, 2027</b>	Minimum carapace size increase from 3 5/16" to 3 3/8".	No Changes	No Changes	Minimum carapace size increase from 3 5/16" to 3 3/8".
<b>July 1, 2028</b>	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.	No Changes	No Changes	
<b>July 1, 2029</b>	No Changes	Maximum carapace size decrease from 6 3/4" to 6 1/2".	Maximum carapace size decrease from 6 3/4" to 6 1/2".	Maximum carapace size decrease from 6 3/4" to 6 1/2".

July 1, 2025

Massachusetts Division  
of Marine Fisheries





# Development of Addendum XXXII

- January 2025: Implementation of Addendum XXVII unraveled as Maine indicated it would not be able to implement rules. Soon thereafter New Hampshire backed out.
  - Driven by economic concerns 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.
- February 2025: ASMFC Lobster Board initiated and approved Addendum XXXII to repeal certain aspects of Addendum XXVII and letter to New Hampshire and Maine.
  - Draft 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.
  - Letter expressed disappointment in outcome, negative impact on process, and need for both states to lead and work with their industries to develop future conservation measures.
- May 2025: ASMFC Lobster Board approved draft Addendum XXXII.



# State Implementation of Addendum XXXII

- DMF committed to ensure our industry is not held to stricter standards than fishers in same LCMA.
- April 2025: DMF initiated emergency rule making to rescind relevant gauge size and escape vent changes for commercial fishery, seafood dealers, and recreational fishery in anticipation of Addendum XXXII passing.
- May 2025: Emergency rules went into effect and will remain in effect for a period of 90-days.
- May 2025: DMF initiated final rule making to maintain emergency rules beyond the 90-day period.
- Public hearing held on May 19, 2025 and public comment accepted from April 23, 2025 to May 23, 2025.
- Hearing testimony and written public comment dominated by state-only OCCLCMA fishers objecting to v-notch standardization.
  - V-Notch standardization was approved by MFAC in April 2024 and was promulgated in December 2024.
  - Emergency rules did not affect v-notch standardization because repeal was not included in Addendum XXXII.
  - DMF cannot repeal v-notch standardization without going out of compliance with FMP.
  - ASMFC could initiate new addendum to address issue, but likely little support from other states.
- DMF is making recommendation to MFAC today to adopt as final regulations the recently enacted emergency regulations.
- If recommendation is not approved, emergency regulations will expire in August 2025.
  - Regulations promulgated under Addendum XXVII will go back into effect. Immediately triggers a minimum size increase for LCMA 1 ( $3 \frac{5}{16}$ "") and maximum size ( $6 \frac{3}{4}$ "") for state-only OCCLCMA fishery and gauge and escape vent changes scheduled for 2027-2029 will remain on the books.
  - Non-compliance does not apply to states that adopt stricter measures than required by FMP.



# V-Notch Definitions

- LMCA1: - “Zero-Tolerance” – Unlawful to possess any female lobster that bears a v-shaped notch of any size with or without setal hairs.
- All Other LCMA – 1/8” Standard - Unlawful to possess any female lobster that bears a v-shaped notch or other indentation in the base of the tail flipper that is at least as deep as 1/8” with or without setal hairs.
- Old State Waters OCCLCMA - 1/4” Standard - Unlawful to possess any female lobster that bears a v-shaped notch or other indentation that is at least as deep as 1/4” and tapering to a sharp point with or without setal hairs.



# Striped Bass Update

- Stock Projection Update
  - Draft Addendum III reduction options expected to change

2024 MRIP Estimate Used in Projections (Removals)	Probability of Current Measures Achieving Rebuilt Status in 2029	Reduction to Achieve <u>50% Probability</u> of Rebuilt in 2029	Reduction to Achieve <u>60% Probability</u> of Rebuilt in 2029
Prelim Estimate (3.22 M fish)	49%	-1%	-7%
Final Estimate (3.45 M fish)	30%	-12%	-18%

- DMF convening an ad hoc industry advisory panel on July 31
  - MFAC Striped Bass Focus Group invited
  - Discuss possible implications of Addendum III (quota reduction, harvester-based tagging), and more broadly what management objectives should be, especially with regard to access and participation.
  - Expect subsequent MFAC Striped Bass Focus Group meeting, prior to bringing any proposals to full MFAC.





# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

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Secretary

THOMAS K. O'SHEA  
Commissioner

DANIEL J. MCKIERNAN  
Director

June 16, 2025

Richard Sargeant  
38 Lakeman's Lane  
Ipswich, MA 01938

Dear Mr. Sargeant,

I am in receipt of your June 9 letter expressing concern about the future of the striped bass resource and the Division of Marine Fisheries' management of it, particularly with relation to the state's commercial fishery for striped bass. While warranting careful monitoring and attentive management, the status of the striped bass resource at this time does not merit a commercial harvest moratorium nor a complete harvest moratorium, such as you have recommended.

Although the stock was declared overfished in 2019, the latest coastwide assessment indicates that spawning stock biomass is rebuilding under the measures implemented in 2020, 2023, and 2024. Through highly restrictive commercial and recreational fishing measures, fishing mortality is being constrained to a precautionary level due to recent below average recruitment of young-of-the-year striped bass. Importantly, the preponderance of evidence indicates that it is not the level of reproductively mature females in the population that is causing this below average recruitment, but rather environmental conditions in the spawning areas (e.g., warmer, dryer winters). Spawning stock biomass remains well above the level seen in the 1980s when the stock collapsed and capable of producing strong year-classes should the right environmental conditions present.

Nonetheless, fishery managers coastwide remain highly focused on achieving a rebuilt striped bass stock by the 2029 deadline. In fact, additional proactive measures are being considered through the interstate management process for 2026 to increase the probability of success. Options for commercial quota cuts and first-ever recreational fishing seasons are being developed and expected to be released for public comment later this summer. Stakeholder engagement at that time will be very important to the outcomes. I encourage you to continue to follow our Advisories for important news and to visit our Striped Bass Frequently Asked Questions webpage for more information and to stay up to date with management progress ([mass.gov/stripped-bass-faq](http://mass.gov/stripped-bass-faq)).

Due to the migratory nature of striped bass, it takes the collective effort of all the Atlantic coast states between Maine and North Carolina to manage the resource, and the interstate management plan is critical to this objective. It is through the interstate plan that the states are allocated commercial quotas of striped bass deemed sustainable based on the best available science. Massachusetts' quota (currently 683,773 pounds or about 30,000 fish measuring 35" or greater) provides fresh, locally caught seafood to Massachusetts consumers (many of whom are unable to go fishing themselves), supports our coastal economy and heritage (commercial striped bass fishing

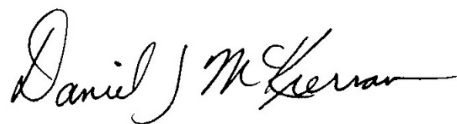
dates back to the arrival of the Pilgrims), and has not inhibited recreational anglers from catching millions of striped bass in Massachusetts each year and harvesting many times more fish than commercial harvesters.

You note particular concern with the commercial minimum size limit for striped bass in Massachusetts. The Commonwealth's commercial striped bass fishery has been managed with a minimum size limit between 34 and 36" since 1989. The mandatory transition to higher size limits fishery-wide was a fundamental element of that era's successful rebuilding plan. Once rebuilt and regulations were allowed to be relaxed however, Massachusetts opted to maintain a higher size limit in the commercial fishery for conservation and market-driven reasons, while the recreational minimum size was reduced to 28" to afford anglers greater harvesting access to the resource. Although the higher commercial size limit does mean that the commercial fishery takes predominantly mature, female fish, the commercial quota has capped this harvest at a level below that taken by the recreational fishery (which is unconstrained by quota).

Consider that in 2023, the Massachusetts commercial fishery harvested an estimated 29,899 striped bass, the youngest of which were 6 years old. (Due to differences in growth, a 35" fish—the current legal minimum size in the commercial fishery—can be anywhere from roughly 6 to 11 years old according to length-at-age data collected in 2023.) Meanwhile, the Massachusetts recreationally fishery is estimated to have harvested 306,159 striped bass age 6+ (10-fold more) and another 172,994 striped bass age 6+ are estimated to have died from being caught and released in the recreational fishery. Even at the older ages where recreational harvest ends due to the recreational slot limit, the recreational fishery's opportunity to practice catch and release results in more dead fish than commercial harvest.

Please know that the Division of Marine Fisheries is heavily invested in the stewardship of striped bass. We undertake research to fill critical knowledge gaps, engage wholeheartedly in interstate management in a conservation-forward manner, partner with enforcement agencies to uphold the regulations, and place an emphasis on education and outreach. These actions serve to support our goal for long-term sustainable commercial and recreational fisheries.

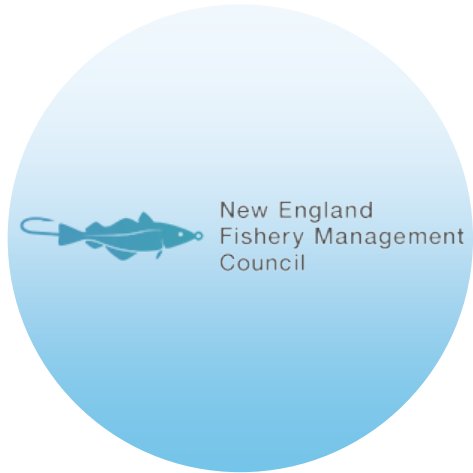
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel J. McKiernan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Daniel J. McKiernan, Director

CC: Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

# New England Regional Fishery Updates



- The State of Regional Fisheries Management
- June Summary
- September Agenda



# Regional Landscape

## Federal Operational Updates

- Council budget
- Executive Orders
- Petitions
- Assessments





	Species/Topic	Stock Area	Management Organization(s)	Status
2025 Research Tracks	Atlantic herring		NEFMC	Completed
	Sea scallop		NEFMC	Completed
	American lobster*		ASMFC	Final review in fall
Summer	Sea scallop specification		NEFMC	Continue as planned
June Management Track Review	Black sea bass		MAFMC, ASMFC	Continue as planned
	Bluefish		MAFMC, ASMFC	Continue as planned
	Northern shortfin squid ( <i>Illex</i> )		MAFMC	Continue as planned
	Scup		MAFMC, ASMFC	Continue as planned
	Summer flounder		MAFMC, ASMFC	Continue as planned
September Management Track Review	Acadian redfish		NEFMC	Continue as planned
	Atlantic mackerel		MAFMC	Delayed from June MT
	Atlantic wolffish		NEFMC	Provide Data Update
	Monkfish	Northern	NEFMC, MAFMC	Provide Data Update
	Monkfish	Southern	NEFMC, MAFMC	Provide Data Update
	Ocean pout		NEFMC	Provide Data Update
	Skate Complex		NEFMC	Provide Data Update
	White hake		NEFMC	Continue as planned
	Windowpane flounder	Northern	NEFMC	Provide Data Update
	Windowpane flounder	Southern	NEFMC	Provide Data Update
	Winter flounder	GB	NEFMC	Continue as planned
	Winter flounder	GoM	NEFMC, ASMFC	Continue as planned
	Winter flounder	SNE/MAB	NEFMC, ASMFC	Continue as planned
	Yellowtail flounder	CC/GoM	NEFMC	Continue as planned
	Yellowtail flounder	GB	NEFMC	Continue as planned
	Yellowtail flounder	SNE/MAB	NEFMC	Continue as planned

	Stocks/Topic	Management Organization(s)	Status
Future Research Tracks	Longfin Squid (Spring 2026)	MAFMC	Continue as planned
	Winter Flounder (Fall 2026)	NEFMC, ASMFC	Pause working group
	Monkfish (Spring 2027)	NEFMC, MAFMC	Pause working group
	Striped Bass* (Spring 2027)	ASMFC	ASMFC-led; Continue as planned
	Projections (Fall 2027)	NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC	Pause working group
	2028 Research Tracks	NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC	Pause (do not recruit in 2025)

# Regional Landscape

## Council Operational Updates

- Strategic Planning
- Omnibus Flexibility
- Risk Policy
- Socioeconomics
- NTAP IBS



# Groundfish

## Amendment 25:

- consistent with NS 2
- inconsistent with NS1

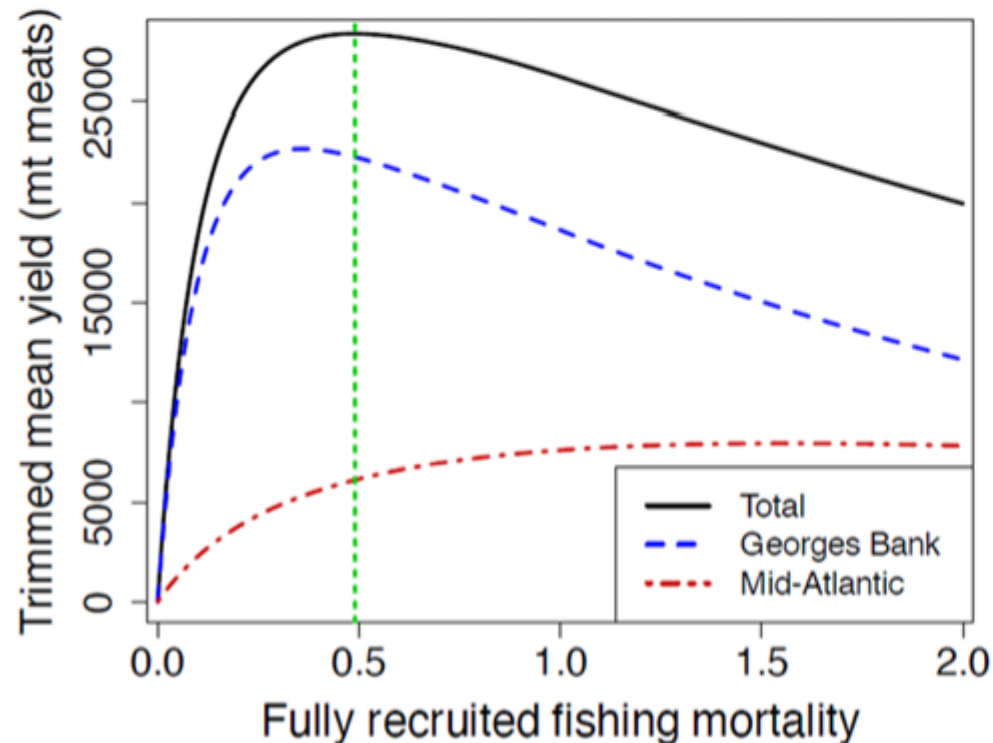
“(T)he Council must **include** in a revised amendment the elements necessary for the action to be consistent with the National Standards and **required provisions** of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. These management measures include the **SDCs, distribution of ABCs, and accountability measures for the four cod stocks, as developed and included in Framework 69.**” – GARFO May 9, 2025 letter to NEFMC



# Scallops - RTA

Uses SYM (Stochastic Yield Model) that takes into account parameter uncertainty

Two SYM models – one each for Mid-Atlantic and Georges Bank



Combined  $F_{MSY} = 0.49$

Georges Bank  $F_{MSY} = 0.36$

Mid-Atlantic  $F_{MSY} = 1.56$

$F_{MSY}$  in Mid-Atlantic not well defined

# Omnibus Gear Marking Framework

Revise Council regulations to allow for alternate surface marking provisions of on-demand fixed gear:

1B: allow in all federal waters within GAR

1C: allow during and within seasonal restricted areas

1D: allow within season restricted areas, at any time



# Upcoming Final Actions

## • September – Final Action

- Monkfish specifications
- Skate specifications
- Groundfish Amendment 25
- Management Flexibility Omnibus
- On-Demand Gear Marking Omnibus
- Executive Order 14276 Council recommendations

## • December – Final Action

- Groundfish FW72
- Scallop FW40 and Scallop Strategic Plan
- Dogfish specifications and AM measures
- EFH Designations
- 2026 Council Priorities





## JUNE 2025 NEFMC MEETING SUMMARY

The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) met June 24-26 in Freeport, ME. Below, find meeting highlights with links to relevant documents. Council **motions** are denoted in bold (consensus unless Y/N/abstain). The NEFMC meets next September 23-25 at the Beauport Hotel in Gloucester.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

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- Several [members](#) will soon be departing from Council service and were recognized, including Council Chair Rick Bellavance (RI 2016-2025), Alan Tracy (ME 2020-2025), Cheri Patterson (NH 2020-2025), Peter Hughes (MAFMC liaison 2016-2025), and SSC Chair Lisa Kerr (SSC 2016-2025).
- Rick Bellavance, as Council Coordination Committee CCC Chair, provided [Congressional testimony](#) on June 4, 2025 in Washington, D.C., on the national importance of fishing, challenges faced by regional fisheries management councils, and ongoing Council work aligned with goals of Executive Order (E.O.) 14276.

### COUNCIL ACTIONS

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**MANAGEMENT FLEXIBILITY ACTION** – The Council **initiated the Omnibus Management Flexibility Amendment** for added management flexibility in fishery specification frequency, rollover provisions, in-season adjustment authority, and other options across the NEFMC's Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). The Council established this new priority in April in response to recent changes in regional resources, decreased federal capacity to support scientific updates and regulatory processes, E.O.s, and pauses in advancement of management actions. Final action is expected in September to have changes in place for Fishing Year (FY) 2026. Examples include allowing for specifications to remain in place for up to five years and establishing in-season adjustment authority for all FMPs.

**SCALLOPS** – As scheduled, the Council **initiated Framework Adjustment 40, an action to set Atlantic sea scallop fishery specification for FY2026 and default measures for FY2027**. Additionally, following an update on 2025 Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) management area fishery performance, the Council considered a [recommendation from the Scallop Committee](#) to better understand fishing activities and potential violations that occurred during the April NGOM scallop season. This year, 200 vessels participated in the 18-day season in April, with 95% of the NGOM set-aside pounds landed. The Council **agreed to task the Scallop Plan Development Team (PDT) with working with NOAA Office of Law Enforcement to request data on enforcement from the 2025 NGOM fishing season in comparison to previous years, e.g. number of boardings, location of boardings (inside/outside demarcation line), whether fishing activity was occurring, trends in the types of violations, and noteworthy violations**. The NOAA Northeast Fishery Science Center (NEFSC) Director provided a report on a recent loss of the "HabCam" (habitat camera), the NEFSC's primary scallop optical survey vehicle, after completion of only 21% of planned HabCam tracks. Efforts to salvage the HabCam from an uncharted shipwreck in western Georges Bank are on-going.

**SPINY DOGFISH** – The Council considered a [joint action](#) with Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) to revise (i.e., relax) spiny dogfish accountability measures (AMs) for annual catch limit (AC) overages due to discards, particularly when estimated biomass is high. The Council **initiated a framework adjustment to the Spiny Dogfish FMP, to include: 1) modifications to accountability measures, and 2) specifications for FY2026 and FY2027**. Consistent with [MAFMC actions taken in June](#), the Council **agreed that Alternative Set 5 (consider projections when implementing paybacks) and Alternative Set 6 (automatically triggered landings closure buffers) in the June 2025 draft framework document be moved to "considered but rejected" and endorsed further perfection of the framework without selection of preferred alternatives**. Final action is anticipated in October by the MAFMC and in December by NEFMC. For awareness with action development, the ASMFC Policy Director noted the Commission's existing Spiny Dogfish FMP rollover provision allowing states or regions to transfer up to 5% of their quota from one fishing year to the next when the stock is in rebuilt condition.

**GROUND FISH** – The Council **initiated Framework Adjustment 72, to set FY2026-2028 specifications and management measures for many groundfish stocks**. On May 19, the Council received a letter from the GARFO Regional Administrator on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, announcing [disapproval of Northeast Multispecies Amendment 25](#) (A25). General rationale indicated the amendment does not demonstrate how the proposed action is consistent with National Standard 1 and other required provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act but identified broad support for the four-stock Atlantic cod structure and (National Standard 2) requirement to incorporate this best



available scientific into the FMP. The Council deliberated extensively on how to move forward. While the [Groundfish Committee recommended](#) the Council take no further action on A25/Framework 69 (i.e., no resubmission) and to default to potential Secretarial action, the full Council acknowledged similar approval uncertainties and workloads for Council and GARFO staff under either approach. Ultimately, the Council underscored the importance of preserving the Council's role in development and oversight of this action and seeing its substantial investment to-date. Necessary to balance workloads, the Council **agreed to substitute the following 2025 Council Priorities: 'Review of the redfish sector exemption program', 'Complete development of metrics to be used in the review process that will evaluate the monitoring system, per Amendment 23', 'Amendment 23 monitoring system review', and 'In consultation with the SSC, continue work to revise ABC control rules for Northeast Multispecies stocks' with the following NEW 2025 PRIORITY: 'Re-submit Amendment 25 as advised by NOAA's May 19<sup>th</sup> letter to the Council, focusing only on reformatting the cod-specific management measures as previously submitted in A25 (Sept 2024 Council final action) and Framework 69 (Dec 2025 Council final action)' (16/0/1).** This substitution would pause work on the above identified groundfish priorities until A25 is completed; resumption of work would be considered during annual priority setting in December 2025. Contract work related to IRA 1 – Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rules for Northeast Multispecies will continue in 2025. To immediately advance this decision, the Council **agreed to reinstate Amendment 25** (16/0/1). The Council anticipates taking final action on the Revised Amendment 25 in September, despite challenges of a limited timeline and no guarantee of final approval by NOAA Fisheries. The current [Emergency Action](#) temporarily authorizing FY2025 groundfish fishery expires on October 28, 2025, thus advancing the measures in A25/FW69 remains a top Council priority to ensure measures are in place for May 1, 2026.

**SSC SOCIAL SCIENCES SUBCOMMITTEE** — The Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC) Social Sciences Subcommittee (SSS) held its inaugural meeting on June 3. The group's focus is to develop tangible strategies for integration of social sciences in earlier stages of the Council's decision-making. The SSS Chair overviewed the 2025-2026 workplan which includes incorporation of social science into stock assessments, improving use of industry-generated information, and supporting revisions to the Council's Risk Policy and the State of the Ecosystem report. In strong support of the SSS's detailed roadmap, the Council **approved SSC SSS objectives as revised, to: 1) Create more opportunities for integrating social sciences tools to inform management, 2) Better understand the Council's socioeconomic objectives to help address management needs, 3) Increase coordination between the SSS and Social Sciences Branch staff in various Council Plan Development Teams, 4) Better integrate existing tools and data from SSB and other sources into fisheries management advice and decision-making processes, and 5) Improve effectiveness and optimize timing of social science data input and recommendations.**

## **UPDATES & DISCUSSION**

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**COUNCIL COORDINATION COMMITTEE (CCC) & NORTHEAST REGION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (NRCC)** — Executive Director O'Keefe reviewed outcomes of recent CCC and NRCC meetings, including Council responses and planning to address Presidential E.O.s and Congressional requests. NOAA Fisheries' concern regarding lack of capacity to sustain current practices to manage over 500 stocks was discussed at the CCC. Regionally, the NRCC agreed to 2025 stock assessment schedule changes including data updates rather than MTAs for skate, monkfish, windowpane flounder, and wolffish stocks and pausing Research Track Assessments for winter flounder, monkfish, and projections. Considering a risk matrix, the NRCC will determine the 2026 assessment schedule on August 20.

**PRESIDENTIAL E.O. 14276 "RESTORING AMERICAN SEAFOOD COMPETITIVENESS"** — Staff presented a timeline and approach to responding to Presidential E.O. 14276, "Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness, to reduce burdens on domestic fishing, increase production, stabilize markets, improve access, enhance economic profitability, and prevent closures. Several Council members supported revisiting historic vessel baseline restrictions and noted an immediate need for modernizing existing requirements among other suggestions. The Council will gather additional input from its PDT and Advisory Panels. The Executive Committee will finalize a list of recommended actions in September ahead of the response deadline (Sept 30). Recommendations will be considered at priority-setting in December. As noted in the E.O., a Federal Register notice identifying the country's most over-regulated fisheries with solicitation for public comment is expected to publish soon.

**HOLISTIC STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE** — The Parnin Group (contractor) introduced its workplan for preparing the Council's [Holistic Strategic Plan](#), a multiyear IRA initiative. The contractor will use focus groups, individual interviews, and surveys to identify efficiencies and approaches to support resilient and responsive fisheries management in facing challenges in management uncertainty with ecosystem change. The project oversight team includes Council staff and members from NEFMC, MAFMC, ASMFC, GARFO, and NEFSC.

**OFFSHORE WIND MONITORING STANDARDS** — NEFSC staff provided details on comprehensive offshore wind project-level monitoring standards they are drafting for fisheries, protected species, and socioeconomics. Impact

producing factors identified for fisheries species monitoring standards include noise, hydrodynamics, artificial reef effects, electromagnetic fields, and cumulative effects on movement and behavior. A draft document will be available in July with opportunity for comment.

**SCALLOP RESEARCH TRACK ASSESSMENT** – The NEFSC Director presented results of the April Atlantic Sea Scallop RTA. Results of the peer review were not covered. However, the Council raised several concerns regarding limitations of the assessment and outcomes of the peer review, particularly around partial fulfillment of four central Terms of Reference (TORs) and potential implications for management. The SSC will receive the RTA and peer review on August 19 and this topic is expected to be discussed further.

**NOAA FISHERIES 2022 COST SURVEY** – NEFSC Social Science staff presented results of the most recent [Commercial Fishing Business Cost Survey Effort](#) to collect information on 2022 commercial fishing expenses from active federally-permitted vessel owners in the Greater Atlantic region. The previous Cost Survey was conducted in 2016. Changes included a simplified survey, increased outreach, and release of a new [online data visualization tool](#) displaying cost information across 19 categories. Overall response rate for 2022 was 15% (367 completed surveys). This was the first year the survey also employed a non-response postcard; over 40% of respondents indicated distrust with NOAA/NMFS as a primary reason for not participating in the survey.

**ON-DEMAND GEAR CONFLICT WORKING GROUP (ODWG)** – Council staff overviewed changes in [ODWG membership and progress on ODWG's TORs](#). The group meets July 23 to discuss recommendations for reducing gear interactions between on-demand gear used in the Northeast Lobster/Jonah crab fisheries and other types of fishing gear. This ODWG “TOR 3b” report will be presented to both Councils in the fall. NOAA Sustainable Fisheries staff reviewed the [action plan](#) and draft alternatives comprising the [Joint New England & Mid-Atlantic Omnibus Alternative Gear-Marking Framework](#) to revise surface gear marking regulations to allow for on-demand gear to be used across NEFMC and MAFMC FMPs. NOAA staff indicated an addendum to the ASMFC Lobster FMP is not required for consistency, as it does not contain gear-marking regulations. Council members and ASMFC pressed for additional opportunity for industry input on preferred action alternatives ahead of both Councils taking final action in the fall (NEFMC Sept; MAFMC Oct). The ASMFC will collect comments on the action from the Lobster Board on August 5.

**COUNCIL PLANNING** – With a multitude of changes since December, the Executive Director provided a summary of revised 2025 Council priorities, IRA initiatives, action timelines.

**AGENCY ACTIVITIES** – Written reports from the [Council Executive Director](#), [GARFO Regional Administrator](#), [NEFSC](#), [MAFMC](#), [ASMFC](#), [U.S. Coast Guard](#), [NOAA Enforcement](#), [HMS](#), and [ICCAT](#).

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

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In September, the Council is expected to:

- Elect officers (Chair, VC, Executive Committee).
- Take final action on monkfish and skate fishery specifications.
- Take final action on the Alternative Gear Marking Framework.
- Take final action on the Management Flexibility Action.
- Take final action on new Essential Fish Habitat designations for herring, cod, monkfish, and skates.
- Receive the final report of the Scallop LAGC IFQ Program Review.
- Receive the final report of the On-Demand Gear Conflict Working Group with recommendations on reducing gear interactions between on-demand gear used in the lobster/Jonah crab fishery and other fisheries.
- Receive June 2025 Management Track Assessments for Mid-Atlantic stocks.

# Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

July 2025

## Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour May 2025

Carbon Trust

SAMBAS Consulting

Maine Fishing Industry

Maine DMR & GEO

Massachusetts Fishing Industry

Massachusetts DMF

Brad Schondelmeier

Offshore Wind and Fisheries Specialist

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Credit: Principle Power

# Study Tour Design and Objectives



Maine Offshore Wind  
Research Consortium



SAMBAS Consulting LLC

## Design

A one-week Study Tour for Gulf of Maine fishermen and marine resource managers to learn about floating Offshore Wind (FOSW) from Scottish government, developers, fishing industry and researchers.

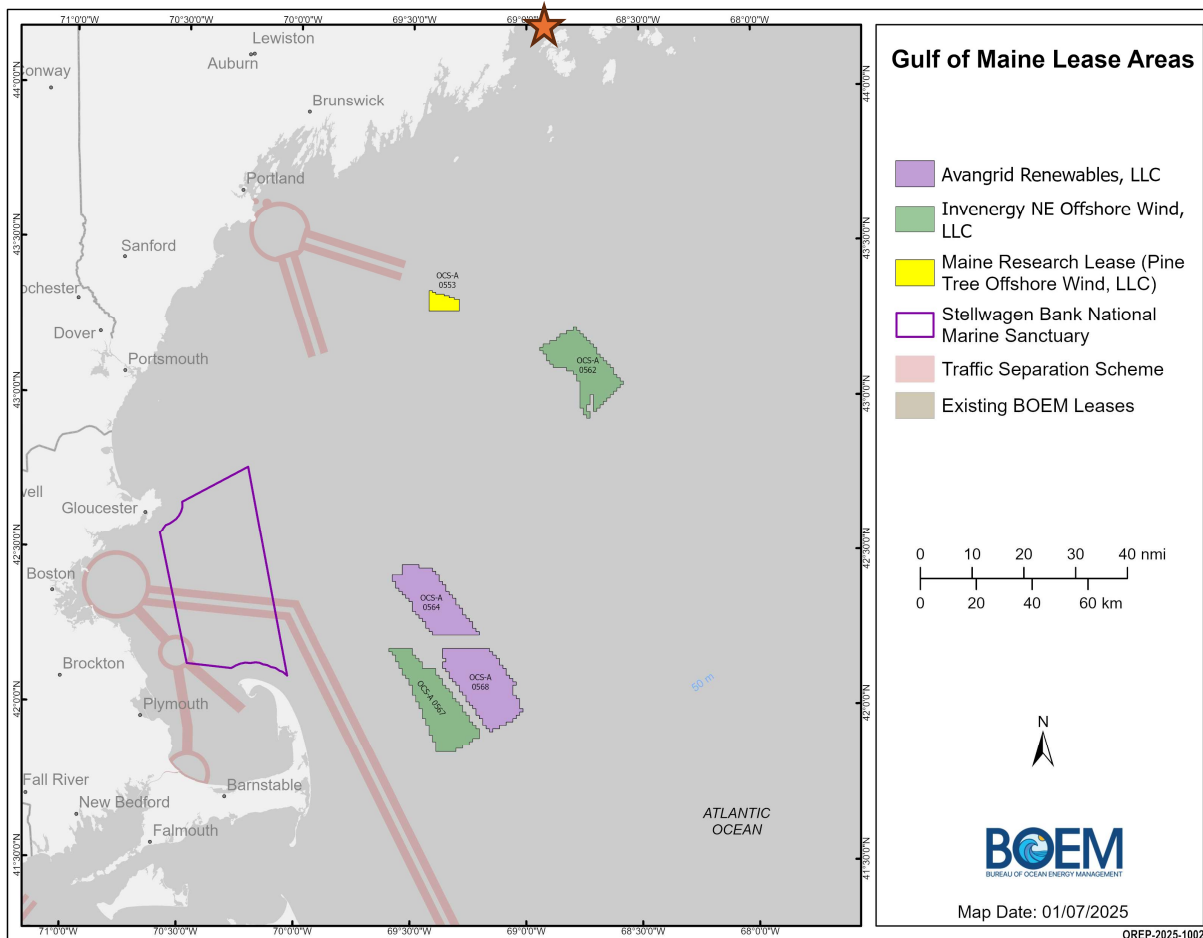
## Objectives

- Establish a common understanding of floating OSW technology,
- Understand the status of floating OSW development in Scotland, including planning, policy, science and research, and engagement with the fishing industry,
- Learn about Kincardine floating OSW project, focusing on the technology, design and installation, and engagement with the fishing industry and coastal community,
- Exchange best practices for assessing and mitigating the impacts of floating OSW development on the fishing industry and wider coastal communities.

Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour – May 2025



# Status and Timing of US Floating Offshore Wind



UMaine Quarter-scale Demonstration ★  
Deployed off Castine for next 18 months,  
grid connection in July

Maine Research Array (OCS-A 0553)  
State has lease, continuing to explore  
research questions, begin survey work in  
July

Avangrid Renewables (OCS-A 0564, 0568)  
Communications Plans released, meetings  
held, websites created

Invenergy NE Offshore Wind (OCS-A 0562, 0567)  
Communications Plans in development

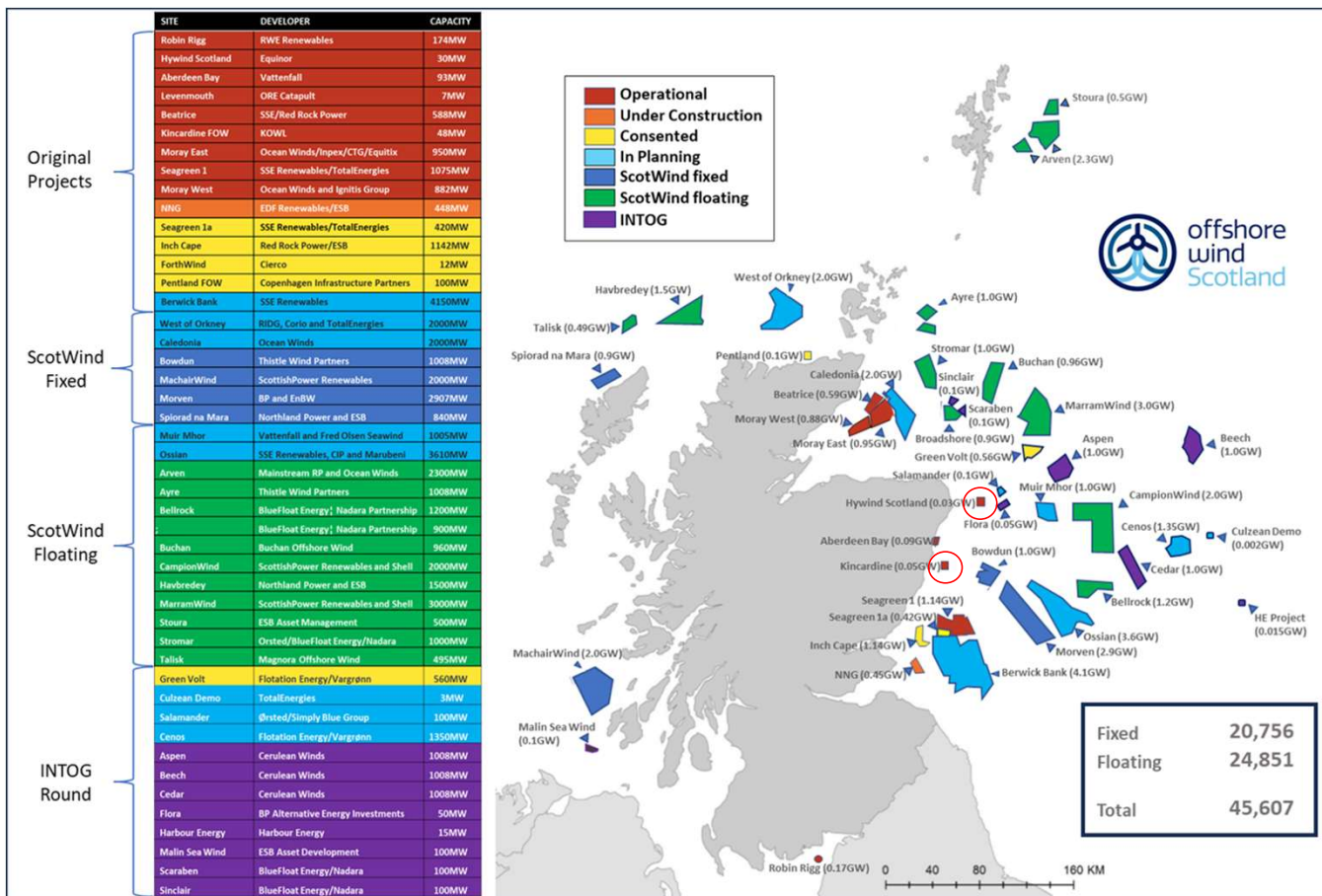
Realistic commercial-scale build timeline:  
2030-2035



Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour – May 2025



# Status of (Floating) Offshore Wind Scotland



Projects in Operation	Max Output
Fixed	3,769 MW
Floating	78 MW
Kincardine	48 MW
Hywind Scotland	30 MW
Total	3,847 MW



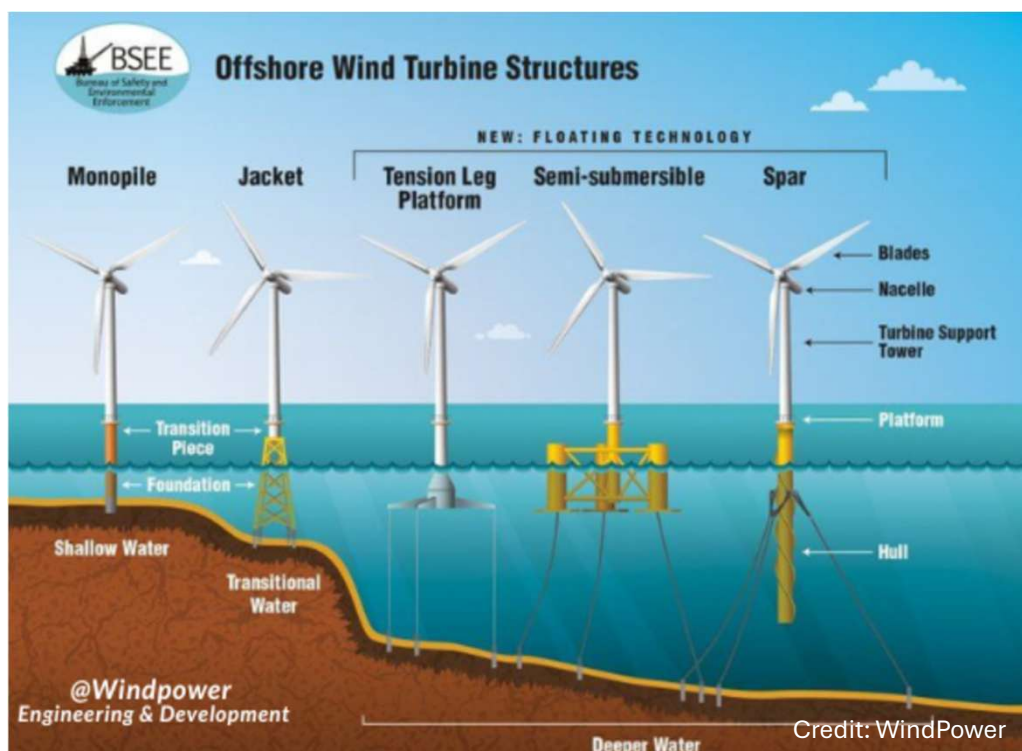
Source: <https://www.offshorewindscotland.org.uk/the-offshore-wind-market-in-scotland/floating-wind-in-scotland/>

Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour – May 2025

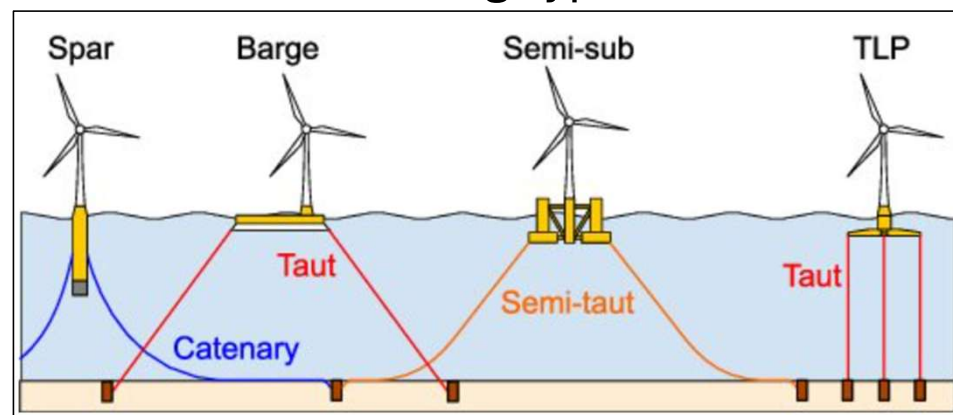


# Floating Offshore Wind Technology Overview

## Foundation Types

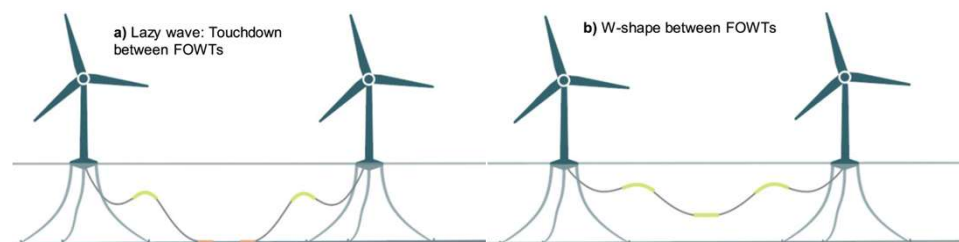


## Mooring Types



Credit: Cerfontaine et al.

## Dynamic Cable Arrangements



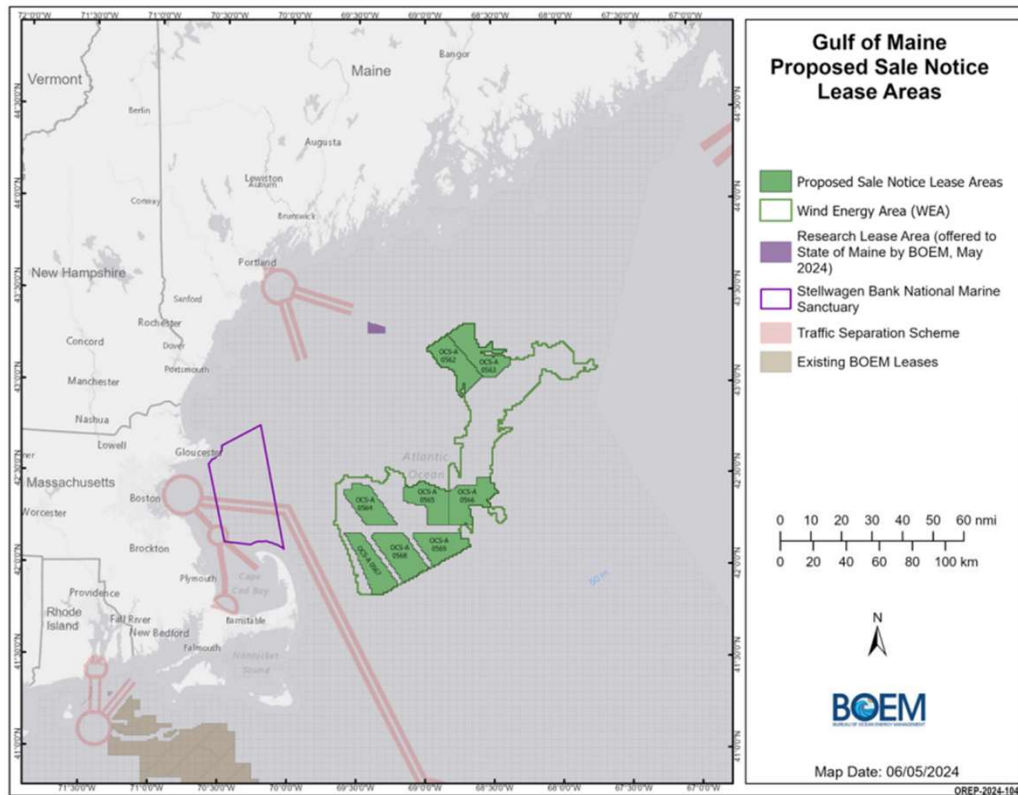
Credit: Cerik and Huang, 2024

Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour – May 2025



# UK FOSW Study Tour Participants (US group)

**10 Fishing Industry members**  
**4 Marine Resource Management staff**  
**1 Facilitator**



## State of Maine

Fishing Industry  
Lobster  
Groundfish  
Pelagic  
Sector/Advocacy/Co-op

Resource Management  
Carl Wilson  
Erin Wilkinson  
Meghan Suslovic

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Fishing Industry  
Groundfish  
Longline & Pelagic

Resource Management  
Brad Schondelmeier

## Trip Planning/ Facilitation

State of Maine  
Caroline Coccoli

Laura Singer  
Jade Dieumegard-Meyrick



Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour – May 2025



# UK FOSW Study Tour Participants (UK group/hosts)



**Caroline Coccoli** – Senior Manager, OSW  
**Mary Harvey** – Manager, OSW

**Mike Archer** – Senior Associate, OSW  
**Alistair Morris** – Manager, OSW



## Offshore Wind Directorate

**Caroline Daumich** – Strategic Engagement and Policy Officer

## Marine Directorate

**Kirsty Wright** – Senior Marine Fish and Fisheries Scientist



**Elsbeth MacDonald** - CEO

**Andrew Innes** – Industry Advisor and Commercial Fisherman

**Elena Balestri** – Fisheries Policy and Science Manager

**Fahim Hashimi** – Offshore Energy Policy Manager



**Peter Duncan** – Head of Commercial Fishing

## Offshore Wind Fisheries Managers

**Fingal McKiernan**

**Cameron Moffat**



**Iain McMyn**

**Michael Sutherland**



**THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH**

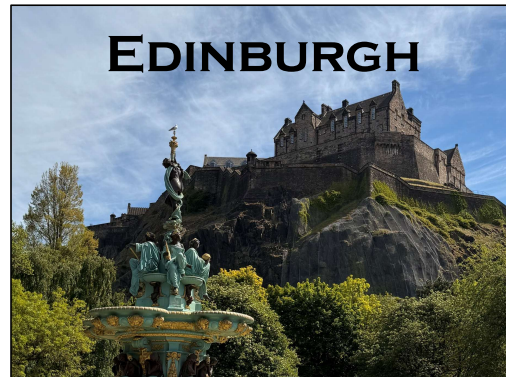
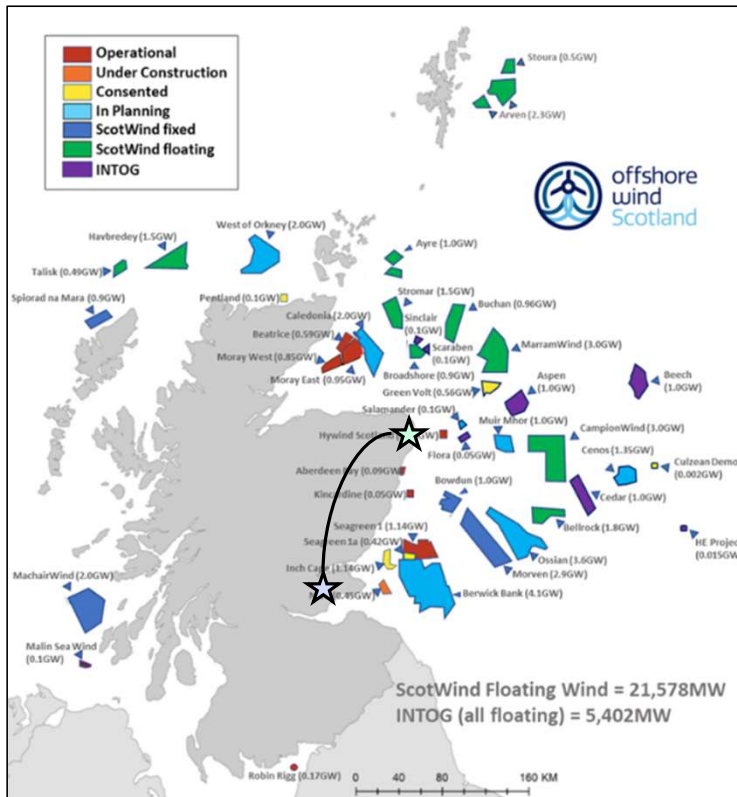
**Dr. Laura-Beth Jordan** – Experimental Officer

Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour – May 2025



# UK FOSW Study Tour Schedule

Sunday 5/18: Arrive in Edinburgh, Scotland  
Saturday 5/24: Depart Edinburgh for Boston



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



FloWave



SCOTTISH  
FISHERMEN'S  
FEDERATION



KOWL  
cobra

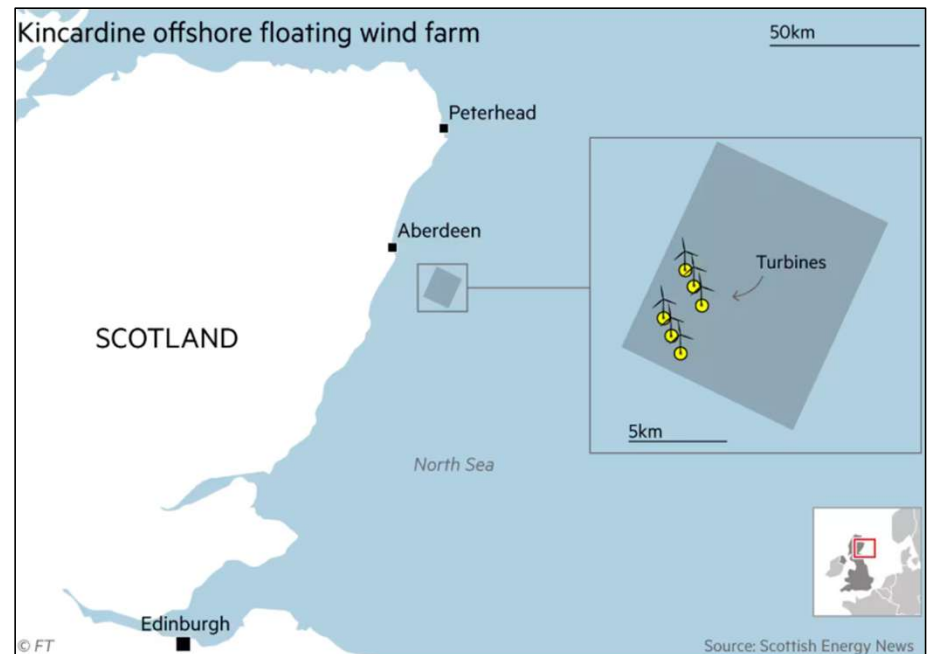
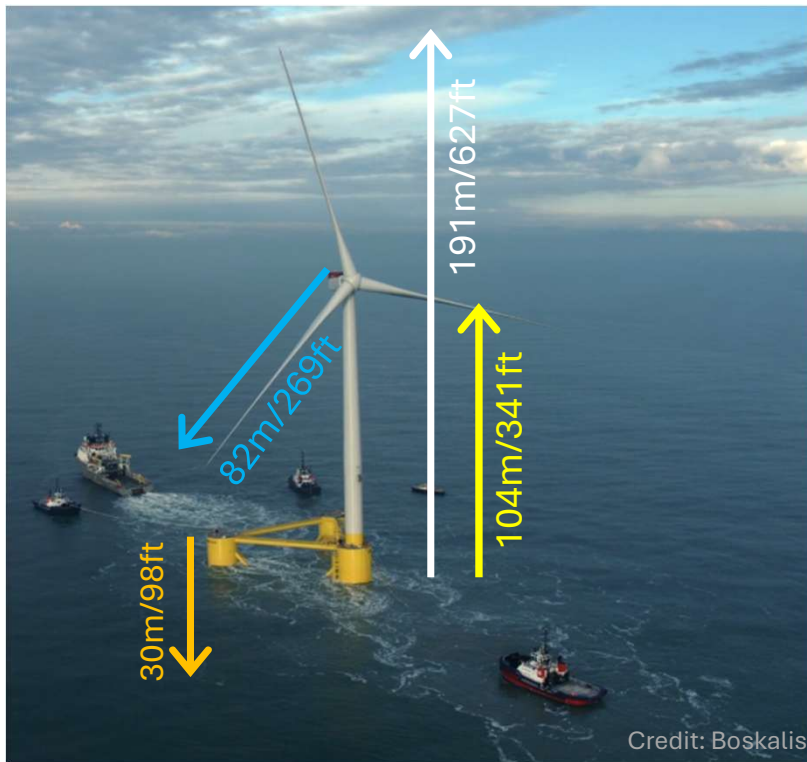


Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour – May 2025

# UK FOSW Study Tour – Kincardine Wind Farm

Five Vestas V164-9.5MW WTGs

Fully commissioned in 2021, largest FOSW array in world (until 2023)



15km/9.3 miles from shore  
Water depth ~80m/260ft

Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour – May 2025





# UK FOSW Study Tour – Kincardine Wind Farm

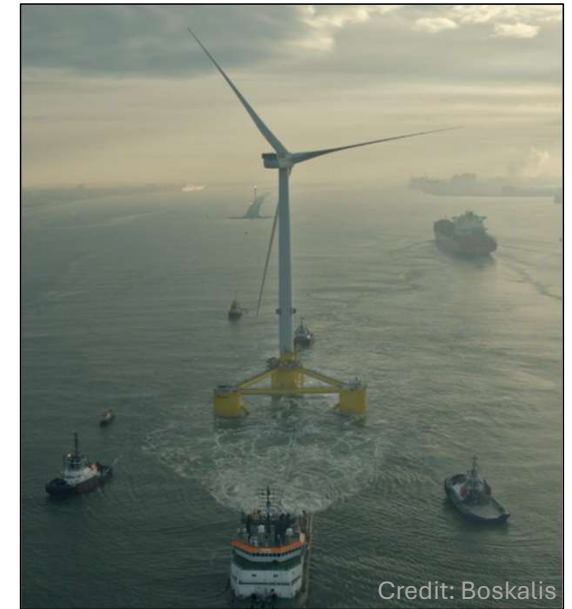
Construction Timeline	Phase1 (2018)	Phase2-3 (2020-2021)
Turbines	(1) Vestas V80-2MW	(5) Vestas V164-9.5MW
Built		Ferrol, Spain
Assembled	Dundee, Scotland	Rotterdam, Netherlands
Generating Power	September 2018	October 2021

~1200nm journey for each turbine



Credit: Boskalis

[Boskalis Kincardine Towing/Install Video](#)



Credit: Boskalis

Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour – May 2025



# UK FOSW Study Tour – Kincardine Wind Farm



Floating Offshore Wind UK Study Tour – May 2025



# Study Tour Takeaways



- Scottish government and jurisdictions relatively new
- No BSEE in Scotland to hold developers accountable for mistakes or safety issues, just permitting
- Government guidance for fisheries mitigation and environmental impacts limited
- Working through ScotMER, working groups and fisheries liaisons to improve engagement

## Developers



- No government guidance or engagement on financial mitigation, creating a disjointed, inequitable process between developers and fishermen
- Concern with lack of engagement from government in helping wind and fishing “co-exist”
- Lack of data (e.g. fishing, environmental) noted as a significant issue
- Shoreside infrastructure, grid connections, transmission location suitability are a few of the persistent infrastructure issues in addition to port infrastructure.



# Study Tour Takeaways



- Concern with the lack of monitoring and government pro-active engagement and guidance
- Over time, the fishing industry has learned to work with (and around) the oil and gas industries, which have a smaller spatial footprint.
- Scottish fishing industry is feeling the “squeeze” of their spatial fishing footprint. Regulations, MPAs and offshore development projects are reducing their CPUE, and they have great concern about being displaced into less productive fishing grounds
- Scottish fishermen are frustrated over the lack of public understanding of the importance of the fishing industry - economic contribution to the country and localized food production

## Kincardine Offshore Wind Farm

- Almost entirely a different sector than fixed OSW, requiring very different infrastructure and vessels
- Different scale and distance from shore than GOM, making visualization of GOM arrays difficult
- Despite clear movement of water (1+kt current, 6-8' seas), not much noticeable movement of WTG
- Impressive structures and engineering! Would like a way to visualize sub-surface infrastructure (mooring lines, cables, etc.).

# Study Tour Takeaways

## Final Thoughts

- UK decarbonization goals have broad public buy-in and are driving the offshore wind efforts
- Success and viability of FOSW very dependent on port and shipping infrastructure
- Grid connection, shoreside infrastructure and development costs are real problems
- Scottish fishing industry has serious concerns with the environmental impacts, lack of monitoring and spatial conflicts
- Both fishermen and developers desired more oversight and guidance from government
- Some felt that our GOM lease siting process, and state/federal involvement, was better than what we heard about in North Sea
- UK Study Tour experiences created experts who can now lead productive discussions and engagement with developers in early stages of GOM floating OSW development. Incredible value.

## Acknowledgements

- |                             |                |                    |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| • Maine DMR and Maine GEO   | • Carbon Trust | • UK Hosts         |
| • Mass DMF, EEA and MassCEC | • Laura Singer | • Private ME Donor |