



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

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**INTER-OFFICE MEMO**

**To:** Scott Olszewski,  
Chief

**From:** Terrence Gray, P.E.  
Director

**Date:** April 23, 2026

**Subject:** Final decisions regarding proposed amendments to RI Marine Fisheries regulations.

I have received and reviewed your memo to me, dated April 9, 2026, regarding the regulatory matters that were subject of a public hearing held on February 17, 2026, and the RI Marine Fisheries Council meeting held on March 31, 2026. The final decision regarding each regulatory matter is as follows:

1. **Striped Bass Total Length Measurement:**

Decision: Amend the rule as recommended by the Council and supported by the Division, which adopts Addendum III to Amendment 7 of the ASMFC Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for measuring total length for striped bass.

2. **2026 Recreational Bluefish Management:**

Decision: Amend the rule as noticed and recommended by the Council and Division, which provides for increased possession limits for the recreational private/shore fishery from three (3) to five (5) fish/person/day, and for the recreational for-hire fishery from five (5) to seven (7) fish/person/day. This represents a 15% increase in the Recreational Harvest Limit (RHL) from 2025. While I appreciate the public comments received that supported status quo, I believe that the recommendations of the Division and Council provided sound rationale to support the proposal as noticed.

3. **2026 Recreational Black Sea Bass Management:**

Decision: Amend the rule as recommended by the Council and Division, which changes the minimum size to 16", season beginning on May 16<sup>th</sup> and possession limits increases of three (3) fish per day and four (4) fish per day for the general recreational fishery and the for-hire fishery respectively during the summer period. This action is consistent with the Northern Region Option 2 approved by the ASMFC Management Board.

4. **False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito Management:**

Decision: Maintain status quo as recommended by the Council and supported by the Division. While there is clear interest among stakeholders and the public in establishing management measures for these species, the record reflects a range of perspectives on what those measures should be specifically. It was not apparent that there was one broadly supported path forward on a regulatory framework that would be widely accepted. In addition, approaches to management for these species amongst our neighboring states remains unsettled, and there is not yet a consistent framework among neighboring states for RI to follow in an effort to have cohesive management in our region.

Given these considerations, maintaining the status quo at this time allows the Division to continue developing the scientific and technical foundation necessary to support effective management. This approach also provides the opportunity to incorporate ongoing research for these species into the management process, allows us to further evaluate regulatory developments in our neighboring states, and allows for further engagement with stakeholders in a targeted and constructive process to identify a regulatory framework that is both practical and widely supported.

I direct the Division to continue and expand research on stock dynamics, biological characteristics, catch information, and fishing effort. I also encourage the Division to reach out to members of the public and industry stakeholders to further develop and refine management proposals that can achieve broad consensus and be supported for future implementation.

5. **Add Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore to List of Common Species:**

Decision: Adopt the rule as noticed and recommended by the Council and Division, which adds these two species to the list of common species in regulation.