



MA Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission

April 12, 2018 Meeting Summary

This document serves as a brief summary of the April 12, 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.

Pending Emergency Regulations

Recreational Fluke, Scup and Black Sea Bass

The MFAC reviewed DMF’s proposed emergency regulations to establish the 2018 recreational fishing limits for fluke, black sea bass and scup. The proposed regulations are described in the table below with changes in bold font.

Species	Season	Bag Limit	Size Limit
Fluke	May 23 – October 9	5-fish	17 inches
Black Sea Bass	May 19 – September 1*	5-fish	15 inches
Scup Private Anglers	May 1 – December 31	30-fish	9 inches
Scup For-Hire Anglers	May 1 – June 30 July 1 – December 31	45-fish 30-fish	9 inches

* Season may be extending past September 1 pending DMF’s appeal of Addendum XXX to the ASMFC’s Black Sea Bass Management Plan. Appeal to be heard by ASMFC Policy Board on May 3, 2018.

Discussion Items

2018 Commercial Menhaden Management

DMF and the MFAC discussed the management of the commercial menhaden fishery in 2018. DMF reviewed the potential implications of the increase in the quota in Massachusetts and other New England states following the approval of Amendment 3 to the ASMFC’s Menhaden Management Plan. DMF stated that while the quota is increasing the quota management system would stay status quo. Moreover, the New England states were working cooperatively to manage their menhaden quotas in a compatible regional manner. DMF informed the MFAC that they were considering adopting several new permit conditions for 2018. This included requirements limiting the use of carrier boats, mandating the use maintenance of a logbook and prohibiting fishing on weekends and summertime holidays.

At the request of a number of MFAC members, DMF will be further reviewing the potential permit condition that would require carrier vessels only acquire fish from one vessel and possess and land one trip limit per day. DMF will further review this item at the May 2018 MFAC business meeting. DMF intends to move forward with all other permit conditions as discussed.

State-Waters Groundfish Analysis. DMF presented its analysis of the state-waters groundfish landings, as compared to the federal state-waters set asides. For certain stocks, such as Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine winter flounder, state-waters landings exceeded the set-aside in recent years. While this occurred in the past, federal quotas were underutilized providing a buffer for these exceedances. Now,

as federal quotas are more fully utilized, these exceedances are causing accountability measures affecting federal permit holders. As a result, DMF's management of the state-waters fishery is under scrutiny by federal permit holders, NMFS and the NEFMC.

DMF's analysis demonstrated that new trip limit reductions are likely inadequate to control harvest and landings and additional time/area closures are likely necessary. There is also some interest in treating these set-asides more like hard quotas. DMF will be analyzing FY17 data over the next few months (as it becomes available) and developing public hearing proposals to be presented to the MFAC at a late summer or early fall meeting. Any new regulations will go into effect for 2019.

Petitions from the Massachusetts Fisherman's Mobile Gear Alliance (MFMGA). DMF received several petitions from the MFMGA requesting a variety of actions by the agency. DMF provided the MFAC with an analysis of and response to these petitions. However, at the request of the petitioners, DMF suspended the in-depth discussion of these petitions until a later meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

The next MFAC business meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 10, 2018. It will be held at the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Westborough Field Headquarters. The following meeting is scheduled for June 14, 2018 and it will be held at DMF's New Bedford Field Office. Unless otherwise advertised, MFAC meetings start at 10AM. The meeting schedule for the second half of 2018 is forthcoming.

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).