



## **MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission**

---

### **November 14, 2019 Meeting Summary**

This document serves as a brief summary of the November 14, 2019 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. Further details are available in the supplemental meeting materials and MFAC business meeting minutes.

#### **Action Items**

##### Approval of Letter In Support of Massachusetts Environmental Police

The MFAC reviewed and unanimously approved a letter to Governor Baker request the Massachusetts Environmental Police full-time employee cap be increased and funding enhanced in order to begin to restore their ranks to about 150 officers coastwide. This level of enforcement is commensurate with historic levels dating back to the 1990s and is thought to be sufficient to meet today's marine fishery enforcement challenges.

#### **Discussion Items**

Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) staff provided a summary of the recent October Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) meeting. The summary focused on the ASMFC's Spiny Dogfish Board approval of Addendum VI to the Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan allowing commercial quota to be transferred among all regions and states to enhance the utilization of the available quota; the ASMFC's Menhaden Board unanimously finding the Commonwealth of Virginia out of compliance with the Menhaden FMP due to their failure to implement the Chesapeake Bay menhaden cap and the cap being exceeded in 2019; and the ASMFC's Striped Bass Board approval of Addendum VI to end overfishing by reducing harvest mortality by 18% beginning in 2020.

DMF recently received a petition from the Town of Pembroke to open their river herring run to harvest. The size of the run has increased from about 20,000 to 30,000 fish to 600,000 fish in 2019. This increase in productivity is largely a product work done to improve the run and install fish ladders. The 2015 river herring year class is also very strong and age four fish typically return up river to spawn.

In early 2020, DMF will propose those striped bass conservation measures necessary to comply with Addendum VI. This includes replacing the existing 28" minimum size with a 28" to 35" slot limit and potentially expanding the state's existing circle hook mandate for 2021. With the adoption of the slot limit, DMF will also have to revisit its existing gaffing rule and it was requested that DMF develop a rule to require recreational fishermen use non-lethal devices to remove striped bass from the water.

DMF has scheduled industry advisory meetings on December 4. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the management of the Period II summer flounder fishery, the summertime directed black sea bass fishery, and the commercial striped bass fishery. These meetings will help DMF draft rule changes for 2020 to address recent fishery performance and expected quotas moving forward.

DMF projected potentially amending bait fishery rules for 2020. Regarding menhaden, DMF is considering adjusting the existing trip limit triggers to better utilize the quota available to the state and addressing latent effort through a control date and owner-operator requirement. In response to concerns about the potential development of an industrialized inshore bait fishery for sand lance, DMF is considering a nominal 200 pound trip limit, which would accommodate existing harvest activities. Lastly, DMF will likely amend its sea herring regulations to streamline the management process of the commercial fishery in Management Area 1A (Inshore Gulf of Maine). This will allow the agency to more timely respond to in-season adjustments to the interstate management of this fishery approved by the ASMFC.

Commissioner Amidon announced that a recommendation to appoint the next DMF Director will be made at a future meeting. A special MFAC meeting may be convened in the coming weeks to address this issue. The MFAC was informed that Deputy Director Dan McKiernan will serve as “Acting Director” until further notice.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

The MFAC is currently scheduled to meet again on December 19, 2019. Unless otherwise specified, business meetings begin at 9AM and are held at DFW’s Field Headquarters located at 1 Rabbit Hill Road in Westborough, MA.

Any materials regarding past or upcoming MFAC business meetings may be obtained from DMF. Contact Jared Silva at DMF (617-626-1534 or [jared.silva@state.ma.us](mailto:jared.silva@state.ma.us)).