



## MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

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### September 13, 2018 Meeting Summary

This document serves as a brief summary of the September 13, 2018 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. Further details will be captured in MFAC business meeting minutes for this date.

#### **Action Items**

##### Adjustment to Commercial Striped Bass Fishing Days

The MFAC approved the Division of Marine Fisheries recommendation to make an in-season adjustment to the open commercial fishing days for striped bass. This action will add Tuesday to the existing Monday and Thursday open fishing day schedule for 2018. The change will be effective for the start of the fishing week on September 17.

#### **Future Public Hearing Items**

##### Commercial State-Waters Groundfish Management

The MFAC reviewed a future public hearing proposal by the Division of Marine Fisheries affecting the commercial state-waters groundfish fishery. The first proposal was to enact a spatial closure within all state-waters between 42°00' north latitude and the MA/NH border during the month of April for commercial groundfish fishing. This action was proposed to address the consistent over harvest of the state-waters set-asides for Gulf of Maine cod and winter flounder. The MFAC advocated that DMF include a provision that would allow the Director to forgo the April closure if landings data indicated that state-waters set-asides would not be over harvested if fishing were to occur in April. The second proposal was to enact an owner-operator provision for the state-waters groundfish fishery. This would be a preliminary measure to address the activation of latent effort in the fishery. DMF anticipates a public hearing will be scheduled this winter to take comment on these proposals.

##### Commercial Scup Bycatch Limits

The MAFMC and ASMFC recently approved a joint MA/RI revision to the federal and interstate management plan for scup. This revision would allow trawlers fishing with mesh smaller than 5" to possess and land 2,000 pounds of scup per day during the period of April 15 – June 15; the current limit is 200 pounds. This was proposed to reduce the discarding of scup bycatch in inshore springtime squid trawl fisheries. DMF anticipates a public hearing will be scheduled this winter to take comment on similarly adjusting state regulations to accommodate this change in the management plan.

#### **Discussion Items**

##### Review of August 2018 ASMFC Meeting

DMF staff provided a review of the the August 2018 ASMFC business meeting. The focus was on changes to the American Eel FMP. DMF also discussed the Sea Herring and Menhaden board meetings, as well as the proposed 2019 specifications for black sea bass, scup, fluke and bluefish.

### Changes to Marine Fishery Fines and Penalties

DMF informed the MFAC that Governor Baker signed the Environmental Bond Bill into law in August 2018. This bill included a modernization to the marine fisheries fines and penalties schedule, which will go into effect on November 7, 2018. It effectively doubles existing non-criminal fines and allows for an additional fine of \$10 per non-compliant fish; modernizes the criminal fine schedule; and adopts a \$10,000 civil fine.

### Quota Monitoring Update

DMF staff provided the MFAC with an update on quota monitored species and fishery performance.

### Review of MFAC Sub-Committee Meeting on Compliance in For-Hire Fisheries

The MFAC Sub Committee on Compliance in For-Hire fisheries met on Wednesday, September 12, 2018. The purpose of the meeting was to review potential management options to enhance compliance in the for-hire fishery, specifically the springtime black sea bass and scup head boat fishery. A number of management strategies were vetted and will be developed into public hearing proposals this fall.

### **Belding Award Presentation**

The Division of Marine Fisheries presented Arthur DeCosta of Fairhaven, MA with the 2017 Belding Award. Arthur is a recently retired long-time trap fisherman. Throughout his career he was actively involved in developing and assisting DMF in cooperative research. He made substantial contributions to DMF's commercial sea sampling program for lobsters and whelk and ventless trap programs.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

The next MFAC business meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 11, 2018. It will be held at Division of Fish and Wildlife's Field Headquarters in Westborough, MA. This meeting is scheduled to begin immediately following a public hearing at 9AM.

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)).