



Notice of Public Informational Meeting

2020 Recreational Fishery Measures

The CT DEEP Marine Fisheries Program is holding a Public Informational Meeting to provide information on the status of important recreational species, to provide information on planned recreational regulations for the 2020 fishing season, and to gather public input on potential 2020 regulation options for striped bass and bluefish.

The meeting will be held at:

7:00 PM, Thursday, February 13, 2020
CT DEEP Marine Headquarters
Boating Education Center (rear building)
333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme CT

Striped Bass

At the October 2019 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Striped Bass Management Board meeting, the Board approved a coast-wide **28-35" slot limit** with a 1-fish bag limit for the "ocean" (all state waters excluding Chesapeake Bay) recreational fishery in 2020. However, the Board allowed for states to propose alternative regulations via the "conservation equivalency" process, provided those alternative measures produce at least an 18% reduction in that state's overall striped bass removals. Following the October meeting, both New York and Rhode Island stated an intent to pursue conservation equivalency and adopt a regulation other than the 28-35" slot limit. In the interest of maintaining regionally-consistent striped bass regulations, DEEP worked with NY DEC and RI DEM to develop regional conservation equivalency proposals, including: **1) a 30-40" slot limit (all anglers); or 2) a 30-40" slot limit for private anglers and a 28-37" slot limit for party/charter boat anglers.** Ability of any one of the three states to implement one of these alternative regulations in 2020 is contingent on all three states implementing the identical regulation. At the time of this notice, final approvals of conservation equivalency proposals are pending, and will be taken up by the Board at the February 4-6 ASMFC meeting. Conditional on final approval of conservation equivalency proposals, **DEEP is seeking public input on which striped bass regulation should be implemented in 2020: the 28-35" slot limit, or one of the regional conservation equivalency options.**

Bluefish

At the December 2019 joint meeting of the ASMFC Bluefish Management Board and the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (MAFMC), the two bodies voted to approve new coast-wide recreational regulations for bluefish in 2020: **a 3-fish bag limit for private anglers and a 5-fish bag limit for party/charter boat anglers (no size limit or closed season).** However, the Board allowed for states to propose alternative regulations via conservation equivalency provided those alternative measures produce an equivalent reduction in harvest (by weight). Connecticut and Rhode Island have submitted a regional conservation equivalency proposal to allow a higher bag limit of "snappers" (young-of-year bluefish) for shore anglers: **an 8-fish aggregate bag limit,**

composed of up to 6 fish less than 12" and up to 2 fish greater than or equal to 12" (shore anglers only). At the time of this notice, final approvals of conservation equivalency proposals are pending, and will be taken up by the Board at the February 4-6 ASMFC meeting. Conditional on final approval of conservation equivalency proposals, **DEEP is seeking public input on whether the alternative bag limit for shore anglers should be implemented.**

At this time, DEEP anticipates no changes to recreational seasons, bag limits or size limits for any species other than striped bass and bluefish in 2020. However, at this meeting, the DEEP Marine Fisheries Program will provide information on the status of important recreational species including summer flounder, black sea bass, scup, and blackfish.

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