



MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission June 16, 2022 Meeting Summary

This document serves as a brief summary of the June 16, 2022 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. This business meeting was held in person at DMF's New Bedford Field Office. The meeting was not recorded.

Action Items

Commercial Limits for Black Sea Bass, Scup, and Summer Flounder. The MFAC unanimously approved DMF's final recommendations to file final regulations to adopt those recreational fishing limits promulgated on an emergency basis in April 2022. These final regulations are described in the tables below:

- *Black Sea Bass.* Open season of May 21 through September 4 with a 4-fish bag limit and 16" minimum size.
- *Summer Flounder.* Open season of May 21 – September 29 with a 5-fish bag limit and 16.5" minimum size.
- *Scup.* Open season year-round with a 10" minimum size for all anglers. For anglers onboard for-hire vessels the bag limit is 30-fish during the periods of January 1 – April 30 and July 1 – December 31 and 45-fish during the bonus season of May 1 – June 30. For private anglers, year-round, the bag limit is 30-fish not to exceed 150 fish per vessel.

Belding Award Nomination

The Division of Marine Fisheries recommended Mark Amorello be the recipient of the 2022 Belding Award. This award recognized Mark's work on river herring restoration at Herring Brook in Pembroke, as well as his contributions to marine fisheries management as a member and former chair of the MFAC and as a member of the NEFMC. The MFAC unanimously approved agency's recommendation. Mark Amorello was presented the award after the MFAC business meeting, as part of a ceremony to commemorate the MFAC and celebrate its 60th birthday.

Items for Future Public Hearing

DMF indicated the agency would present several draft proposals at the June and August business meetings that would then be taken out to public hearing during the early fall for potential implementation by 2023. Today, DMF presented two items. The first addressed the MAFMC's rebuilding plan for Atlantic mackerel. This included a proposal to adopt a 20-fish recreational limit that would apply to harvest and possession when fishing, as well as a new commercial regulated fishery permit endorsement to allow harvest in excess of the recreational fishing limit. The second item is an ASMFC compliance issue and requires DMF prohibit all retention of shortfin mako caught in state waters.

Discussion Items

Updates Concerning the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

DMF staff reviewed hot button issues being addressed at the ASMFC. First, Amendment 7 to the Striped Bass FMP was approved at the May ASMFC meeting. Staff reviewed the various aspects of Amendment 7 and described how it allows the Striped Bass Board to more quickly respond to stock assessments and the potential for persistent low recruitment. Second, the harvest control rule for black sea bass, scup, summer flounder, and bluefish was finalized and implemented for a maximum of three-years. This rule attempts to better consider uncertainty around MRIP harvest estimates and stock biomass to stabilize interannual variability in recreational fishing regulations. Lastly, DMF reviewed the lobster resiliency addendum. This addendum sought to create more uniformity for rules across LMAs and state/federal jurisdiction. However, its finalization was complicated by concerns expressed by Maine seafood dealers importing lobsters from Canada.

Updates Concerning the Federal Fisheries Management

DMF provided a high level summary of the recent April NEFMC meeting in Mystic and an overview of hot button issues on the June NEFMC agenda in Portland. The April meeting summary focused on Framework 13 for Monkfish, Framework 65 for multi-species groundfish, the approval of a limited access sea scallop leasing public information document, and continued work regarding the Southern New England Habitat Area of Particular Concern. The June meeting would finalize research priorities for 2022 – 2026, research set-aside priorities for monkfish and sea scallops in 2023 and 2024, and the Southern New England Habitat Area of Particular Concern. Additionally, at the June meeting the Council will receive an update from the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team and will draft an action plan to address Atlantic sturgeon bycatch in gillnet fisheries by 2024. Lastly, the Council would have the opportunity to discuss NOAA's scoping process for a Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary.

Vineyard Wind Innovation Panel

DMF described the new Vineyard Wind Innovation Panel. This group was established to determine how to mitigation funds are to be deployed. The group recently held its initial meeting. One of the topics discussed was using funding to enhance vessel safety and navigation through wind arrays. Mike Pierdinock and Shelley Edmundson of the MFAC serve on this panel.

Upcoming Meetings

No upcoming meetings are currently scheduled. DMF and the MFAC will publish the meeting schedule for the second half of 2022 on the MFACs in early July.