MarineFisheries
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission
October 21, 2025 Meeting Summary

This document serves as a brief summary of the October 21, 2025 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. This business meeting was held virtually via Zoom. A recording is available for viewing on DMF's YouTube Channel. All meeting materials are available on the MFAC's past meeting website.

2025 Belding Award Nomination
The MFAC approved DMF's recommendation to bestow Henry Lind the 2025 Belding Award.

Fishery Performance Review
DMF provided the MFAC with an up-to-date performance review of the 2025 quota managed fisheries for scup, tautog, black sea bass, summer flounder, bait horseshoe crabs, menhaden, bluefish, and spiny dogfish.

Discussion Items
Preview of Upcoming October Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting. DMF discussed three key items to be addressed at the October 2025 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) meeting. This included public hearing testimony and survey results relevant to Draft Addendum III to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass; menhaden specifications for 2026-2028 and the potential for significant commercial quota cuts; and the lobster industry survey to inform future management.

Federal Fisheries Management Update. DMF provided the MFAC with an update on federal fisheries management focused on the September 2025 New England Fishery Management Council Meeting. The presentation outlined: (1) the approval of the Omnibus Management Flexibility Amendment to add flexibility and consistency across various fishery management plans (FMP); (2) the specifications for monkfish and skate for fishing years 2026-2028; (3) the approval of revised Amendment 25 to the Multispecies FMP and the extension of existing emergency measures through April 30, 2026; (4) approval of essential fish habitat designations for cod, herring, skate, and monkfish; (5) challenges related to declining biomass observed for Atlantic sea scallops; and specifications for fishing year 2026 and default measures for 2027; (6) continued work by the On-Demand Gear Conflict Working Group; and (7) NEFMC elections including DMF Policy Analyst Melanie Griffin becoming the Vice-Chair. The NEFMC will meet again from December 2-4 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. DMF provided the MFAC with an update on the Commonwealth's shellfish management program. The presentation focused on: (1) personnel and facilities; (2) the development of a new Constable training program; (3) depuration harvest and the closure of the state's depuration facility in Newburyport; (4) the harvest of whole sea scallops from federal

waters; (4) upcoming meetings of the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Commission; (5) the 2025 *Vp* Control season; (6) *Campylobacter* illnesses; and (7) sewage treatment plant outfall modeling, reclassifications, and combined-sewage overflow closures.

Offshore Wind Update. DMF provided an update on various offshore wind development projects under construction and those in planning and permitting phases. Additionally, DMF updated the MFAC on the status of the Massachusetts Fisheries Innovation Fund. The request for proposal period ended on August 29 with 20 proposals were received and the expectation the 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 and there was an East Coast/West Coast learning exchange to discuss fishery impacts and perspectives, mitigation and compensation, port uses, and wind development regulation.

Upcoming Meetings
The MFAC will meet next on November 18, 2025 at DFW's Field Headquarters located at 1 Rabbit Hill Road in Westborough.