Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission Draft Business Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2025

Via Zoom

Attendees

Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission: Raymond Kane, Chair; Bill Doyle, Vice-Chair; Shelley Edmundson, Clerk; Bill Amaru; Chris McGuire; Eric Nelson, Ray Jarvis; and Sooky Sawyer.

Division of Marine Fisheries Staff: Dan McKiernan, Director; Robert Glenn, Deputy Director; Jared Silva; Nichola Meserve; Anna Webb; Kelly Whitmore; Derek Perry; Bradlie Morgan; Elise Koob; Ben Gahagan; Brad Schondelmeier; Steve Wilcox; Chrissy Petitpas; Alex Boeri; and Matt Camisa

Department of Fish and Game Staff: Commissioner Tom O'Shea; Sefatia Romeo-Theken, Deputy Commissioner

Massachusetts Environmental Police: Captain Jack Chapin, Lieutenant Matt Bass

Members of the Public: Mark Faherty; Jarrett Drake; Ike Uri

Call to Order and Routine Business

Chairman Ray Kane called the meeting to order.

Review of the October 2025 Business Meeting Agenda

Chairman Kane asked for any amendments to the October 2025 Business Meeting Agenda. There were no amendments.

Review and Approval of the September 2025 Draft Business Meeting Minutes

Chairman Kane asked for amendments to the draft September 2025 Business Meeting Minutes. There were no amendments. **The Chair called for a motion. Shelley Edmundson made a motion to accept the minutes as drafted and Chris McGuire seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Agency Updates

Office of Law Enforcement: Personnel, Recent Operations and Marine Fishery Incidents

Captain Jack Chapin and Lieutenant Matt Bass provided updates on the operations of the Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP). He noted that MEP's focus in the fall typically shifts to hunting, as fishing activity decreases. However, he thanked the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) for assisting MEP and NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement in addressing a recent incident concerning non-compliant lobster gear in Ipswich Bay.

On personnel, Chapin said that a new officer was hired and will be assigned to the Inland Bureau in Western Massachusetts. MEP hopes to fill seven existing vacancies and anticipates several additional retirements in the next year, particularly among management.

Sooky Sawyer asked for additional details on the lobster gear compliance issue. Chapin explained that a dual state-federally permitted lobster fisherman possessed unmarked and untagged gear. Complaints were filed through NOAA in response to gear conflicts. DMF staffed the R/V Craven — which has gear hauling and storage capabilities — to assist MEP and the Office of Law Enforcement in their investigation.

Chairman Kane asked if this effort was part of a Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA). Chapin responded that this was part of a JEA—both DMF and NOAA were involved because the gear was in state waters—and the lobsterman held a dual state-federal permit. Kane questioned the status of the JEA in the current federal climate and Chapin noted that the program remains funded.

Department of Fish and Game: Recent Meetings and Events and Department-wide Activities and Projects

Commissioner Tom O'Shea provided an update on the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). Regarding the MFAC, he is working to fill the group's final vacant seat by the end of the year.

The Commissioner then moved on to discuss recent and upcoming meetings. The Commercial Fisheries Commission met in early October, and the meeting's agenda included presentations on the Designated Port Assessment, offshore wind (OSW) updates, Governor Healey's Biodiversity Initiative, and DMF's Seafood Marketing Program. DMF and DFG also met with the Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to discuss plans to develop a marine habitat restoration center at the Cat Cove Marine Laboratory in Salem. The Commissioner will be attending Massachusetts Seafood Day at the Statehouse with on October 22. Chairman Kane encouraged all MFAC members to attend this event.

Division of Marine Fisheries: Personnel, Recent Meetings and Events, and Agency Activities and Projects

Director Dan McKiernan noted that Story Reed and Wendy Mainardi are currently attending a regional meeting of state agency seafood marketing programs. He hoped this would lead to coordinated efforts across northeast states to promote certain aspects of the seafood industry.

Dan then forecasted that today's meeting will cover the final quota managed fishery update for 2025. He recognized the efforts of DMF's Statistics Program to track landings against these quotas and maintain close contact with primary buyers throughout the season to accurately project closures and prevent overages.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) will meet next week. Among the most controversial items are striped bass conservation (Addendum III) and menhaden quota adjustments. He anticipated there would be disagreement among stakeholders regardless of outcome. The lobster stock assessments will also be shared at this meeting.

The Ropeless Consortium was currently holding a two-day annual meeting (October 20 and 21) in New Bedford. Dan attended the first day. The issue of ropeless fishing gear is complicated and controversial and there are a number of ongoing initiatives to investigate the challenges it presents. This includes better understanding the co-occurrence of whales and trap fishing gear through data collection accomplished by the deployment of Passive Acoustic Monitoring systems and mandating real-time vessel monitoring systems for federal lobster and Jonah crab trap permit holders.

DMF completed a survey for Massachusetts lobster fishers to determine how best to move forward with conservation. New Hampshire and Maine have also conducted similar surveys. Results will be shared during this meeting and at the ASMFC meeting in October.

Director McKiernan remarked on the recent rain that has alleviated some drought conditions across the state. He explained that DMF's Brad Chase believes this will be beneficial to young of the year river herring as they migrate downstream.

Lastly, he described a horseshoe crab bill that has been filed with the legislature. The bill aims to eliminate horseshoe crab harvest for the purpose of bait. In practice, this would eliminate the bait quota but would not prohibit the use of horseshoe crabs caught outside Massachusetts and imported in-state as bait. DMF intends to work through the Administration to address this bill's impacts to the fishing industry.

Dan then discussed Jamie Bassett's recent request for DMF to reallocate horseshoe crab quota from the bait quota to the biomedical quota. There is no mechanism for DMF to accommodate such an adjustment in-season, but DMF is currently analyzing bait demand in Massachusetts and whether it would be appropriate to pursue a regulatory adjustment to the quotas for 2026. Any potential draft regulatory proposals will be brought forward to the MFAC at a future meeting.

Sooky Sawyer remarked on calls he has received from fishermen with commercial eel endorsements who discovered their permit was not reissued for 2026. Dan explained that in spring 2025, DMF proposed to limit the reissuance of eel endorsements to only those permit holders who reported landing at least one pound of eel between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2024. This permitting action was driven by the fact that the eel resource is severely depleted and there are significant concerns about under reporting and latent effort. This would not restrict the use of eels as bait in commercial fisheries (e.g., striped bass) provided individuals comply with the recreational possession limit of 25 eels. Nichola Meserve and Chairman Kane noted the low threshold (1-pound in any of the past 10-years) needed to continue to renew the permit in 2026.

Sawyer then asked about a recent reduction in the recreational surf clam limit to 15 clams per person. Dan responded that DMF manages the commercial surf clam fishery, but the recreational fishery is managed under municipalities. DMF will investigate this further and provide an update at a future meeting.

2025 Belding Award Nomination

Dan introduced the Belding Award—an award created in 1990 by the descendants of David Belding, a naturalist and scientist who contributed to fishery science. DMF

nominated Henry Lind for the 2025 Belding Award. Dan explained that Lind has been an active member of the shellfish community in Cape Cod and continues to be involved in the development of a Shellfish Constable Training Course, which will be offered through Cape Cod Community College.

Director McKiernan then outlined previous recipients of the Belding Award since its inception in 1990.

Bill Amaru made the motion to nominate Henry Lind for the Belding Award. Ray Jarvis seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Update on Performance of 2025 Quota Managed Fisheries

Ray Kane recognized DMF's accuracy in predicting the timing of quota managed fishery closures.

Anna Webb provided an update on the performance of the 2025 quota managed fisheries.

Scup

The state-managed summertime scup quota period ended on September 30. This year's landings were slightly lower than those in 2023 and the quota was again underutilized.

Tautog

The tautog fishery closed on October 18. The recent nor'easter disrupted fishing substantially and made projecting a quota closure challenging. However, Webb expected total landings to come in close to 100%.

Black Sea Bass

The black sea bass fishery closed on October 21. This fishery and quota closure projections were similarly disrupted by the recent storm. Webb expected a negligible quota underage would be likely.

Fluke

The fluke fishery is still open. On October 1, since more than 10% of the quota remained, trip limits were increased to 5,000 pounds. This allowed the offshore fleet, which lands primarily in New Bedford, to target fish in federal waters south of the islands. Anna projected the quota would be taken by early November and the fishery would then close.

Bait Horseshoe Crab

With only 4,000 crabs remaining, the bait horseshoe crab fishery is close to fulfilling its quota. DMF expects a small amount of landings will continue to trickle in and the quota may be achieved by year's end.

Menhaden

Menhaden landings are currently trending slowly, which is to be expected at this time of year as the fish are migrating southwards. Massachusetts closed its state quota managed fishery in late August and entered into the Episodic Event Set Aside (EESA) fishery. Quota remains in the EESA; however, Maine recently exited the program and Massachusetts is currently the only state participating in this program.

Meserve explained that the EESA is a set-aside of 1% of the overall coastwide quota made available annually to the northeast states (New York to Maine) that is accessible should the fish remain in state waters and the state's quota is taken prior to September 1. McKiernan added that as part of the rulemaking approved by the MFAC in early 2025, to the fishery is managed so as to take the state quota by late August with the expectation that the EESA could be accessed after quota is fulfilled and allow fishing to continue into the early fall when the fish remain locally available.

Kane asked whether Maine permit holders can still access menhaden. Meserve explained that Maine received a quota transfer from another state after they left the EESA and this allowed fishing to continue.

Bluefish

Bluefish landings are slowing down, and Webb did not expect significant changes moving forward, as what fish were available are migrating out of our waters. Accordingly, DMF anticipated the state's quota would not be taken and transferred some of its underage to North Carolina.

Spiny Dogfish

Spiny dogfish are managed by regional quotas monitored by NOAA Fisheries. While, DMF does not actively track landings and quota utilization for this species, Bill Amaru requested (at the September meeting) that DMF present on its performance of this fishery moving forward. Webb reported that while NOAA's quota monitoring website has not been updated since the federal government shutdown in September, the most updated information shows that landings are trending lower than previous years and the quota would likely be underutilized.

Discussion Items

Preview of Upcoming October ASMFC Meeting

Director McKiernan discussed the key items to be addressed at the October 2025 ASMFC meeting: (1) Draft Addendum III to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass; and (2) menhaden specifications for 2026-2028 and the potential for significant commercial quota cuts. Massachusetts hosted two ASMFC public hearings on Draft Addendum III in September in Woburn and Bourne.

Nichola Meserve then reviewed the ASMFC's analysis of the testimony received at public hearing and multiple-choice survey results. She noted this analysis did not include written public comment and opened-ended survey responses. She also caveated the analysis results noting that public hearing comment skewed heavily towards the commercial and for-hire businesses, the multiple-choice survey was dominated by recreational anglers, and the number of survey respondents was substantially larger than public hearing attendees and commentors.

A substantial majority of public hearing (71%) and survey respondents (88%) supported a coastwide total length standard of a straight-line measurement with the fish laid flat, tail fins squeezed, and the mouth closed. Common themes in support of a coastwide standard included improve consistency in enforcement and compliance across states, whereas common views in favor of status quo discuss challenges handling the fish and the conservation benefits of reducing handling time.

On commercial tagging, a majority of public hearing (73%) and survey respondents (57%) supported point of harvest tagging. However, Massachusetts public hearing respondents (58%) favored status quo, which would continue to allow dealer tagging. Those in favor of harvester tagging noted that it will improve enforcement and reporting and reduce high-grading, whereas those in favor of maintaining dealer tagging noted that it allows states to develop programs best suited to their fisheries and the enforcement and reporting benefits are speculative and without direct evidence that existing programs are not working.

On mandating a 12% cut in recreational and commercial removals to support stock rebuilding, a large majority of public hearing respondents (81%) favored no action — this trend was similar among only Massachusetts public hearing respondents (83%). However, among survey respondents the majority (68%) supported the 12% cut. Arguments against the cut noted that fishing mortality is low and preliminary MRIP estimates suggest harvest was down in 2025 compared to recent years; concerns about spawning stock biomass (SSB) are driven by environment not fishing; and management would benefit from the next benchmark stock assessment. Arguments for additional

conservation focused on being precautionary in order to protect SSB given poor recruitment and declining abundance.

The addendum also contained two sub-options addressing how the cut should be achieved in the recreational fishery. First, there is an option that would accommodate a larger slot limit for the for-hire sector that would be offset by a 13% removal in reduction. A large majority of public hearing (88%) and survey (84%) respondents did not favor this. However, the issue was split 50-50 among Massachusetts public hearing commentors. Those opposing this action noted the equity and fairness issues and the need for all sectors to adapt to living with a less productive fishery, whereas those in favor noted the economic impacts to the for-hire sector compared to their relatively low contribution to total harvest. Second, to achieve the reduction there were options for seasonal no harvest closures and no targeting closures. A majority of public hearing (88%) and survey (89%) survey respondents favored no harvest closures. Those in favor of no harvest closures noted it is easier to enforce and comply with and is more likely to achieve the intended reduction, whereas supporters of the no targeting closures noted it would result in shorter closure durations and also directly impact catch and release fishers.

Lastly, the addendum addressed the Maryland Chesapeake Bay recreational season baseline. This option would either require Maryland retain their existing season, adjust the timing of their season in a conservation neutral manner, or adjust the timing of the season in a conservation neutral manner but also with an uncertainty buffer. A majority of public hearing respondents (81%) favored no change, whereas a majority of survey respondents (55%) favored allowing adjustments with an uncertainty buffer.

McKiernan noted that DMF's recently completed a striped bass release mortality study that release mortality is approximately half the rate used in the assessment (9%). Meserve and McKiernan noted that these findings were not included in the last assessment and were not considered in the development of Draft Addendum III but may influence discussion at the ASMFC's Striped Bass Board. McKiernan encouraged MFAC members to attend Micah Dean's virtual presentation on this research tomorrow. Jared Silva noted that a recording of this presentation will be shared and DMF would work to have this information presented at a future meeting.

Ray Jarvis and Eric Nelson remarked on their disagreement with some comments at Massachusetts public hearings. Jarvis voiced support for the 12% removal reductions and was interested in the impact of the release mortality shift on the ASMFC's decision. Nelson was curious what each state's potential voting plans were at the ASMFC meeting.

Bill Amaru shared the results of a beach seine survey in Chesapeake Bay that suggested striped bass recruitment in 2025 was slightly higher than in recent years.

Amaru and Meserve discussed how the 2025 results were still well below the long-term average.

Amaru and Kane then asked about the impact of barbless hooks on release mortality. Meserve noted that these practices could be introduced in future regulations if constituents aim to lower release mortality further. She suggested that harvest restrictions may have greater conservation impact than further addressing release mortality. DMF biologist Ben Gahagan noted that barbless hooks were not included in DMF's recent striped bass release mortality study. However, the data from the study indicated that handling time is predicative of release mortality. As debarbing hooks can substantially help minimize handling time, an argument can be made that using this terminal tackle would further reduce release mortality. Meserve noted that terminal tackle requirements could be introduced in future regulations if constituents aim to lower release mortality further, but harvest restrictions may have greater overall conservation benefits. Gahagan added that DMF has encouraged barbless hooks through angler outreach and education.

Amaru then asked if the new release mortality rate considers fish being caught multiple times. Gahagan explained the challenges of researching this without successful mark and recapture studies. He described a Housatonic River study in Connecticut that showed a small amount of mortality weeks after release that may have been caused by subsequent capture, but more research is needed. Amaru reflected on previous conversations with DMF biologists who were concerned about recaptures. Nelson shared incidents of recapturing fish and noted their apparent resilience. He emphasized the importance of understanding the impact of environmental conditions on striped bass in Chesapeake Bay.

Kane asked about the impact of release mortality rate changes on the stock assessment. Meserve responded that this would reduce the amount of removals attributed to release morality and may impact reference points because the rate is length and age dependent. Any change will become more evident once the stock assessment is complete.

Kane then asked about the use of format letters by organizations as part of written public comment for Draft Addendum III. Meserve responded that their current data doesn't describe written comment; however, she wondered about the impact of organizations encouraging their members to complete the online survey or submit format letters. Gahagan and Jarvis remarked on the apparent hesitancy of recreational fishery stakeholders to share comments at public hearings.

Dan encouraged MFAC members to attend Micah Dean's presentation on this research tomorrow. Jared Silva noted that a recording of this presentation will be shared.

Meserve then introduced menhaden specifications for 2026-2028 facing ASMFC decision. A recent single species assessment and ecosystem assessment have revealed errors in estimating menhaden biomass, suggesting that the average biomass is 37% lower than previously estimated based on new analyses of historical tagging data.

The stock status is derived from Ecological Reference Points (ERPs) that account for menhaden's role as forage species. Updated data showed that menhaden fishing mortality fell between the ERP Fishing Mortality Target and Threshold Level to sustain striped bass as a primary predator species in 2023. A 50% reduction in Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is thought to be necessary to reach a 40-50% probability of exceeding the ERP Fishing Mortality Target (F) in 2026 – 2028.

Meserve outlined potential approaches to address this issue. There would likely be a 20-50% cut in coastwide TAC starting in 2026, which could bring Massachusetts' quota closer to its 2018 – 2022 quota. DMF has already capped permits for the menhaden fishery and removed latent effort from the limited entry permit holders. She explained that the EESA could still be accessed under these changes.

Chris McGuire and Sooky Sawyer asked how cuts would be applied across different menhaden fisheries (reduction and bait). Meserve responded that allocations are state-by-state and states determine how their quota is distributed across the reduction and bait fishery. She noted that, given a reduction in coastwide TAC, the ASMFC may pursue an addendum to adjust the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap, which limits how much of Virginia's reduction fishery can occur in the Chesapeake Bay.

Sawyer voiced concern for the local menhaden bait fishermen who invested heavily in this fishery and the local lobster industry who rely on local caught menhaden for bait.

The Board will also discuss quota allocations, as is required every three years. McGuire and Meserve discussed the process of implementing an addendum. Meserve explained that while TAC changes are determined by Board specifications, coastwide allocations and adjustments to the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap would not be implemented until 2026 or 2027.

Sawyer, Jarvis, and Kane emphasized the importance of the menhaden fishery for New England's lobster industry and supported allocating more menhaden to the bait fishery.

Lobster industry survey

Anna Webb described the results of the recent survey given to lobster industry members. Director McKiernan explained that the survey was part of an effort across

Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts to determine how to best move forward with conservation.

DMF sent the survey to 1,043 industry members and received a 27% response rate. Respondents were predominantly from Lobster Management Area (LMA) 1, with the remainder in LMA2, LMA3, and Outer Cape Cod (OCC) LMA. The greatest concerns for fleet sustainability included input costs and whale protection regulations. Most respondents believed current conservation measures were effective in protecting the future of the lobster population and that they were adequately informed of potential regulatory changes impacting the lobster industry.

On potential future conservation initiatives, answers differed across LMAs. LMA1 preferred trap limit decreases and v-notch regulations; LMA 2 preferred trap allocation changes, increasing the minimum size, and changing seasonal area closures; OCCLMA preferred increasing the minimum size; and LMA3 preferred more conservative v-notch regulations.

Federal Fisheries Management Update

Kelly Whitmore provided the MFAC with an update on federal fisheries management focused on the September 2025 New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) meeting.

Whitmore first congratulated DMF policy analyst Melanie Griffin on her recent appointment to Vice Chair of the NEFMC.

Whitmore then discussed the approval of the Omnibus Management Flexibility Amendment to add flexibility and consistency across various fishery management plans (FMP). This will be implemented in FY2026, pending NOAA approval. Potential options include allowing specification frequencies to be increased to up to 5 years for an FMP, specification actions for groundfish and monkfish, in-season adjustments, and the removal of the annual review requirements.

On monkfish and skates, the NEFMC approved specifications for FY2026 – 2028 using catch advice based on updated data. For monkfish, status quo catch limits and effort controls were adopted for Northern and Southern areas. For the skate complex, a catch limit increase was adopted due to an increase in abundance of winter skate.

On groundfish, the NEFMC approved a revised Amendment 25 to the Multispecies FMP and the extension of existing emergency measures through April 30, 2026. This change would transition the New England cod stock units from two to four and incorporate Framework 69 after an earlier version of Amendment 25 was rejected by NOAA Fisheries.

The NEFMC approved updated Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Designations for cod, herring, skate, and monkfish. Previous designations use data through 2005, and current designations use species distribution modeling and data through 2022. Remaining FMP species will be considered in 2026 – 2027.

The on-demand gear conflict working group's final action on the Omnibus Alternative Gear-Marking Framework was postponed. This framework seeks to make it easier to standardize gear-marking beyond traditional gear. On-demand gear currently requires Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP). The working group's report was approved by the NEFMC, which also contains recommendations for reducing gear conflict.

Sooky Sawyer and Director McKiernan discussed NEFMC's involvement in lobster gear management. Dan noted that there are two federal rules in conflict: the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act dictates how buoys are marked and the Marine Mammal Protection Act allows on-demand gear in areas closed to lobster gear. This then requires NOAA to create EFPs for any ropeless gear, and NEFMC aims to simplify this process. Sawyer thanked Toni Kearns for her advocacy for the lobster fishery.

Lastly, Whitmore highlighted the challenges related to declining Atlantic sea scallop biomass. Exploitable biomass is at a historic low and recruitment is weak outside of the Gulf of Maine. Accordingly, catch limit specifications for FY2026 will be 30% lower than in 2025. The NEFMC is considering Limited Access rotational areas and trip limits; open bottom fishing or days-at-sea allocation; and closures continue for recruitment. The development of specifications development has been impacted by the federal shutdown.

The NEFMC will meet in December in Newport, Rhode Island to take final action on sea scallop, groundfish, and spiny dogfish specifications and set work priorities for the upcoming calendar year.

Shellfish Program Update

Chrissy Petitpas provided the MFAC with an update on the Commonwealth's shellfish management program.

On personnel, Petitpas shared that a number of new employees have been hired. Additionally, DMF intends to bring several other staff for the New Bedford laboratory and on the Aquaculture Project. Matt Camisa is leading DMF's efforts to assist the Massachusetts Shellfish Officers Association (MSOA) in the development of a Constable Training Course to be given by Cape Cod Community College starting as soon this coming spring semester.

On depuration harvest, there is one master digger who has resumed harvesting since DMF's depuration plant's closure in 2024 and is trucking his Massachusetts harvested moderately contaminated clams to a facility in Eliot, Maine for depuration.

Petitpas then described issues concerning whole sea scallop harvest from federal waters designated as controlled access for neurotoxins and the disconnect between federal fishery rules and federal public health rules. She concluded that whole in-shell sea scallop product should not be landed in Massachusetts from these areas.

The National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) is a cooperative state-federal-industry program that develops a Model Ordinance that governs the harvest and handling of shellfish for sanitary purposes and public health through a Model Ordinance. The NSSP works through the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC), which meets every two years to review and develop the standards contained within the Model Ordinance. The next scheduled ISSC meeting is November January 2027.

Petitpas summarized the work DMF engages in to address shellfish-related illnesses. She described the state's *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (Vp) Control Plan for Oyster Harvest and Handling. This plan focuses on time-to-temperature controls to slow the growth of the Vp bacteria post harvest. Chrissy outlined how the state responds to reported Vp infections and the decision matrix used to determine steps to precautionary and mandatory closures. The state's Vp Working Group may seek the removal of the precautionary closure following challenges encountered this past year.

Campylobacter is a bacteria that causes gastro-intestinal illnesses. It is thought that shellfish-borne illnesses are related to presence of defecating birds on floating oyster cages. Three outbreaks were linked to MA shellfish growing areas, though one of these outbreaks is likely due to post-harvest contamination in a restaurant. Regulations require harvesters to use bird deterrents on floating gear to prevent this and DMF anticipates regulatory compliance with this measure will be a focal point of the 2026 FDA annual review of the state's shellfish sanitation program.

Combined sewer overflow (CSO) closures pose several issues for Massachusetts shellfish harvesters, especially around New Bedford. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has recently implemented a regulation that requires procedures for notifying the public of CSO occurrences. As DEP and DMF are more aware of the frequency of CSOs and the concentration of sewage during these events, shellfish harvest closures occur more frequently.

A model created by UMass Dartmouth's School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) is being used by DMF to assess wastewater treatment plant effluent dilution and help inform the reclassification of shellfish harvest areas proximate to sewage treatment plant outfalls so as to comply with federal standards.

Offshore Wind Update

Brad Schondelmeier provided an update on various offshore wind (OSW) development projects under construction and those in planning and permitting phases.

In the Northeast, there are four sites under construction, including Vineyard 1, Revolution, Sunrise, and Empire. One OSW site, South Fork, is complete. Several sites are in the permitting process. He provided updates on each site under construction. Sites were in various stages, including installing blades, subsea drilling, fish monitoring deployment, and deploying monopiles. Revolution was paused by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) in August, but a preliminary injunction allowed them to resume work in September. In the Gulf of Maine, several projects are currently planning and permitting.

Schondelmeier then updated the MFAC on the status of the Massachusetts Fisheries Innovation Fund. The request for proposal period ended on August 29 with 20 proposals received. Contracts will be awarded by the end of the year to allow projects to begin in 2026.

Lastly, the Massachusetts – Rhode Island wind collaboration continues on-going work on boulder relocation and seabed alteration. An East Coast/West Coast learning exchange took place earlier this year to discuss fishery impacts and perspectives, mitigation and compensation, port uses, and wind development regulation.

Other Business and Public Comment

Jared Silva expressed his intention to potentially convene the Law Enforcement Focus Group in November.

Chris McGuire asked for a recreational fisheries research presentation to be shared at an MFAC meeting in the future.

The Chairman invited public comment. There was no public comment.

Chairman Kane then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill Amaru made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Shelley Edmundson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Meeting Documents

- October 21, 2025 MFAC Business Meeting Agenda
- September 18, 2025 MFAC Draft Business Meeting Minutes
- 2025 Belding Award Recommendation
- NEFMC September Meeting Summary
- Presentation Update on the Performance of the 2025 Quota Managed Fisheries
- Presentation on the Upcoming October ASMFC Meeting
- Presentation on the Federal Fisheries Management Update
- Presentation on the Shellfish Program Update
- Presentation on the Offshore Wind Update

Next Meeting Date

November 18, 2025

DFW Field Headquarters

1 Rabbit Hill Rd

Westborough, MA