



## MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

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### January 25, 2018 Meeting Summary

This document serves as a brief summary of the January 28, 2018 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. It provides only an overview of the items discussed. Further discussion of each item is captured in MFAC business meeting minutes for this date.

#### **Action Items**

The MFAC approved DMF's recommendation to award the 2017 Belding Award to Arthur DeCosta. Arthur is a fixed gear fisherman from the south coast of Massachusetts and has assisted DMF on industry based survey work for almost 30-years.

#### **Future Public Hearings Items**

Division of Marine Fisheries' (DMF) staff updated the MFAC on the agency's proposal to modernize its mobile gear closure regulations. The current mobile gear closures are depicted using historic lines, LORAN C and line of sight coordinates. DMF is moving to modernize its regulations to depict the closure boundaries with GPS coordinates. These changes are expected to be completed for 2019.

For 2018, DMF will publish maps and coordinates depicting the existing mobile gear closure areas throughout the state, except for the Area 2A closure in Nantucket Sound. Based on public feedback, the legal closure line for Area 2A differs substantially from where the boundary is historically understood to be by both fixed and mobile gear fishermen, particularly in northeast Nantucket Sound. DMF is working to describe the boundary as understood by industry. DMF will take public comment on this boundary to ensure it matches industry's understanding of it and then it will be adopted by permit condition for this year.

DMF also notified the MFAC that they expect to hold public hearings in early March 2018 on the various 2018 fishing limit proposals discussed at the December 2017 MFAC business meeting. DMF will then provide the MFAC with a final recommendation on these proposals at their March 2018 business meeting.

#### **Presentation**

DMF biologist Ben Gahagan provided the MFAC with a presentation on striped bass spawning and migration.

#### **Discussion Items**

Three additional issues were discussed at the January meeting. First, Director Pierce reviewed his decision to not move forward a pilot program that would have allowed wintertime sea scallop dredge fishing off Nahant. Second, Division staff reviewed a recent industry meeting regarding the surf clam dredge fishery. There are several management proposals coming out of the meeting. This includes how to improve (1) the way the state-waters fishery interfaces with the federal fishery; (2) habitat protection and management area monitoring; and (3) access to the fishery and available resources. Lastly, DMF provided the MFAC with an update on the ongoing interstate and federal processes to set recreational

fishing limits for black sea bass, scup, fluke, cod and haddock in 2018. Once these processes are complete, DMF will develop state specific limits.

DMF also received a public petition to consider lifting the state prohibition on mixing recreational and commercial fishing trips.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

The next MFAC business meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 15, 2018. It will be held at the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Westborough Field Headquarters and will begin at 10:00 AM.

Future 2018 meetings are then scheduled for April 12, May 10 and June 14; these meeting dates may be subject to change.

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](mailto:jared.silva@state.ma.us)).