

**RHODE ISLAND GOVERNMENT REGISTER
PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING**

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Title of Rule: Finfish
Rule Identifier: 250-RICR-90-00-3
Rulemaking Action: Proposed Amendment

Important Dates:

Date of Public Notice: October 15, 2025
Hearing Date: November 3, 2025
End of Public Comment: November 16, 2025

Rulemaking Authority:

R.I. Gen. Laws Title 20

R.I. Gen. Laws Chapters 42-17.1

42-17.6

and 42-17.7

and in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-35-18(b)(5)

Administrative Procedures Act

as amended

Summary of Rulemaking Action:

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 (section 3.21.2(A))
- **Proposal 2 (Industry):** Expand weekly limit for menhaden regardless of the MMA status (section 3.21.2(A))

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 (sections 3.8.2(A)(3)(a&b))
- **Proposal 2 (Industry):** Amend the General Category season (section 3.8.2(A)(3)(a&b))
- **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 (section 3.8.2(A)(3)(b))
- **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 (section 3.8.2(A)(3)(b))
- **Proposal 5 (Industry):** Amend the gill net prohibition for striped bass to allow for commercial harvest under the general category fishery (section 3.8.2(C))
- **Proposal 6 (Industry):** Amend the FFT allocation and gill net prohibition for striped bass to allow commercial gill net harvest (section 3.8.2(B)(2))
- **Proposal 7 (Industry):** Do not allow any floating fish trap allocation to change until after the 2029 rebuilding timeline for striped bass or the striped bass stock has been rebuilt (section 3.8.2(B)(2))

3. 2026 Commercial Tautog Management:

- **Proposal 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Sub-period allocation changes (sections 3.10.2(B)(2)(a)), 3.9.2(B)(4)(a), and 3.9.2(B)(6)(a))

4. 2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management:

- **Proposal 1 (Industry/Noticed):** Sub-period allocation changes (sections 3.6.2(B)(1)(a) and 3.6.2(B)(6)(a))
- **Proposal 2 (Industry/Noticed):** Possession limit changes (sections 3.6.2(B)(3)(b) and 3.6.2(B)(4)(b))
- **Proposal 3 (Industry):** Amend the weekly black sea bass limit to a daily limit (section 3.6.2(B)(1)(b)). 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 and accompanying document “Summary of Proposed Rulemaking” for full details).

5. 2026 Commercial Summer Flounder Management:

- **Proposal 1 (Division/Noticed):** Amend sub-period possession limits (sections 3.9.2(B)(3)(b)(1)) and 3.9.2(B)(3)(b)(2))
- **Proposal 2 (Industry/Noticed):** Amend landing restriction for summer flounder (section 3.9.2(D))
- **Proposal 3 (Industry):** Amend landing restriction for summer flounder (section 3.9.2(D)). 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 and accompanying document “Summary of Proposed Rulemaking” for full details)

Additional Information and Public Comments:

All interested parties are invited to request additional information or submit written or oral comments concerning the proposed amendment until November 16, 2025 by contacting the appropriate party at the address listed below:

Peter Duhamel
Department of Environmental Management
3 Fort Wetherill Road
Jamestown, RI 02893
peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov

Public Hearing:

A public hearing, in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-35-2.5, to consider the proposed amendment shall be held at which time and place all persons interested therein will be heard. This hearing is subject to R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-46, Open Meetings.

Public Hearing Information:

Date: November 3, 2025

Time: 5:00 P.M.

Location: URI Bay Campus/GSO, Corliss Auditorium
215 South Ferry Road
Narragansett, RI, 02882

The place of the public hearing is accessible to individuals with disabilities. If communication assistance (readers/interpreters/captioners) is needed, or any other accommodation to ensure equal participation, please call 401-423-1927 or RI Relay 711 at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting so arrangements can be made to provide such assistance at no cost to the person requesting. For questions regarding available parking, please contact the agency staffperson listed above.

Regulatory Analysis Summary and Supporting Documentation:

In the development of the proposed amendment consideration was given to: (1) alternative approaches; (2) overlap or duplication with other statutory and regulatory provisions; and (3) significant economic impact on small business. No alternative approach, duplication, or overlap was identified based upon available information.

For full regulatory analysis or supporting documentation contact the agency staffperson listed above.