



MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

October 6, 2016 Meeting Summary

Future Public Hearings

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) presented four proposals for future public hearings. These proposals affect the commercial whelk fishery, the commercial black sea bass fishery, the commercial menhaden fishery and the commercial tautog fishery. The public hearing and public comment period has not yet been scheduled, so please pay attention for forthcoming pertinent details.

Whelk. Due to continued concerns regarding minimum size compliance; declines in spawning stock and recruitment overfishing; and sea turtle entanglements and mortalities, DMF put forth a suite of management proposals:

1. Require use of chute gauge and dimensions.
2. Utilize an “any orientation” method of measurement (right).
3. Gradual increases of effective minimum size:
 - a. 2017: 3” gauge at any orientation—effective $\frac{3}{16}$ ” minimum size increase
 - b. 2019–2029: Biennial effective minimum size increase of $\frac{1}{8}$ ” with corresponding gauge width increases to be determined.
4. July 27–September 6 conch pot haul out period and whelk fishery closure for all gear types.
5. Night closure ($\frac{1}{2}$ hour after sunset to $\frac{1}{2}$ hour before sunrise) for fish pot and conch pot gear.



The above graphic depicts the “any orientation” method of measurement.

Black Sea Bass. To better manage and improve compliance in the black sea bass fishery, DMF is proposing to right-size the black sea bass trap limit to the black sea bass trap trip limit, by reducing the maximum trap allowance from 200 traps to 100 traps. Also, based on comment received from the MFAC, DMF will also be proposing to reduce the number of open fishing days during the commercial black sea bass season to extend the length of the commercial season. Note the night closure discussed above would also apply to black sea bass potters.

Menhaden. To improve quota utilization, DMF is proposing to move the trigger that reduces the menhaden trip limit from 125,000 pounds to 25,000 pounds from when 75% of the quota is taken to when 85% of the quota is taken. Since the implementation of the menhaden quota in 2013, Massachusetts has underutilized its available quota (0.86% of coastwide quota) and has often transferred its quota underage to other states. This underutilization is in part attributable to this trip limit management trigger.

Tautog. DMF is moving forward a petition from the Dartmouth Angler’s Association to eliminate the spring tautog fishery, thereby moving the entire annual quota to the fall fishery. This management

change should address enforcement, compliance, quota monitoring and conservation concerns regarding the spring fishery.

Other Items

During the business meeting, the MFAC also received presentations from DMF staff on the state's ongoing Gulf of Maine Industry Based Survey and an overview of interstate recreational black sea bass management. The MFAC also discussed the ASMFC's upcoming vote on an Addendum to set the target allowable catch for menhaden, monument designations and the Monomoy National Wildlife refuge.

Future Meetings

Future meetings are scheduled for November 8, 2016 and December 15, 2016. Both meetings will start at 10:30 a.m. and will be held at the MA Division of Fish and Wildlife's Headquarters, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough. MFAC business meeting agendas are published on the [Division's website](#) approximately 1-week before the scheduled meeting.

If you would like to obtain any materials regarding past or upcoming MFAC business meetings, please contact Jared Silva at DMF (617-626-1534 or jared.silva@state.ma.us).