



Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

June 14, 2024

Reminder of Commercial Striped Bass Fishing Regulations

Massachusetts' 2024 commercial striped bass fishery will open on Tuesday, June 18 (the first open fishing day on or after June 16) with a 683,773-pound quota. This year's quota has been reduced by 7% through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's adoption of Addendum II to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass.

The open fishing season will commence with two open fishing days—Tuesdays and Wednesdays—and be closed from Thursday through Monday. In response to the reduced quota and recent fishery performance, Mondays were eliminated as an open fishing day this year to prevent an early season quota closure. However, if at least 30% of the quota remains available after July 31, Thursdays will be added, resulting in open fishing days of Tuesday–Thursday beginning on August 1. Similarly, if any quota remains after September 30, Mondays and Fridays will be added, resulting in open fishing days of Monday–Friday beginning on October 1. Please note, the commercial fishery will be closed on Wednesday, July 3 to avoid user group conflicts given the high level of boating traffic around the 4th of July holiday.

Commercial fishers may only sell striped bass to a seafood dealer authorized as a primary buyer on an open commercial fishing day. Both the primary buyer and the commercial fisher must be present at this transaction. Dropping off fish at an unattended dealer facility is unlawful. Primary buyers are required to affix a DMF-issued commercial striped bass tag through the jaw and the gill plate of the fish upon primary purchase.

The commercial minimum size remains unchanged at 35". The release of previously retained legal sized fish for larger fish ("high-grading") is prohibited. Commercial fishers may eviscerate striped bass at sea, but the fish must be otherwise landed whole and in-the-round and may not be mutilated in any manner that would interfere with their measurement.

The daily limits will also remain unchanged this year at 15-fish for boat-based permit holders fishing onboard the vessel named on the permit, and 2-fish for all other commercial fishing activity. The daily limit applies regardless of number of permits held, commercial fishers on board the vessel, or number of trips taken in a day. With consecutive open fishing days, commercial fishers may fish overnight tides spanning two open fishing days (e.g., Tuesday night into Wednesday morning), provided they do not possess or sell more than

one daily limit during any single calendar day. For example, fishermen may retain, land, and sell fish on a Tuesday and then begin fishing again on Tuesday and continue fishing into Wednesday morning to land and sell fish. However, in doing so, they may not possess or sell more than one limit during any calendar day.

On closed commercial fishing days, all striped bass fishing activity must adhere to the 2024 recreational rules: 1 fish per angler in a slot limit of at least 28" to less than 31". Commercial fishing for striped bass may not occur during the same trip as recreational striped bass fishing. The Cape Cod Canal ("Canal") remains closed to commercial striped bass fishing. Therefore, all striped bass retained from the Canal or possessed within 1,000 feet of the Canal (unless caught elsewhere and being actively transported to a dealer) must adhere to Massachusetts' recreational striped bass fishing limits.

Rod-and-reel and handline gear are the only gears authorized to harvest striped bass in Massachusetts. The retention, possession, and sale of striped bass caught by other gears is prohibited.

Commercial fishers are reminded of the requirement to report all striped bass retained under the authority of their commercial fishing permit. This includes all fish sold, as well as any fish kept for personal use.

For more information, please visit our website: www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.



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