



MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission July 1, 2025 Meeting Summary

This document serves as a brief summary of the July 1, 2025 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. This business meeting was held via Zoom. A recording is available for viewing on [DMF's YouTube Channel](#). All meeting materials are available on the [MFAC's past meeting website](#).

Action Item

Renewal of Recommendation on Regulations to Implement Addendum XXXII to Lobster FMP.

In late April 2025, DMF filed emergency regulations to repeal scheduled carapace size and escape vent size rule consistent with Addendum XXXII to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster. DMF sought to adopt these emergency regulations as final regulations so as to prevent their expiration and ensure Massachusetts fishing and seafood industry were not put at a competitive disadvantage compared to New Hampshire and Maine. This recommendation was voted down at the May MFAC business meeting due to the perceived unfairness of Addendum XXXII — and implementing state regulations — not also repealing pending v-notched lobster possession rules impacting state-only Outer Cape Cod (OCC) Lobster Conservation Management Area (LCMA) permit holders. However, this vote by the MFAC did not provide these permit holders with reprieve from the pending v-notch rule, but placed the Commonwealth on track to have the existing emergency rules expire, which would negatively impact the broader lobster fishery and seafood dealer sector and place them at a competitive disadvantage compared to similar entities in Maine and New Hampshire. Accordingly, DMF requested the MFAC to reconsider this position and renew the prior motion to adopt the emergency regulations as final rules. The recommendation was renewed and passed by a vote of 5-1-1.

Discussion Items

Interstate Striped Bass Management and Reconvening MFAC Focus Group. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is in the process of developing Draft Addendum III to the FMP for Striped Bass. This addendum is intended to increase the probability of rebuilding the striped bass stock by the 2029 rebuilding deadline. Initial projections based on preliminary 2024 MRIP data indicated that in order to achieve a 50% probability of rebuilding by 2029 there only needed to be a 1% cut in removals and a 7% cut in removals to achieve a 60% probability of rebuilding by 2029. However, these projections were revised based on final 2024 MRIP data and the projected cuts to removals are more substantial with a 12% cut needed to achieve a 50% probability of rebuilding by 2029 and an 18% cut needed to achieve a 60% probability of rebuilding by 2029.

Later this summer, DMF will also convene the MFAC's Striped Bass Focus Group and an ad hoc industry advisory panel to discuss management objectives for the commercial striped bass fishery, including the possible implications of Addendum III on the (quota reductions, harvester-based tagging) and controlling access and participation moving forward. The ad hoc industry

group is scheduled to meet on July 31. DMF will then meet with the MFAC's Striped Bass Focus Group to develop a potential management proposal for the full MFAC's consideration and an eventual public hearing.

Federal Fisheries Management. DMF provided the MFAC with an update on federal fisheries management focused on the June 2025 New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) meeting and previewing the September NEFMC agenda. The presentation outlined: (1) the NEFMC's budget and anticipated cuts (e.g., reductions in in-person meetings and bonus technical assistance grants); (2) the implementation of relevant Executive Orders; (3) updates on the status of petitions concerning scallops on Georges Bank, and surf clams and mussels in the Great South Channel; and (4) an update on the schedules and timelines for 2025 Management Track Assessments. The presentation also discussed NEFMC operational updates, including: (1) the development of a holistic strategic plan focused on challenges of management uncertainty and ecosystem changes; (2) efforts to increase omnibus flexibility and more consistently address specification frequencies, rollovers and defaults, in-season adjustments, and specification setting processes; (3) updates on the new risk policy; (4) a new social science subgroup of NEFMC's Science and Statistics Committee; and (5) updates on the pilot Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel Industry Based Survey examining data collected around wind areas. DMF also discussed the next steps following the Secretary of Commerce's rejection of Amendment 25 and Framework 69 to update cod stocks, scallop management updates, spiny dogfish updates, and an omnibus gear marking framework concerning on-demand fixed gear.

Offshore Wind Energy. DMF presented on a study tour on floating offshore wind (FOSW) in the United Kingdom. The presentation highlighted objectives of the study tour (e.g., establish an understanding of floating OSW technology, and exchange best practices for assessing and mitigating impacts of floating OSW on fishing industries), the status of floating OSW in the UK, floating OSW technology overview, and a team visit to Kincardine floating wind farm. DMF also highlighted key takeaways from the study tour (e.g., disconnection between fishery needs and floating OSW due to minimal government engagement, lack of ecological and fishing data, need for significant port and vessel infrastructure improvements, and importance of public buy-in).

Upcoming Meetings

The MFAC will meet next on August 21 in Westborough.