



**MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission  
June 13, 2023 Meeting Summary**

This document serves as a brief summary of the June 13, 2023 Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) business meeting. This business meeting was held virtually via Zoom. All meeting materials are available on the [MFAC's past meeting website](#) and the recording of this business meeting has been published on [DMF's YouTube channel](#).

**MFAC Elections**

The MFAC held their annual elections and reappointed Raymond Kane as Chair; Michael Pierdinock as Vice Chair; and Bill Doyle as Clerk.

**Action Items**

*Recreational Scup and Black Sea Bass.* On April 28, DMF filed emergency regulations to establish the 2023 recreational black sea bass and scup fishing limits. The MFAC unanimously approved DMF to finalize these emergency regulations, thereby allowing them to remain in effect for the remainder of the season and beyond the initial 90-day emergency period. These 2023 limits for these species are described in the table below.

Species	Mode	Season	Bag	Minimum Size
Scup	Private Vessels	May 1 – Dec 31	30 fish (vessel cap of 150 fish)	10.5"
	Shore	May 1 – Dec 31	30 fish	9.5"
	For-hire Vessels	May 1 – Jun 30	40 fish	10.5"
		Jul 1 – Dec 31	30 fish	
Black Sea Bass	All Modes	May 20 – Sep 7	4 fish	16.5"

*Letter to Former Commissioner Amidon.* Governor Healy appointed Thomas O'Shea as Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game. The MFAC approved a letter to former Commissioner Ronald Amidon to thank him for his work alongside the MFAC and DMF and his contributions to improving fisheries management and enforcement in Massachusetts.

**Discussion Items**

*Federal Fisheries Management Update.* DMF staff provided the MFAC with a briefing on happenings at the New England Fishery Management Council, including a review of the April meeting and a preview of the June meeting. Staff commented on the Habitat Committee's work on northern edge scallop access and Atlantic salmon aquaculture; the research set-aside work group for monkfish; emergency rules to address the utilization of the FY 2023 Gulf of Maine haddock annual catch limit; the development of transition plan for the management of cod from the current two management unit approach to up to five management units; user group conflicts and ecosystem based management in the Atlantic herring fishery; Atlantic sturgeon bycatch in monkfish and dogfish gillnet fisheries; the working group on on-

demand (“ropeless”) trap fishing gear; the appointment of Dr. Cate O’Keefe as the Council’s Executive Director; risk policy development; thorny skate white paper; and the inshore mid-water trawl closure for herring.

DMF also discussed several other items relevant to federal fisheries management. This included the Loper Bright Enterprises v Raimondo case going in front of the US Supreme Court. This case challenges NOAA Fisheries’ authority to require industry pay for increased monitoring coverage in the Atlantic herring fishery and brings into question the deference historically provided to administrative agencies with regards to interpreting their statutory authority. DMF also discussed the significant challenges NOAA Fisheries is facing with regards to completing and continuing long-term federal surveys and efforts to develop more industry-based surveys. Lastly, DMF discussed the Biden Administration’s American the Beautiful initiative to conserve 30% of US lands and oceans by 2030 and the May 2023 evaluation of conservation areas in the EEZ.

*Permitting Sub-Committee Update.* DMF staff provided the MFAC with an overview of ongoing deliberations at the Permitting Sub-Committee. This included discussions regarding DMF’s bundling policies; immediate family transfer requirements; and the potential for a routine review of endorsement specific activity standards. There was also some MFAC-driven discussion regarding additional actions to encourage new entrants into commercial fisheries and address concerns regarding the high cost of permit transfers.

*Ongoing Rule Making and Meeting Schedule.* DMF will host a public hearing on the emergency action to amend the recreational striped bass slot limit on June 21. DMF will then host a MFAC business meeting in mid-July focused on finalizing this slot limit rule. DMF anticipated NOAA Fisheries would adopt recreational cod and haddock limits by the end of the month. DMF intended to file complementary emergency regulations and hold a public hearing on these rules in late-July.

## **Presentation**

In 2022, DMF established a Derelict Gear Task Force to study the issue of abandoned, lost, or derelict fishing gear (ALDFG) in Massachusetts waters and develop solutions for the removal of such gear. The Task Force consisted of Robert Glenn, Jared Silva, David Chosid, and Julia Kaplan from DMF; Deputy General Counsel Tori LaBate from the Department of Fish and Game; Major Chris Baker of the Massachusetts Environmental Police; Sooky Sawyer, President of the Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association on MFAC member; Ray Kane, Chairman of the MFAC and Outreach Coordinator for the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s Alliance; Beth Casoni, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association; and Laura Ludwig, manager of the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies Marine Debris and Plastics Program. In 2023, the Task Force released a white paper that describes the problems posed by ALDFG and proposes several legislative and regulatory recommendations to more efficiently and effectively handle and clean up ALDFG while balancing property rights.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

The MFAC will meet next on July 10 at 9AM via Zoom.