



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

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February 18, 2022

### **Notice of March 14, 2022 Virtual Public Hearing and Public Comment Period: Draft Regulatory Proposals Affecting Commercial Menhaden and Bluefish Limits, Commercial Striped Bass Permitting, and Regulatory Housekeeping**

Under the provisions of G.L. c. 30A and pursuant to the authority found at G.L. c. 130 §§ 2, 17A, 80 and 104, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is taking public comment and holding a virtual public hearing on draft regulations to amend 322 CMR 6.00 and 7.00. Full text of the draft regulations may be found on [DMF's website](#) along with additional relevant background information.

Commercial Menhaden (322 CMR 6.43). DMF is proposing to adopt a June 1 start date for the limited entry commercial menhaden fishery with an exception for fish weirs.

Commercial Bluefish Minimum Size (322 CMR 6.18). DMF is proposing to adopt an 18" commercial minimum size for bluefish.

Commercial Striped Bass Permitting (322 CMR 7.04). DMF is proposing to update the commercial striped bass control date to June 14, 2022. The current control date is September 8, 2013. DMF could use this control date, in combination with other eligibility criteria, to limit future access and participation in this commercial fishery.

Housekeeping (322 CMR 6.19, 6.41, 7.03, and 7.06). DMF is proposing several regulatory housekeeping measures to clarify existing regulations.

1. *Owner-Operator Rules*. Owner-operator rules apply to certain commercial fishing permits and commercial fishing permits govern the fishing activity, as well as the possession and sale of fish. As such, DMF seeks to clarify the owner-operator requirements extend not just to permitted fishing activity but the possession and sale of fish caught under the authority of the permit.
2. *Limited Entry Permit Endorsement Renewal Rules*. Correct typographical errors to improve the readability of the regulation governing the renewal of limited entry permit endorsements received or post-marked after the permit renewal deadline.
3. *Officer Discretion and Violations Onboard For-Hire vessels*. Eliminate redundant language regarding officer discretion from its regulation affecting liability for violations onboard for-hire vessels.
4. *Recreational Traps for Cancer Crabs*. With the prohibition on the use of trap gear to catch blue crabs, clarify that all recreational traps for lobsters and edible crabs be configured as a recreational lobster trap.

### **Public Hearing and Comment Schedule**

A virtual Zoom public hearing is scheduled for Monday, March 14, 2022 at 6PM. To attend this virtual public hearing, please register [online](#). Once you are registered, you will receive information regarding

how to login to the hearing. DMF will also accept written public comment through March 20, 2022. Submit written comments to Director Daniel McKiernan by e-mail ([marine.fish@mass.gov](mailto:marine.fish@mass.gov)) or post (251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114).