

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT  
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
MARINE FISHERIES SECTION**

**PUBLIC NOTICE CONCERNING PROPOSED REGULATORY CHANGES**

Pursuant to the provisions of Chapters 42-17.1 and 20-3 of the General Laws of Rhode Island as amended, and in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act Chapter 42-35 of the General Laws, the Director of the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) proposes amendments to the **Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Regulations** and gives notice of intent to hold a workshop and public hearing to afford interested parties the opportunity for public comment.

Public comment will be solicited on the following proposals:

- 1) Amendments to RIMFR - Shellfish, regarding the establishment of **regulations to reduce the risk of Vibrio illness associated with the consumption of commercially harvested quahaugs** (section 6, 16, and 17);
- 2) Amendments to RIMFR - Shellfish, regarding **technical clarifications** (i.e., no actual changes proposed);
- 3) Amendments to Part XV - Lobsters, Other Crustaceans, and Horseshoe Crabs regarding **removal of escape vent placement requirement** (section 15.13.2);
- 4) Amendments to Part VII - Finfish, regarding management for **recreational Summer Flounder** (section 7.7.1);
- 5) Amendments to Part VII - Finfish, regarding management for **recreational Tautog** (section 7.9.1);
- 6) Amendments to Part VII - Finfish, regarding management for **commercial Tautog** (section 7.9.2);
- 7) Amendments to Part VII - Finfish, regarding management for **recreational Scup** (section 7.11.1);
- 8) Amendments to Part VII - Finfish, regarding management for **recreational Black Sea Bass** (section 7.14.1);
- 9) Amendments to Part VII - Finfish, regarding management for **Spiny dogfish** (section 7.15);
- 10) Amendments to Part XII – Striped Bass, regarding management for **recreational Striped Bass** (section 12.1);
- 11) Amendments to Part XII – Striped Bass, regarding management for **commercial Striped Bass general category** (section 12.3);

- 12) Amendments to Part XII – Striped Bass, regarding management for **commercial Striped Bass floating fish trap** (section 12.5);
- 13) Amendments to Part VII - Finfish, regarding **general editing for improved clarity**;
- 14) Amendments to Part VII - Finfish, regarding **addition of a Quota Management section** (proposed section 7.1; in conjunction with hearing item #15);
- 15) Amendments to Part III – Marine Fisheries Council, regarding **deletion of the Quota Management section** (section 3.1; in conjunction with hearing item #14);
- 16) Amendments to Part X – Equipment Restrictions, regarding **deletion of redundant sections that are currently included elsewhere in RIMFR**.

The **workshop will commence at 4:30PM** on **Monday, February 16** followed by the **public hearing at 7:00PM** at the University of Rhode Island, Graduate School of Oceanography, Corless Auditorium, South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI 02882. The room is accessible to the disabled. Interpreter services for the deaf and hard of hearing will be provided if such services are requested at least three (3) business days prior to the hearing by contacting the RI Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at (401) 222-5300; or (401) 222-5301 (TTY); or <http://www.cdhh.ri.gov/>.

The Department has determined that small businesses may be adversely impacted by the proposed regulations. Small businesses which are either currently licensed, or in the future may seek a license to harvest, buy, sell, or produce seafood products, as well as the small businesses that provide services related to those engaged in such industries, are requested to comment on the proposed regulations on how such proposed action can be changed to minimize the impact on those small businesses affected.

Written comments concerning the proposed regulations may be submitted to Peter Duhamel, Division of Fish and Wildlife – Marine Fisheries office, 3 Fort Wetherill Road, Jamestown, RI 02835 no later than 12:00 Noon on February 16, 2015. A copy of the proposed regulations will be available for review from January 16 through February 16, 2015 at the Marine Fisheries offices, or by mail. A copy of the proposed regulation(s) has been filed with the Office of the Secretary of State's website at <http://sos.ri.gov/ProposedRules/>. Proposed annotated regulations are also available on the DEM Marine Fisheries webpage at <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/pn021615.htm>.

Mark Gibson,  
Deputy Chief



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

BUREAU OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
FISH AND WILDLIFE  
&  
LAW ENFORCEMENT



**RHODE ISLAND MARINE FISHERIES  
REGULATIONS**

**Part III  
Marine Fisheries Council**

~~December 23, 2014~~

**Proposed/annotated regulations**

**Public hearing**

**February 16, 2015**

**AUTHORITY:** Title 20, Chapters 42-17.1, 42-17.6, and 42-17.7, and in accordance with Chapter 42-35-18(b)(5), Administrative Procedures Act of the Rhode Island General Laws of 1956, as amended.

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## **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of these rules and regulations is to supplement and simplify and/or clarify existing regulations in order to more efficiently manage the marine resources of Rhode Island.

## **2. AUTHORITY**

These rules and regulations are promulgated pursuant to Title 20, Chapters 42-17.1, 42-17.6, and 42-17.7, and in accordance with Chapter 42-35-18(b)(5), Administrative Procedures Act of the Rhode Island General Laws of 1956, as amended.

## **3. APPLICATION**

The terms and provisions of these rules and regulations shall be liberally construed to permit the Department to effectuate the purposes of state law, goals, and policies.

## **4. DEFINITIONS**

See Rhode Island Marine Statutes and Regulations, Part I, '1.3.

## **5. SEVERABILITY**

If any provision of these Rules and Regulations, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the validity of the remainder of the Rules and Regulations shall not be affected thereby.

## **6. SUPERSEDED RULES AND REGULATIONS**

On the effective date of these rules and regulations, all previous rules and regulations, and any policies regarding the administration and enforcement of Part III shall be superseded. However, any enforcement action taken by, or application submitted to, the Department prior to the effective date of these Rules and Regulations shall be governed by the Rules and Regulations in effect at the time the enforcement action was taken, or application filed.

## **7. REGULATIONS**

## **8. EFFECTIVE DATE PAGE**

R.I. Marine Fisheries Regulations  
PART III - MARINE FISHERIES COUNCIL

**\*PUBLIC HEATING ITEM # 15\***

**Deletion of the Quota Management section (in conjunction with hearing item #1 – addition of modified/updated section into Part VII – Finfish)**

~~3.1 Allocations, seasons and possession limits: For species managed under quota, possession limit, and/or by seasons, compliance with a federal or regional fisheries management plan (FMP), the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), unless specifically prohibited by the Secretary of Commerce or the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, will have the authority to distribute the allocations including the distribution of allocations among the various gear types, modify possession limits, and change seasons in the following manner:~~

~~3.1.1 Allocation Changes: DFW may project when the allocation for a species will be exhausted. This determination will be based on the period of time remaining in the allocation period, historical catch rates, and the current catch rate. If DFW determines that an allocation assigned for a sub-period or assigned to be available for taking by a particular gear type during that sub-period will be exhausted prior to the end of the sub-period or will not be met for a sub-period, it may change or redistribute the allocation assigned to be available for taking by a particular gear type during that sub-period. DFW will file a notice with the Secretary of State and submit a listserve notice announcing the change. All variances will be effective upon filing with the Secretary of State.~~

~~3.1.2 Possession limit Changes: If DFW determines that the allocation for a given species will be exhausted prior to the end of a sub-period or will not be met for a sub-period, DFW may change the possession limit; such modifications may include the increase or the decrease in the possession limit at which a sub-period commences. DFW will file a notice with the Secretary of State and submit a listserve notice announcing the change. All variances of possession limits will be effective upon filing with the Secretary of State.~~

~~3.1.3 Season Changes: Upon notification from federal authorities to alter a season for a particular species in compliance with a federal or regional FMP, DFW will file a notice with the Secretary of State and submit a listserve notice announcing the change. All changes in seasons accomplished will be effective upon filing with the Secretary of State.~~

## **7. REGULATIONS**

~~3.1.47.1 Current Possession limit: If no current possession limit is noted in the table below, refer to RI Marine Fisheries Regulations (RIMFR) Part 7 – Finfish, for the sub-period starting possession limit for all species other than Striped bass, Menhaden, and Horseshoe crabs. For Striped bass, refer to RIMFR Part 12 – Striped Bass; for Horseshoe crabs, refer to RIMFR Part 15 - Lobsters, Other Crustaceans, and Horseshoe Crabs; and for Menhaden, refer to RIMFR Part 16 -~~

Menhaden.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Current possession limit</b>	<b>Effective dates</b>
Atlantic Herring – Area 1A	OPEN UNLIMITED	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015.
Atlantic Herring – Area 1B	Directed Fishery is CLOSED; 2,000 lbs/vessel/calendar day bycatch allowance.	Effective 12:01AM on May 28, 2014, until the next fishing season opens on May 1, 2015.
Atlantic Herring – Area 2	OPEN UNLIMITED	Effective 12:01AM on October 29, 2013, until further notice.
Atlantic Herring – Area 3	Directed Fishery is CLOSED; 2,000 lbs/vessel/calendar day bycatch allowance.	Effective 12:01AM September 26, 2014, until further notice.
Black Sea Bass	OPEN at 750 lbs/vessel/calendar day.	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015, until the next sub-period begins on May 1, 2015 at 50 lbs/vessel/day.
Coastal Sharks – Smoothhound Sharks Species Group	OPEN UNLIMITED	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015 until further notice.
Coastal Sharks - Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Shark Species Group	OPEN UNLIMITED	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015, until further notice.
Coastal Sharks - Blacknose Coastal Shark Species Group	OPEN UNLIMITED	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015, until further notice.
Coastal Sharks - Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks Species Group	CLOSED	Effective 12:01AM on December 4, 2014, until the next fishing season opens on July 1, 2015.
Coastal Sharks - Hammerhead Sharks Species Group	CLOSED	Effective 12:01AM on December 4, 2014, until the next fishing season opens on July 1, 2015.
Coastal Sharks - Pelagic Sharks Species Group (excluding Porbeagle sharks)	OPEN UNLIMITED	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015, until further notice.
Coastal Sharks - Porbeagle Sharks of the Pelagic Shark Species Group	CLOSED	Effective 12:01 AM on December 19, 2014, extending through December 31, 2015.
Horseshoe Crab – commercial bait fishery	OPEN	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015.
Menhaden – in the Menhaden Mgmt. Area	CLOSED	Effective 12:01AM on July 14, 2014, until further notice.

Menhaden – In State Waters outside the Menhaden Mgmt. Area	OPEN UNLIMITED	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015, until further notice.
Monkfish	OPEN at 550 lbs tail weight or 1,826 lbs whole weight per vessel/calendar day.	Effective May 1, 2014, until further notice.
Scup – General Category	OPEN at 50,000 lbs/vessel/calendar day	Effective January 1, 2015, until the next sub-period opens on May 1, 2015 at 10,000 lbs/vessel/week.
Scup – Floating Fish Traps	OPEN at 50,000 lbs/vessel/calendar day	Effective January 1, 2015, until the next sub-period opens on May 1, 2015 (unlimited).
Striped Bass – General Category	CLOSED	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015, until the fishery opens on June 8, 2015 at 5 fish/vessel/day.
Striped Bass – Floating Fish Traps	CLOSED	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015, until the fishery opens on April 1, 2015 (unlimited).
Summer Flounder	CLOSED	Effective 12:01AM on December 26, 2014, until the next sub-period begins on January 1, 2015 at 200 lbs/vessel/day.
Spiny Dogfish	OPEN at 5,000 lbs/vessel/calendar day.	Effective at 12:01AM on September 8, 2014.
Tautog	CLOSED	Effective 12:01AM on January 1, 2015, until the fishery opens on April 15, 2015 at ten (10) fish per vessel per day.
Weakfish	Directed fishery is CLOSED; 100 lbs/vessel/calendar day bycatch allowance.	Effective November 9, 2014, until the directed fishery opens on June 1, 2015 at 100 lbs/vessel/calendar day.

**37.2 Penalties:** Unless another penalty is specified in this Title, any person who violates a rule or regulation of the Department shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500) or imprisonment for not more than ninety (90) days, or both. (RIGL 20-1-16)

**37.3 Shellfish and Marine Life Management Areas:** The Council may, recommend to the Director, to designate certain portions of the shores of the public waters of the State, or land within the State covered by tidewater at either high or low tide, or portions of the free and common fisheries of the State as Shellfish or Marine Life Project Management Areas pursuant to RIGL Section 20-3-4.

**37.3.1** Any designations under these regulations shall include an explicit description of the area to be designated and may include restrictions on the quantities, types, or sizes of shellfish or finfish which may be taken in such area, the times during which

shellfish or finfish may be taken, the manner or manners in which shellfish or finfish may be taken, or may close such area to the taking of shellfish or finfish altogether.

**37.3.2** A designation under these regulations may be made for a period not to exceed five (5) years. A designation may be renewed at the end of its initial term.

**37.3.3** Designations under these regulations may be made pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, Chapter 42-35 of the General Laws of Rhode Island as amended. Such designations shall contain a brief description of the purposes for which they are being made.

**37.3.4** Shellfishing and finfishing activity in a Management Area may be regulated by the Director by filing such regulation with the office of the Secretary of State. Such regulation shall take effect twenty (20) days following its filing. In case of emergency or imminent hazard found to require immediate action, the Director may issue regulations governing the taking of shellfish or finfish in a Management Area to become effective without delay. Any regulation issued under this Section shall contain an explicit description of the nature of the emergency or imminent hazard giving rise to the regulation.

**37.3.5** Until and unless modified pursuant to these regulations, all Management Areas previously established by the Department shall remain in effect.

**37.3.6** The Director may, where he or she reasonably believes that a delay would adversely affect the public purposes sought to be served by Title 20 of the General Laws of Rhode Island and/or would pose a danger to the public health, act to open or close any area (whether or not previously designated as a Marine Life Management Area) within the coastal waters of the State of Rhode Island to the taking of any and all types of fish, lobsters, and shellfish. In determining whether to open or close an area pursuant to this regulation, the Director shall consider what effect, if any, would be occasioned by deferring the decision to open or close such area until the next meeting of the Council. If the Director opens or closes an area without awaiting the next meeting of the Council, he or she shall:

- (A) Immediately give notice, in writing, to the Council members of his/her action, and the basis thereof;
- (B) Immediately give notice of his/her action, in a newspaper of general circulation in the area to be affected thereby; and
- (C) Place his/her decision to open or close an area on the agenda at the next scheduled meeting of the Council, for its consideration.

## **8. EFFECTIVE DATE**

The foregoing rules and regulations "Rhode Island Marine Regulations, Part III - Marine Fisheries Council", after due notice, are hereby adopted and filed with the Secretary of State this ~~23<sup>rd</sup> day of December, 2014~~ to become effective 20 days from filing, unless otherwise indicated below, in accordance with the provisions of Title 20, Chapters

42.17.1, 42-17.6, and 42-17.7, and in accordance with Chapter 42-35-18(b)(5),  
Administrative Procedures Act of the Rhode Island General Laws of 1956, as amended.

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Mark Gibson, Deputy Chief of Marine Fisheries  
Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Department of Environmental Management

Notice Given: **N/A 01/16/2015**  
Public Hearing: **N/A 02/16/2015**  
Filing date: **12/23/2014**  
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