



MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission May 28, 2026 Meeting Summary

This document serves as a brief summary of the May 28, 2026 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. This business meeting was hybrid, being held in person at the Katherine Cornell Theater in Tisbury and virtually via Zoom. A recording of this meeting can be made available upon request and all meeting materials are available on the [MFAC's past meeting website](#).

Commission Business

Elections. Chairman Ray Kane stepped down as Chair after serving in the position for a decade. Shelley Edmundson was unanimously elected as the new Chair. Bill Doyle was unanimously re-elected as Vice-Chair. With Shelley Edmundson assuming the Chair's role, the Clerk position became an open seat, and Chris McGuire was unanimously elected Clerk.

Discussion Regarding Hybrid Meetings. The MFAC supported providing a hybrid option for all future in-person meetings. However, there was a strong interest in having MFAC members only utilize the hybrid option when necessary and the MFAC reserved the opportunity to revisit hybrid meetings in the future.

Action Items

Recreational Black Sea Bass Limits. The MFAC unanimously approved DMF's recommendation to adopt the recreational black sea bass limits implemented by emergency regulations as final rules. This will codify the liberalizations to the season and size limit resulting in a May 16 – October 14 open season, 16-inch minimum size, and 4-fish bag limit from May 16 through August 31 and 2-fish bag limit from September 1 through October 14 for 2026 and 2027.

Recreational Gulf of Maine Haddock. The MFAC unanimously approved DMF's recommendation to adopt the recreational Gulf of Maine haddock minimum size reduction from 18 inches to 17 inches implemented by emergency regulations as final rules. This will ensure state regulations continue to match federal rules for this species.

Atlantic Mackerel. The MFAC unanimously approved DMF's recommendation to adopt those liberalizations afforded to the commercial and recreational state waters Atlantic mackerel

fishery implemented by recent emergency action as final rules. On the commercial side, the state waters trip limit will be set at 20,000 pounds with quota-based trip limit reductions to 5,000 pounds and 2,500 pounds, an increase from prior rules that established a 5,000-pound baseline trip limit with a quota-based trip limit reduction to 2,500 pounds. This ensures the limits for the state waters commercial fishery continue to match the federal open access trip limit. On the recreational side, the bag limit will be set at 25 fish for private anglers and 50 fish for anglers onboard for-hire vessels, an increase from the prior bag limit of 20 fish for all anglers. This matches federal rules for the current fishing year to maintain uniform regulations across jurisdictions and support the federal conservation and management program for this species.

Discussion Items

Whelk Minimum Size Management. DMF indicated its intent to initiate rule making this fall to suspend all scheduled whelk gauge increases beginning in 2027. Should this occur, the whelk minimum gauge size will remain at 3 1/8". The University of Massachusetts School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) is currently conducting a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) being conducted and this should be completed within two years. Once the MSE is complete, DMF will reevaluate the conservation management program for this fishery. DMF also intends to analyze a petition to reduce the knobbed whelk gauge size. A formal public hearing proposal will be set forth in a memorandum at a future MFAC business meeting.

Port Profile Project. In 2021, DMF completed its first Port Profile Project. This project reviewed commercial fishing activity statewide and at the municipal level, described the infrastructure at each port, identified access and infrastructure challenges, and provided infrastructure improvement recommendations. The agency is currently in the process of completing a five-year review which will include updated commercial fisheries statistics, as well as data from new harbormaster and commercial fisher surveys at the port level. DMF anticipates the 2026 report will be released this summer. DMF reviewed some of the data contained in this report for the Vineyard ports of Tisbury and Chilmark.

Offshore Wind Energy Update. DMF provided a routine update on offshore wind projects around New England. This focused on: (1) current project status; (2) recent milestones; (3) federal actions; and (4) mitigation funds.

Next Meeting

The MFAC will meet again on July 14, 2026 at 9AM via Zoom.