



# Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

3 Fort Wetherill Road Jamestown, Rhode Island 02835

(401) 423-1920 Fax: (401) 423-1925

**RIMFC:** Molly Moran-Ogren, *Chair*; Coral Aiello; David Bethoney, Ph.D.; Andy Dangelo; Katie Eagan; Melva Treviño Peña, Ph.D.; Mike Roderick; Russell Sylvestre; Greg Vespe

## MEETING NOTICE RI MARINE FISHERIES COUNCIL

**Monday, December 1, 2025 – 6:00 PM**

In person:

URI Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium  
215 South Ferry Road  
Narragansett, RI

Zoom webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85906161166?pwd=3NqfrIxYG0Nvrvh1ILSPRYHTthYuym.1>

Meeting ID: 859 0616 1166

Passcode: 534432

Dial in: 1-929-205-6099

### AGENDA

<b>Agenda item (<i>items italicized include links to the meeting material</i>)</b>	<b>Recommended action(s)</b>
1. <i>Tonight's agenda</i>	Approval of agenda
2. <b>Review/approval of minutes from last meeting (11/5/2025)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Draft meeting minutes</i></li></ul>	Approval of meeting minutes
3. <b>Public comment on any matters not on the agenda</b>	Discussion or recommendations for future action.
4. <b>Review/approval of minutes from last Shellfish Advisory Panel (SAP) meeting (11/12/2025)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Draft meeting minutes</i></li><li>• <i>SAP presentation</i></li></ul>	Approval of minutes
5. <b>Providence River Shellfish Management Area (Area "E") January – April 2026 commercial harvest schedule</b> (opportunity for public comment will be provided): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>SAP recommendation</i></li></ul>	Provide recommendations to the Director as needed for regulatory changes

<p><b>6. Proposed regulations publicly noticed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Issuance of tickets for marine fisheries violations through the RI Traffic Tribunal (RITT)</i></li> <li>• <i>Dealer fixed place of business documentation</i></li> <li>• <i>RIGL reference pertaining to marking of traps</i></li> <li>• <i>Escape vent requirements for pots and traps other than lobster, black sea bass, and scup pots</i></li> <li>• <i>2026 commercial menhaden management</i></li> <li>• <i>2026 commercial striped bass – general category</i></li> <li>• <i>2026 commercial striped bass – gill net</i></li> <li>• <i>2026 commercial striped bass – floating fish trap allocation</i></li> <li>• <i>2026 commercial tautog management</i></li> <li>• <i>2026 commercial black sea bass management</i></li> <li>• <i>2026 commercial summer flounder management/landing restriction for summer flounder</i></li> <li>• <i>Aggregate Program</i></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Summary of Proposed Rulemaking (summary of all proposals under consideration)</i></li> <li>• <u>Summary of public hearing comments:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Part 3 – Finfish (menhaden, striped bass, tautog, black sea bass, summer flounder management; landing restriction for summer flounder)</i></li> <li>○ <i>Part 6 – General Equipment Provisions (RIGL reference pertaining to marking of traps; escape vent requirements for pots and traps other than lobster, black sea bass, and scup pots)</i></li> <li>○ <i>Part 7 – Dealers (dealer fixed place of business documentation; landing restriction for summer flounder)</i></li> <li>○ <i>Part 23 – Aggregate Program (aggregate program for black sea bass, summer flounder, tautog)</i></li> <li>○ <i>Part 1 – Definitions and General Provisions (RITT Tickets)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Written comments received</i></li> <li>• <u>External links (Sec. of State) to proposed rules:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#"><u>Part 3 – Finfish</u></a></li> <li>○ <a href="#"><u>Part 6 – General Equipment Provisions</u></a></li> <li>○ <a href="#"><u>Part 7 – Dealers</u></a></li> <li>○ <a href="#"><u>Part 23 – Aggregate Program</u></a></li> <li>○ <a href="#"><u>Part 1 – Definitions and General Provisions</u></a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Provide recommendations to the Director regarding proposed regulations</p>
<p><b>7. Administrative Policies and Procedures of the RIMFC – update/revisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Summary slides</i></li> <li>• <i>Proposed updated draft policy (revised based on Council input provided at the November 5, 2025 meeting)</i></li> </ul>	<p>Adoption or recommendations for future development</p>
<p><b>8. FYI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Aquaculture letter to CRMC - Application # 2025-06-013, Thomas Blank</i></li> <li>• <i>Aquaculture letter to CRMC - Application # 2025-06-048, Bradley Boehringer</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>9. Any other matters?</b></p>	<p>FYI or recommendations for future action.</p>
<p><b>10. Adjourn</b></p>	

**All RIMFC Meetings are open to the public**

Posted to Sec. of State Open Meetings pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-6



# Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

3 Fort Wetherill Road Jamestown, Rhode Island 02835

(401) 423-1920 Fax: (401) 423-1925

**RIMFC:** Molly Moran-Ogren, *Chair*; Coral Aiello; David Bethoney, Ph.D.; Andy Dangelo; Katie Eagan; Melva Treviño Peña, Ph.D.; Mike Roderick; Russell Sylvestre; Greg Vespe

## MEETING SUMMARY

November 5, 2025

Chairperson: Molly Ogren

Council members: Ms. Aiello, Mr. Vespe, and Mr. Roderick absent

Division of Marine Fisheries: S. Olszewski, J. Livermore, J. Lake, N. Costa, E. Schneider, C. Parkins, A. Gerber-Williams, K. Rodrigue, P. Duhamel

DEM Legal: Maria Rice

1. Approval of the agenda: Chair Ogren inquired to any objections to approving the agenda; hearing no objections or requests for modifications from the Council members, the agenda was approved by consent.
2. Approval of minutes from last meeting on October 20, 2025: Chair Ogren inquired to any objections to approving the minutes or if there were any requests for modifications. Hearing none, the minutes were approved by consent.
3. Public comments regarding any other matters not on agenda: DEM Director Terry Gray addressed the Council and offered support and appreciation for the Council. He explained his decision-making process and the importance of the Council recommendations to him when rendering his final decisions on final rules.
4. Shellfish Advisory Panel (SAP) meeting minutes (10/1/2025 and 10/15/2025 meetings): Ms. Gerber-Williams provided an overview of the meetings. Upon conclusion of the summaries, Chair Ogren inquired to any objections to approving the summary, or if there were any requests for modifications. Hearing no objections or requests for modifications, the summaries were approved by consent.
5. Shellfish harvest schedule for Greenwich Bay Shellfish Management Area: Discussion focused on the December 2025 harvest schedule, in which two industry proposals were submitted and provided in the SAP meeting materials. Ms. Eagan offered support for the SAP recommended schedule, to which Mr. Olszewski offered Division support. **Motion made by Ms. Eagan; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dr. Bethoney, to recommend adoption of the SAP recommended schedule for December 2025.** Opportunity for public comment on the motion was then provided, to which comments were provided from Mr. Mike McGiveney and Mr. Jim Boyd, who both provided support for the SAP recommendation. **The motion passed 5-0.**

6. Administrative Policies and Procedures of the RIMFC – update/revisions: Chair Ogren provided a summary of the contents of the proposed policy, which dictates the operational management of the Council. Ensuing discussion focused on Council communication with the public, the need for additional advisory panels, the current workshop structure and regulatory proposals submitted by industry and the public, aquaculture review, advisory panel attendance requirements, advisory panel chair and vice-chair, and advisory panel term limits. The Council directed the Division to revise the policy to reflect the discussion and provide an updated policy for review and/or approval for the next meeting scheduled on December 1, 2025.
7. 2024 RI Annual Fisheries Report: Ms. Livermore provided a brief summary of the contents of the report, and inquired as to any comments or additional information to be added to the report. No comments were provided.
8. 2024 Recreational Fishing Report: Mr. Lake provided a brief summary of the contents of the report with emphasis on past and planned future expenditures. Mr. Lake inquired as to any comments or additional information to be added to the report. No comments were provided.
9. 2024 RIMFC Annual Report: Mr. Duhamel provided a brief summary of the contents of the report with emphasis on the Director's concurrence with advice provided by the Council on regulatory matters brought before the Council. No comments were provided.
10. Any Other Matters: No other matters were brought forward for discussion.
11. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:45pm.

Note: This document represents a meeting summary of the actions taken and/or future actions that will be addressed at subsequent meetings. The full video recording of the meeting is available at the Division of Marine Fisheries YouTube channel [here](#).

# Shellfish Advisory Panel

November 12, 2025; 4:30PM

URI Bay Campus Large Conference Room/

Virtual public meeting - Zoom webinar

## MEETING SUMMARY

RIMFC members: K. Eagan (Chair)

DEM: A. Gerber-Williams, S. Olszewski, P. Barrett, D. Borkman, E. Schneider, J. Livermore, C. Truesdale, J. Lake, J. Beuth (DLE);

SAP members: B. Bica, J. Gardner, D. Ghigliotty, J. Grant, J. McDonald, M. McGiveney, G. Schey;

Scientific Advisor: Dr. Rice

Public: J. Boyd, B. Eastman, E. Soranno, 1 additional attendee in person and 2 attendees online.

Link to meeting recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0UCcZWx9ao>

### **1. Providence River Shellfish Management Area/Area E Harvest January – April Harvest Schedule.**

A. *Gerber-Williams* presented an overview of the Providence River Shellfish Management Area commercial landings to date. She shared the realized hours (45 hours) and unrealized harvest hours (24) for the 2025 season. This hourly framing was prefaced for the upcoming discussion of the schedule using hours rather than days for scheduling.

Two Providence River harvest schedules were presented for the February through April of 2026. Proposal 1 was presented by *M. McGiveney* on behalf of the Rhode Island Shellfishermen's Association. The February openings were adjusted to 9:00 – 11:00 AM due to later sunrise and hazardous winter driving conditions. March – April openings revert to 8:00 – 10:00 AM. The intent of the schedule is to increase realized harvest opportunities during a period with significant rainfall-related closures, provide more predictable weekly access, spread harvest pressure evenly without overwhelming dealers. The schedule projects 24 total hours of potential harvest if all days open, yielding an estimated 1.7 million clams based on historical harvest rates. *J. Beuth* on behalf of enforcement noted the challenges associated with changing harvest times between months and asked that industry communication networks work to distribute such updates. Discussion points were made about market considerations in February (slow demand except around Valentine's Day), frequency of rainfall closure and likelihood that not all proposed days would be realized

(approximately 70%). It was noted that long-term declines in quahog landings and the need for more consistent Providence River access to buffer the collapsing industry.

Proposal 2 was presented by *B. Bica* and largely mirrored the RISA proposal, but a correction was made to the initially listed proposal, which listed a three-hour opening period. He clarified that the intent of the proposal was to use the same two-hour openings and the same times as Proposal 1, except that the week of February 16-20 would be omitted, reducing total proposed hours from 24 to 22. Discussion points focused on market weakness the week after Valentine's Day, the tradeoff between fewer February days versus maximizing total opportunities.

***Motion made by M. McGiveney to recommend to the Marine Fisheries Council adopt the following schedule for Providence River Area E:***

**Commercial boat harvest/other than shoredigging harvest schedule, February – April 2026: Open one (1) weekday Monday through Thursday, excludes Friday, from 9:00 A.M. until 11:00 A.M. on the first available weekday that is not closed due to water quality impairment at a 6-bushel limit during the following weeks:**

- **February 9 through 12**
- **February 16 through 19**
- **February 23 through 26**

**Open one (1) weekday Monday through Thursday, excludes Friday, from 8:00 A.M. until 10:00 A.M. on the first available weekday that is not closed due to water quality impairment at a 6-bushel limit during the following weeks:**

- **March 2 through 5**
- **March 9 through 12**
- **March 16 through 19**
- **March 23 through 26**
- **March 30 through April 2**
- **April 6 through 9**
- **April 13 through 16**
- **April 20 through 23**
- **April 27 through 30**

**2<sup>nd</sup> by *M. McDonald*; The motion passed 7 – 0 – 0.**

## 2. Any Other Matters

*B. Bica* noted concerns with shoredigging and dealer reporting when they arrive at the dealers around 6:00 -7:00 P.M. with product allegedly dug hours earlier. Dealers cannot verify when product was harvested, creating food safety and recall liability risks. The concern is that warm-weather landings held on boats, during transport from shore or at home may exceed allowed temperature windows. It was also noted the large discrepancy in available time where shorediggers may work an entire tide cycle (4-6+ hours) and boat harvesters receive a 3-hour window to harvest. *J. Beuth* on behalf of enforcement reported no significant increase in shoredigging effort but the main violation observed is individuals harvesting recreational limits during commercial closures, then attempting to tag as commercial the next day. The overall Panel consensus was that this issue should be further discussed and added to the February 2026 SAP agenda with updated data from the Division of Marine Fisheries on actual shore-harvest participation.

*A. Gerber-Williams* shared and summarized previously submitted written public comments from both the Rhode Island Shellfishermen's Association and *Mr. J Boyd*. *M. McGiveney* presented the Association's comments. For the Providence River Shellfish Management Area, industry strongly supports counting total annual hours, not days because it allows more flexibility to match market conditions, more equitable distribution of effort, ability to spread smaller 2-hour openings across more weeks (this proves beneficial for industry in more realized time in the Providence River). *A. Gerber-Williams* agreed that that the Division supports transitioning back to hour-based accounting, consistent with early Area E modeling efforts and stated that the Division would work with industry to design an annual hours framework. Initial planning discussions will begin during the Spring 2026 scheduling for the Providence River. *M. McGiveney* also stated that industry requests that for the Providence River Shellfish Management Area, a single annual schedule, rather than separate winter and summer cycles potentially with a mid-season check-in to address unused hours. *A. Gerber-Williams* on behalf of the Division agreed that moving toward a full-year scheduling beginning fall 2026 would be beneficial to all and that a mid-season reassessment option could be incorporated. *S. Olszewski* suggested using sub-period rollovers, allowing unused hours in one period to roll forward into the next without triggering regulatory amendments. *M. McGiveney* raised the industry request to allow steamer harvest during Providence River openings. Division staff presented that there is no known steamer abundance data for that area but would be willing to work with industry to perform a fishery-dependent steamer survey in Spring 2026 with volunteer diggers accompanied by DMF staff. It would require developing a statistically valid sampling method; intended for exploration, not immediate harvest authorization. *E. Schneider* further stated that Soft-shell clams have faced major disease-driven collapses across the Northeast ("steamer neoplasia") and that it's unknown whether Providence River supports any surviving or resistant population.

*J. Boyd* summarized industry concerns about the Providence River dredging and shellfish relocation worked planned with the Corps, which intends to dredge the Edgewood Shoals CAD cell and connecting channel. He reiterated the number of clams to be removed and the testing required in advance of such relocation work and urged the Division that this is a timely manner with suggested dredging could begin November 2026. *E. Schneider* provided an update from the

Corps with the revised timeline of earliest dredging in the Spring of 2027, not 2026. He also shared that the Corps is revising the Dredged Material Management Plan using RIDEM and RISA comments and that the funding is expected to be closer to \$200K plus a large contingency. He also stated that some funds may be made available before construction, allowing early pathology and contaminant testing. Coordination is ongoing; another meeting with the Corps is scheduled within two weeks. *E. Soranno* of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) described ongoing research proposals to evaluate the Potowomut Spawner Sanctuary population structure, other potential transplant receiving sites and population baseline assessments to avoid overcrowding or unsuitable placement from the transplant efforts. *G. Schey* shared that dredging sedimentation poses serious mortality risk to Area E clams; Barrington/ Upper Bay was severely impacted the last time dredging occurred. *J. Boyd* presented the topic of establishing a permanent Quahog Advisory Committee/Commission, which is support unanimously by industry members to coordinate research priorities, long-term recruitment studies, transplant program oversight, and policy development. *D. Borkman* stated that DEM has pursued funding through several budget cycles but has been unsuccessful. *E. Schneider* shared that the Division has been discussing that the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Institute (RIMFI) may serve as an administrative home.

### **3. Adjourn**

Adjourned at 6:40 PM.

*Minutes prepared by Anna Gerber-Williams, the Division of Marine Fisheries*

# SHELLFISH ADVISORY PANEL

**URI BAY CAMPUS/GSO**  
ROOM TBD (COASTAL INST. BUILDING)

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November 12, 2025



# Virtual Meeting Participation



1. All participants will be muted throughout the meeting.
2. To make a comment or ask a question you must use the **Raise Hand** feature in the zoom webinar.
3. The meeting facilitator will un-mute one participant at a time to make their comment or ask their question, the participant will then be re-muted.

**Please minimize background noise while unmuted! – Thank you**

# AGENDA



- 1. Providence River Shellfish Management Area/Area E harvest schedule  
February – April 2026 - Action**
- 2. Any Other Matters, Public Comment – FYI or recommendation for  
future agenda item only**
- 3. Adjourn**

# Providence River 2025 Harvest Summary



YEAR	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (Winter: 2-hr openings)	2025 (Summer: as of 11/4)
Days Open	15	28	15	16	6 out of 6	15 out of 23
Clams Harvested	4,727,196	10,553,571	5,645,317	4,977,293	853,198	4,703,316
(% Little Necks)	-83.54%	-85.10%	-83.12%	-84.92%	-83.22%	-83.30%
(% Top Necks)	-13.30%	-12.60%	-14.80%	-13.89%	-15.30%	-15.37%
(% Cherry)	-0.87%	-0.60%	-0.57%	-0.48%	-0.54%	-0.56%
(% Chowders)	-2.29%	-1.70%	-1.51%	-0.71%	-0.95%	-0.77%
Average landings per Day	312,530	376,680	372,323	311,080	141,795	303,029
Average Number of Harvesters per Day	151	176	184	163	95 (min 77-max 118)	161 (141 min-181 max)
Average number of Clams per license per day	2,048	2,131	2,052	1,908	1,493	1,873

2025	
Summer schedule hours realized	Summer schedule hours not realized
45	24

**\*1 potential day remaining on Dec 12**

**\*2025 Landings data as of 11/4/2025**

# Providence River Harvest Schedule



## February – April 2025 schedule:

- Recreational shoredigging: Open daily.
- Recreational boat harvest (other than shoredigging): Closed.
- Commercial other than shoredigging: Open one (1) weekday from 8:00 A.M. until 10:00 A.M. on the first available weekday that is not closed due to water quality impairment during the following weeks:
  - February 8 through 14
  - February 22 through 28
  - March 8 through 14
  - March 22 through 28
  - April 5 through 11
  - April 19 through 25

# Providence River Harvest Schedule



## Industry Proposal 1:

- Commercial boat harvest/other than shoredigging harvest schedule, February 2026: Open one (1) weekday Monday through Thursday, excludes Friday, from ~~8:00~~ 9:00 A.M. until ~~10:00~~ 11:00 A.M. on the first available weekday that is not closed due to water quality impairment at a 6-bushel limit during the following weeks:
    - February 9 through 12
    - February 16 through 19
    - February 23 through 26
  
  - Open one (1) weekday Monday through Thursday, excludes Friday, from 8:00 A.M. until 10:00 A.M. on the first available weekday that is not closed due to water quality impairment at a 6-bushel limit during the following weeks:
    - March 2 through 5
    - March 9 through 12
    - March 16 through 19
    - March 23 through 26
    - March 30 through April 2
    - April 6 through 9
    - April 13 through 16
    - April 20 through 23
    - April 27 through 30
- **Proposed total number of 24 hours**
- **Estimated total harvest 1,702,020**

# Providence River Harvest Schedule



## Industry Proposal 2:

- Commercial boat harvest/other than shoredigging harvest schedule, February 2026: Open one (1) weekday Monday through Thursday, excludes Friday, from ~~8:00~~ 9:00 A.M. until ~~10:00~~ 11:00 A.M. on the first available weekdays that is not closed due to water quality impairment at a 6-bushel limit during the following weeks:
  - February 9 through 12
  - February 23 through 26
- Open one (1) weekday Monday through Thursday, excludes Friday, from 8:00 A.M. until ~~10:00~~ 10:00 A.M. on the first available weekday that is not closed due to water quality impairment at a 6-bushel limit during the following weeks:
  - March 2 through 5
  - March 9 through 12
  - March 16 through 19
  - March 23 through 26
  - March 30 through April 2
  - April 6 through 9
  - April 13 through 16
  - April 20 through 23
  - April 27 through 30

➤ **Proposed total number of 22 hours**



# 1. Providence River Commercial Harvest 2025

Scenario	Hours Open	Total Days	Total Hours	Total Harvest (estimated)
<b>Proposal 1</b>	2 hours (9-11 AM)	3	<b>24</b>	<b>1,702,020</b>
	2 hours (8-10 AM)	9		
<b>Proposal 2</b>	2 hours (9-11 AM)	2	<b>31</b>	<b>2,997,647</b>
	<del>3 hours (8-11 AM)</del>	9		
<b>Default Schedule</b>	2 hours (8-10 AM)	6	<b>12</b>	<b>851,010</b>

**\*\*Each possession limit is 6 bushel/person/day; maximum 12 bushels/vessel**

# Providence River Harvest Schedule



**Motion:** To recommend to the Marine Fisheries Council to adopt the following schedule for Providence River Area E:

- **Industry Proposal 1**

*Motion made by: MM*

*Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by: JM*

*Yea: JM, DG, MM, BB, JG, JG, GS*

*Nay:*

*Abstain:*

*Vote: 7-0-0*



**Any Other Matters?**  
**Public comment welcome**

# Public Comment



1. RISA would like to propose scheduling for Area 16E – Providence River – for an entire year from January through December. Scheduling for each successive year would be accomplished in the Fall prior to the start of the next January – December cycle.
2. Counting hours of opening for area E instead of days. Similar to Greenwich Bay scheduling. Example: allowed 44 hours in Greenwich for the month of December.
3. Revisit Steamer harvest for Area E when it is open.
4. Establishment of a Permanent Quahog Advisory Committee Commission as recommended by the Joint Legislative Quahog Commission in their final report dated 5/31/24;
5. Communication update between DMF and ACOE on Providence River dredging project and relocation of quahog resource to be impacted by dredging operations and Cad cell construction
6. Communication update between DMF and SouthCoast Wind on shellfish resource assessment in the Sakonnet River and Mt. Hope Bay and potential mitigation/compensation plans; and
7. Senators Whitehouse (RI-D) and Scott (SC-R) proposed legislation to form an East Coast Bivalve Research Task Force



**Adjourn**



	Hours Open	Poss. Limit	Total Days	2026 Winter/Spring Schedule	Total Hours	Total Harvest (estimated)	Additional notes
<b>Proposal 1</b>	2 hours (9-11 AM)	6 bu/ person/ day; max 12 bu/ vesl/ day	3	February 9 through 12 February 16 through 19 February 23 through 26	24	<b>1,702,020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 hour average number of harvesters (95)</li> <li>• 2 hour average number of clams per license (1,493)</li> </ul>
	2 hours (8-10 AM)	6 bu/ person/ day; max 12 bu/ vesl/ day	9	March 2 through 5 March 9 through 12 March 16 through 19 March 23 through 26 March 30 through April 2 April 6 through 9 April 13 through 16 April 20 through 23 April 27 through 30			
<b>Proposal 2</b>	2 hours (9-11 AM)	6 bu/ person/ day; max 12 bu/ vesl/ day	2	February 9 through 12 February 23 through 26	31	<b>2,997,647</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 hour average number of harvesters (161)</li> <li>• 3 hour average number of clams per license (1,873)</li> </ul>
	3 hours (8-11 AM)	6 bu/ person/ day; max 12 bu/ vesl/ day	9	March 2 through 5 March 9 through 12 March 16 through 19 March 23 through 26 March 30 through April 2 April 6 through 9 April 13 through 16 April 20 through 23 April 27 through 30			
<b>Default Schedule</b>	2 hours (8-10 AM)	6 bu/ person/ day; max 12 bu/ vesl/ day	6	February 8 through 14 February 22 through 28 March 8 through 14 March 22 through 28 April 5 through 11 April 19 through 25	12	<b>851,010</b>	



**Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management  
Division of Marine Fisheries**

Office 401.423.1920 | Fax 401.423.1925 | dem.ri.gov/marine

Fort Wetherill Marine Laboratory  
3 Fort Wetherill Road, Jamestown, RI 02835

Coastal Fisheries Laboratory  
1231 Succotash Road, Wakefield, RI 02879



## **Summary of Proposed Rulemaking**

**Comment Period: October 14 – November 16, 2025**

**Public Hearing: Monday, November 3, 2025**

**RI Marine Fisheries Council: Monday, December 1, 2025**

**Note: Order of proposals reflects order received**

**Proposals reflect amendments for regulatory changes, however, STATUS QUO is always an option, unless otherwise specified**

### **Part 3 – Finfish (250-RICR-90-00-3)**

#### **1. Commercial Menhaden Management:**

- **Proposal 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Increase the weekly limit for menhaden regardless of the MMA status and add one additional open day.

**Proposed Rule (Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.21.2(A)):**

1. Weekly possession limit: ~~Twelve Six~~ thousand (~~12,000 6,000~~) pounds per vessel per week provided that the State's quota has not been exhausted or if the Episodic Event Set Aside Program has been enacted in Rhode Island.
  - a. Open Days: Monday, ~~Tuesday~~, and Thursday of each week.
  - b. Rhode Island resident only.
  - c. Gear restrictions:
    - (1) Hand-haul seine only, cast net, and floating gill net only.
    - (2) Maximum net size: Four-hundred and eighty (480) feet by forty-eight (48) feet.
  - d. Seasons and allocations:
    - (1) April 1 through April 30: 100,000 lbs.

(2) May 1 through 31: 100,000 lbs.

(3) June 1 through June 30: 100,000 lbs.

- e. All commercial menhaden operations conducted in the Management Area, prior to and after the State's quota has been reached, are subject to the provisions of § 3.21.2 of this Part.

2. Daily Possession limit:

- **Proposal 2 (Industry):** Expand weekly limit for menhaden regardless of the MMA status.

Proposed Rule (Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.21.2(A)):

- 1. Weekly possession limit: Twelve Six thousand (~~12,000 6,000~~) pounds per vessel per week provided that the State's quota has not been exhausted or if the Episodic Event Set Aside Program has been enacted in Rhode Island.

~~a. Open Days: Monday and Thursday of each week.~~

~~a~~b. Rhode Island resident only.

~~b~~e. Gear restrictions:

(1) ~~Hand-haul seine only, cast net, and floating gill net only.~~

(2) ~~Maximum net size: Four-hundred and eighty (480) feet by forty-eight (48) feet.~~

~~c~~d. ~~Seasons and allocations:~~ January 1 through December 31.

(1) ~~April 1 through April 30: 100,000 lbs.~~

(2) ~~May 1 through 31: 100,000 lbs.~~

(3) ~~June 1 through June 30: 100,000 lbs.~~

d. Monthly landing trigger: Once 100,000 pounds is projected to be reached in any month, the weekly possession limit will close until the start of the next month.

- e. All commercial menhaden operations conducted in the Management Area, prior to and after the State's quota has been reached, are subject to the provisions of § 3.21.2 of this Part.

2. Daily Possession limit:

2. **2026 Commercial Striped Bass Management (General Category, Floating Fish Trap, Gill Net):**

- **Proposal 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Amend the General Category season and closed days.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.8.2(A)(3)(a&b)*):

- a. January 1 through May 18 ~~June 9~~: Closed.
- b. May 19 ~~June 10~~ through December 31:

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.8.2(A)(3)(b)(3)*):

The fishery will be ~~open~~ ~~closed~~ in each calendar week on Tuesday ~~Friday~~, ~~Saturday~~, ~~Sunday~~, and ~~Monday~~ during this sub-period. There will be no commercial possession or sale of striped bass on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or Monday ~~these days~~ for general category commercial fishermen.

- **Proposal 2 (Industry):** Amend the General Category season.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.8.2(A)(3)(a&b)*):

- a. January 1 through June 1 ~~June 9~~: Closed.
- b. June 2 ~~June 10~~ through December 31:

- **Proposal 3 (Division):** Amend the General Category possession limit. This option is being put forward proactively in case the ASMFC adopts commercial reductions for 2026 at their October 2025 meeting.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.8.2(A)(3)(b)*):

- (2) Possession limit: ~~Three~~ ~~Five~~ (~~3~~ ~~5~~) fish per person per day, or if fishing from a vessel, ~~three~~ ~~five~~ (~~3~~ ~~5~~) fish per vessel per day.

- **Proposal 4 (Division):** Amend the General Category closed days. This option is being put forward proactively in case the ASMFC adopts commercial reductions for 2026 at their October 2025 meeting.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.8.2(A)(3)(b)*):

- (3) The fishery will be closed in each calendar week on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday during this sub-period. There will be no commercial possession or sale of striped bass on these days for general category commercial fishermen.

- **Proposal 5 (Industry):** Amend the gill net prohibition for striped bass to allow for commercial harvest under the general category fishery.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.8.2(C)*):

Gill net prohibition for striped bass: No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gillnetting, or while hauling a gillnet, north of a line commencing at upper pier in the town of Narragansett and extending in a straight line in a northeasterly direction to Beavertail Lighthouse and thence continuing in a northeasterly direction in a straight line to Castle Hill Lighthouse in the city of Newport.

- **Proposal 6 (Industry)**: Amend the FFT allocation and gill net prohibition for striped bass to allow commercial gill net harvest.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.8.2(B)(2)*): Allocation: During a single calendar year, the floating fish trap quota shall not be more than twenty-seven ~~thirty-nine~~ percent (39 ~~27~~%) of the annual Rhode Island commercial quota.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.8.2(C)*):

Gill nets prohibition for striped bass:

1. Allocation: During a single calendar year, the gill net quota shall not be more than twelve percent (12%) of the annual Rhode Island commercial quota.
2. Minimum size: Twenty-six inches (26”).
3. Season: April 1 through December 31.
4. Possession limit: Unlimited with the total weight of striped bass landed (measured in pounds) equal to or less than twenty percent (20%) of the total combined weight of all other fish landed.
5. Permit required: No person shall harvest striped bass with gill nets without a valid Striped Bass Gill Net Harvest Permit obtained from the Director. Application for this permit shall be made on forms prescribed by the Director.
  - a. Eligibility:
    - (1) Must hold a valid gill net endorsement.
    - (2) Must demonstrate at least thirty thousand (30,000) pounds of cumulative landings of any marine species harvested in the three (3) preceding calendar years.
  - b. Permit conditions: The permit is valid only for the calendar year of issuance.

6. Gill net prohibition for striped bass:

- a. No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gillnetting, or while hauling a gillnet, without a valid Striped Bass Gill Net Harvest Permit.
- b. No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gillnetting, or while hauling a gillnet, north of a line commencing at upper pier in the town of Narragansett and extending in a straight line in a northeasterly direction to Beavertail Lighthouse and thence continuing in a northeasterly direction in a straight line to Castle Hill Lighthouse in the city of Newport.

- **Proposal 7 (Industry):** Do not allow any floating fish trap allocation change until after the 2029 rebuilding timeline for striped bass or the striped bass stock has been rebuilt.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.8.2(B)(2)*):

Allocation:

- a. During a single calendar year, the floating fish trap quota shall not be more than thirty-nine percent (39%) of the annual Rhode Island commercial quota.
- b. The floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change, and will remain 39%, until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended, and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the ASMFC.

3. **2026 Commercial Tautog Management:**

- **Proposal 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Sub-period allocation changes.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.10.2(B)(2)(a)*):

Allocation: Forty ~~two and one-half~~ percent (40 42.5%) of the annual quota.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.9.2(B)(4)(a)*):

Allocation: ~~Thirty Fifteen~~ percent (30 15%) of the annual quota.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.9.2(B)(6)(a)*):

Allocation: ~~Thirty Forty-two and one-half~~ percent (30 42.5%) of the annual quota.

4. **2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management:**

- **Proposal 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Sub-period allocation changes.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.6.2(B)(1)(a)*):  
Allocation: ~~Fifteen~~ **Eighteen** percent (~~15~~ **18**%) of the quota.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.6.2(B)(6)(a)*):  
Allocation: ~~Thirteen~~ **Ten**-percent (~~13~~ **10**%) of the quota.

- **Proposal 2 (Industry/Noticed)**: Possession limit changes.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.6.2(B)(3)(b)*):  
Possession limit: ~~One-hundred~~ **Fifty** (~~100~~ **50**) pounds per person and per vessel per day.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.6.2(B)(4)(b)*):  
Possession limit: ~~One-hundred~~ **Fifty** (~~100~~ **50**) pounds per person and per vessel per day.

- **Proposal 3 (Industry/Noticed)**: Possession limit changes. **This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 23 – Aggregate, Proposal 5 to amend the Aggregate Program to be a single year-round program** (see Part 23 – Aggregate below).

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.6.2(B)(1)(b)*):

Possession limit: ~~One~~ **Five**-hundred (~~100~~ **500**) pounds per person and per vessel per ~~day~~ **week**.

## 5. **2026 Commercial Summer Flounder Management:**

- **Proposal 1 (Division/Noticed)**: Amend sub-period possession limits.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.9.2(B)(3)(b)(1)*):  
Vessels that possess a valid Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate: ~~One~~ **Five** hundred (~~100~~ **500**) pounds per person and per vessel per day.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.9.2(B)(3)(b)(2)*):  
Vessels that do not possess a valid Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate: ~~One~~ **Two**-hundred (~~100~~ **200**) pounds per person and per vessel per day.

- **Proposal 2 (Industry/Noticed)**: Amend landing restriction for summer flounder.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.9.2(D)*):  
Summer flounder may be ~~offloaded~~ **landed** between the hours of 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. only.

- **Proposal 3 (Industry)**: Amend the landing restriction for summer flounder for harvesters. **This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 7 –**

Dealers, proposal #1 regarding the landing restriction for summer flounder for dealers (see below Part 7 – Dealers Proposal 1).

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.9.2(D)*):

~~Summer flounder may be landed between the hours of 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. only.~~

## **Part 23 – Aggregate Program (250-RICR-90-00-23)**

### **1. Summer/Fall Aggregate Program for Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass:**

- **Proposal 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Amend weekly black sea bass limit to 7x the daily limit.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 23 – Aggregate Program; section 23.11(E)(1)*):

Black sea bass:

- a. ~~May 1 through October 15:~~ The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by seven (7).
  - b. ~~October 16 through December 31: The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by six (6).~~
  - ae. Once 85% of the sub-period quota is projected to be reached, the possession limit may revert back to a daily limit.
- **Proposal 2 (Industry):** Amend title of part 23 to remove “aggregate” and change all instances of “aggregate” to “weekly or bi-weekly landing limit program”.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 23 – Aggregate Program*):

Part 23 – ~~Aggregate~~ Weekly Landing Limit Program

Change all instances of “aggregate” to “weekly or bi-weekly landing limit”.

- **Proposal 3 (Industry):** Amend the permit condition requirement to submit reports prior to offload.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 23 – Aggregate Program; section 23.11(D)(2)*): Participants shall document catch and effort information through the Division approved electronic application no more than twenty four (24) hours after ~~prior to~~ offload.

- **Proposal 4 (Industry):** Amend the permit condition requirement to submit reports prior to offload.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 23 – Aggregate Program; section 23.11(D)(2)*): Participants shall document catch and effort information for summer flounder and black sea bass through the Division approved electronic application prior to offload.

- **Proposal 5 (Industry)**: Amend *Part 23 - Aggregate Program* to be a single year-round program. **This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 3 – Finfish, 2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management Proposal 3 to amend possession limit changes** (see Part 3 – Finfish, 2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management above).

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 23 – Aggregate Program, sections 23.10 and 23.11*) and *Part 3 – Finfish, section 3.6.2(B)(1)(b)*

### 23.10 Winter I Season Program

- A. Authorizes the aggregate possession limit of summer flounder and black sea bass during the specified season(s) to authorized permit holders.
- B. Eligibility:
1. The vessel, if harvesting summer flounder from Federal waters, holds a valid Federal Summer Flounder Moratorium Permit and Rhode Island Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate issued pursuant to Part 14 of this Subchapter.
  2. The vessel's owner and operator(s), if harvesting summer flounder from State waters, holds without a valid Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate, must be a Rhode Island resident. Vessels owned by a corporation(s) must meet the following conditions:
    - a. The business or corporation must be registered with the State of Rhode Island in the preceding calendar year and in good standing.
    - b. At least one member of the corporation must be a RI resident. RI resident must demonstrate they have a vested interest in a business or corporation that owns the commercial fishing vessel and must document their vested interest on certificate of authority and disclosure of corporation forms prescribed by the Department.
- C. Season: Sunday of the first full week in January through April 30.
- D. Possession Limit: ~~Four thousand (4,000) pounds per vessel per biweek.~~
1. Summer flounder:

- a. Vessels that possess a valid Rhode Island Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate: Four thousand (4,000) pounds per vessel per biweek.
- b. Vessels that do not possess a valid Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate: The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by seven (7).
- c. Possession limits may revert back to a daily limit once 80% of the sub-period quota for each species is projected to have been reached.

2. Black sea bass:

- a. The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by seven (7).
- b. Possession limits may revert back to a daily limit once 80% of the sub-period quota for each species is projected to have been reached.

**23.11 Summer/Fall Season Program**

C. Season Period: May 1 through December 31

- **Proposal 6 (Industry)**: Add tautog as an authorized species to the aggregate program.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 23 – Aggregate; section 23.11(A)*):

Authorizes the aggregate possession limit of black sea bass, ~~and~~ summer flounder, and tautog during the specified season(s) to authorized permit holders.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 23 – Aggregate; section 23.11(E)*):

3. Tautog: The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by seven (7).

- a. Once 85% of the sub-period quota for is projected to be reached, the possession limit may revert back to a daily limit.

**Part 6 - General Equipment Provisions (250-RICR-90-00-6)**

1. **Delete Reference to RIGL in Rule Pertaining to Marking of Traps:**

- **Proposal 1 (Division/Noticed)**: Remove the reference to RIGL in rule to clarify that the rule also applies to recreational pots.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 6 – General Equipment Provisions; section 6.4(B)(2)*):

Each pot used for the taking of marine species shall have attached a buoy, and each pot and buoy shall be identified with the name and license number of the owner. (~~R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-4-7~~)

2. **Escape Vent requirement for all Pots and Traps:**

- **Proposal 1 (Division/Noticed):** Amend rule to require an escape vent requirement for pots and traps.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 6 – General Equipment Provisions; section 6.4(B)(7)*):

Escape vents: All pots and traps must be constructed with at least one (1) rectangular escape vent with an unobstructed opening measuring not less than two inches by five and three quarters inches (2" x 5-3/4") or one (1) circular escape opening that must be a minimum of two and one half inches (2 1/2") in diameter, unless otherwise noted in regulation. Pots and traps utilized to catch certain marine species including, but not limited to, lobster, jonah crab, black sea bass, and scup have additional escape vent requirements. The following pots and traps are exempt from this requirement but may not be used to harvest lobster, jonah crab, black sea bass, and scup:

a. Traps not exceeding twenty four inches (24") per side.

b. Traps constructed with a mesh size not exceeding one inch (1").

**Part 1 - Definitions and General Provisions (250-RICR-90-00-1)**

1. **Penalties: Issuance of Tickets for Marine Fisheries Violations Through the RI Traffic Tribunal (RITT)**

- **Proposal 1 (Division/Noticed):** Amend regulations to be consistent with statute whereby violations will be subject to a \$100 fine per offense and shall be under the jurisdiction of RITT.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 1 – Definitions and General Provisions; section 1.8*):

~~A. If the Director determines that there has been non-compliance with the provisions of these Regulations or a permit agreement, the owner and/or operator of the vessel and/or license holder shall be advised of such determination and the specific grounds therefore in writing. The determination shall specifically include notice that an opportunity for a hearing is available before the Administrative Adjudication Division pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-17.7 relative to either or both the finding that sufficient evidence exists of non-compliance with the provisions of these Regulations or the~~

~~permit agreement as well as the termination of the permit and or the imposition of a penalty pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-1-16.~~

~~A.B.—Judicially imposed penalty for violations:~~

~~1.—Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-1-16, Unless otherwise specifically provided, the penalty for the violation of any Law or Rule or Regulation relating to ~~wild animals, wild birds, lobsters and fish~~, marine, freshwater and anadromous fisheries and shellfisheries shall be a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or imprisonment for up to ninety (90) days, or both, unless otherwise specifically provided.~~

~~B. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-1-12, the penalty for any violation of any Law, Rule, or Regulations relating to seasons, possession limits, size limits and methods of take for any species of fish, game, bird, or other wild animal occurring within the state shall be a civil violation and subject to a fine of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each offense. The Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine all violations specified in this section.~~

~~2C. Additionally, a person The owner and/or operator of the vessel and/or license/permit holder may be subject to the imposition of an administrative penalty pursuant to DEM's Rules and Regulations Governing the Suspension/Revocation of Commercial and Recreational Fishing Licenses; Part 80-00-6 of this Title, licenses issued pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Title 20 (250-RICR-80-00-6).~~

## **Part 7 – Dealers (250-RICR-90-00-7)**

### **1. Dealer Fixed Place of Business Documentation:**

- **Proposal 1 (Division/Noticed):** Require documentation for RI fixed place of business upon application of a dealers license.

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 7 – Dealers; section 7.6(B), 7.7(B), 7.8(B), & 7.9(B)*):

- Amend to include language requiring documentation attesting that the applicant, or their registered agent, maintains a fixed place of business in the state.
- Amend to include that documentation may consist of:
  - A current tax bill
  - A lease
- A notarized letter from an eligible landowner or leaseholder granting permission to use their address/business as their fixed place of business
- Any other documentation deemed acceptable by the Department.

2. **Landing restriction for summer flounder for dealers:**

- **Proposal 1 (Industry):** Delete the rule regarding the landing restriction for summer flounder. **This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 3 – Finfish, 2026 Commercial Summer Flounder Management Proposal 3** (see above Part 3 - Finfish).

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 7 – Dealers; section 7.15(A)*):

**7.15 Summer Flounder**

~~Dealers shall receive summer flounder between the hours of 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. only.~~

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Interested parties are invited to **submit comments concerning the proposed rules through November 16, 2025.** Send comments by mail or email to:

Peter Duhamel  
DEM Division of Marine Fisheries  
3 Fort Wetherill Road, Jamestown, RI 02835  
[peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov](mailto:peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov)

# **RI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

## **Division of Marine Fisheries**

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## **RI Marine Fisheries Council**

December 1, 2025



# Providence River Harvest Schedule



## **Industry Proposal 1:**

- Commercial boat harvest/other than shoredigging harvest schedule, February 2026: Open one (1) weekday **Monday through Thursday, excludes Friday**, from **8:00 9:00** A.M. until **10:00 11:00** A.M. on the first available weekday that is not closed due to water quality impairment at a 6-bushel limit during the following weeks:
  - **February 9 through 12**
  - **February 16 through 19**
  - **February 23 through 26**
- Open one (1) weekday **Monday through Thursday, excludes Friday**, from 8:00 A.M. until 10:00 A.M. on the first available weekday that is not closed due to water quality impairment at a 6-bushel limit during the following weeks:
  - **March 2 through 5**
  - **March 9 through 12**
  - **March 16 through 19**
  - **March 23 through 26**
  - **March 30 through April 2**
  - **April 6 through 9**
  - **April 13 through 16**
  - **April 20 through 23**
  - **April 27 through 30**
- SAP vote 7-0-0 in support
- See SAP presentation for full discussion

# Penalties: Issuance of Tickets for Marine Fisheries Violations Through the RI Traffic Tribunal (RITT)



**Proposal 1 (Division):** Amend regulations to be consistent with statute whereby violations will be subject to a \$100 fine per offense and shall be under the jurisdiction of RITT.

# Penalties: Issuance of Tickets for Marine Fisheries Violations Through the RI Traffic Tribunal (RITT)



## Proposed:

~~A.—If the Director determines that there has been non-compliance with the provisions of these Regulations or a permit agreement, the owner and/or operator of the vessel and/or license holder shall be advised of such determination and the specific grounds therefore in writing. The determination shall specifically include notice that an opportunity for a hearing is available before the Administrative Adjudication Division pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-17.7 relative to either or both the finding that sufficient evidence exists of non-compliance with the provisions of these Regulations or the permit agreement as well as the termination of the permit and or the imposition of a penalty pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-1-16.~~

~~B.—Judicially imposed penalty for violations:~~

~~1.A. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-1-16, Unless otherwise specifically provided, the penalty for the violation of any Law or Rule or Regulation relating to ~~wild animals, wild birds, lobsters and fish~~, marine, freshwater and anadromous fisheries and shellfisheries shall be a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or imprisonment for up to ninety (90) days, or both-, unless otherwise specifically provided.~~

~~B. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-1-12, the penalty for any violation of any Law, Rule, or Regulations relating to seasons, possession limits, size limits and methods of take for any species of fish, game, bird, or other wild animal occurring within the state shall be a civil violation and subject to a fine of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each offense. The Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine all violations specified in this section.~~

~~2.C. Additionally, a personThe owner and/or operator of the vessel and/or license/permit holder may be subject to the imposition of an administrative penalty pursuant to DEM's Rules and Regulations Governing the Suspension/Revocation of Commercial and Recreational Fishing Licenses, Part 80-00-6 of this Title, licenses issued pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Title 20(250-RICR-80-00-6).~~

# Dealer Fixed Place of Business Documentation



**Proposal 1 (Division/Noticed):** Require documentation for RI fixed place of business upon application of a dealers license.

- Amend to include language requiring documentation attesting that the applicant, or their registered agent, maintains a fixed place of business in the state.
- Amend to include that documentation may consist of:
  - A current tax bill, lease, a notarized letter from an eligible landowner or leaseholder granting permission to use their address/business as their fixed place of business, or any other documentation deemed acceptable by the Department.

# Delete Reference to RIGL in Rule Pertaining to Marking of Traps



**Proposal 1 (Division):** Remove the reference to RIGL in rule to clarify that the rule also applies to recreational pots.

## **Proposed Rule:**

Each pot used for the taking of marine species shall have attached a buoy, and each pot and buoy shall be identified with the name and license number of the owner. (~~R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-4-7~~)

# Escape Vent Requirements for Pots and Traps other than Lobster, Black Sea Bass, and Scup Pots



**Proposal 1 (Division/Noticed):** Amend rule to require an escape vent requirement for pots and traps.

## **Proposed Rule:**

Escape vents: All pots and traps must be constructed with at least one (1) rectangular escape vent with an unobstructed opening measuring not less than two inches by five and three quarters inches (2" x 5-3/4") or one (1) circular escape opening that must be a minimum of two- and one-half inches (2 1/2") in diameter, unless otherwise noted in regulation. Pots and traps utilized to catch certain marine species including, but not limited to, lobster, jonah crab, black sea bass, and scup have additional escape vent requirements. The following pots and traps are exempt from this requirement but may not be used to harvest lobster, jonah crab, black sea bass, and scup:

- a. Traps not exceeding twenty-four inches (24") per side.
- b. Traps constructed with a mesh size not exceeding one inch (1").

# Menhaden

## 2026 Proposed Commercial Management



### **Updated Information:**

- A 20% reduction to the TAC was adopted for 2026 at the October 28, 2025, ASMFC Board meeting
- This results in a coastwide TAC of 186,840 mt
  - 2025 quota = 4.1 million pounds
  - 2026 quota = ~ 3.3 million pounds

# Menhaden

## 2026 Proposed Commercial Management



**Proposal 1 (Industry):** Increase weekly possession limit regardless of MMA status and add one additional day

### **Proposed Rule:**

Weekly Possession limit: ~~Six~~ Twelve thousand (~~6,000~~ 12,000) pounds per vessel per week provided that the State's quota has not been exhausted or if the Episodic Event Set Aside Program has been enacted in Rhode Island.

- a. Open Days: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday of each week.
- c. Gear restrictions:
  - (1) Hand-haul seine only, cast net, and floating gill net only.
  - (2) Maximum net size: 480 feet by 48 feet.
- d. Seasons and allocations:
  - (1) April 1 through April 30: 100,000 lbs.
  - (2) May 1 through 31: 100,000 lbs.
  - (3) June 1 through June 30: 100,000 lbs.

# Menhaden

## 2026 Proposed Commercial Management



**Proposal 2 (Industry):** Expand weekly limit for menhaden regardless of the MMA status

### **Proposed Rule:**

1. Weekly possession limit: ~~Twelve Six~~ thousand (~~12,000 6,000~~) pounds per vessel per week provided that the State's quota has not been exhausted or if the Episodic Event Set Aside Program has been enacted in Rhode Island.
  - a. ~~Open Days: Monday and Thursday of each week.~~
  - ab. Rhode Island resident only.
  - be. Gear restrictions:
    - (1) ~~Hand-haul seine only, cast net, and floating gill net only.~~
    - (2) ~~Maximum net size: Four-hundred and eighty (480) feet by forty-eight (48) feet.~~
  - cd. ~~Seasons and allocations:~~ January 1 through December 31.
    - (1) ~~April 1 through April 30: 100,000 lbs.~~
    - (2) ~~May 1 through 31: 100,000 lbs.~~
    - (3) ~~June 1 through June 30: 100,000 lbs.~~
  - d. Monthly landing trigger: Once 100,000 pounds is projected to be reached in any month, the weekly possession limit will close until the start of the next month.

# Striped Bass

## 2026 Proposed Commercial Management



### Updated Information:

- Status quo was adopted for 2026 management measures at the October 29, 2025, ASMFC Board meeting
- This results in no commercial quota reductions for 2026
- The Board did adopt:
  - A standard method for measuring striped bass as of **January 1, 2027**
    - When measuring total length of a striped bass it must be a straight-line measurement with upper and lower fork of the tail squeezed together.
  - Commercial tagging will transition from point of sale (dealers) to first point of landing (harvesters) as of **December 31, 2028**

# Striped Bass 2026 Commercial GC Management



**Proposal 1 (Industry):** Amend the General Category season, poss. limit, and closed days

Min. size	Season	Allocation	Poss. limit	Closed Days
34"	<del>June 10</del> <u>May 19</u> – Dec. 31	100%	5 fish pp/day	<u>Wed, Thu</u> , Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon

**Proposal 2 (Industry):** Amend the General Category season

Min. size	Season	Allocation	Poss. limit	Closed Days
34"	<del>June 10</del> <u>June 2</u> – Dec. 31	100%	5 fish pp/day	Fri, Sat, Sun, & Mon

**Proposal 3 (Division):** Amend the General Category possession limit.

Min. size	Season	Allocation	Poss. limit	Closed Days
34"	June 10 - Dec. 31	100%	<del>5</del> <u>3</u> fish pp/day	Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon

**Proposal 4 (Division):** Amend the General Category possession limit.

Min. size	Season	Allocation	Poss. limit	Closed Days
34"	June 10 – Dec. 31	100%	5 fish pp/day	<u>Thu</u> , Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon

*NOTE: Proposals 3 & 4 were proactive in case ASMFC adopted comm. reductions for 2026*

# Striped Bass – 2026 Commercial Management – Gill Nets



**Proposal 5 (Industry):** Amend the gill net prohibition for striped bass to allow for commercial harvest under the general category fishery

## **Proposed Rule:**

Gill net prohibition for striped bass: No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gillnetting, or while hauling a gillnet, north of a line commencing at upper pier in the town of Narragansett and extending in a straight line in a northeasterly direction to Beavertail Lighthouse and thence continuing in a northeasterly direction in a straight line to Castle Hill Lighthouse in the city of Newport.

# Striped Bass – 2026 Commercial Management – Gill Nets



**Proposal 6 (Industry):** Amend the FFT allocation and gill net prohibition for striped bass to allow commercial gill net harvest

**Proposed Rule (section 3.8.2(B)(2)):** Floating fish trap allocation  
During a single calendar year, the gill net quota shall not be more than ~~thirty-nine~~ twenty-seven percent (~~39~~ 27%) of the annual Rhode Island commercial quota.

**Proposed Rule (section 3.8.2(C)):**

Gill nets ~~prohibition for striped bass:~~

1. Allocation: During a single calendar year, the gill net quota shall not be more than twelve percent (12%) of the annual Rhode Island commercial quota.
2. Minimum size: Twenty-six inches (26”).
3. Season: April 1 through December 31.
4. Possession limit: Unlimited with the total weight of striped bass landed (measured in pounds) equal to or less than twenty percent (20%) of the total combined weight of all other fish landed.

# Striped Bass – 2026 Commercial Management – Gill Nets



## Proposal 6, Proposed Rule (section 3.8.2(C)) continued:

5. Permit required: No person shall harvest striped bass with gill nets without a valid Striped Bass Gill Net Harvest Permit obtained from the Director. Application for this permit shall be made on forms prescribed by the Director.
  - a. Eligibility:
    - (1) Must hold a valid gill net endorsement.
    - (2) Must demonstrate at least thirty thousand (30,000) pounds of cumulative landings of any marine species harvested in the three  
(3) preceding calendar years.
  - b. Permit conditions: The permit is valid only for the calendar year of issuance.
6. Gill net prohibition for striped bass:
  - a. No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gillnetting, or while hauling a gillnet, without a valid Striped Bass Gill Net Harvest Permit.
  - b. No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gillnetting, or while hauling a gillnet, north of a line commencing at upper pier in the town of Narragansett and extending in a straight line in a northeasterly direction to Beavertail Lighthouse and thence continuing in a northeasterly direction in a straight line to Castle Hill Lighthouse in the city of Newport.

# Striped Bass – Commercial FFT Allocation



**Proposal 7 (Industry):** Do not allow any floating fish trap allocation change until after the 2029 rebuilding timeline for striped bass or the striped bass stock has been rebuilt.

**Proposed Rule (section 3.8.2(B)(2)):** Floating fish trap allocation

- b. The floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change, and will remain 39%, until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended, and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the ASMFC.

# 2026 Commercial Tautog Management



## **Proposal 1 (Industry):** Sub-period allocation changes

Min. size	Season	Allocation	Poss. limit
16"	January 1 – March 30		Closed
	April 1 – May 31	<del>42.5</del> <u>40</u> %	10 fish/day
	June 1 – July 31		Closed
	August 1 – September 15	<del>15</del> <u>30</u> %	10 fish/day
	September 16 – Oct. 14		Closed
	Oct. 15 – Dec. 31	<del>42.5</del> <u>30</u> %	10 fish/day

# 2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management



## Proposal 1 (Industry): Sub-period allocation changes

Min. size	Season	Allocation	Aggregate (lbs)	Daily (lbs)
11"	1/1 – 4/30	<del>18</del> <u>15</u> %	N/A	500 (vsl/week)
	5/1 – 6/30	30%	700 (vsl/wk)	100 (vsl/day)
	7/1 – 8/15	22%	350 (vsl/wk)	50 (vsl/day)
	8/16 – 9/15	10%	350 (vsl/wk)	50 (vsl/day)
	9/16 – 10/15	10%	700 (vsl/wk)	100 (vsl/day)
	10/16 – 12/31	<del>10</del> <u>13</u> %	600 (vsl/wk)	100 (vsl/day)

# 2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management



## Proposal 2 (Industry): Possession limit changes

Min. size	Season	Allocation	Aggregate (lbs)	Daily (lbs)
11"	1/1 – 4/30	18%	N/A	500 (vsl/week)
	5/1 – 6/30	30%	700 (vsl/wk)	100 (vsl/day)
	7/1 – 8/15	22%	700 (vsl/wk)	<del>50</del> <u>100</u> (vsl/day)
	8/16 – 9/15	10%	700 (vsl/wk)	<del>50</del> <u>100</u> (vsl/day)
	9/16 – 10/15	10%	700 (vsl/wk)	100 (vsl/day)
	10/16 – 12/31	10%	600 (vsl/wk)	100 (vsl/day)

# 2026 Summer Flounder Commercial Management



## **Proposal 1 (Division):** Possession limit change.

Min. size	Season	Allocation	Starting Poss. limit
14"	1/1 – 4/30	54%	100 lbs/day Aggregate: 4,000 lbs/bi-week
	5/1 – 9/15	35%	200 lbs/day* Aggregate: 1,400 lbs/week
	9/16 – 12/31	11%	<del>500</del> <u>100</u> lbs/day* Aggregate: <del>3,500</del> <u>700</u> lbs/week

\* Non-exemption certificate holders bound to 200 lbs/vessel/day

# 2026 Summer Flounder Commercial Management & Dealers



**Proposal 2 (Industry):** Amend the landing restriction for summer flounder

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.9.2(D)*):

Summer flounder may be offloaded ~~landed~~ between the hours of 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. only.

**Proposal 3 (Industry):** Remove the landing restriction for summer flounder for harvesters. **This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 7 – Dealers, proposal #1 regarding the landing restriction for summer flounder for dealers.**

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 3 – Finfish; section 3.9.2(D)*):

~~Summer flounder may be landed between the hours of 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. only.~~

**Proposal 1 (Industry):** Delete the rule regarding the landing restriction for summer flounder. **This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 3 – Finfish, 2026 Commercial Summer Flounder Management Proposal 3 (see above Part 3 - Finfish).**

**Proposed Rule** (*Part 7 – Dealers; section 7.15*):

~~Dealers shall receive summer flounder between the hours of 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. only.~~

# Summer/Fall Aggregate Program



## Current Management:

- Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass
- Approved VMS device required
- Electronic reporting required prior to offload
- Season: May 1 – December 31
- Weekly possession limit:
  - Black Sea Bass:
    - 5/1 – 10/15: 7X the daily limit
    - 10/16 – 12/31: 6X the daily limit
  - Summer Flounder:
    - 5/1 – 12/31: 7X the daily limit
- No Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate required if enrolled in program
- Vessels may participate in both Winter and Summer / Fall aggregates
- Participants are exempt from the Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate possession limit restrictions as specified in Part 14 “Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate”.

# Aggregate Program



**Proposal 1 (Industry):** Amend possession limit for black sea bass limit from 6x to 7x the daily limit from October 16 through December 31 (7x the daily limit for the entire season)

**Proposal 2 (Industry):** Amend title of part 23 to remove “aggregate” and change all instances of “aggregate” to “weekly or bi-weekly landing limit program”

**Proposal 3 (Industry):** Amend the permit condition requirement to submit reports prior to offload.

**Proposed Rule:** Participants shall document catch and effort information through the Division approved electronic application ~~prior to~~ no more than twenty-four (24) hours after offload.

**Proposal 4 (Industry):** Amend the permit condition requirement to submit reports prior to offload

**Proposed Rule:** Participants shall document catch and effort information for summer flounder and black sea bass through the Division approved electronic application prior to offload.

# Aggregate Program



**Proposal 5 (Industry):** Amend Part 23 - Aggregate Program to be a single year-round program for summer flounder and black sea bass. **This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 3 – Finfish, 2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management Proposal 3 to amend possession limit changes.**

- Vessel owner and operator(s) must be a RI resident if fishing without a summer flounder exemption certificate during the Winter I season.
- Vessels owned by corporation must be registered with the State of Rhode Island in the preceding calendar year and in good standing
  - At least one member of the corporation must be a RI resident. RI resident must demonstrate they have a vested interest in a business or corporation that owns the commercial fishing vessel and must document their vested interest on certificate of authority and disclosure of corporation forms prescribed by the Department.

# Aggregate Program



## **Proposal 5 (Industry) continued:**

- Summer flounder Winter I possession limit:
  - Vessels that possess a valid Rhode Island Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate: Four thousand (4,000) pounds per vessel per biweek.
  - Vessels that do not possess a valid Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate: The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by seven (7).
- Black sea bass Winter I possession limit: 7x daily with 80% trigger

# Aggregate Program



**Proposal 6 (Industry):** Add tautog as an authorized species to the aggregate program

- The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by seven
- Once 85% of the sub-period quota for is projected to be reached, the possession limit may revert back to a daily limit.

# 2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management



**Proposal 3 (Industry):** Possession limit changes. This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 23 – Aggregate, Proposal 5 to amend the Aggregate Program to be a single year-round program

Min. size	Season	Allocation	Aggregate (lbs)	Daily (lbs)
11"	1/1 – 4/30	18%	<del>N/A</del> <u>700 (vsl/wk)</u>	<del>500 (vsl/wk)</del> <u>100 (vsl/day)</u>
	5/1 – 6/30	30%	700 (vsl/wk)	100 (vsl/day)
	7/1 – 8/15	22%	350 (vsl/wk)	50 (vsl/day)
	8/16 – 9/15	10%	350 (vsl/wk)	50 (vsl/day)
	9/16 – 10/15	10%	700 (vsl/wk)	100 (vsl/day)
	10/16 – 12/31	10%	600 (vsl/wk)	100 (vsl/day)



# **Administrative Policies and Procedures of the RIMFC – Update/Revisions**

# RIMFC Administrative Policies and Procedures - Timeline



Date	Action
9/13/16	Current Policy Adopted
10/15/25	Draft Changes Presented to SAP
11/5/25	Draft Changes Presented to RIMFC for Discussion
11/6/25 – 11/14/25	Division to Modify Draft Based on RIMFC Feedback
<b>12/1/25</b>	<b>RIMFC Takes Final Action to Adopt New Policy</b>

NOTE: This timeline is subject to change

# Summary of Draft Changes – Follow-up from 11/5/25



## L. Advisory Panels: **General changes** from current policy that are now remaining ***STATUS QUO***

ITEM	CURRENT/ <b>NEW</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
Meeting Minutes	Draft meeting minutes shall be reviewed by the <b>Council</b> at a subsequent meeting	<del>Draft meeting minutes shall be reviewed by the Panel at a subsequent meeting</del>

# Summary of Draft Changes – Follow-up from 11/5/25



## L. Advisory Panels: **Chair and Vice-Chair changes** from current policy

ITEM	CURRENT/ <b>NEW</b>	PROPOSED
Chair Position	Council member appointed by Council	If no Council member, Council Chair will serve. If no Council member or Council chair, then panel member will serve. If no Council member, Council Chair, or panel member, Division staff will serve temporarily
Chair Voting	May inform discussion but not advocate position or vote <del>unless breaking tie.</del>	<del>Shall remain part of the active membership and retain the ability to vote at their discretion</del>
Meeting Minutes	Draft minutes provided to and approved by Council	Panel chair will attend all Council meetings and report out meeting minutes
<del>Vice-Panel Chair Position</del> Alternate	No permanent position, alternate Council member appointed ad-hoc for each meeting	<del>Elected by Panel</del>
<del>Vice- Panel Chair Alternate</del> Voting	May inform discussion but not advocate position or vote	<del>Shall remain part of the active membership and retain the ability to vote at their discretion</del>
<del>Chair and Vice-Chair</del> <del>Alternate</del> Term	N/A	<del>3-years/term, no limit to # of terms</del> Reviewed annually. May 1) maintain current chair or 2) appoint another Council member

# Summary of Draft Changes – Follow-up from 11/5/25

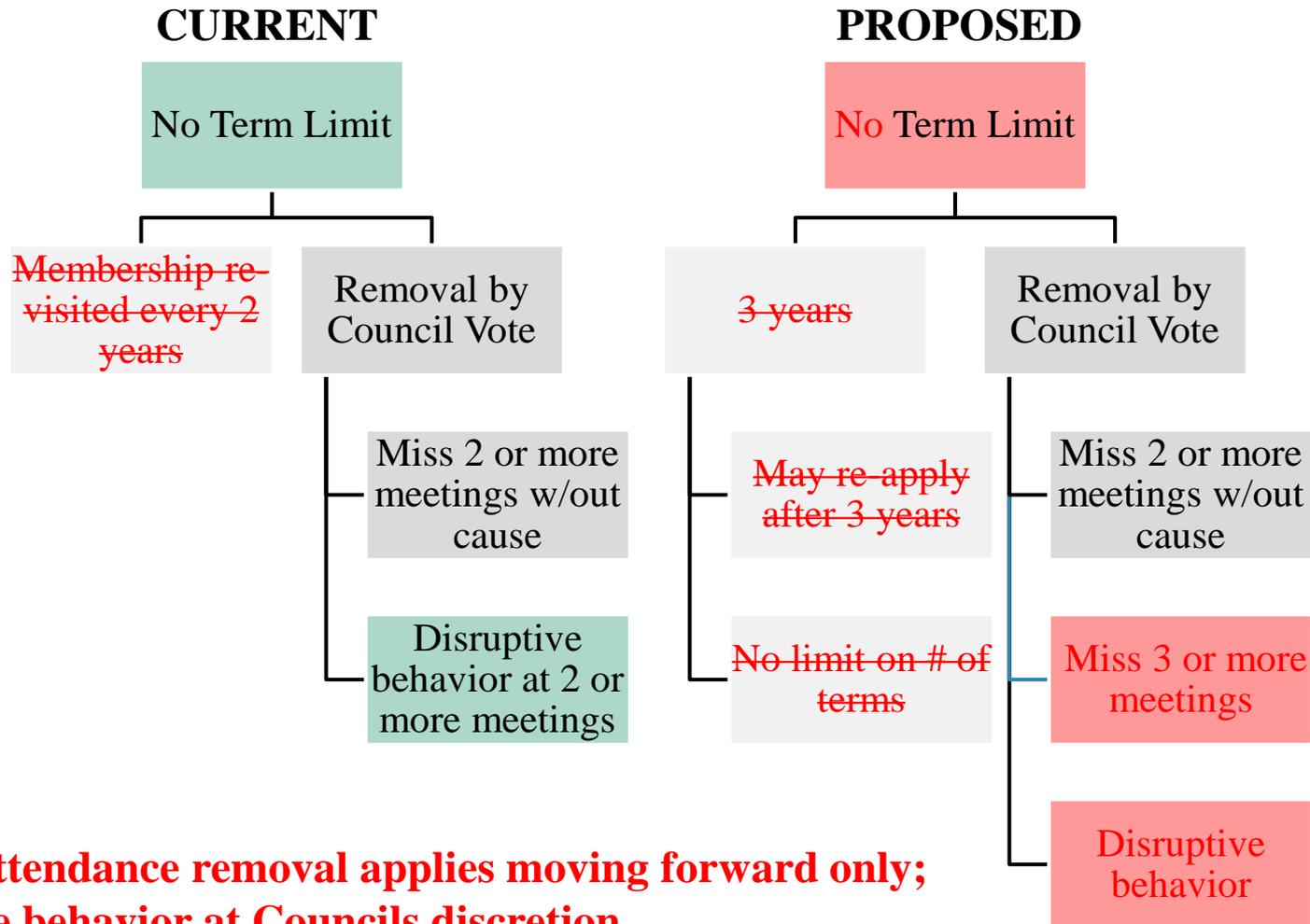


ITEM	CURRENT	PROPOSED
Population	N/A	New solicitation issued <del>in 2026</del> ASAP w/ closed Council session to approve membership
Membership Composition	SAP: Broad array of comm. & rec. shellfish interests, including species harvested, gear types, areas fished, other relevant interests or user groups. Members w/ non-shellfish interest for aquaculture review	General: Rec. & comm. fishers, dealers, individuals from recognized fisheries organizations or user groups, or individuals from other organizations that represent the public interest. <b>Council members not eligible to serve on AP's</b>
New Members	Solicited via any process that the Council wishes to employ, with assistance from the Division	Opening announced, submit application to Division, Council reviews at next meeting
Alternate Members	May be selected by Council to serve when primary member cannot attend a meeting	Selected by Primary Panel member. Must submit application and get approval of the Council
Interviews	N/A	Division may interview all applicants to provide recommendations to Council

# Summary of Draft Changes – Follow-up from 11/5/25



## L. Advisory Panels: Panel member term limits.



**NOTE: Attendance removal applies moving forward only;  
Disruptive behavior at Councils discretion.**

# Summary of Draft Changes – Follow-up from 11/5/25



## **J. Rulemaking Processes Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-35 “Administrative Procedures”:** *Conferring with constituents and public comment. All new language reflecting current practice.*

- Council members may confer with constituents at their discretion through the end of the public comment period.
- At the Chair’s discretion, public comment shall be limited to the following circumstances\*:
  - Council member’s request.
  - New and/or additional information has become available to the Department after issuance of the public notice.
  - When a motion being considered by the Council includes rulemaking action different from the public notice.
  - To provide the public opportunity to offer clarification on a motion being considered by the Council.



End of Slides!





**Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management**  
**Division of Marine Fisheries**

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3 Fort Wetherill Road, Jamestown, RI 02835

Coastal Fisheries Laboratory  
1231 Succotash Road, Wakefield, RI 02879



## Summary of Comments

Agency: Department of Environmental Management

Division: Marine Fisheries

Regulation: **Part 3 – Finfish (250-RICR-90-00-3)**

Type of rulemaking: Regular rulemaking

Type of filing: Amendment

Timetable for action on the proposed rule:

- Date of public notice: October 15, 2025
- Date of hearing: November 3, 2025
- End of comment period: November 16, 2025

Proposed rules and comments received:

### 1. **Commercial Menhaden Management:**

- **PROPOSAL 1 (Industry/Noticed): Increase the weekly limit for menhaden regardless of the MMA status and add one additional open day**

**Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.21.2(A)):**

1. Weekly possession limit: **Twelve** ~~Six~~ thousand (**12,000** ~~6,000~~) pounds per vessel per week provided that the State's quota has not been exhausted or if the Episodic Event Set Aside Program has been enacted in Rhode Island.
  - a. Open Days: Monday, **Tuesday**, and Thursday of each week.
  - b. Rhode Island resident only.
  - c. Gear restrictions:
    - (1) Hand-haul seine only, cast net, and floating gill net only.
    - (2) Maximum net size: Four-hundred and eighty (480) feet by forty-eight (48) feet.

d. Seasons and allocations:

(1) April 1 through April 30: 100,000 lbs.

(2) May 1 through 31: 100,000 lbs.

(3) June 1 through June 30: 100,000 lbs.

e. All commercial menhaden operations conducted in the Management Area, prior to and after the State's quota has been reached, are subject to the provisions of § 3.21.2 of this Part.

2. Daily Possession limit:

**Comments received:**

- One comment received in support of this proposal
- Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) opposed

➤ **PROPOSAL 2 (Industry): Expand weekly limit for menhaden regardless of the MMA status**

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.21.2(A)):

1. Weekly possession limit: ~~Twelve Six~~ thousand (12,000 6,000) pounds per vessel per week provided that the State's quota has not been exhausted or if the Episodic Event Set Aside Program has been enacted in Rhode Island.

~~a. Open Days: Monday and Thursday of each week.~~

~~a~~b. Rhode Island resident only.

~~b~~e. Gear restrictions:

(1) ~~Hand-haul seine only, cast net, and floating gill net only.~~

(2) ~~Maximum net size: Four-hundred and eighty (480) feet by forty-eight (48) feet.~~

~~cd. Seasons and allocations: January 1 through December 31.~~

(1) ~~April 1 through April 30: 100,000 lbs.~~

(2) ~~May 1 through 31: 100,000 lbs.~~

(3) ~~June 1 through June 30: 100,000 lbs.~~

d. Monthly landing trigger: Once 100,000 pounds is projected to be reached in any month, the weekly possession limit will close until the start of the next month.

e. All commercial menhaden operations conducted in the Management Area, prior to and after the State's quota has been reached, are subject to the provisions of § 3.21.2 of this Part.

2. Daily Possession limit:

**Comments received:**

- One written comment received in support of this proposal.
- Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) opposed.

2. **2026 Commercial Striped Bass Management (General Category, Floating Fish Trap, Gill Net):**

- **PROPOSAL 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Amend the General Category season and closed days.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.8.2(A)(3):

3. Season and possession limit:

a. January 1 through May 18 ~~June 9~~: Closed.

b. May 19 ~~June 10~~ through December 31:

(1) Allocation: One hundred percent (100%) of the general category quota.

(2) Possession limit: Five (5) fish per person per day, or if fishing from a vessel, five (5) fish per vessel per day.

(3) The fishery will be open ~~closed~~ in each calendar week on Tuesday ~~Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday~~ during this sub-period. There will be no commercial possession or sale of striped bass on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or Monday ~~these days~~ for general category commercial fishermen.

**Comments received:**

- RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association opposed.
- One comment received in support of opening on June 1.
- One comment received opposed.

- **PROPOSAL 2 (Industry):** Amend the General Category season

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.8.2(A)(3)(a&b)):

3. Season and possession limit:
  - a. January 1 through June 1 ~~June 9~~: Closed.
  - b. June 2 ~~June 10~~ through December 31:

**Comments received:** RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association opposed.

- **PROPOSAL 3 (Division):** Amend the General Category possession limit. This option is being put forward proactively in case the ASMFC adopts commercial reductions for 2026 at their October 2025 meeting.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.8.2(A)(3)(b)(2)):

- (2) Possession limit: Three ~~Five~~ (3 ~~5~~) fish per person per day, or if fishing from a vessel, three ~~five~~ (3 ~~5~~) fish per vessel per day.

**Comments received:**

- RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association opposed.
- One comment received opposed.

- **PROPOSAL 4 (Division):** Amend the General Category closed days. This option is being put forward proactively in case the ASMFC adopts commercial reductions for 2026 at their October 2025 meeting

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.8.2(A)(3)(b)):

- (3) The fishery will be closed in each calendar week on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday during this sub-period. There will be no commercial possession or sale of striped bass on these days for general category commercial fishermen.

**Comments received:**

- Six public hearing comments were received in support of this proposal.
- RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association in support of this proposal.

- **PROPOSAL 5 (Industry):** Amend the gill net prohibition for striped bass to allow for commercial harvest under the general category fishery

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.8.2(C)):

Gill net prohibition for striped bass: No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gillnetting, or while hauling a gillnet, north of a line commencing at upper pier in the town of Narragansett and extending in a straight line in a northeasterly direction to Beavertail Lighthouse and thence continuing in a

northeasterly direction in a straight line to Castle Hill Lighthouse in the city of Newport.

**Comments received:**

- Five comments received opposed.
- One comment received in support.
- RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association opposed.
- Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) opposed.

➤ **PROPOSAL 6 (Industry): Amend the FFT allocation and gill net prohibition for striped bass to allow commercial gill net harvest**

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.8.2(B)(2)): Allocation: During a single calendar year, the floating fish trap quota shall not be more than twenty-seven ~~thirty-nine~~ percent (~~39~~ 27%) of the annual Rhode Island commercial quota.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.8.2(C)):  
Gill nets ~~prohibition for striped bass~~:

1. Allocation: During a single calendar year, the gill net quota shall not be more than twelve percent (12%) of the annual Rhode Island commercial quota.
2. Minimum size: Twenty-six inches (26").
3. Season: April 1 through December 31.
4. Possession limit: Unlimited with the total weight of striped bass landed (measured in pounds) equal to or less than twenty percent (20%) of the total combined weight of all other fish landed.
5. Permit required: No person shall harvest striped bass with gill nets without a valid Striped Bass Gill Net Harvest Permit obtained from the Director. Application for this permit shall be made on forms prescribed by the Director.
  - a. Eligibility:
    - (1) Must hold a valid gill net endorsement.
    - (2) Must demonstrate at least thirty thousand (30,000) pounds of cumulative landings of any marine species harvested in the three (3) preceding calendar years.

- b. Permit conditions: The permit is valid only for the calendar year of issuance.
6. Gill net prohibition for striped bass:
- a. No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gillnetting, or while hauling a gillnet, without a valid Striped Bass Gill Net Harvest Permit.
- b. No person shall take or possess any striped bass while gillnetting, or while hauling a gillnet, north of a line commencing at upper pier in the town of Narragansett and extending in a straight line in a northeasterly direction to Beavertail Lighthouse and thence continuing in a northeasterly direction in a straight line to Castle Hill Lighthouse in the city of Newport.

**Comments received:**

- Six comments received in support of this proposal.
  - Two comments received in support of allowing harvest of striped bass by gill net (comments not specific to this proposal).
  - One comment received that gill nets and floating fish traps should not be included together in the same sector
  - One comment received to amend the eligibility criteria regarding the 30,000 pounds of cumulative landings of any marine species harvested (written comment provided)
  - Three comments received opposed.
  - Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) opposed.
- **PROPOSAL 7 (Industry): Do not allow any floating fish trap allocation change until after the 2029 rebuilding timeline for striped bass or the striped bass stock has been rebuilt**

**Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.8.2(B)(2)):**

Allocation:

2. Allocation:

- a. During a single calendar year, the floating fish trap quota shall not be more than thirty-nine percent (39%) of the annual Rhode Island commercial quota.
- b. The floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change, and will remain thirty-nine percent (39%), until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended, and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the ASMFC.

**Comments received:**

- Thirty-seven comments were received in support of this proposal.
- Two comments opposed to this proposal.
- Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) in support.

3. **2026 Commercial Tautog Management:**

➤ **PROPOSAL 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Sub-period allocation changes.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.10.2(B):

2. April 1 through May 31:

- a. Allocation: Forty ~~two and one half~~ percent (~~40~~ 42.5%) of the annual quota.

3. June 1 through July 31: Closed.

4. August 1 through September 15:

- a. Allocation: ~~Thirty Fifteen~~ percent (~~30~~ 45%) of the annual quota.

5. September 16 through October 14: Closed.

6. October 15 through December 31:

- a. Allocation: ~~Thirty Forty two and one half~~ percent (~~30~~ 42.5%) of the annual quota.

**Comments received:**

- Three comments were received opposed to the proposal and in support of status quo.
- RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association in support of status quo.

4. **2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management:**

➤ **PROPOSAL 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Sub-period allocation changes.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.6.2(B):

B. Season, allocation, and possession limit:

1. January 1 through April 30:

- a. Allocation: ~~Fifteen Eighteen~~ percent (~~15~~ 48%) of the quota.

2. May 1 through June 30:

- a. Allocation: Thirty percent (30%) of the quota.
- 3. July 1 through August 15:
  - a. Allocation: Twenty-two percent (22%) of the quota.
- 4. August 16 through September 15:
  - a. Allocation: Ten percent (10%) of the quota.
- 5. September 16 through October 15:
  - a. Allocation: Ten percent (10%) of the quota
- 6. October 16 through December 31:
  - a. Allocation: ~~Thirteen Ten~~-percent (~~13 10~~%) of the quota.

**Comments received:** One comment received in support of this proposal.

➤ **PROPOSAL 2 (Industry/Noticed): Possession limit changes.**

Proposed (abridged) Rule (*section 3.6.2(B)*):

B. Season, allocation, and possession limit:

- 1. January 1 through April 30:
  - b. Possession limit: Five hundred (500) pounds per person and per vessel per week.
- 2. May 1 through June 30:
  - b. Possession limit: One-hundred (100) pounds per person and per vessel per day.
- 3. July 1 through August 15:
  - b. ~~One-hundred Fifty~~(~~100 50~~) pounds per person and per vessel per day.
- 4. August 16 through September 15:
  - b. Possession limit: ~~One-hundred Fifty~~ (~~100 50~~) pounds per person and per vessel per day.
- 5. September 16 through October 15:
  - b. Possession limit: One hundred (100) pounds per person and per vessel per day
- 6. October 16 through December 31:
  - b. Possession limit: One hundred (100) pounds person and per vessel per day.

**Comments received:** Two comments received in support of this proposal.

➤ **PROPOSAL 3 (Industry/Noticed): Possession limit changes. This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 23 – Aggregate Program, Proposal 5 to amend the Aggregate Program to be a single year-round program** (see Part 23 – Aggregate Program, below).

Proposed (abridged) Rule (*section 3.6.2(B)(1)(b)*):

B. Season, allocation, and possession limit:

1. January 1 through April 30:
  - b. Possession limit: ~~One Five~~-hundred (~~100 500~~) pounds per person and per vessel per ~~day~~ week.

**Comments received:** One comment received in support of this proposal..

5. **2026 Commercial Summer Flounder Management:**

- **PROPOSAL 1 (Division/Noticed):** Amend sub-period possession limits.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.9.2(B)(3)(b):

B. Season, allocation, and possession limit:

3. September 16 through December 31:

- b. Possession limit:

- (1) Vessels that possess a valid Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate: ~~One Five~~-hundred (~~100 500~~) pounds per person and per vessel per day.
    - (2) Vessels that do not possess a valid Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate: ~~One Two~~-hundred (~~100 200~~) pounds per person and per vessel per day.

**Comments received:** No comments were provided.

- **PROPOSAL 2 (Industry/Noticed):** Amend landing restriction for summer flounder.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.9.2(D)):

Summer flounder may be ~~offloaded~~ ~~landed~~ between the hours of 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. only.

**Comments received:** No comments were provided.

- **PROPOSAL 3 (Industry):** Amend the landing restriction for summer flounder for harvesters. **This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 7 – Dealers, proposal #1 regarding the landing restriction for summer flounder for dealers** (see below Part 7 – Dealers, proposal #1).

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 3.9.2(D)):

~~Summer flounder may be landed between the hours of 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. only.~~

**Comments received:** One comment was provided in support of the proposal.

**IMPORTANT!** The public hearing was recorded and is publicly available on the Division of Marine Fisheries YouTube channel [here](#). *This document serves only as a tally of support, opposition, or alternative proposals received, as provided in written and oral comments received; it does not include supporting details, rationale, or discussion of matters not specific to the proposed rules.*



**Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management  
Division of Marine Fisheries**

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Fort Wetherill Marine Laboratory  
3 Fort Wetherill Road, Jamestown, RI 02835

Coastal Fisheries Laboratory  
1231 Succotash Road, Wakefield, RI 02879



## Summary of Comments

Agency: Department of Environmental Management

Division: Marine Fisheries

Regulation: **Part 6 – General Equipment Provisions (250-RICR-90-00-6)**

Type of rulemaking: Regular rulemaking

Type of filing: Amendment

Timetable for action on the proposed rule:

- Date of public notice: October 15, 2025
- Date of hearing: November 3, 2025
- End of comment period: November 16, 2025

Proposed rules and comments received:

1. **Delete Reference to RIGL in Rule Pertaining to Marking of Traps:**

- **PROPOSAL (Division/Noticed):** Remove the reference to RIGL in rule to clarify that the rule also applies to recreational pots.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 6.4(B)(2)):

B. Pots and buoys

2. Each pot used for the taking of marine species shall have attached a buoy, and each pot and buoy shall be identified with the name and license number of the owner. (~~R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-4-7~~)

**Comments received:** No comments were received.

2. **Escape Vent requirement for all Pots and Traps:**

- **PROPOSAL 1 (Division/Noticed):** Amend rule to require an escape vent requirement for pots and traps.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 6.4(B)(7)):

B. Pots and buoys:

7. Escape vents: All pots and traps must be constructed with at least one (1) rectangular escape vent with an unobstructed opening measuring not less than two inches by five and three quarters inches (2" x 5-3/4") or one (1) circular escape opening that must be a minimum of two and one half inches (2 1/2") in diameter, unless otherwise noted in regulation. Pots and traps utilized to catch certain marine species including, but not limited to, lobster, jonah crab, black sea bass, and scup have additional escape vent requirements. The following pots and traps are exempt from this requirement but may not be used to harvest lobster, jonah crab, black sea bass, and scup:

a. Traps not exceeding twenty four inches (24") per side.

b. Traps constructed with a mesh size not exceeding one inch (1").

**Comments received:** 1 comment received to add "or" between proposed sections 6.4(B)(7)(a) and (b) to add clarity that either section (a) or (b), not both, must be adhered to.

**IMPORTANT!** The public hearing was recorded and is publicly available on the Division of Marine Fisheries YouTube channel [here](#). *This document serves only as a tally of support, opposition, or alternative proposals received, as provided in written and oral comments received; it does not include supporting details, rationale, or discussion of matters not specific to the proposed rules.*



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## Summary of Comments

Agency: Department of Environmental Management

Division: Marine Fisheries

Regulation: **Part 7 – Dealers (250-RICR-90-00-7)**

Type of rulemaking: Regular rulemaking

Type of filing: Amendment

Timetable for action on the proposed rule:

- Date of public notice: October 15, 2025
- Date of hearing: November 3, 2025
- End of comment period: November 16, 2025

Proposed rules and comments received:

1. **Dealer fixed place of business documentation:**

- **PROPOSAL 1 (Division/Noticed):** Require documentation for RI fixed place of business upon application of a dealers license. Amend sections 7.6(B), 7.7(B), 7.8(B), & 7.9(B)) for the Finfish Dealer License, Shellfish Dealer License, Crustacean Dealer License, and Multipurpose Dealer License respectively, to:
  - Include language requiring documentation attesting that the applicant, or their registered agent, maintains a fixed place of business in the state
  - Include that documentation may consist of a current tax bill, lease, a notarized letter from an eligible landowner or leaseholder granting permission to use their address/business as their fixed place of business, or any other documentation deemed acceptable by the Department.

**Comments received:** No comments were received.

2. **Landing restriction for summer flounder for dealers:**

- **PROPOSAL 1 (Industry):** Delete section 7.15(A) regarding the landing restriction for summer flounder. This proposal should only be considered in

**conjunction with Part 3 – Finfish, 2026 Commercial Summer Flounder Management Proposal 3 (section 7.15(A))**

**Comments received:** No comments were received.

**IMPORTANT!** The public hearing was recorded and is publicly available on the Division of Marine Fisheries YouTube channel [here](#). *This document serves only as a tally of support, opposition, or alternative proposals received, as provided in written and oral comments received; it does not include supporting details, rationale, or discussion of matters not specific to the proposed rules.*



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## Summary of Comments

Agency: Department of Environmental Management

Division: Marine Fisheries

Regulation: **Part 23 – Aggregate Program (250-RICR-90-00-23)**

Type of rulemaking: Regular rulemaking

Type of filing: Amendment

Timetable for action on the proposed rule:

- Date of public notice: October 15, 2025
- Date of hearing: November 3, 2025
- End of comment period: November 16, 2025

Proposed rules and comments received:

1. **Summer/Fall Aggregate Program for Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass:**

- **PROPOSAL 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Amend weekly black sea bass limit to 7x the daily limit

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 23.11(E)(1)):

E. Possession Limit:

1. Black sea bass:

~~a. May 1 through October 15:~~ The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by seven (7).

~~b. October 16 through December 31: The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by six (6).~~

~~ae.~~ Once 85% of the sub-period quota is projected to be reached, the possession limit may revert back to a daily limit.

**Comments received:**

- Two comments received in support of the proposal.
- Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) opposed.

- **PROPOSAL 2 (Industry):** Amend title of Part 23 to remove “aggregate” and change all instances of “aggregate” to “weekly or bi-weekly landing limit program”

**Comments received:**

- One comment received opposed to the proposal.
- One comment received in support of the proposal and weekly possession limits.
- RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association opposed.

- **PROPOSAL 3 (Industry):** Amend the permit condition requirement to submit reports prior to offload.

**Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 23.11(D)(2)):**

D. Permit Conditions:

2. Participants shall document catch and effort information through the Division approved electronic application no more than twenty-four (24) hours after ~~prior to~~ offload.

**Comments received:** One comment received in support of the proposal.

- **PROPOSAL 4 (Industry):** Amend the permit condition requirement to submit reports for summer flounder and black sea bass prior to offload.

**Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 23.11(D)(2)):**

D. Permit Conditions:

2. Participants shall document catch and effort information for summer flounder and black sea bass through the Division approved electronic application prior to offload.

**Comments received:** RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association opposed.

- **PROPOSAL 5 (Industry):** Amend Part 23 - Aggregate Program to be a single year-round program. This proposal should only be considered in conjunction with Part 3 – Finfish, 2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management Proposal 3 to amend possession limit changes.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (sections 23.10 and 23.11)

**23.10 Winter I Season Program**

- A. Authorizes the aggregate possession limit of summer flounder and black sea bass during the specified season(s) to authorized permit holders.
- B. Eligibility:
1. The vessel, if harvesting summer flounder from Federal waters, holds a valid Federal Summer Flounder Moratorium Permit ~~and Rhode Island Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate issued pursuant to Part 14 of this Subchapter.~~
  2. The vessel's owner and operator(s), if harvesting summer flounder ~~from State waters, holds without~~ a valid Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate, must be a Rhode Island resident. Vessels owned by a corporation(s) must meet the following conditions:
    - a. The business or corporation must be registered with the State of Rhode Island in the preceding calendar year and in good standing.
    - b. At least one member of the corporation must be a RI resident. RI resident must demonstrate they have a vested interest in a business or corporation that owns the commercial fishing vessel and must document their vested interest on certificate of authority and disclosure of corporation forms prescribed by the Department.
- C. Season: Sunday of the first full week in January through April 30.
- D. Possession Limit: ~~Four thousand (4,000) pounds per vessel per biweek.~~
1. Summer flounder:
    - a. Vessels that possess a valid Rhode Island Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate: Four thousand (4,000) pounds per vessel per biweek.
    - b. Vessels that do not possess a valid Summer Flounder Exemption Certificate: The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by seven (7).

c. Possession limits may revert back to a daily limit once 80% of the sub-period quota for each species is projected to have been reached.

2. Black sea bass:

a. The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by seven (7).

b. Possession limits may revert back to a daily limit once 80% of the sub-period quota for each species is projected to have been reached.

23.11 Summer/Fall **Season Program**

C. Season Period: May 1 through December 31

**Comments received:**

- Three comments were received in support of this proposal.
- One comment received opposed to this proposal if resulting in increased effort.
- RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association opposed.

➤ **PROPOSAL 6 (Industry):** Add tautog as an authorized species to the aggregate program.

Proposed (abridged) Rule (section 23.11(A)&(E)):

23.11 Summer/Fall Program

A. Authorizes the aggregate possession limit of black sea bass, ~~and~~ summer flounder, and tautog during the specified season(s) to authorized permit holders.

E. Possession Limit:

3. Tautog: The weekly possession limit will be equal to the daily limit multiplied by seven (7).

a. Once 85% of the sub-period quota for is projected to be reached, the possession limit may revert back to a daily limit.

**Comments received:**

- Four comments received in support of the proposal.

- One comment received in support of the proposal, but add cap to # of tautog tags issued based on the number of tags issued in the previous year, or number of tags issued in a previous number of years, or lower the possession limit, or lower the closure trigger (written comment provided).
- One comment received in support of the proposal, and in support of a weekly possession limit for tautog that would be less than 7X the daily limit.
- One comment received in support of the proposal only with an increase in the commercial quota for tautog
- One comment received opposed to the proposal.
- RI Commercial Rod and Reel Association opposed.

**IMPORTANT!** The public hearing was recorded and is publicly available on the Division of Marine Fisheries YouTube channel [here](#). *This document serves only as a tally of support, opposition, or alternative proposals received, as provided in written and oral comments received; it does not include supporting details, rationale, or discussion of matters not specific to the proposed rules.*



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## Summary of Comments

Agency: Department of Environmental Management

Division: Marine Fisheries

Regulation: **Part 1 – Definitions and General Provisions (250-RICR-90-00-1)**

Type of rulemaking: Regular rulemaking

Type of filing: Amendment

Timetable for action on the proposed rule:

- Date of public notice: October 15, 2025
- Date of hearing: November 3, 2025
- End of comment period: November 16, 2025

Proposed rules and comments received:

1. **Penalties: Issuance of Tickets for Marine Fisheries Violations Through the RI Traffic Tribunal (RITT)**

- **PROPOSAL 1 (Division/Noticed):** Amend regulations to be consistent with statute whereby violations will be subject to a \$100 fine per offense and shall be under the jurisdiction of RITT (*section 1.8*)

**Comments received:** One comment received in support of the proposal as long as the Department doesn't go crazy issuing tickets and issuance of tickets is well thought out.

**IMPORTANT!** The public hearing was recorded and is publicly available on the Division of Marine Fisheries YouTube channel [here](#). *This document serves only as a tally of support, opposition, or alternative proposals received, as provided in written and oral comments received; it does not include supporting details, rationale, or discussion of matters not specific to the proposed rules.*

**From:** bob ritchie  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Admitting gillnets into floating fishtrap sector  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 5, 2025 9:36:01 AM

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Cows and pigs are two totally different animals. They may live on the same barnyard, but that's where the similarities end. Gillnets and floating fishtraps are likewise totally different animals as well, and should not be lumped together in the same sector. I am against adding gillnets to the fishtrap sector.

**From:** Chelsea Fuchs  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support proposal 7  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 11, 2025 3:43:07 PM

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**Rhode Island’s Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7**

**We, the undersigned, support Proposal 7, which states:**

**“The floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change, and will remain 39%, until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended, and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).”**  
**Proposal 7 offers a fair and measured approach to fisheries management, providing needed stability for Rhode Island’s historic floating fish trap fishery — a sustainable, low-impact practice that has operated responsibly for generations. By maintaining the current allocation through the rebuilding period, Rhode Island supports both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the continued contribution of this fishery to the state’s local seafood economy.**

**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

**Chelsea Williams and Aaron Williams  
Charlestown, RI**

Sent from my iPhone

**Public hearing comments on Black Sea Bass from David and Charles Borden F/V Old Coot and Drake/ Sakonnet Point - cell, 401-451-9312- Submitted -11-14-2025**

**2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management Options:**

- **Support Proposal 1 (Industry/Noticed): Sub-period allocation changes.** Rational: This proposal shifts 3% of the quota from January–April to October 16 to December 31. Why: The Oct-Dec 31 period is 10 weeks long (two and a half times longer than the two prior periods) and requires additional quota to avoid a closure like the one that occurred in 2023.

The January–April and October–December fisheries share many of the same participants and vessel types (in order of participation) trawlers, gill netters, lobster trap fishermen, fish potters, and rod-and-reel boats on Coxes and South). These are generally deep-water bycatch fisheries where releasing fish often results in mortality due to barotrauma, making quota utilization more biologically and ethically sound. This adjustment does not take quota away from other user groups, but rather shifts 3% of catch within the same constituency, to better match seasonal fishing patterns. Final point, in spite of this minor shift in quota during the spring period, the allocation for this period and group of vessels will still increase from the 2025 level, as will the weekly limit if proposal 5 below is approved (500-700 a week).

- **Support Proposal 2 (Industry/Noticed): Possession limit changes.** (from 50 lbs. day to 100 day). The rational for support is that the quota is increasing by 31%, and there were no closures this year, meaning more fish are available to catch, which allows for the liberalization of existing regulations. This change will also standardize the daily possession limit at 100/ day for entire year.
- **Support Proposal 3 (Industry/Noticed): Possession limit changes.** This proposal should be considered in conjunction with Part 23 – Aggregate, proposal #5, to amend the Aggregate Program to be a single year-round

program (see comments below). As explained below, it is also a logical adjustment, even if not linked to the aggregate year-round programs.

**Part 23 – Aggregate Program (250-RICR-90-00-23): Summer/Fall Aggregate Program for Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass:**

- **Support Proposal 1: Amend weekly black sea bass limit from 6 to 7x the daily limit.** The rationale for this support is that the quota is increasing by 31%, and there were no closures this year, meaning more fish are available to catch, which allows for the liberalization (6 to 7 days) of existing regulations. Additionally, going to seven days a week will prevent situations where a fisherman catches black sea bass on a closed day and has to discard the fish.
- **Opposed Proposal 2 (Industry): Amend title of part 23 to remove “aggregate” and change all instances of “aggregate” to “weekly or bi-weekly landing limit program”.** Rationale: There was no compelling logic presented verbally at the hearing, or in writing, to adopt this alternative, and this change could add confusion if there are different weekly programs with different requirements.
- **Support Proposal 5 (Industry): Amend Part 23 - Aggregate Program to be a single year-round program.** Rationale: In conjunction with the above recommendations, this change will raise the landing limit in the first period by 200 lbs. (500 to 700). This change will also standardize the daily limit at 100 a day year long.

Given that the quota is increasing by 31%, this change, in conjunction with the other proposals above, will likely convert some discards to landings by benefiting trawlers and offshore lobster fishermen during the winter period - January through April. Since discards during this period are deducted from subsequent commercial ABC, it will benefit all commercial users of the resource, by reducing the possibility of discarding BSB i. e. no closed days.

**From:** Dan  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support for proposal 7  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 11, 2025 3:58:48 PM

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Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7

I, the undersigned, support Proposal 7, which states:

“The floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change, and will remain 39%, until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended, and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).”

Proposal 7 offers a fair and measured approach to fisheries management, providing needed stability for

Rhode Island's historic floating fish trap fishery — a sustainable, low-impact practice that has operated

responsibly for generations. By maintaining the current allocation through the rebuilding period, Rhode

Island supports both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the continued contribution of this fishery to

the state's local seafood economy.

I urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

Daniel Calitri. Seafood Unlimited Inc.

## **Support for Proposal Seven**

Dear Members of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council,

Our names are Dom and Devon Campanale. We're commercial fishermen from Point Judith. We've been lobstering for longer than we can remember and working the fish traps since we were kids.

Point Judith's fleet is getting smaller every year, and we're some of the few younger guys still in it. We know that the floating fish traps are a clean and effective fishery, and we're committed to it for the long haul. But if you start taking quota away, then what are we supposed to count on for the future? Stability and opportunity are what keep people in this industry. If things keep changing, more young fishermen are just going to walk away. Losing quota during the rebuilding period weakens a fishery that's already limited, and it takes chances away from the people who are trying to stick with it. Proposal Seven provides some needed consistency. The floating fish traps have been part of Rhode Island for a long time, and they should be part of its future.

Thank you,

Dom and Devon Campanale

**From:** dpesante  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Commercial Striped Bass Proposal comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025 6:42:29 PM

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To Rhode Island, DEM, Fish and Wildlife, and Rhode Island fisheries management council

My name is Dean Pesante owner operator of the F/V Oceana based out of Point Judith RI.

I have been a full-time commercial fisherman since 1982.

I am writing to support proposal 6 for Commercial Striped bass management. I am supporting this proposal for two very important reasons. 1) **DISCRIMINATION** Right now Gill nets are the only gear type that cannot land striped bass. This is arbitrary and discriminatory.

2) **REGULATORY DISCARDS**. Because of the discrimination towards gillnets, we are forced to discard, striped bass. Many of which are already dead. Striped bass is an unavoidable by Catch in our targeted Fisheries of bluefish, Scup and dogfish.

Given the fact that striped bass is in a rebuilding stage, makes it that much more important that all these fish are being accounted for towards the quota.

Right now the way striped bass is being managed you are encouraging and promoting a directed fishery and ignoring an unavoidable by Catch in other Fisheries. This is not good management, and is not in the best interest of striped bass stocks.

Thank you. Dean Pesante. F/V Oceana

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad \[mail.onelink.me\]](#)

**From:** Daniel Sh  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps  
**Date:** Sunday, November 2, 2025 7:45:09 PM

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I, the undersigned, support Proposal 7, which states:  
“The floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change, and will remain 39%, until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended, and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).”  
Proposal 7 offers a fair and measured approach to fisheries management, providing needed stability for Rhode Island’s historic floating fish trap fishery — a sustainable, low-impact practice that has operated responsibly for generations. By maintaining the current allocation through the rebuilding period, Rhode Island supports both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the continued contribution of this fishery to the state’s local seafood economy.

I urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

Daniel Shames South Kingston / Mooresfield oyster farm employee.

**From:** ERIC LORENTZEN  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** menhaden comment  
**Date:** Saturday, November 8, 2025 4:08:58 PM

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i like both proposals that have been submitted. rhode island has taken a step to allow their fishermen to access bait, but the rules fall short of making it worth investing in the fishery. i think the council should hear out it local fishermen on relaxing the rules to make it feasible to pursue. it sounds like they want to use power blocks to make it easier to set haul in the net and be able catch fish when they show up rather than just in the spring. to do this with the restriction of 12,000 lbs a week i know it won't be overfished or put any stress on the management area.

## **Support for Proposal 7 – Maintain Floating Fish Trap Allocation**

Dear Members of the RI Marine Fisheries Council,

My name is Ian Campbell, and I own and operate the floating fish traps in Point Judith. I'm writing in strong support of Proposal 7, which states that the floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change and will remain at 39% until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Our season begins in early spring and ends in fall, but it takes year-round effort to make it happen. As an owner/operator, I am responsible for repairing and maintaining multiple boats that are needed to set and haul fish traps. That's mechanical work, electrical work, carpentry, fiberglassing, and so on. I build and mend traps, which require off-season storage to protect them from damage. I weld anchors, make lead weights, paint buoys, and fix barrels. I splice and coil anchor lines, up and down lines, and build frames. I stack, trailer, and stack again all the parts and pieces in and out of Point Judith continually. I coordinate crew schedules in all weather conditions throughout the year. I must plan months in advance to string all this together into a cohesive unit so that we can go catch fish. I give myself completely to this company and to this fishery. I invest my time, my money, and my energy — and all of that depends on predictable access to our quota. Proposed reallocations of the quota create enormous uncertainty, which makes it difficult to continue sacrificing and giving myself totally to an industry that faces repeated undercutting of access to an established quota.

The work that goes into keeping this fishery operational reflects the same consistency and care that's needed in management decisions. A predictable quota allows that effort to mean something — without it, the planning and all the doing is ultimately a slow road to failure instead of progress or success.

Some argue that reallocating quotas to other sectors would create new opportunities or fill gaps they perceive as missing. In reality, such changes would undermine a centuries-old fishery that earned its allocation through the qualifying years. This kind of grab would ultimately provide minimal financial gain for those sectors while simultaneously depleting the fish trap quota and eroding a sustainable, proven fishery.

Stability in the striped bass allocation supports the overall planning and balance of our operation. Maintaining the 39% allocation throughout the rebuilding period — or until the stock has been declared rebuilt by the ASMFC — supports not only conservation, but also the continuation of a fishery built on responsibility and precision. It provides the predictability we need to plan responsibly and keep Rhode Island's floating fish trap fishery alive for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ian Campbell

Commercial Fisherman and Floating Fish Trap Owner

To DEM and RIMFC,

I am writing in support of adding tautog to the current aggregate permit program. I believe the flexibility in fishing is vital for the fishing community, however I also recognize concerns from both fishermen and the State about the potential for increased catch rates if tautog is added without safeguards. There is no doubt that the aggregate program increases catch rates, and there is warranted concern that the tautog quota cannot withstand increased effort without significantly shortening seasons.

To address this, I am suggesting the following modifications to the aggregate program to incorporate tautog in a responsible manner that will have no effect on fishermen who chose not to be in the program:

- 1) Add tautog as an option for the aggregate program
- 2) Each eligible fishermen will be issued tautog tags in number not to exceed the average of the prior 2 years which they used
- 3) Fishermen enrolling in the program will be prohibited from obtaining more tags

Everything else would remain the same. Season closures, quota monitoring and current season lengths would remain the same as the number of fish harvested by participants in the program would not increase, and only have the possibility of decreasing.

It would also allow new fishermen to access the program after participating in the current "general category" for a short time. New people would not be blocked from participating.

Essentially, this will create a cap on the number of fish harvested by an individual. It is NOT an allocation, merely a upper limit on the number of fish they can harvest. This will prevent increased effort in the form of new entrants into the fishery because of the modified limits as well as prevent current fishermen from expanding their effort all while allowing the current fishermen to operate their business in the most efficient and streamlined manner at the levels they have done so in the past.

Thank you, Jeff Grant

**Subject: Support for Proposal 7 – Maintain Floating Fish Trap Quota**

**To: Rhode Island Division of Marine Fisheries and Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council**

**Dear Members of the Council and Division,**

I am writing in support of Proposal 7, which states that the floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change and will remain at 39% until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Maintaining allocation stability during the rebuilding period is essential to the long-term health and continuity of Rhode Island's floating fish trap fishery. The stability provided under Proposal 7 safeguards both current operations and the broader viability of the sector as a whole. There are fish trap businesses presently for sale, and the value of those enterprises is directly tied to the quota they hold. Reducing the allocation at this juncture would diminish that value and discourage potential new ownership or reinvestment in this historic and sustainable fishery.

If quota were to be removed now and these operations later acquired or reactivated, restoring that lost allocation would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Once quota is redistributed, it rarely returns. Such instability not only undermines business value but also weakens confidence in the management system designed to support sustainable fisheries.

Implementing allocation changes while the stock is under active rebuilding would also complicate the interpretation of management outcomes. Stable, data-rich fisheries such as the floating fish traps provide valuable information that supports accurate assessments of rebuilding progress. Maintaining the current allocation until the stock has been declared rebuilt ensures that management decisions made thereafter are based on actual biological recovery rather than short-term shifts in access or effort.

Rebuilding a fish stock must include consideration of the fisheries that depend on it. If the floating fish trap sector loses ground now, there may be neither the infrastructure nor the experienced operators remaining to benefit from the recovery once it occurs. Proposal 7 provides the necessary continuity to ensure that biological rebuilding is matched by social and economic recovery.

Maintaining quota stability through the rebuilding period is both a practical and precautionary management decision. It preserves business value for existing permit holders, sustains opportunity for future participants, and ensures that the benefits of rebuilding can be realized by a functioning fishery when the time comes.

Thank you for considering this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jeff Grant

**From:** jmacari1  
**To:** [Olszewski, Scott \(DEM\)](#); [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** 2025 Proposed Regulations  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 12, 2025 1:38:05 PM

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As far as the proposed Striped Bass Regulations-

I am favor of Division proposal #4. I am AGAINST all other proposals pertaining to the 2025 commercial Striped Bass season.

To add another user group (Gill Nets) to a VERY LIMITED allocation that is in effect, IS A VERY POOR CHOICE.

As some of the Department is aware of, a couple of decades or so ago, striped bass were solely a rod and reel fishery (along with just the trap fishery); a commercial angler could make a decent amount of revenue during the summer on bass, along with other fish, such as fluke, sea bass, tautog, tuna, etc. That is not the case these days; the historical commercial rod and reel activity for striped (and other species), is slowly going by the wayside, PLEASE omit any other user group to participate in the striped bass fishery..

I am favor of proposal #2 for black sea bass.

I am in favor of maintaining the status quo, no changes to the tautog fishery/. I am against the proposal to include tautog in the aggregate program.

Summer flounder and Black Sea bass aggregate programs- Against any modification of these programs until a study measuring the negative impacts of those programs on non-participating fishermen has been completed.

Thank You-

Sincerely,  
Joe Macari

commercial rod and reel fisherman  
jmacari1@cox.net



**From:** Kenneth Booth  
**To:** [Olszewski, Scott \(DEM\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Regulations - November 3, 2025, Public Hearing Comments  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 12, 2025 11:05:34 AM

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The Rhode Island Commercial Rod & Reel Association submits the following comments on the items presented at the November 3rd hearing:

**Striped Bass** - RICRRA is in favor of Division Proposal 4. We believe this option allows all fishers an equitable time frame for fishing effort. The two day per week fishing should also provide the Department the ability to closely monitor quota compliance.

- RICRRA is against all other proposals related to the commercial striped bass fishery.

**Tautog**- RICRRA is in favor of status quo, maintaining 2025 regulations in regard to commercial tautog management. The limited annual quota is equitably distributed among the subperiods allowing all fishermen the opportunity to harvest during the year.

- RICRRA objects to the proposal to include this specie in the aggregate program. This proposal would favor some specific gear types and provide greater opportunity for non-compliant fishermen to manipulate catch limits.

**Black Sea Bass** - RICRRA is in favor of proposal 2.

**Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Aggregate Programs** - RICRRA objects to any modifications to these programs until completion of a comprehensive study of the program's negative impacts on non-participating fishermen.

Ken Booth, President  
RICRRA

**From:** Katherine Goss  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support  
**Date:** Sunday, November 16, 2025 12:49:08 PM

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Proposal 7

I, the undersigned, support Proposal 7, which states:

“The floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change, and will remain 39%, until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended, and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).”

Proposal 7 offers a fair and measured approach to fisheries management, providing needed stability for

Rhode Island’s historic floating fish trap fishery — a sustainable, low-impact practice that has operated

responsibly for generations. By maintaining the current allocation through the rebuilding period, Rhode

Island supports both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the continued contribution of this fishery to

the state’s local seafood economy.

I urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Liam Sullivan  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Olszewski, Scott \(DEM\)](#); [Lengyel, Nicole \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Rule Making  
**Date:** Thursday, October 30, 2025 9:10:56 AM

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Peter,

I am writing this email to propose a change to the proposed language regarding the eligibility for the Striped Bass Gillnet Harvest Permit. In Finfish Section 3.8.2(C)5(a)2, I would like the language to state "Must demonstrate at least thirty thousand (30,000) pounds of cumulative landings of any marine species harvested in the three (3) preceding calendar years, and/or 10 or more state water gillnet landings".

Rational:

It is my interpretation of the current proposed language to minimize the eligible participants to gillnet fishermen that fish full time or make a significant portion of their income for the year from fishing. This current proposed language would make boats that meet the landings requirement through federal landings whose owners have a state water gillnet endorsement eligible. While I agree they should be eligible, this language would not qualify someone with a state water gillnet endorsement that does not have enough landings in 3 years but has actively gillnetted in state waters. I do not believe this to be fair.

I believe the language I am proposing will keep the eligibility pool to a minimum while also fairly encompassing all fishermen deserving of qualifying for the permit. If you have any questions or would like me to go further into my thought process, please feel free to reach out.

Thank you,  
Liam Sullivan  
(401) 418-2100

**From:** micheal mcelroy  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** DEM  
**Date:** Thursday, November 13, 2025 11:33:35 PM

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Hi Peter

this is getting silly , these people don,t care about any fishery . its all about the money

striper opening date ..... it left the bay along time ago , giving us a chance at the fish , so June 1 opening

Gill nets , im against any proposal in favor of gill nets , IMO they should be 100% banned /but again the money

they should be banned for everyone , evan the guys that only use them for bait ...they catch more then bait

Mike McElroy MP 0000000082

Have & enjoy your holidays ><>

**From:** Max N  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps  
**Date:** Sunday, November 2, 2025 3:24:46 PM

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I, the undersigned, support Proposal 7, which states:  
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Proposal 7 offers a fair and measured approach to fisheries management, providing needed stability for Rhode Island’s historic floating fish trap fishery — a sustainable, low-impact practice that has operated responsibly for generations. By maintaining the current allocation through the rebuilding period, Rhode Island supports both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the continued contribution of this fishery to the state’s local seafood economy.

I urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

Maximus Namba South Kingston / Mooresfield oyster farm employee.

**From:** Mark Sherer  
**To:** [Olszewski, Scott \(DEM\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Mark Sherer](#); [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** 2025 Comm Gen Cat STB  
**Date:** Friday, November 14, 2025 9:19:38 AM

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Scott:

I am in favor of Division proposal #4, 5 fish Tuesday, Wednesday. I am not in favor of any of the other proposals, especially any quota allotted to the gill net industry.

Captain Mark Sherer  
Gannet Outdoor Adventures

**From:** Mark Starr  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps  
**Date:** Monday, November 3, 2025 3:54:48 PM

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## **Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7**

We, the undersigned, support Proposal 7, which states:

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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Dear Mr. Duhamel,

I am writing to you in support of Proposal #7 as seen above in support of keeping the current striped bass allocation as is during this period of rebuilding. I feel it is the wrong time to change the parameters of the allocation while waiting to see how current regulations are working. It seems prudent in my eyes to wait until the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt before adding additional pressures mid-stream. Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,  
Markham Starr



# Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7

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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
<u>Bradley Tefft</u>	<u>Ashaway</u>	<u>Bradley Tefft</u>
<u>Annalise Tefft</u>	<u>Ashaway</u>	<u>Annalise Tefft</u>
<u>John Nyblom</u>	<u>Peace Dale</u>	<u>John Nyblom</u>
<u>Howe Bugbee</u>	<u>W. Kingston</u>	<u>Howe Bugbee</u>
<u>Xen Steere Bugbee</u>	<u>West Kingston</u>	<u>Xen Steere Bugbee</u>
<u>Paul J Carr Jr</u>	<u>Narragansett RI</u>	<u>Paul Carr Jr</u>
<u>Kyle Dawson</u>	<u>South Kingstown</u>	<u>Kyle Dawson</u>
<u>Glenon Goodwin</u>	<u>South Kingstown</u>	<u>Glenon Goodwin</u>
<u>Robert Mitchell</u>	<u>Narragansett</u>	<u>Robert Mitchell</u>
<u>Tom Lafazia</u>	<u>NARRAGANSETT BAY LOBSTER</u>	<u>TOM LAFAZIA</u>
<u>Adam Morse</u>	<u>Narragansett Bay Lobster</u>	<u>Adam Morse</u>
<u>John Myrland</u>	<u>SOUTH KINGSTOWN</u>	<u>John Myrland</u>

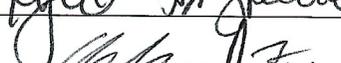
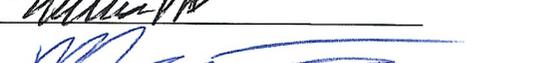
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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
John Tally	Narragansett	
Mike Acampora	South Kingstown	
Sean Tally	Clinton	
KENNY FITZPATRICK	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	
Steve Fitzpatrick	S.K.	
Kyle Fitzpatrick	South Kingstown	
Andy Fox	S.K.	
Lindsay McDonald	Narragansett	
WILLIAM NELSON	S.K.	
Matthew Tanksley	South Kingstown	
Braiden Corbett	South Kingstown	
		

# Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7

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Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
<u>Selma Gordon</u>	<u>S. Kingston</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Candace Gardner</u>	<u>W. Kingston</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Jared Gardner</u>	<u>W. Kingston</u>	<u>Jared Gardner</u>
<u>Lauren Cindrich</u>	<u>W. Kingston</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Ivan Cindrich</u>	<u>W. Kingston</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Mackenzie <del>Wright</del></u>	<u>Westerly</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Steve Graham</u>	<u>Exeter</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>ZACHARY DIER</u>	<u>WEST GREENWICH</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Audrey Murphy</u>	<u>Ashaway</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Tyler Tuckon</u>	<u>W. Kingston</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Mike J Doak</u>	<u>W. Kingston</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Catherine Tuckon</u>	<u>W. Kingston</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>

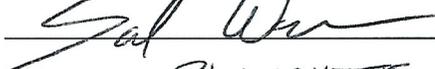
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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
Luce C Rathbone	Charlestown	
Ian Perz	Wakefield	
Brian Follett	Wakefield	Brian Follett
GARY DAVIS	S. KINGSTOWN	Gary W. Davis
Kerri Handrejan	Narragansett	
Peggy Toth	Charlestown	Peggy Toth
James M. TOTTH	Charlestown	James M. Toth
Jimmy Champion	S. Kingstown	
	S. Kingstown	Sam Weeden
DAVID BLANCHETTE	S. KINGSTOWN	
Shelby Sylvia	Wakefield	
matt frediani	Wakefield	Matt

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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
<u>JOANIE CAMPBELL</u>	<u>South Kingstown R.I.</u>	<u>Joanie R. Campbell</u>
<u>Zach Nyblom</u>	<u>South Kingstown</u>	<u>Zach Nyblom</u>
<u>DOUG MELIROS</u>	<u>EXPER</u>	<u>Doug Meliros</u>
<u>Rick Gardner</u>	<u>South Kingstown</u>	<u>Rick Gardner</u>
<u>Ryan Horan</u>	<u>South Kingstown</u>	<u>Ryan Horan</u>
<u>Darlene Gardner</u>	<u>South Kingstown</u>	<u>Darlene Gardner</u>
<u>Marcia Tefft</u>	<u>Ashaway</u>	<u>Marcia Tefft</u>
<u>MATTHEW FISH</u>	<u>NARRAGANSETT</u>	<u>Matthew Fish</u>
<u>Christopher Fish</u>	<u>Narragansett/Bonnet shoals</u>	<u>Chris Fish</u>
<u>ERNEST GEORGE JR.</u>	<u>SOUTH KINGSTOWN</u>	<u>Ernest D. George Jr.</u>
<u>Brandon Kelly</u>	<u>South Kingstown</u>	<u>Brandon Kelly</u>
<u>Rachel Partney</u>	<u>South Kingstown</u>	<u>Rachel Partney</u>
<u>Asmy Kaiser</u>	<u>North Kingstown</u>	<u>Asmy Kaiser</u>

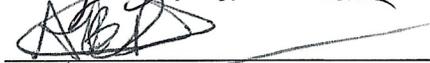
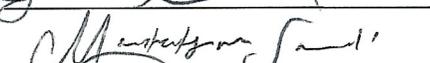
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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
Monica Galasso	Narragansett	
Lily Gartner	Narragansett	
Tony D'Assandis	Warwick	
Allison Reynolds	Warwick	
Amy Galles	Charlestown	
Jels Ward	Waterly	
Julia Kissingler	Ashaway	
Madalynn Sands	Wakefield	
Justin Fritze	Pawtucket	
Max Gofes	Wakefield	
Matthew Hyman	West Warwick	
Jeremy Graham	North Kingstown	

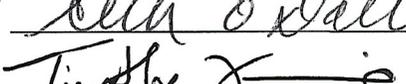
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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
Liam Hamilton	Westerly	
Josh Brewster	west warwick	
George McAniff	South Kingstown	
Victoria Almonte	South Kingstown	
<del>Kathleen Deas</del>	Narragansett	
<del>Jared Morris</del> <sup>Jared Morris</sup>	Narragansett	
ROLAND BENJAMIN	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	
SEAN O'DONNELL	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	
Timothy Fanning	Narragansett	
Timothy Busby	Narragansett	
Jennifer Busby	Narragansett	
ERIK ELLIS	South Kingstown	

## Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7

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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
CHRISTINE A. SYKES	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	Christine A Sykes
Robert W Sykes	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	Robert W Sykes
KEVIN W JONES	NARRA	Kevin W. Jones
WALTER DAVIS	NARRA.	Walter Davis
Kent Browning	South Kingstown	Kent Browning
BOB TUCKER	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	Bob Tucker
CARL GRANQUIST	NARRAGANSETT	Carl Granquist
Nancy Steinmeyer	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	Nancy Steinmeyer
Steven A. Sisson	Wakefield R.I.	Steven A. Sisson
Susan Carew	Wakefield R.I.	Susan Carew
Glenn Westcott	Narragansett, R.I.	Glenn Westcott
JAMES SYKES	NARRAGANSETT	James Sykes

**From:** Stesha Campbell  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Support for Proposal 7  
**Date:** Sunday, November 16, 2025 1:32:00 PM

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# Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7

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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
<u>Brett Carr</u>	<u>South Kingstown</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>RABIAA MADDOUCHA</u>	<u>Narragansett</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Lori A Carr</u>	<u>South Kingstown</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Michele Murphy</u>	<u>NARRAGANSETT</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Michael Murphy</u>	<u>NARRAGANSETT</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>Brandon Carr</u>	<u>Narragansett</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

On Sunday, November 16, 2025, 12:29 PM, Stesha Campbell <stesha\_campbell@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hi Peter,

I have attached the signatures below in support of Proposal 7. Hopefully, this is a little easier than postcards.

Thank you.

Best,  
Stesha



RHODE ISLAND  
**SALTWATER**  
**ANGLERS**  
Association



P.O. Box 1467, Coventry, Rhode Island 02816

401-826-2121

www.RISAA.org

Peter Duhamel  
DEM Division of Marine Fisheries  
3 Fort Wetherill Road, Jamestown, RI 02835

Via email: [peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov](mailto:peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov)

RE: Comments on Proposed Rulemaking Public Hearing 11-3-25

Mr. Duhamel:

Please accept the following comments on RIDEM Proposed Rulemaking, made on behalf of the entire membership of the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association. Our members and all participants in the recreational fishery in RI rely on healthy fish stocks. We believe that the comments below are made in a light that will help protect both forage fish and those species that our industry needs to survive.

1. Commercial Menhaden Management – RISAA opposes both Proposal 1 and 2. We are opposed to additional commercial harvest of menhaden in the Menhaden Management Area when that area has not been opened due to observed high biomass. This entire idea of opening the area before the floor biomass has been observed works counter to the policies established by RIDEM when the MMA was created more than 10 years ago. RISAA has already received calls and complaints regarding commercial harvest in the MMA under the recent opening to 6000 pounds per vessel per week. Additional harvest and additional days open will only bring us back to the days when there was extreme conflict between commercial menhaden harvesters and rod and reel fishermen in the Bay. Please do not liberalize this commercial catch.
2. Commercial Striped Bass – Regarding Proposals 1, 2, 3 and 4 - RISAA is not opposed to some measure to spread out commercial harvest over a longer time and therefore effort to a longer timeframe. We have no opinion if a lower bag limit or less open days is the best method to accomplish this objective. RISAA opposes Proposals 5 and 6. We have stated many times in the past, expanding commercial harvest to gill net fishing is not in the best interest of the species. We believe that the prohibition on gill net fishing for striped bass should remain. This proposed rule would allow gill net fishermen to harvest smaller striped bass than either commercial or recreational fishermen are currently allowed. It is extreme and would do tremendous damage to the striped bass population at a time when rebuilding is required and the striped bass technical committee has stated that there is a less than 50% probability of rebuilding of the stock by 2029 as required by law. Passage of this proposed rule would be reckless mismanagement of a critical marine resource. RISAA supports Proposal 7 to prohibit transfer of quota from the FFT sector to the general commercial sector because it could reduce the total commercial catch, thereby improving the possibility of rebuilding the stock by 2029.
3. Part 23 Aggregate Program – In general RISAA opposes the aggregate program such as in Proposal 1 because it encourages larger vessels to participate in the commercial harvest. In addition, it would seem that allowing a harvester to catch a week's worth of landings in one or two days advantages those vessels since they likely would not get 7 days of good weather and would have other reasons for not being able to fish every day of the week, therefore it makes no sense to establish the aggregate landings in any case to be the sum of the individual daily limits. At a minimum the aggregate should be reduced by 20% or 25% from the sum of the daily limits. Regarding Proposal 2, RISAA sees no reason to change the language in regulation. The term Aggregate has been used in RI regulations for many years and does not need to change just because someone perceives that the word has negative connotations. RISAA is opposed to Proposal 5. There is no reason to make the Aggregate Program year-round. When it was first established, the Aggregate program was for the Winter period only. This program made sense because it allowed fewer trips for a vessel during hazardous winter weather and saved significant fuel with long runs to the Winter fishing grounds. This program has now been expanded to Summer fishing to benefit large commercial vessels at the request of these vessels. RISAA opposes this continuing expansion into the Summer fishing period because it is bringing more draggers and gill net harvesters into the commercial fishery for those species that are

important to recreational fishing interests. These fishing methods are inherently wasteful of our precious marine resources and should not be given special treatment.

Thank you for consideration of these comments. Please feel free to contact either person signing below to discuss further.

Sincerely,

*Scott A. Travers*

Scott Travers  
Executive Director  
Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association  
401-826-2121  
Travers@risaa.org

*Rich Hittinger*

Rich Hittinger  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association  
401-265-7602  
Hittinger@risaa.org

## Opposition to Proposal 6

I am writing to express strong opposition to Proposal 6, which would reduce the Floating Fish Trap (FFT) allocation from 39% to 27% and create a brand-new gill net striped bass fishery with a separate allocation, permit, season, and possession structure. Proposal 6 is the most destabilizing and biologically risky action under consideration this year. It increases effort, expands mortality, undermines stock rebuilding, harms product quality, and creates a major new enforcement and management burden—all during the striped bass rebuilding timeline through 2029.

**1. “Other gears can catch them, why can’t we?” is not a management justification.** Supporters of Proposal 6 argued that rod-and-reel fishermen, spearfishermen, and floating fish traps are allowed to land striped bass, and therefore gill netters should be as well. But fisheries are not—and cannot be—managed according to whether every gear type gets to catch every species.

Gear-specific rules exist for good reason: biological protection, stock rebuilding needs, discard mitigation, product quality, safety, and effort control. The longstanding gill net prohibition for striped bass is intentional, appropriate, and protective—not an oversight. Management should be based on sustainability, not parity.

**2. “We’re catching them anyway as bycatch” highlights a problem—not a reason to authorize more harvest.** At the public meeting, supporters of Proposal 6 claimed striped bass should be legalized for gill nets because they are already being caught incidentally. This is the opposite of a valid rationale. If meaningful bycatch is occurring, the appropriate response is to

- investigate,
- quantify,
- and mitigate

- not expand the fishery to make the bycatch legal. Bycatch is not a loophole for new entitlement. Furthermore, gill net interactions with striped bass result in high mortality due to entanglement, drowning, prolonged soak times, and gear mechanics that are fundamentally incompatible with low-mortality handling. This mortality rate is significantly higher than that of floating fish traps and rod-and-reel fisheries. If gill net bycatch of striped bass is occurring at meaningful levels today, the correct management response is to reduce soak times, modify gear, adjust seasons, or develop bycatch-mitigation measures—not to legalize and expand retention. Converting high-mortality bycatch into authorized harvest does not reduce striped bass deaths; it increases them. During a rebuilding period, regulating bycatch should mean tightening restrictions, not opening new access. Proposal 6 would expand the very gear type with the highest striped bass mortality at the moment when mortality should be minimized.

**3. Proposal 6 will reactivate dormant gill net permits and sharply increase effort.** While only a small number of gill netters fish regularly today, there are approximately 100–150 gill net permits in Rhode Island, and an estimated 70–75 of those permit holders would be immediately eligible to participate in the new striped bass gill net program under Proposal 6.

Proposal 6 offers new quota, new opportunity, and a high-value species—all of which create a strong incentive for currently inactive permit holders to re-enter the fishery, and for additional permit holders to work toward eligibility in future years.

Even a modest reactivation rate would:

- Increase fishing pressure
- Increase striped bass mortality
- Increase enforcement needs
- Destabilize existing sectors
- Undermine rebuilding

No evidence has been presented to justify expanding effort in a rebuilding stock.

**4. The 20% mixed-weight rule is biologically unsound and creates unavoidable waste.** Proposal 6 would allow gill netters to land unlimited striped bass as long as bass comprise  $\leq 20\%$  of the total mixed catch weight.

Gill nets frequently catch single-species hauls, especially during striped bass pulses. Under this rule, a gill netter who catches mostly or exclusively striped bass in a set:

- cannot legally land those fish, and
- would be forced to discard them dead.

This creates a regulatory structure that guarantees discard mortality—an unacceptable outcome for a species under a rebuilding mandate. No other striped bass rule in Rhode Island requires fishermen to throw away dead fish they legally cannot land. Proposal 6 would create exactly that problem.

**5. Gill-net-caught striped bass are significantly lower quality and damage Rhode Island's product reputation.** Quality is part of sustainability and part of economic viability.

- FFT fish are bled immediately while still moving and iced within seconds.
- Rod-and-reel fish are handled individually and kept iced.

In contrast: Gill-net-caught striped bass routinely exhibit gill-net ring bruising, soft flesh, and degradation from drowning and prolonged net soak times.

- Fish are often landed with little or no ice, packed into totes.
- Restaurants have, and will, reject poor-quality fish.
- Introducing a large volume of lower-quality product harms:
  - Rhode Island's market reputation
  - Dealer relationships
  - Pricing stability
  - Consumer confidence

Rhode Island currently lands a premium striped bass product. Proposal 6 jeopardizes that.

**6. Proposal 6 imposes a major new enforcement and administrative burden on DEM.** This proposal requires DEM and Marine Fisheries enforcement to build, manage, and monitor an entirely new fishery—with new permits, new rules, new reporting requirements, new compliance checks, and new risks.

DEM would now have to:

- Issue and track a new Striped Bass Gill Net Harvest Permit
- Verify permit eligibility (including a 30,000-lb landing requirement)
- Enforce a complex 20% mixed-weight rule requiring on-site weight checks
- Monitor a new 12% gill net striped bass allocation
- Track gill net striped bass separately from the General Category and FFT's

- Police discard problems created by unavoidable single-species hauls
- Manage quota, reporting, and enforcement across multiple new moving parts

This is a heavy administrative burden with no conservation benefit. During stock rebuilding, regulatory complexity should decrease—not multiply.

### **7. The economics do not justify the risk or the regulatory complexity.**

Rhode Island's total commercial striped bass quota is 138,467 pounds. Under Proposal 6, gill nets would receive 12% of the total, which equals approximately 16,616 pounds.

With an estimated 70–75 gill net permit holders immediately eligible to participate—and strong incentive for more of the roughly 100–150 permit holders statewide to become eligible—the per-vessel share quickly becomes negligible. If 70–75 gill netters participate, they would each be competing for only about 220–240 pounds per vessel per year. If participation grows toward the full 100–150 permit universe, that per-vessel share drops to roughly 110–165 pounds per year.

This is not a meaningful, stable economic opportunity for participants. It is a thinly spread allocation that will either concentrate in a small number of hands or leave most participants with almost nothing, while still requiring the Division to create and police an entirely new sector.

In contrast, the FFT fishery would lose approximately 16,600 pounds, dropping from ~54,000 pounds to ~37,000 pounds — a major, permanent reduction to an existing, highly selective, low-impact, heritage fishery.

The economics simply do not justify creating a new sector, reallocating quota away from an existing sustainable gear type, and adding significant administrative burden to the Division.

### **8. Proposal 6 undermines stability during the ASMFC-mandated rebuilding period through 2029.**

The striped bass stock is under a formal rebuilding timeline. During rebuilding:

- Effort should not expand
- New gear sectors should not be added
- Mortality should not increase
- Stability should be prioritized

Proposal 6 contradicts the goals of the rebuilding plan and introduces a high-risk, low-benefit fishery expansion at the worst possible time.

**Conclusion:** Proposal 6 increases mortality, increases effort, increases waste, decreases product quality, reactivates dormant permits, burdens DEM with new administrative and enforcement work, and destabilizes Rhode Island's most selective, lowest-impact source of commercial striped bass.

It provides no demonstrated biological, economic, or management benefit.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Division and the Council to reject Proposal 6 in its entirety.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
 Stesha Campbell  
 Commercial fisherman and Floating Fish Trap Operator

Subject: **Support for Proposal 7 – Maintain Floating Fish Trap Allocation**

Dear Members of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council and Division of Marine Fisheries,

My name is **Stesha Campbell**, and my brother and I own and operate the floating fish traps in Point Judith. I'm writing in **strong support of Proposal 7**, which ensures that the floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change and will remain at 39 percent through the end of the rebuilding period, or until the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) declares the striped bass stock rebuilt.

For us, this is not just a policy matter — it's our livelihood, our history, and our future. Running a floating fish trap business is a **year-round commitment**. It's not just hauling fish for a few months — it's repairing boats in the winter, welding anchors in March, building frames and mending traps in April, and breaking it all down again in the fall.

It's mechanical work, electrical work, carpentry, planning, and coordination. It's also being a bookkeeper — filing SAFIS reports, keeping insurance and licenses current, and making sure berthing is paid. It's showing up at meetings, time and time again, to defend the work you do and the right to keep doing it. **Every part of that depends on predictability — knowing that the effort we put in year-round, through every season, will still mean something tomorrow.** Stability in quota isn't about profit or preference; it's about survival.

The fish traps have operated responsibly for generations because they work. They're efficient, selective, and inherently sustainable. Our traps have a discard mortality rate of less than three percent — fish that aren't kept are released alive and unharmed. There's no drag on the ocean floor, near-zero bycatch, and a minimal carbon footprint. This gear is passive, fixed, and fully accountable — exactly the kind of operation that **supports the state's conservation and rebuilding goals**.

**By contrast, the proposal seeking to shift striped bass quota into the gillnet fishery** would move this resource into a far less predictable and much higher-mortality gear type. Gillnets would result in exponentially greater discard mortality, far less predictable catch rates, and present new challenges for enforcement and monitoring. Never mind **igniting a resting fleet of gillnet permits**. During a rebuilding period, those risks are not theoretical — they **directly undermine recovery**.

Maintaining the current allocation is not just about fairness between sectors; it's about protecting the integrity of striped bass management and ensuring that Rhode Island's most selective, low-impact fishery remains part of the solution — not part of the problem. **Proposal 7 doesn't request more access or new opportunities; it seeks consistency — to maintain what already works.** Changing allocations now, while the stock is recovering, would destabilize a fishery that has proven itself reliable and sustainable.

**There are fish trap businesses currently for sale, and their value is directly tied to the quota they hold. If the quota is reduced, those operations lose value, and future investment becomes far less likely.** Once the quota is redistributed, it rarely returns. That kind of loss doesn't just hurt one company — it weakens an entire gear type. It jeopardizes the continuity of a whole fishery that has contributed to Rhode Island's economy and identity for over two centuries.

**The floating fish traps are one of the oldest continuously operating fisheries in the United States.** Historical records trace it back to the early 1800s. For generations, Rhode Islanders have built their lives around these traps — people who hauled the gear by hand, who built and repaired every piece themselves, and who passed their knowledge on to the next generation. Today, that same tradition continues.

**The fish traps in Point Judith aren't just our traps — they're the community's.** Each spring, people come up to us and say they've seen the ospreys back, because they know their arrival means it's time to set the traps again. Fishermen stop to tell us what they've been seeing offshore — schools of this or that, signs of what might be on the way.

As we load anchors and frames into the boats, every passerby wants to know what's already been set. Almost every commercial fisherman in the Point has a story about when they worked the traps for a season or two — a kind of rite of passage that ties generations together. And there's always the prior trap captain who'll tell you how they used to do it.

When we're mending along the escape road, people slow down to take pictures or stop and ask questions — sometimes fishermen will offer a hand, or at least a story, to help us pass the time. **We're not just another boat at the dock; we're something the community feels invested in and connected to — a part of the harbor that belongs to everyone.**

**That sense of shared pride and belonging is what's kept this fishery alive through generations. It's not something that can be rebuilt once it's lost — which is why it deserves protection, not risk.** Reducing the allocation now would undercut one of the few fisheries still meeting modern management ideals — low impact, high accountability, and sustainability.

At a time when the entire commercial fleet is shrinking altogether and aging out, **Proposal 7 helps preserve opportunity for those still here** — and for the younger fishermen working hard to make this their future. It **provides a reason to stay invested in the fishery** that's been part of Rhode Island for over two hundred years.

**Proposal 7 is fair, measured, and fully aligned with the goals of striped bass recovery.** It supports biological rebuilding while ensuring that a proven, responsible fishery remains part of Rhode Island's working coast when the stock rebounds.

On behalf of the floating fish trap sector, our families, our crews, and the many people who have signed in support of Proposal 7, I **respectfully urge you to adopt it — maintain the current allocation,** protect the fishery that's doing things right, and allow Rhode Island's floating fish traps to continue contributing to both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the long-term strength of this state's fishing heritage.

Sincerely,  
**Stesha Campbell**

Floating Fish Trap Operator  
Point Judith, Rhode Island

## **SUPPORT PROPOSAL SEVEN – Maintain the allocation**

Dear Members of the Council and Division,

My name is Stesha Campbell, and my brother and I own and operate the floating fish traps in Point Judith. I am writing in strong support of Proposal 7, which would maintain the current 39 percent striped bass allocation for the floating fish trap (FFT) sector, through the end of the rebuilding period or until the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Floating fish traps are not just another commercial gear; they are a management tool that directly supports Rhode Island's conservation and rebuilding objectives. As a fixed, passive gear type, our traps have a discard mortality rate of less than 3 percent. Non-target or undersized fish are released alive and unharmed, which directly contributes to the recovery of the striped bass stock. Our landings are easily monitored and fully traceable, providing managers with reliable data and ensuring compliance with quota limits. The state's provision, which allows the floating fish trap sector to roll over unharvested quota into the general category, has played a crucial role in maintaining the allocation system. This measure has helped prevent overage and preserve the integrity of both sectors.

This fishery embodies the principles of responsible, ecosystem-based management: no seabed disturbance, near-zero bycatch, and a small carbon footprint. These qualities make the floating fish trap one of the most selective and environmentally compatible commercial gears in use today. Maintaining stability in the floating fish trap sector allows Rhode Island to continue benefiting from one of the most sustainable and transparent commercial fisheries in the region.

Proposals to reallocate floating fish trap quota to commercial gillnets may appear to some to expand opportunity in the industry as a whole, but they should be viewed with eyes wide open. If you wanted to find the exact antithesis of a floating fish trap, you'd find it in a gillnet. This reckless gear type poses significant biological and management risks. It produces exponentially higher discard mortality, far less predictable catch rates, and creates new enforcement challenges. You don't want gillnets catching striped bass in their best years, never mind during a rebuilding period. Preserving the existing allocation and rejecting all gillnet proposals seeking striped bass quota is the responsible decision for the current and future health of the stock.

Proposal seven supports Rhode Island's broader fisheries management goals. It provides stability for our small business and ensures that the floating fish traps continue to play an active role in striped bass recovery. It also keeps this fishery focused on low-impact harvest methods and prevents striped bass from being shifted into high-mortality gillnet fisheries. We are proud to represent a fishery that reflects Rhode Island's commitment to sustainability and stewardship, and we remain dedicated to operating responsibly for the long-term health of this resource.

Sincerely,  
Stesha Campbell

**From:** Stesha Campbell  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Striped Bass Public Comment  
**Date:** Friday, November 14, 2025 2:52:26 PM  
**Attachments:** [Opposition to Proposal 6.docx](#)  
[2026 Stesha's speech in a PC letter.docx](#)  
[2026 Stesha Campbell support proposal 7.docx](#)

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Good afternoon, Peter.

Attached below are my public comments regarding the striped bass agenda. I don't have anything formally written in opposition to proposal number five, but I am strongly opposed to it. Additionally, instead of using postcards this year, we have collected signatures on letter-sized pages to minimize the amount of scanning required on your end. I will email those signatures to you this weekend, before Sunday at 4 PM.

Just a note, for some unknown reason, my documents become italicized when I attach them to my yahoo email. I have no idea, but I assume that should not matter.

Have a great weekend, thank you.

Stesha



Stuart J. Meltzer  
Fearless Fish Ikejime  
272 Great Island Rd  
Narragansett, RI 02882  
[stu@fearlessfishmarket.com](mailto:stu@fearlessfishmarket.com)

Peter Duhamel  
DEM Division of Marine Fisheries  
3 Fort Wetherill Road  
Jamestown, RI 02835  
[peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov](mailto:peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov)

Dear Mr. Duhamel,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am submitting comments in response to amendments to “2026 Commercial Striped Bass Management” that will be presented to the RI Marine Fisheries Council.

As you know, the Wild Striped Bass Stock/Biomass is under significant pressure and therefore heavily regulated. The market price for this fish should reflect this (i.e. high). However, this fishery is managed in such a way that produces the opposite effect. Currently, fishermen are incentivized to catch as much Wild Striped Bass as they are allowed as quickly as they are allowed before the collective quota is hit. This floods the market and crashes the price. We saw this happen this year (2025) in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. This foments distrust between dealers and fishermen and both parties realize less value than is possible.

Instead, I propose a quota allocation system where each commercial fisherman who has recorded at least 20 landings the prior season (of any species) and landed Wild Striped Bass three or more times would receive Wild Striped Bass Quota. This would include about 116 fishermen. Given the existing quota, it would come to around thirty (30) fish per license holder, which is roughly the expected catch on any given season (currently). I propose distributing the quota in the form of tags to fishermen at the beginning of the season. Fishermen can use these tags to fish for Striped Bass *at any time throughout the year*. The tags can be transferred or sold among licenseholders.

Again, a limited species should be managed in a way that helps realize the maximum possible value, while balancing operational considerations and regulatory requirements. I think this proposal, or something similar, needs to be considered for the upcoming season. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart J. Meltzer".

Stuart J. Meltzer  
Owner  
Fearless Fish Ikejime

## Support for Proposal 7

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Dear Members of the Council and Division,

My name is Thomasina Grant, and I grew up in the commercial fishing community. I'm writing in support of Proposal 7, which would maintain the current 39 percent striped bass allocation for the floating fish trap sector through the rebuilding period or until the stock is declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Rhode Island's floating fish trap fishery is not only one of the oldest in the state, but one of the oldest continuously operating commercial fisheries in the country. Historical records from the National Marine Fisheries Service trace it back to the early 1800s, and in *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States* (1887), G. Browne Goode described Rhode Island's trap fishery in nearly the same form that exists today. At its height, hundreds of traps stretched along the coast from Narragansett to Sakonnet Point, marking the spring return of both the fish and the people who worked them.

Today, only one company remains to carry that legacy forward. The gear has endured because it works — it's simple, efficient, and selective. Fish swim in alive and can be released unharmed if they're not part of the catch. There's no drag on the ocean floor, no fuel-hungry chase, and near-zero bycatch. Researcher and documentarian Mark Starr, who extensively recorded the history of Rhode Island's fisheries — particularly around Point Judith — described the floating fish traps as “the greenest fishery in existence.” His work, which included photography, video, and written documentation, highlighted how a single trap boat can harvest close to a million pounds of fish while burning only a few hundred gallons of fuel. This method predates industrialization and, in many ways, represents what modern management now aims for: low impact, high accountability, and sustainability.

The floating fish trap fishery has helped shape Rhode Island's identity for generations. It reflects the work ethic, skill, and ingenuity of the people who built their lives around the ocean. When you see a trap along the coast, you're seeing history in motion — the same practice carried out by hand and by heart for over two centuries.

Proposal 7 protects more than a quota. It safeguards a living connection to Rhode Island's maritime heritage and ensures that the state continues to lead by example in sustainable fishing. Reducing the fish trap allocation now would not only harm a responsible fishery, it would risk erasing a tradition that has stood the test of time.

For the sake of history, community, and conservation, I urge you to support Proposal 7 and maintain the 39 percent striped bass allocation for the floating fish trap sector.

Sincerely,  
Thomasina Grant



# Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

3 Fort Wetherill Road Jamestown, Rhode Island 02835

(401) 423-1920 Fax: (401) 423-1925

## Administrative Policies and Procedures of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

Adopted DATE

### A. Powers and duties of the Council

Pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §20-3-2 “Powers and duties”](#), the RI Marine Fisheries Council (council) shall serve in an advisory capacity only to the state and agencies of the state regarding marine fisheries issues and shall have the power and duty to advise the director of the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) in the exercise of his or her authority under this title for the planning, management, and regulation of marine fisheries on matters (except emergency rules adopted pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §42-35-2.10](#)), including, but not limited to, the following:

1. The manner of taking marine species from the waters of the state.
2. The legal size limits of marine species to be taken or possessed.
3. The seasons and hours during which marine species may be taken or possessed.
4. The numbers or quantities of marine species which may be taken or possessed.
5. The opening and closing of areas within the coastal waters to the taking of any and all types of marine species.
6. Marine fisheries licensing, including commercial, recreational and for-hire fisheries sectors.
7. Reviewing applications to the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) for permits to conduct aquaculture, and provide recommendations to CRMC on all such applications, in accordance with [R.I. Gen. Laws §20-10-5\(b\)](#).
8. Advise the director in the development of the rulemaking agenda for marine fisheries pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §42-35-5.1 “Rulemaking agenda”](#).

### B. Advice of the marine fisheries council

Pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-1-5.1 “Advice of the marine fisheries council”](#), the Director, in exercising authority under this title for the planning, management, and regulation of marine fisheries, shall request and consider in the record as applicable the advice of the council, and shall provide a written response to such advice.

### C. Quorum

A quorum shall comprise a simple majority of the active membership. A quorum is required for voting to take place. If a quorum is not present, the chair shall decide whether to cancel

the meeting or hold the meeting for informational purposes only. No voting may take place in instances of early departures that result in the loss of the quorum. The chair shall not be considered part of the active membership.

#### **D. Chair**

1. The Council chair shall be the DEM Director, or the Director's designee, pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-3-1](#).
2. The chair's principal role is to manage the agenda for the meeting and provide for an orderly flow of the meeting. The chair shall follow codes of parliamentary procedure (such as Robert's Rules of Order or the American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure) to the extent necessary and appropriate.
3. The chair shall assure that a quorum is present at each meeting, call meetings to order, and manage the dialogue by the Council and comments from the public.
4. The chair shall inform the discussion only, and shall not advocate a position or vote.
5. The chair may excuse any person(s) deemed disruptive and, in the case of serious disorder or some other emergency, adjourn a meeting prior to completion.

#### **E. Vice-chair**

The Council shall elect a vice-chair, who shall serve as acting chair when the chair is unable to attend all or part of a Council meeting. When serving as chair, the vice-chair shall still be considered part of the active membership and retain the ability to vote at their discretion.

#### **F. Matters subject to a closed session**

Any disciplinary matters or panel membership decisions to come before the Council will be addressed during a closed session. Closed session participation shall be limited to the Council, relevant DEM staff, and any person(s) subject to disciplinary matters. Members of the public will not be admitted to a closed session and no public record will be documented.

#### **G. Meeting agenda/materials**

1. Agendas shall be developed by the chair in consultation with the Division of Marine Fisheries (Division).
2. Each agenda shall include approval of the agenda and past meeting minutes.
3. Each agenda shall provide for public comment on marine fisheries matters not on the agenda for that meeting. The Council may respond to any such comments and may elect to address the matter at a subsequent meeting, but shall not vote on the matter raised.
4. Meeting dates shall be noticed on the Division's listserv and calendar a minimum of three (3) weeks prior to the meeting date. Meeting materials shall be provided in electronic format ("ePacket") and provided a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting. If shorter than two (2) weeks, the Council shall be notified and provided with as much information as possible prior to receiving the ePacket.
5. All Council meetings are open to the public. Announcement of meetings and agendas shall be noticed with the Office of the RI Secretary of State in accordance with [R.I.](#)

[Gen. Laws §42-46-6 “Open Meetings”](#), as well the Division’s listserve and website. Paper copies of the agenda are posted at a minimum of two (2) locations.

#### **H. Meeting preparation**

1. Council members shall respond in a timely manner to correspondence relating to the Council, including meetings, information requests, and industry feedback.
2. Council members are expected to attend Council meetings well prepared, including reading the ePacket, conferring with constituents at their discretion through the end of the public comment period, and forming opinions and positions on matters on the agenda in advance of the meeting.
3. Council members are encouraged to attend workshops, advisory panel meetings, public hearings, and any public meetings to aid them in forming opinions and positions on matters on the agenda. It should be noted that many of the items heard before the Council are presented, rationalized, discussed, and edited at the workshops and could provide insight for Council members in forming their positions.
4. Council members are encouraged to provide motions and supporting rationale to the chair in advance of the meeting.
5. Council members are expected to vote on the items heard before them, except in instances where a conflict of interest or other need for abstention or recusal may occur.

#### **I. Role of the Division of Marine Fisheries**

1. The Division of Marine Fisheries (Division) shall provide administrative support to the chair and Council. Such support shall include, but not be limited to, the scheduling of meetings, preparing agendas and meeting materials, meeting announcements, preparing meeting minutes, data gathering and analysis, and preparing and presenting presentations.
2. Division staff shall assist Council members with drafting motions in advance of, and during meetings, in the best interest of efficiency. Pre-drafted motions reduce the chances of errors and allows Council members to focus on the intent of the motion.
3. The Division shall be provided opportunity for comment on all agenda items.
4. The Division, on behalf of and in coordination with the Director, is responsible for conducting the regulatory process pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-35 “Administrative Procedures”](#) for all Division regulations.
5. The Division shall prepare the Council’s Annual Report pursuant to section (N) of this policy, and provide a draft for review and approval at a regularly scheduled meeting.
6. Division staff shall monitor advisory panel member attendance.
7. Division staff may make recommendations to the Council regarding member removal based on disruptive behavior, poor attendance, or other reasons as appropriate.

#### **J. Rulemaking Processes Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-35 “Administrative Procedures”**

The Division of Marine Fisheries, on behalf of and in coordination with the Director, is responsible for conducting the regulatory process pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-35](#)

“Administrative Procedures” for DMF regulations. The following are the different regulatory processes utilized by the Division to adopt rules:

1. Regular rulemaking with a public hearing: Regular rulemaking with a public hearing is the most common method of rulemaking utilized by the Division, as follows:
  - a. A workshop and/or advisory panel meeting, as appropriate, is scheduled prior to publicly noticing proposed rules to solicit the public’s feedback on regulatory proposals being considered by the Division, or proposals that have been provided by the public or industry in advance of the meeting. Meetings shall be announced on the Division’s listserve a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the meeting date. The Division shall provide for agenda revisions to allow for additional proposals to be received and considered at the workshop.
  - b. Upon conclusion of the advisory panel meeting or workshop, the Division will provide additional time, not to exceed five (5) days, for the public or industry to submit additional proposals to be considered for the public notice. The Division shall consider all proposals discussed at the workshop, and received subsequent to the workshop, and determine which proposals will be publicly noticed. The Division is not bound to noticing any proposal made. If a proposal is not noticed, the proposer shall be notified by Division staff with rationale provided.
  - c. Upon noticing a proposed rule, the public notice is announced to advise the public of proposed regulatory action, including the thirty (30) day public comment period and hearing date.
  - d. Council members are encouraged to attend the public hearing; however, members are dissuaded from commenting at the hearing due to their subsequent role in deliberating on and providing advice to the Director on the same matter(s) being considered. Members who feel compelled to provide comment on a matter at a public hearing may do so, provided they recuse themselves from the subsequent Council deliberation and vote on the matter.
  - e. Council members shall refrain from communicating with, or considering oral or written comments offered by, members of the public after the close of the public comment period.
  - f. A Council meeting is scheduled approximately two (2) weeks after the close of the public comment period.
  - g. At the discretion of the chair, public comment on proposed rules at Council meetings shall be limited to the following circumstances:
    - i. A Council member’s request.
    - ii. New and/or additional information has become available to the Department after issuance of the public notice.
    - iii. When a motion being considered by the Council includes rulemaking action different from the public notice.
    - iv. To provide the public opportunity to offer clarification on a motion being considered by the Council.
  - h. After the Council meeting, the Director renders the final decision, considering public comments, the Council recommendation, and staff recommendations. The Director’s decision shall be provided in writing and made available to the

- public consistent with [R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-1-5.1 “Advice of the marine fisheries council”](#).
- i. Final regulations are filed with the RI Secretary of State, taking effect twenty (20) days from the date of the Director’s signature.
  - j. Lastly, a listserv is provided announcing the filing of the final rules.
2. Regular rulemaking without a public hearing: In limited instances, the Division may elect not to hold a public hearing, generally when timeliness is not critical and objections are not anticipated. The process is the same as regular rulemaking with a public hearing, however no hearing is held. A public hearing shall always be held if specifically requested by twenty-five (25) or more persons or an entity representing at least twenty-five (25) persons pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §42-35-2.8 “Public participation”](#) if requested within ten (10) days of the date of the notice.
3. Direct Final Rule: A Direct Final Rule (DFR) filed pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §42-35-2.11 “Direct final rule”](#) is an alternative to regular rulemaking, used in limited circumstances when matters are considered to be non-controversial or necessary for FMP compliance where timeliness to adopt the rule is important:
- a. Public meetings (i.e., workshop, hearing, Council) are not held; however the proposed rules are publicly noticed including a 30-day public comment period, same as regular rulemaking. If during the comment period there is an objection made to the proposed rule, the DFR process is terminated, and the regular rulemaking process shall be initiated. In instances where an objection is received, the Division may elect to discuss the matter with the objector with the goal of withdrawal of the objection.
  - b. The proposed rule is noticed and the public is notified via the Division’s listserv. The Council is provided a separate notification (email) to assure they are aware of the proposed rule.
  - c. If no objection is received and upheld during the 30-day comment period, the rule is filed and becomes effective on the last day of the comment period (i.e., no additional 20 day “wait” period as with regular rulemaking). In lieu of a Council meeting and memo by the Director addressing the Council recommendations, the concise regulatory statement filed at the time of filing the final rule shall indicate that the Council did not object to the proposed rule.
4. Emergency rules: Pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §42-35-2.10 “Emergency rule”](#), the Director may file an emergency rule if the agency finds that “an imminent peril to the public health, safety, or welfare or the loss of federal funding.”
- a. Emergency rules must be first approved by the Governor’s Office.
  - b. The Council shall be notified of all emergency rules filed on or before their effective date, pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §20-2.1-9\(1\)\(vi\)](#).
  - c. An emergency rule may be effective for a period not exceeding one hundred (120) days; renewable once for a period not exceeding sixty (60) days. If the rule is to be maintained beyond one hundred eighty (180) days, regular or DFR rulemaking must be initiated.

5. Rulemaking exempted from R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-35 “Administrative Procedures”:
- a. Pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §42-17.1-2\(38\)\(i\)](#), the Director has the authority to adopt rules and regulations in Shellfish and Marine Life Management Areas *“addressing restrictions on the quantities, types, or sizes of marine species which may be taken in any individual management area, the times during which marine species may be taken, the manner or manners in which marine species may be taken, the closure of such areas to the taking of marine species, or any other specific restriction deemed necessary.”* Such rulemaking is exempted from R.I. Gen. Laws §§[42-35-2.7 “Notice of Proposed Rulemaking”](#), [42-35-2.8 “Public Participation”](#), and [42-35.2.9 “Regulatory Analysis”](#), meaning there is no public noticing of proposed rules or official public comment period. Note that initial designation of any such area is by rule subject to Chapter 42-35; it is only subsequent rulemaking in the designated area that is exempt.
  - b. As no hearing or public comment period is provided for such proposed rules, opportunity for public comment shall be provided at the advisory panel and/or Council meeting. The chair may limit such public comment at their discretion.
  - c. After the Council meeting, the Director considers all public comments, the Council recommendation, and staff recommendations and renders a decision on the final rules to be filed. The Director’s decision shall be provided in writing and made available to the public pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §20-1-5.1 “Advice of the marine fisheries council”](#).
  - d. Final regulations are filed with the RI Secretary of State, taking effect twenty (20) days from the date of the Director’s signature.
  - e. Lastly, a listserv is provided announcing the filing of the final rules.

## **K. Code of Ethics**

1. Recusals: As a [state appointed official](#), Council members are subject to the provisions [R.I. Gen. Laws §36-14-7 “Interest in conflict with discharge of duties”](#). As such, a member may occasionally determine that he or she should recuse themselves from voting on and otherwise participating in the Council’s consideration or disposition of a matter pending before the Council.
  - a. Council members shall recuse themselves when it has been determined that the member or any person within the member’s family or any business associate of the member *“has an interest which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his or her duties or employment in the public interest and of his or her responsibilities as prescribed in the laws of this state, if he or she has reason to believe or expect that he or she or any person within his or her family or any business associate, or any business by which the person is employed or which the person represents will derive a direct monetary gain or suffer a direct monetary loss, as the case may be, by reason of his or her official activity”*. This section of the law outlines when such *“substantial conflict”* occurs and does not occur.

- b. Class Exception: A Council member is not required to recuse him/herself if the subject matter/regulation impacts the Council member solely as a member of a large group (or as a member of any significant class of persons within a group), and all persons within that group are impacted in the same way. For example, a Council member who is a commercial fisher and harvests summer flounder may participate and vote on a matter involving the regulation of summer flounder, as long as the provisions under consideration apply equally to all summer flounder harvesters. However, if the provisions under consideration affect the Council member's interest in a manner that is different from the rest of the group, then the exception doesn't apply, and the Council member should recuse him/herself. If a member is uncertain as to whether a given matter/regulation poses a potential conflict of interest, he/she should seek advice from the Council's legal counsel and exercise their best judgment in accordance with that advice.
  - c. If a Council member deems it appropriate to recuse him/herself, the member must notify the Chair prior to Council consideration of the matter, ideally in advance of the start of the Council meeting, and in consultation with the Council's legal counsel.
  - d. During the meeting, when the agenda item is reached, the member should note, for the record, that he/she is recusing him/herself and will not vote on or otherwise participate in the Council's consideration or disposition of the matter.
  - e. If the Council member wishes to provide public comment on the matter, they may join the public in the audience and, at the behest of the Chair, may be recognized and offer public comment.
  - f. A Rhode Island Ethics Commission recusal form must be submitted within twenty-four (24) hours of the recusal, hand delivered or mailed to the Rhode Island Ethics Commission, with a copy to the Chair. The recusal form may be obtained from the Council's legal counsel or downloaded from the Rhode Island Ethics Commission's website.
  - g. A Council member recusal shall not affect the quorum of the meeting.
2. Financial statements required: Council members shall file with the Ethics Commission a financial statement complying with the requirements of [R.I. Gen. Laws §§36-14-16 "Financial statement to be filed"](#) and [36-14-17 "Content of financial statement"](#). Council members should receive notification directly from the Office of the RI Secretary of State when such statements are required to be provided.
  3. Prohibited activities: Council members are required to comply with [R.I. Gen. Laws §36-14-5 "Prohibited Activities"](#), which outlines those activities prohibited by Council members in the discharge of their duties as Council members.
  4. Disclosure of regulated business interests: Council members are required to comply with [R.I. Gen. Laws §36-14-18 "Disclosure of regulated business interests"](#).

## L. Advisory Panels

1. General:

- a. Pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §20-3-8 “Establishment of advisory committees”](#), the Council may establish advisory panels as deemed appropriate to fulfill its responsibilities.
- b. Advisory panels may be established as long term committees, or ad-hoc, as determined to be necessary.
- c. Panels shall consist of a minimum of six (6) and maximum of fifteen (15) members.
- d. Penalties: No person may serve on an advisory panel if assessed a marine fisheries criminal or administrative penalty in the past three (3) years or has more than one marine fisheries violation (including any suspension or revocation of a commercial or recreational fishing license or permit or dealer’s license, or any fine, donation, probation, imprisonment, or other filing, imposed administratively or by a court of law).
- e. Meeting agenda/materials:
  - i. Meeting dates shall be noticed on the Division’s listserv and calendar a minimum of three (3) weeks prior to the meeting date. Meeting materials shall be provided in electronic format and provided a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting. If shorter than two (2) weeks, the panel members shall be notified and provided with as much information as soon as possible. Meeting materials shall be posted to the Division’s website to be made available to the public.
  - ii. Advisory panel meetings are open to the public. Announcement of meetings and agendas shall be noticed with the Office of the RI Secretary of State in accordance with [R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-6 “Open Meetings”](#), with hard copies posted at a minimum of two (2) locations, and also noticed via the Division’s listserv and website.
- f. A quorum shall comprise a simple majority of the active membership. A quorum is required for voting to take place. If a quorum is not present, the chair shall decide whether to cancel the meeting or hold the meeting for informational purposes only. No voting may take place in instances of early departures that result in the loss of the quorum.

2. Panel Membership:

- a. The Council may appoint membership composed of recreational and commercial fishermen, dealers, individuals from recognized fisheries organizations or user groups, or individuals from other organizations that represent the public interest.
- b. Council members shall not be eligible to serve as active membership on an advisory panel.
- c. Population of the Advisory Panel:
  - i. Application required: Persons interested in membership on an advisory panel shall submit application to the Division on forms prescribed by the Director.
  - ii. For any advisory panel opening, a solicitation for advisory panel membership will be announced.
  - iii. No application shall be considered by the Council unless a solicitation is announced.
  - iv. A closed session of the Council will be held to approve advisory panel membership.

- v. All advisory panel members shall be notified of their appointment within thirty (30) days of membership approval.
- vi. Alternate members: Advisory panel members may select an alternate member to serve in their stead when unable to attend a meeting. Interested persons seeking membership as an alternate shall provide application to the Division on forms prescribed by the Director. Applications shall be forwarded to the Council for their consideration during a closed session at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- vii. The Division may interview prospective applicants with the goal of providing a recommendation to the Council.
- d. Attendance and communication: Advisory panel members are expected to attend each meeting unless unable to attend. Members shall be informed of prospective meeting dates a minimum of three (3) weeks in advance of the meeting. Members shall notify the chair in a timely manner if attending or not.
- e. Meeting preparation:
  - i. Panel members shall seek to be knowledgeable on the agenda items in advance of the meeting, and form opinions and positions prior to the meeting, drawing upon input sought from a broad cross-section of interests from the fisheries sector or user group they represent.
  - ii. Panel members shall read meeting materials in advance of the meeting scheduled, with the goal of forming opinions and positions on matters on the agenda. Panel members are encouraged to confer with constituents in preparation of meetings and forming opinions and positions ahead of the meeting.
  - iii. Panel members are encouraged to provide motions and supporting rationale to the chair in advance of the meeting.
- f. Removal from panel: Members may be removed from the panel by vote of the Council, for failure to appear at two (2) or more meetings without due cause and prior notification, for failure to appear at three (3) or more consecutive meetings, or for disruptive behavior.

### 3. Panel chair:

- a. The Council shall appoint one of its members to serve as the panel chair. If no Council member is able to serve, the Council Chair or a member of the panel may serve as the chair. If no Council member, Council chair, or panel member is able to serve, the Council may direct the Division to appoint a staff or other person, as appropriate, as the panel chair, in consultation with the Council. When Division staff are appointed as panel chair, they will only serve in this role until the position can be filled by a Council member, the Council Chair, or a panel member.
- b. The panel chair's principal role is to manage the agenda for the meeting and provide for an orderly flow of the meeting. The chair shall follow codes of parliamentary procedure (such as Robert's Rules of Order or the American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure) to the extent necessary and appropriate.
- c. The panel chair shall assure that a quorum is present at each meeting, call meetings to order, and manage the dialogue and comments from the public.

- d. The panel chair shall attend all Council meetings and provide a summary of the meeting minutes.
  - e. The panel chair may excuse any person(s) deemed disruptive and, in the case of serious disorder or some other emergency, adjourn a meeting prior to completion.
  - f. Panel chair voting: The panel chair may inform the discussion, but shall not advocate a position, or vote.
  - g. Panel chair term limit: On an annual basis, the Council will review the panel chair position. The Council may choose to:
    - i. Maintain the current panel chair.
    - ii. Appoint another Council member to serve as panel chair if the current Council member serving as panel chair is no longer able or willing to serve as panel chair.
  - h. Panel chair alternate: When the panel chair is a Council member, and the panel chair is unable to attend a given meeting, the panel chair shall call upon another Council member to serve as an alternate. When serving as panel chair, the panel chair alternate may inform the discussion, but shall not advocate a position, or vote.
4. Role of the Division:
- a. The Division shall provide administrative support to the Advisory Panel consistent with that of administrative support to the Council pursuant to section (H) of this policy.
  - b. Division staff shall assist members with drafting motions in advance of, and during meetings, in the best interest of efficiency. Pre-drafted motions reduce the chances of errors and allows members to focus on the intent of the motion.
  - c. The Division shall be provided opportunity for comment on all agenda items.
  - d. Meeting minutes: Draft meeting minutes of each advisory panel meeting shall be reviewed by the Council at a subsequent meeting. Minutes shall be subject to modification to ensure accuracy and shall be subject to approval by the Council. Division staff shall post approved minutes to the Office of the RI Secretary of State in accordance with [RI Gen. Laws §42-46-6 “Open Meetings”](#).
5. Shellfish Advisory Panel:
- a. The Shellfish Advisory Panel (SAP) is an advisory panel established for the purpose of providing recommendations to the Council on all shellfish-related matters and regulations brought before the panel for consideration.

## **M. Aquaculture application review**

- 1. In accordance with [R.I. Gen. Laws § 20-10-5\(d\)](#), the Council is responsible for the review of publicly noticed aquaculture lease applications before the RI Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) for the purpose of providing a recommendation to the CRMC as to “*whether the aquaculture activities proposed in each application are consistent with competing uses engaged in the exploitation of the marine fisheries*”. No application shall be approved by the CRMC without consideration of recommendations by both the Director and the Council.

2. Prior to publicly noticing the application, CRMC staff will conduct a Preliminary Determination (PD) meeting to identify information needs and key issues to be addressed by the applicant. The Division, Council members, and SAP members should make every effort to review, and submit comment as deemed appropriate, to the draft proposal during the PD process.
3. Applications shall be brought before the SAP and Council upon conclusion of the publicly noticed comment period. Materials to be provided to the SAP and Council necessary to render a recommendation include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. The publicly noticed application.
  - b. A survey quantifying the biological resources and habitat information using a methodology approved by the CRMC staff and Division staff, in consultation with the Council.
  - c. Public comments received.
  - d. Any other relevant information as the SAP or Council may require.
4. Prior to the Council's review and recommendation, all shellfish aquaculture applications before the CRMC shall be first presented to the SAP for review and recommendation. SAP recommendations shall be provided to the Council and the Council shall provide a recommendation to the CRMC.
  - a. The SAP and Council are not obligated to render a recommendation without the prerequisite information and may defer recommendation until such time that the information is provided.
5. The CRMC Aquaculture Coordinator shall be informed of the Council's recommendation via written correspondence within fourteen (14) days of the date of the meeting where the recommendation was made.

#### **N. Annual Report**

Pursuant to [R.I. Gen. Laws §20-3-2 "Powers and duties"](#), the council shall report annually by April 1 to the governor, the speaker of the house, the president of the senate, the chairperson of the house committee on environment and natural resources, the chairperson of the senate committee on environment and agriculture, and to the house oversight committee and the senate committee on government oversight, for the preceding calendar year regarding:

1. The advice it has given to state agencies, including specifically the DEM, on marine fisheries issues.
2. The response it received to the advice it gave.
3. Any findings or position it may have regarding the status and/or condition of marine fisheries; and
4. Any recommendations it may have for maintaining, improving, or changing laws, regulations, or management programs for marine fisheries.



# Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

3 Fort Wetherill Road Jamestown, Rhode Island 02835

(401) 423-1920 Fax: (401) 423-1925

**RIMFC:** Molly Moran-Ogren, *Chair*; David Bethoney, Ph.D.; Andy Dangelo; Katie Eagan; Melva Treviño Peña, Ph.D.; Mike Roderick; Greg Vespe

November 18, 2025

Ben Goetsch, Aquaculture Coordinator  
Coastal Resources Management Council  
4808 Tower Hill Road  
Wakefield, RI 02879

Re: CRMC Aquaculture Lease Application # 2025-06-013, Thomas Blank, West Passage, North Kingstown

Dear Mr. Goetsch:

Pursuant to RIGL §20-10-5, the above-referenced aquaculture lease application was brought before the RI Marine Fisheries Council's (hereafter " Council" or "RIMFC) via the Council's Shellfish Advisory Panel (SAP) on October 15, 2025. At this meeting, the SAP found that the application does not conflict with competing uses engaged in the exploitation of marine fisheries in the area. In accordance with RIMFC policy, the recommendation of the SAP constitutes the recommendation of the Council.

Sincerely,

*Molly Moran-Ogren*

Molly Moran-Ogren, Chair

Cc: RIMFC membership



# Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

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**RIMFC:** Molly Moran-Ogren, *Chair*; David Bethoney, Ph.D.; Andy Dangelo; Katie Eagan; Melva Treviño Peña, Ph.D.; Mike Roderick; Greg Vespe

November 18, 2025

Ben Goetsch, Aquaculture Coordinator  
Coastal Resources Management Council  
4808 Tower Hill Road  
Wakefield, RI 02879

Re: CRMC Aquaculture Lease Application # 2025-06-048, Bradley Boehringer,  
Dutch Harbor, Jamestown

Dear Mr. Goetsch:

Pursuant to RIGL §20-10-5, the above-referenced aquaculture lease application was brought before the RI Marine Fisheries Council's (hereafter " Council" or "RIMFC) via the Council's Shellfish Advisory Panel (SAP) on October 18, 2025. At this meeting, the SAP found that the application does not conflict with competing uses engaged in the exploitation of marine fisheries in the area. In accordance with RIMFC policy, the recommendation of the SAP constitutes the recommendation of the Council.

Sincerely,

*Molly Moran-Ogren*

Molly Moran-Ogren, Chair

Cc: RIMFC membership