

**From:** Anita Bourque  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False Albacore and Bonito Regulations Will Benefit Rhode Islanders  
**Date:** Monday, February 16, 2026 10:00:11 AM

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Anita Bourque

735 W Beach Rd  
Charlestown, RI

February 16, 2026

Dear Mr Duhamel,

As a Rhode Island resident of South County and woman angler, I am writing to support RI DEM to urgently enact regulations to manage false albacore and bonito. These fish are prized and accessible to our inshore recreational anglers both from shore and by boat. In addition, sustaining the 800,000 directed trips in New England for these pelagic fish is vital to supporting our economy through sales, taxes, and tourism. Enhancing this world class recreational fishery has huge implications to Rhode Island's economy and the lifestyle that many of us, men and women alike, cherish.

Regulations should provide a set of basic guardrails that reflect what responsible anglers already believe: a 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries, an aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined, and a commercial landing cap for both species.

These regulations are clear, enforceable, and aligned with the current reality of both fisheries. Without a cap, the incentive structure becomes dangerous: the moment these fish gain value at the dock, the management system is already too late to respond. With the noticeable and unfortunate decline of the inshore fishery along the Atlantic coast and the often troubled management efforts, we need to shift our mindset to precautionary management.

Without clear and simple guardrails, we would be heading along the sad path where short-term exploitation replaces long-term sustainability.

Sincerely,

Anita L. Bourque

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

**From:** Anthony Frasca  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False albacore and bonito  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 7:42:47 AM

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Dear Mr. Duhamel,

As a recreational angler who makes frequent trips to Rhode Island, I am urging RI DEM to urgently enact regulations to manage false albacore and bonito. These fish are prized and accessible to our inshore recreational fisherman both from shore and by boat. Enhancing this world class recreational fishery has huge implications to Rhode Island's economy and the lifestyle that attracts anglers.

Regulations should provide a set of basic guidelines that reflect what responsible anglers already believe: a 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries, an aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined), and a commercial landing cap for both species.

These regulations are clear, enforceable, and aligned with the current reality of both fisheries. Without a cap, the incentive structure becomes dangerous: the moment these fish gain value at the dock, the management system is already too late to respond. With the unfortunate state of the inshore fishery along the Atlantic coast and the troubled management efforts, we need to shift our mindset to precautionary management.

Without clear and simple guidelines, we would be heading along the path where short term exploitation replaces long-term sustainability. The decline in striped bass and bluefish creates increased risk for excessive harvest and commercial harm.

Concerned angler,  
Anthony Frasca  
47 Curtis Drive  
Sound Beach, NY 11789

**From:** Andrew Karn  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** 2026 saltwater fishing regulations  
**Date:** Monday, March 2, 2026 3:10:31 PM

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Hello Peter,

I am a saltwater angler and I fish in Rhode Island. I am also a member of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) and I am interested in sound regulations that will protect our fishery resources while allowing proper use of these resources by saltwater anglers. Regarding the proposed 2026 Saltwater Regulations for Black Sea Bass Management, I want to express my support for the option that opens the season on May 16 and keeps it open until December 31 with a minimum size of 16" and a bag limit of 3 fish per person per day during that period.

I also support regulations on the harvest of bonito and false albacore both recreationally and commercially. I believe the recreational regulations should be similar to those in MA and should have a minimum size of 16" for each species and have a bag limit of 5 fish total for the 2 species per person per day. The commercial minimum size should also be 16" and the annual limit can be the average of landings over the last 3 or 5 years or even the maximum annual landings over that period, but it is important that you establish a commercial limit to avoid a significant rise in commercial harvest.

It is critical that the state be proactive rather than reactive to fish population pressures.

Thank you,  
Andrew Karn  
91 Knowlton Street  
Riverside, RI 02915



**From:** abe pearson  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Albie and bonito management  
**Date:** Saturday, February 14, 2026 7:14:35 AM

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I am writing this to let you know of my support for basic guardrails for false albacore and bonito. These guardrails include minimum size limits for taking of 16" as well as aggregate bag limits of 3 fish and commercial landing caps.

I am a recreational angler and I support healthy fisheries that leave opportunities for everyone to fish.

Thank you for your consideration,

Abram Pearson

Eliot, ME

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Al Perrino  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Letter in Support of Urgent False Albacore and Bonito Regulations  
**Date:** Sunday, February 15, 2026 9:30:57 PM

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Dear Mr Duhamel,

As a Rhode Island resident, I am urging RI DEM to urgently enact regulations to manage false albacore and bonito. These fish are prized and accessible to our inshore recreational fisherman both from shore and by boat. In addition, sustaining the three quarters of a million directed trips in New England for these pelagic fish is vital to supporting our economy through sales, taxes, and tourism. Enhancing this world class recreational fishery has huge implications to Rhode Island's economy and the lifestyle that attracts so many of us here.

Regulations should provide a set of basic guardrails that reflect what responsible anglers already believe: a 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries, an aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined, and a commercial landing cap for both species.

These regulations are clear, enforceable, and aligned with the current reality of both fisheries. Without a cap, the incentive structure becomes dangerous: the moment these fish gain value at the dock, the management system is already too late to respond. With the unfortunate state of the inshore fishery along the Atlantic coast and the often troubled management efforts, we need to shift our mindset to precautionary management. As black sea bass and bluefish are going to see significant liberalization in regulations in 2026, basic regulations for albies and bonito will not disadvantage any stakeholders.

Without clear and simple guardrails, we would be heading along the path where short-term exploitation replaces long-term sustainability. The decline in striped bass and bluefish creates increased risk for excessive harvest and commercial harm.

Thank you for your consideration,

Albert Perrino

735 W Beach Rd

Charlestown, RI 02813

**From:** Campanale Oysters Inc.  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore:  
**Date:** Friday, March 6, 2026 2:07:38 PM

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I oppose the proposed commercial prohibition on Atlantic bonito and false albacore. These fish can be caught incidentally in lawful fishing operations, and a possession ban will not prevent catch — it will only force fishermen to discard fish that may already be dead. Regulations should reduce waste, not create it. At a minimum, fixed gear fisheries like floating fish traps should be exempted.

Domenic Campanale  
Devon Campanale  
F/V ROBERT C (POINT JUDITH R.I.)

**From:** Bruce Bartolomeo  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Letter in Support of Urgent False Albacore and Bonito Regulations  
**Date:** Sunday, February 15, 2026 11:28:11 PM

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Dear Mr Duhamel,

As a Rhode Island resident, I am urging RI DEM to urgently enact regulations to manage false albacore and bonito. These fish are prized and accessible to our inshore recreational fisherman both from shore and by boat. In addition, sustaining the three quarters of a million directed trips in New England for these pelagic fish is vital to supporting our economy through sales, taxes, and tourism. Enhancing this world class recreational fishery has huge implications to Rhode Island's economy and the lifestyle that attracts so many of us here.

Regulations should provide a set of basic guardrails that reflect what responsible anglers already believe: a 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries, an aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined), and a commercial landing cap for both species.

These regulations are clear, enforceable, and aligned with the current reality of both fisheries. Without a cap, the incentive structure becomes dangerous: the moment these fish gain value at the dock, the management system is already too late to respond. With the unfortunate state of the inshore fishery along the Atlantic coast and the often troubled management efforts, we need to shift our mindset to precautionary management. As black sea bass and bluefish are going to see significant liberalization in regulations in 2026, basic regulations for albies and bonito will not disadvantage any stakeholders.

Without clear and simple guardrails, we would be heading along the path where short-term exploitation replaces long-term sustainability. The decline in striped bass and bluefish creates increased risk for excessive harvest and commercial harm.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bruce Bartolomeo  
740 Post Rd.  
South Kingstown, RI. 02879

**From:** wfiora1@icloud.com  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito regulations  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 3:24:28 PM

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I am writing to express my support for regulations on False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito. I am a recreational angler who takes dozens of trips each year in pursuit of these fish. As striped bass and bluefish numbers continue to decline, it's important to set reasonable guidelines to protect these other valuable gamefish from a similar plight.

I urge DEM to adopt a framework that includes:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational limit of three fish per angler, combined between both species
- A commercial landing cap for both species

Best regards,

Bill Fiora

**From:** Fleming, Braden  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False Albacore and Bonito  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:30:34 AM

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Hi:

I am writing this email in support of setting regulations for the management of bonito and false albacore. I've been an avid fisher of these species since 2003 and purchased a house in RI situated near the West Wall so that I can readily fish for them. These species have become more popular over the years, and the numbers, particularly False Albacore are dwindling. Lots of fish are being mishandled and killed for no reason.

I am unable to attend the hearing but wanted to share my point of view.

Thank you,

Braden Fleming

--

Braden C. Fleming, Ph.D.  
Lucy Lippitt Professor of Orthopaedics  
Bioengineering Labs  
Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University  
Rhode Island Hospital  
Coro West, Suite 404  
1 Hoppin Street  
Providence RI 02903  
PH: 401-316-4737  
FX: 401-444-4418  
email: [Braden\\_Fleming@brown.edu](mailto:Braden_Fleming@brown.edu)

**From:** Bill Howard  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** 2026 Salt Water Fishing Regulations  
**Date:** Monday, March 2, 2026 3:28:29 PM

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Hello Peter

I am a saltwater angler and I fish in Rhode Island. I am also a member of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) and I am interested in sound regulations that will protect our fishery resources while allowing proper use of these resources by saltwater anglers. Regarding the proposed 2026 Saltwater Regulations for Black Sea Bass Management, I want to express my support for the option that opens the season on May 16 and keeps it open until December 31 with a minimum size of 16" and a bag limit of 3 fish per person per day during that period. I also support regulations on the harvest of bonito and false albacore both recreationally and commercially. I believe the recreational regulations should be similar to those in MA and should have a minimum size of 16" for each species and have a bag limit of 5 fish total for the 2 species per person per day. The commercial minimum size should also be 16" and the annual limit can be the average of landings over the last 3 or 5 years or even the maximum annual landings over that period, but it is important that you establish a commercial limit to avoid a significant rise in commercial harvest.

Thank you,  
Bill Howard  
11 Spring St  
Narragansett, RI

**From:** Robert Lewis  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False Albacore & Atlantic Bonito  
**Date:** Sunday, February 15, 2026 8:08:19 AM

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Peter...as an avid fly fisherman, I strongly believe the idea of a 16" limit and 3 total fish combined is critical to make this a sustainable fishery. I have heard horror stories of party boats coming back to the docks with 1000+ bonito. What each state should realize is that fish are FAR more valuable alive than dead. Anglers such as myself travel to various states and spend money on tackle, restaurants, hotels, guides, etc. We have seen too many species literally wiped out with no management policies in place. I fish for False Albacore on Cape Cod (my hometown), Rhode Island, Montauk NY, Harker's Island NC and West Palm FL. I know many fellow fisherman friends that do the same. Many fishing destinations such as the Bahamas and Belize have concluded catch and release has MUCH more positive impact on their local economies. We all know the striped bass fishery is in real trouble. There are basically no young class schoolie fish to be found. It is VERY important to have management policies in place for both False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito. I wrote the following article in Tail Magazine that will give you an idea of the amazing False Albacore fishery this has become. Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

<https://www.tailflyfishing.com/chasing-albies-down-the-coast/> [[tailflyfishing.com](#)]

Bob Lewis  
Cotuit, MA

**From:** Barry Okun  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False Albacore/ Green Bonito Regulations  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 2:44:42 PM

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Hi Peter

I am a retired resident of Rhode Island and an avid inshore fisherman in our waters. I look forward to the Summer and Fall when False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito run in our neighborhood. I hope the fishery remains abundant for my grandchildren and their grandchildren. To that end, as you consider important rulemaking and regulation for these species, I support the American Saltwater Guides Association proposal for a simple, precautionary framework that reflects what responsible fishermen already believe:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of three fish per angler, combined between both species
- A commercial landing cap for both species

Please let me know how I can help.

Thanks for reading this and have a great holiday weekend.

Warm regards,

Barry

|  
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Barry Okun  
[barry.r.okun@gmail.com](mailto:barry.r.okun@gmail.com)  
617-331-6467

**From:** Glenn Goodwin  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** bonito proposal  
**Date:** Friday, March 6, 2026 3:20:46 PM

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To the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council,

I am writing to oppose the proposed commercial prohibition on Atlantic bonito and false albacore. I have spent my life in the commercial fishing industry, owning vessels and shoreside businesses here in Rhode Island, and I can say that a possession ban like this will not prevent these fish from being caught — it will only create unnecessary waste by forcing fishermen to discard fish that may already be dead. I believe this prohibition should not be adopted. At a minimum, Rhode Island should include an exemption for unavoidable bycatch from fixed gear fisheries such as floating fish traps.

Glenn Goodwin  
Evan Goodwin  
Commercial fisherman Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Brendan Richards  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** In Favor: Proposed RI Bonito and False Albacore Regs  
**Date:** Monday, February 16, 2026 8:54:29 PM

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Dear Peter Duhamel and RI DEM,

I am writing to you to voice my opinion in favor of these pending regulations for bonito and false albacore:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)
- A commercial landing cap for both species

With floundering numbers of striped bass and bluefish, bonito and false albacore are experiencing angling pressure like never before.

Within New England, there were 740,000 directed trips for these fish in 2025.

Having fished for both species in Rhode Island for 25 years now and knowing the prominence they have in our waters, I have no doubt that many of those trips took place right here in our state.

We have excellent fishing for these species in Rhode Island. With the fertile waters of Narragansett Bay and our salt ponds coming into contact with the abundant structure of our rocky coast, Rhode Island's waters are replete each fall with the small baitfish that bonito and false albacore feed upon. As such, our fishery for these species is among the best in the Northeast.

These fish have a significant importance within the region as game fish, and they draw multitudes of anglers to Rhode Island every year, and with that attention comes positive economic impact.

What we are currently in the midst of is the boon of an abundant fishery in bonito and false albacore. This is why we should be proactive in the regulation of their harvest.

Currently, these fish are entirely unregulated, and bonito and false albacore harvested by the five gallon bucket or trash bag full isn't an uncommon sight. This isn't "wanton waste" but it's not far off and certainly is a related idea. While still abundant, these fish welcome abuse simply by the absence of their regulation.

This should persist no further. I support the proposed regulations as should any other steward of Rhode Island waters.

Sincerely,

Brendan Richards  
3595 Post Rd, Apt 18107  
Warwick RI 02886

**From:** Gmail  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Propose Saltwater Fishing Regulations  
**Date:** Friday, March 6, 2026 11:15:49 AM

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As an avid recreational angler in the inshore and coastal waters of Rhode Island I wanted to take a moment to provide you with input on potential 2026 saltwater regulations. With regard to Black Sea Bass Management, I want to express my support for the option that opens the season on May 16 and keeps it open until December 31 with a minimum size of 16" and a bag limit of 3 fish per person per day during that period. I also support regulations on the harvest of bonito and false albacore both recreationally and commercially. I believe the recreational regulations should be similar to those in MA and should have a minimum size of 16" for each species and have a bag limit of 5 fish total for the 2 species per person per day. The commercial minimum size should also be 16" and the annual limit can be the average of landings over the last 3 or 5 years or even the maximum annual landings over that period, but it is important that you establish a commercial limit to avoid a significant rise in

Thank you,  
RISAA Member  
Brian Rooney  
Narragansett, RI

**From:** Brian Sittlow  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support for False Albacore and Bonito Regulations  
**Date:** Thursday, February 12, 2026 7:43:36 PM

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Mr. Duhamel,

I support the proposed regulations for False Albacore and Bonito.

Specifically:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)
- A commercial landing cap for both species

These regulations are clear, enforceable, and aligned with the current reality of both fisheries.

I attended the January workshop and provided supportive verbal testimony on the proposed regulations.

I will not be able to attend the 17 February 2026 final comment session because of an out-of-state business trip. I will try to provide verbal testimony via Zoom link. Thank you for making this option available.

All the best,  
Brian Sittlow  
Westerly, RI

**From:** Chase Freiman  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Supporting Albie and Bonito Regulations  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:21:11 AM

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Hello,

I am a Rhode Island resident and an avid fisherman. Rhode Island has an amazing fishery but it needs to be protected. One of the best fisheries we have is our “Hard tail” fishery. Albie’s and Bonito. Millions of dollars a year are spent fishing for these fish in the Ocean State. It drives enormous amounts of tourism. I’ve personally met hundreds and hundreds of people from all over the country who have traveled to RI to chase these fish. Despite all this, these fish are currently zero regulations. These fish deserve our support and protection. This is why I am supporting a 16 inch min size limit for both commercial and recreational fisheries. I am also supporting bag limits of three fish per angler and a commercial landing cap.

Thank you

Chase freiman

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

**From:** Carl Heise  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Bonito + False Albacore Conservation Comments  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 7:16:57 PM

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Greetings,

As an avid boater and fisherman in Rhode Island and the Northeast in general, I support and urge you to support a simple, precautionary framework that reflects the following:

A 16-inch minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial fisheries

An aggregate recreational bag limit of three fish per angler, combined between both species

A commercial landing cap for both species

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,  
Carl Heise

**From:** chad plumly  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False albies and bonito  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:35:06 AM

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**I'm with ASGA on this.**

ASGA supports a set of basic guardrails that reflect what responsible anglers already believe, including a **16-inch minimum size limit** for both recreational and commercial fisheries, an **aggregate recreational bag limit** of three fish per angler across both species combined, and a **commercial landing cap** that applies to both species.

**Thank you.**

**Chad Plumly**  
**404-580-0093**

Carl Tiska  
24 Van Zandt Ave  
Newport RI 02840  
carl.tiska@gmail.com

February 13, 2026

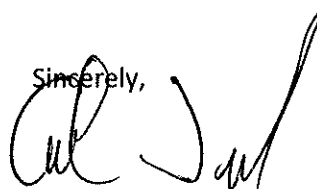
Peter Duhamel  
DEM Division of Marine Fisheries  
3 Fort Wetherill Road  
Jamestown, RI 02835

Dear Mr. Duhamel,

I am a Rhode Island resident and avid recreational kayak angler, focused on catching a range of different fish, shellfish and crustaceans and turning them into exceptional meals for my family. I will be unable to attend the public hearing on proposed 2026 fishing rules on Tuesday 17 February, so I am submitting my comments in written form. My comments and recommendations are as follows:

- I support Recreational Striped Bass Management Proposal 1, to standardize striped bass measurement.
- I have no opinion on Recreational Bluefish Management Proposal 1 since I do not target bluefish.
- For Recreational Black Sea Bass Management, I support Proposal 4, to open the season one week early. I oppose Proposal 1 since I am opposed to reducing the minimum size. I oppose Proposal 2 since I believe that the current two fish limit is adequate for the summer months, and I **adamantly oppose Proposal 3** since in addition to opposing a reduction in the minimum size, I am **vehemently opposed to sector separation**. Licensed party and charter vessels already operate with huge advantages over a kayak fisherman like me. The captains and mates aboard the licensed party and charter vessels have a greater knowledge of where to target the fish based on greater time on the water than I am afforded. They have better electronics to find bottom structure and fish. They have much greater mobility to move from one spot to another and a greater ability to access good fishing spots than I do as a kayak fisherman. **Licensed party and charter vessels are already operating with enough advantages that they should absolutely not be the sole beneficiaries of the 20% increase in recreational black sea bass landings authorized in 2026.**
- For Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore, I support Proposal 1. The increase in the presence of bonito during the past two seasons has been a wonderful addition to my targeted fishing species and has made for some excellent meals. I strongly support precautionary management to ensure continued opportunity to catch and harvest this species for years into the future.

Thank you for your work in managing our fish stocks and for the opportunity to provide feedback through your public comment process.

Sincerely,  


Carl Tiska

**From:** Christian Vye  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Hardtail Management (AB & FA)  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 2:29:28 PM

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I currently oppose any management on these species, as people have said there is not much data on them and that they are highly migratory.

Personally, I would limit the take of Atlantic Bonito to 3 fish any size, and designate the False Albacore to be a sport fish only (no harvesting).

**From:** Dick Amundson  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** 2026 Saltwater Regulations  
**Date:** Monday, March 2, 2026 8:50:24 PM

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Mr. Duhamel,

I am a saltwater angler and I fish in Rhode Island. I am also a member of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) and I am interested in sound regulations that will protect our fishery resources while allowing proper use of these resources by saltwater anglers. Regarding the proposed 2026 Saltwater Regulations for Black Sea Bass Management, I want to express my support for the option that opens the season on May 16 and keeps it open until December 31 with a minimum size of 16" and a bag limit of 3 fish per person per day during that period.

respectfully,

Dick Amundson  
6 Calvert St  
Newport, RI 02840

**From:** Dave  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Albie's and Bonito  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 12:30:23 PM

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Hello Peter,

I am writing you to provide my thoughts on the proposed Albie & Bonito regulations which include the creation of guardrail requirements as follows:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)
- A commercial landing cap for both species

Since there are no present regulations for these species, I see them going the route of other species that have commercial value, and that is overharvesting. Commercial and of recreational fisherman have a right to fish without abusing the environment. Unfortunately, when there is money involved this aspect becomes difficult to self-regulate and often leads to forced enforcement and control.

I believe we should get ahead of this with some agreed to guardrails and data collection.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my thoughts.

Thank you.

David Knightly

**From:** Dave Perrino  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Albacore and bonito regulations  
**Date:** Monday, February 16, 2026 7:13:56 AM

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Dear Mr Duhamel,

I am urging RI DEM to urgently enact regulations to manage false albacore and bonito. These fish are prized and accessible to our inshore recreational fisherman both from shore and by boat. In addition, sustaining the three quarters of a million directed trips in New England for these pelagic fish is vital to supporting our economy through sales, taxes, and tourism. Enhancing this world class recreational fishery has huge implications to Rhode Island's economy and the lifestyle that attracts so many of us here.

Regulations should provide a set of basic guardrails that reflect what responsible anglers already believe: a 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries, an aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined, and a commercial landing cap for both species.

These regulations are clear, enforceable, and aligned with the current reality of both fisheries. Without a cap, the incentive structure becomes dangerous: the moment these fish gain value at the dock, the management system is already too late to respond. With the unfortunate state of the inshore fishery along the Atlantic coast and the often troubled management efforts, we need to shift our mindset to precautionary management. As black sea bass and bluefish are going to see significant liberalization in regulations in 2026, basic regulations for albies and bonito will not disadvantage any stakeholders.

Without clear and simple guardrails, we would be heading along the path where short-term exploitation replaces long-term sustainability. The decline in striped bass and bluefish creates increased risk for excessive harvest and commercial harm.

Thank you for your consideration,

David M. Perrino

**From:** dpesante  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Bonita and False Albacore Proposal  
**Date:** Saturday, January 31, 2026 9:01:31 PM

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To DEM Division of Fisheries's management. I am writing to propose that Fisheries management for Atlantic Bonita, and False Albacore remain status quo for commercial management. Thank you. Dean Pesante. F/V Oceana

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

**From:** dpesante  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore  
**Date:** Sunday, February 1, 2026 9:21:33 AM

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Hi Peter. I would add to my comments/ proposal sent earlier.

Status quo for both Bonita and False Albacore in the commercial fishery

This is an unavoidable bycatch. Any restrictions would only cause regulatory discards of dead fish. No conservation.

We see no decline of either fish. Saw more then we have ever seen last year.

Again these fish are an unavoidable bycatch in the commercial fisheries.

If recreational feel the need for cut backs the should prevent DIRECTED rod and real fishing.

Thank you. Dean Pesante. F/V Oceana

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

**From:** Dave P  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Proposed 2026 Fishing Regulations  
**Date:** Thursday, February 5, 2026 7:04:26 PM

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Dear DEM,

I will not be able to attend the public hearing on February 17 so I hope you will consider my written comments below. As an avid recreational Rhode Island angler, I feel very strongly that we need to manage our fish populations in ways that will allow us and our children to continue to enjoy our wonderful fishery.

**1. 2026 RECREATIONAL BLUEFISH MANAGEMENT**

**I am opposed to Proposal 1.** With the striped bass population already down, our recreational fishery is more dependent than ever on bluefish. Let's not risk depleting their numbers too! Please do not raise the possession limits!

**3. ATLANTIC BONITO AND FALSE ALBACORE**

**I am very much in favor of Proposal 1.** Catching these fish is exciting for recreational anglers and therefore these fish are extremely important to the finances of our guides, tackle shops, etc. These fish are not important to the commercial fishing industry, nor are they important food for many people who catch them. For all of these reasons, they are very valuable when left in the water and not very valuable at all when harvested. Please put these limits in to preserve as much of this fishery as we can, for the long term!

With thanks for your consideration,

Dave Prockop  
Providence, RI

**From:** Daniel Ruede  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** New Regulations for False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito  
**Date:** Sunday, February 15, 2026 7:47:09 AM

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Hello,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak up as a concerned citizen for the management and the harvest regulations for false albacore and Atlantic bonito.

I am in favor of the following:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)
- A commercial landing cap for both species

Not only am I a concerned citizen, but as an angler of the New England waters, and a former fishing guide, I know how critical these two species are, not only environmentally but for the revenue they bring in for all the coastal states, through fishing opportunities. With over 700,000 directed trips for false albacore and Atlantic bonito in New England, and over \$100 million dollars annually in recreational salt fishing in Rhode Island, failure to manage these two species properly would result in huge financial losses.

The narrative for most coastal species is grim, numbers of fish at unsustainable levels because of poor management and over harvesting. Fortunately for Atlantic bonito and false Albacore we have a chance to sustainably harvest these fish from the water and support a future stock by these regulations. With the current no size or bag limit, it is irresponsible and extremely detrimental to the future economy of Rhode Island, and shared waters.

Please have Rhode Island represent a growing recognition of the need for conservation in a rapidly evolving fisheries.

Thank you for your time.

Best,

Dan Ruede

**From:** Daniel Ruede  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Liberalization of Bluefish  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 5:46:52 PM

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Hello, I am attending the Rhode Island DEM public hearing on February 17th, at 5:00 via zoom, the topic came up on the liberalization of bluefish bag limit. I would like to suggest Rhode Island DEM refrain from changing the catch limit of 3 bluefish to 5 bluefish. It seems that although bluefish populations are rebuilding, we should not change regulations prematurely.

I am in favor of keeping the bluefish harvest at 3 fish per person per day.

Thank you for your time.

Best,

Dan Ruede

**From:** Dan Ursini  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Letter in Support of Urgent False Albacore and Bonito Regulations  
**Date:** Monday, February 16, 2026 11:05:36 PM

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Dear Mr Duhamel,

As a Rhode Island resident, I am urging RI DEM to urgently enact regulations to manage false albacore and bonito. These fish are prized and accessible to our inshore recreational fisherman both from shore and by boat. In addition, sustaining the three quarters of a million directed trips in New England for these pelagic fish is vital to supporting our economy through sales, taxes, and tourism. Enhancing this world class recreational fishery has huge implications to Rhode Island's economy and the lifestyle that attracts so many of us here. Regulations should provide a set of basic guardrails that reflect what responsible anglers already believe: a 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries, an aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined), and a commercial landing cap for both species.

These regulations are clear, enforceable, and aligned with the current reality of both fisheries. Without a cap, the incentive structure becomes dangerous: the moment these fish gain value at the dock, the management system is already too late to respond. With the unfortunate state of the inshore fishery along the Atlantic coast and the often troubled management efforts, we need to shift our mindset to precautionary management. As black sea bass and bluefish are going to see significant liberalization in regulations in 2026, basic regulations for albies and bonito will not disadvantage any stakeholders.

Without clear and simple guardrails, we would be heading along the path where short-term exploitation replaces long-term sustainability. The decline in striped bass and bluefish creates increased risk for excessive harvest and commercial harm.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dan Ursini  
43 Rossini Rd  
Westerly RI

**From:** Donald Williams  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on Proposed Regulation of False Albacore and Bonito  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:27:01 AM

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Please count me as a strong supporter of daily bag and minimum size regulations for these two species.

I am 76 years old and have a small boat - I have been pursuing these fish since the early 1990's. In the last few years I have observed wholesale harvesting/taking of these fish by groups of folks fishing from jetskis. Everything goes in their coolers.

Without some reasonable bag and size limits I fear these species will be ravaged.

Thanks for considering my concerns.

Donald C. Williams  
P.O. Box 345  
Adamsville, RI 02801  
401-623-0930  
[dclaytonwilliams@yahoo.com](mailto:dclaytonwilliams@yahoo.com)



February 17, 2026

To: RI DEM Division of Marine Affairs  
3 Fort Wetherill Road  
Jamestown, RI 02835

East Farm Commercial Fisheries Center would like to express support to retain the status quo management strategy for false albacore and bonito. Prohibiting commercial harvest of these species will greatly increase the number of regulatory discards. There has been no data presented to justify prohibiting access to this fishery from commercial harvesters. Please consider keeping the status quo regulations for false albacore and bonito. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

**From:** Earl Evans  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Albie Bonito Regulations  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 2:19:19 PM

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Peter,

First off, thanks for everything you have done and continue to do to protect the species of RI!

Let's do the right thing and place some regulations on these fish. I watched countless bonito and albies get taken from Ocean Drive in Newport this past fall. These people are only killing them because they're allowed to. By the end of the second week, they'd thinned the herd significantly enough to notice. By then even determined anglers weren't catching. Most of the anglers were from not from the area, most had MA and CT plates. When people get discouraged, they don't fish. When they don't fish, they don't travel and bring their money to Newport. All business suffer. And they don't spend their money at the local tackle shops. There are more people targeting these fish every year, these fish are worth more alive than dead. Please place some simple regulations on these fish.

--

H. Earl Evans  
401-300-5600  
908-377-1712  
[evans.earl@gmail.com](mailto:evans.earl@gmail.com)

**From:** Eric Larsen  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for Bonito and False Albacore  
**Date:** Thursday, March 5, 2026 7:42:05 PM

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Dear Mr. Duhamel,

I am in support of Proposal 1 with a combined 3 fish limit.  
In addition, I would like to see a commercial cap for these fish.

Sincerely,

Eric Larsen

**From:** Eric Reid  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Oral Comments on Proposed Bonita and False Albacore PH 2/17  
**Date:** Monday, March 2, 2026 2:55:09 PM

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Good afternoon Mr. Duhamel. Please see below a copy of my oral comments (including a few typos) that I presented at the February 17th Public hearing. That Public forum and the associated written comment period is the one and only opportunity for RIDEM to gather information on the effects this proposed action may have on our Fishing Community as a whole and a final decision could be taken as early as May of 2026. Currently, as you know, Massachusetts is the only State that has put regulations in place for False Albacore and Bonita. North Carolina, much like Rhode Island, is currently considering some actions. At their NCDMF meeting on February 20th in which they reviewed their extensive in house white paper on the Management Issue North Carolina approved considering a recreational possession limit for Bonita. In order to do so and "Before any changes take effect, the NCDMF will conduct a REQUIRED fiscal analysis of the proposed rule. Then, The Commission is expected to vote on issuing a "notice of text" at its May 2026 meeting which would formally begin the rulemaking process. That process includes a 60 day public comment period which would be held later in 2026." At the very least I hope Rhode Island will undertake the same fiscal analysis, including the socio economic impacts on all the segments of our fisheries that will experience both intended and unintended consequences prior to imposing uninformed management measures.

Thank you,  
Eric Reid  
Fishing Industry Specialist  
North Kingstown, RI

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Eric Reid <ericreidri@gmail.com>  
Date: Thu, Feb 19, 2026 at 10:25 AM  
Subject: Oral Comments on Proposed Bonita and False Albacore PH 2/17  
To: Olszewski, Scott (DEM) <scott.olszewski@dem.ri.gov>

Good Evening.

My name is Eric Reid from North kingstown, RI. I am a former New England Fisheries management Council member representing RI and, by

oath, the Nation as a Whole. During my 9 years on the Council I served as Vice Chair for 2 years and Chair for 3 years. I've spent 11 years on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) as a Commissioners Proxy. I am also the U.S. Commissioner to the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, representing the U.S. Commercial fishing Industry. I have been fishing for Bonita and False Albacore for the last 53 years as either a passenger, crew or Captain on head Boats based in Point Pleasant, NJ.

To start, I would cite Title 42 Chapter 35 Administrative Procedures, Rhode Island Law 42-35.3-1 which mandates "a rulemaking agenda must, for each pending rulemaking proceedings, state or contain (b)1 the subject matter of the proposed rule." I do not see that here. Further, in Chapter 1 RI General Law section 20-1-1 "The establishment of conservation policy should be pursued utilizing Modern Scientific techniques having regard for fluctuations of species" I'll get to that shortly.

I will focus my comments tonight on Bonita and avoid False Albacore (FA) as that species does NOT deserve consideration in RI. With the exception of 2022 when RI Harvest (based on MRIP) was 25% of the coastwide Recreational Harvest the bulk of the Fishery is in Florida that accounted for 75-90% of the total harvest and the other 11 states along the Atlantic coast hardly appear on the Radar and any rulemaking proposal should not be on our own radar tonight.

So what's the History of Bonita management proposals along our Northwest Atlantic Coast?

The Mid Atlantic Fisheries Management Council considered, in 2015-2017, during the development of the Omnibus Forage Fish Amendment including Bonita and False Albacore in that effort. However, based on National Standard 2 of the Magnuson Stevens Act and other defining criteria, these 2 species were removed from management actions early on in the process.

The ASMFC, in February 2023, also discussed a possible action for the 2 species in question. But, given the severe lack of modern scientific information and the lengthy timeline to develop even an uninformed action, they declined to move forward.

What about the science, or lack thereof? Currently Bonita in the Atlantic is divided into 5 stock regions, one of which is in the Northwest Atlantic. Several examinations of Stock Status and Stock Risk have occurred but none were focused on the Northwest Atlantic Stock. There was a high level of uncertainty in those studies.

Recently, a "Review of the Fishery, Biology and Life History of Bonita in the Northwest Atlantic" was undertaken by Calabrese and Merhoff. Of the 55 references reviewed, some dating back 27-73 years, only 21 specifically mention Bonita and are from a totally separate genetic stock in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea. Most of that reference group is from the Mediterranean, especially Turkey and the Black Sea and NOT applicable to RI. None are recent or Modern.

However, there are 3 references that MIGHT apply here. They include: Bigelow and Schroeder (1953), A personal communication (ie Anecdotal) 2023 and Trawl Survey data from 1992-1999 length/weight relationships with not enough samples to make a sandwich. Once again not recent or Modern.

In the Prose of the Review, it is stated 4 times in the 1 page Executive Summary and an additional 10 or so more times in the body of the Review that there is no management, no science and high uncertainty in the data reviewed that is applicable to the proposal(s) in front of us.

What DO we know? We know that North Carolina is considering "Promulgating" something and they're Marine Fisheries Commission is meeting shortly to discuss the matter on Bonita which includes 4 options plus Status Quo. The Department of Marine Fisheries is recommending "Option 2" because it is the broadest and most flexible option. That Option proposes to formally monitor landings and delegates the Fisheries Director, with the consent from the NCMFC, to adopt something or nothing in rule. It plainly notes the risk of Rule development with limited or unknown stock data and stock status. It also does not address a recreational bag limit. And since there is no Commercial Fishery it also does not go down that Regulatory road.

In Massachusetts, as we know, they have adopted a 5 fish per person per day combined (both Bonita and FA) Bag Limit, 16" minimum size and a year round Season. However, what has been conveniently omitted in prior discussions in RI is the Commercial Fisheries Exemption for both the Weir (floating fishtrap) and automated mackerel jig fisheries. Even though their Commercial fishery is quite small compared to RI, the Exemption acknowledges that 1) The commercial fishery is quite small, but 2) that the Commercial Fishery will be negatively impacted and 3) that the new regulations will constrain growth of the Commercial Sector.

Further, in providing these Exemptions. Massachusetts "will accomodate historic commercial activities and address the realities of those fishing activities where these species may be incidentally caught and the realities of the fishing activities make it unduly cumbersome to actively sort and discard live bycatch."

So here we are in RI tonight presented with 3 proposed options. It is my understanding that these came out of a Workshop held on January 12, 2026, and as mentioned poorly Noticed to the Commercial sector, just over a month ago and it is proposed that final action may be taken in May 2026. Three and a half Months start to finish? I guess that you can move at Light Speed when there is no science (including no SocioEconomics) to analyse.

Before addressing the Options, let's look at what we know about RI Fisheries for Bonita, On the Recreational side: Rhode island accounted for 8% of the total coastwide Rec catch for 2012-2022. By comparison, Massachusetts and New Jersey accounted for 35% and 32% respectively. The New England catch was dominated by Massachusetts

with RI very far behind.

Over the last several years RI has issued well over 50,000 Saltwater Recreational Permits annually. These Permit Holders took 3.923 MILLION trips of which 2.343 MILLION were "From Shore". In contrast, RI issued way less than 1000 Commercial Finfish Capable Licenses and, In Fact, only 40 or so Fishers accounted for all the Commercial landings in 2023. These 40 gave Rhode Island a Market presence of about 40% of the total U.S. Market that year.

I would like to point out that the Floating Fish Trap Weir Fishery, which not long ago was measured in dozens if not hundreds of sites. As of 2025 there is only ONE entity left. That entity has been in the process and expense of modernizing that operation to improve gear selectivity, improve catch quality, reduce bycatch and reduce gear conflict. Now those upgrades are on hold given the potential to be prohibited from the Fishery and excluded from Socio Economic benefit.

On to Proposal 1. Rec Sector 16" minimum size, 3 fish per person per day (each species or both combined?) and a year round Season. This is THE MOST restrictive REC Measure along the entire Atlantic Coast and IMO, due to the lack of science, driven by Politics and not preserving nor providing conservation.

The "For Hire" segment is responsible for a whopping 2% of discards for 1981-2021. Why would we even consider such harmful and drastic measures for our quickly dwindling "For Hire" Fleet and their Clientele that enjoys both catching and consuming their Quarry? This segment needs help, not peril, and should be exempted from Knee Jerk regulations.

On the Commercial side, this Option proposes to turn the ENTIRE Commercial fishery into a 100% Discard situation. Why are we considering to eliminate a GREAT Opportunity to Promote a Positive Socio Economic Position, With the help of the RI Seafood Marketing Collaborative, to prop up the 40 or so Commercial Fishing Professionals that provide Healthy "Products of Rhode Island" protein to the populace of the American Piscivores instead?

Proposal 2 is only slightly better but still bad with no benefit to 2 critically important segments of the Fishery.

In General, 2 Sectors of our RI Fishing Community will suffer both intended and unintended consequences under the 2 proposals above. An important third sector, the "Catch and Release" sector will feel no pain and will not produce a positive outcome for the Fishery or Resource. Even with a ZERO possession limit the "Catch and Release" Fishery will be able to proceed unabated and, given the Open Access nature of both the "Private" and "From Shore" Saltwater Recreational Fishing Permit process, will be able to increase effort without restriction or participation in Conservation. In fact, Release Mortality, could be as high as 39% (maybe higher or lower) for Bonita, I would suggest that a soft, fragile fish such as Bonita caught mainly in the "From Shore" mode stand little chance of survival

after encountering our rocky Jetties and coastline on both the way in and the way out.

The universally recognized lack of info on the fish and the Fishery is glaring and the relatively small stake our Rhode Island Fishery accounts for has as a whole DOES NOT Justify politics in place of proper and prudent management action. Given our low percentage of the Coastwide catch that exists in RI it is preposterous that either of the 2 aforementioned proposals could potentially prevail.

That leaves ONE plausible Option that fairly and equitably addresses all the participants and the American Public as a whole. Taken all of my comments above, I FULLY SUPPORT STATES QUO for this action fully expect you will consider the same. You can expect my additional written comments once I can address the additional information presented (outside RI Laws) at the hearing tonight.

Thank you.  
Eric Reid  
North Kingstown, RI

Appendices (7) will be attached to my formal written comments

**From:** fdefinis@verizon.net  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Bonito and Albie Regulations  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 12:24:54 PM

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Dear Mr. Duhamel,

I strongly support the forward thinking proposal to limit harvest of these species to five fish per day (matching Massachusetts regs) with a 16 inch minimum length. I also favor a generous but hard limit on commercial landings of these species. Currently, commercial demand for these species is modest and most of the fish landed are though bycatch. However, we have seen that times, trends and tastes can change rapidly and it makes sense to be proactive. One example if this is the southern red drum or redfish. When blackened redfish became a popular dish, there was tremendous pressure on the species and regulators had to scramble to protect the species. Closer to home, our commercial fleets turned to squid fishing after the traditional groundfish stocks were depleted. Today, squid accounts for the most landings in tons and dollars but it wasn't always that way. When I was a youngster, very few people ate squid but today it is on nearly every restaurant menu. In just a generation, it has gone from unknown to a dining staple. Fortunately, they are plentiful and well managed but the point about changing market demand is still relevant.

Opponents of these regulations like to cite the lack of data. When I was young, the only saltwater reg was that a striped bass had to be 16 inches—no bag limit, no data, no restrictions—take all you want. Winter flounder—no size limit, no bag limit, no data—take all can. Ditto for bluefish, bluefin tuna and other species. I recall people filling trash cans with winter flounder and hauling off giant bluefin tuna to the landfill. If we had exercised just a little foresight and common sense back then, we wouldn't be in the pitiful situation we are today.

Thank you for your consideration,

Fred DeFinis  
Middletown, RI  
Recreational angler for sixty plus years.

**From:** fishnewport@yahoo.com  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed sea bass? Really?  
**Date:** Friday, January 30, 2026 7:18:00 PM

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I just read that you are entertaining holding back the starting time for charter boats, and not letting them start at the same time as recreational? Why would that be a consideration? It's already been talked about changing regulations to smaller size, and different limits, because of the excess of sea bass, so why would having charter boats start later? Charter captains are struggling with the fishery in general, with the other species, and the one fish that we can easily get clients on, you want to hold is back on that too? As you can tell, I am totally against a delayed start date, as every other charter captain will be also. Please look at this, and so the right thing

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer \[mail.onelink.me\]](#)

Frank Blount

Frances Fleet

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Division of Marine Fisheries

3 Fort Wetherill Road

Jamestown, RI 02835

Subject: Request for Adjustment to Black Sea Bass Regulations

Dear Director and Members of the Division of Marine Fisheries,

I am writing to respectfully request consideration for adjustments to the current Black Sea Bass regulations in Rhode Island waters. Specifically, if possible, I am advocating for a higher bag limit, a slightly reduced minimum size requirement, and a longer open season.

As a long-time participant in Rhode Island's recreational fishing industry, I have observed firsthand how current regulations can unintentionally reduce angler satisfaction and increase discard mortality. When anglers are required to release a high number of legal-sized fish due to restrictive bag limits or size minimums that exceed neighboring states, it results in repeated handling of fish. Even when released carefully, many of these fish experience delayed mortality due to barotrauma and handling stress.

A modest reduction in size limit combined with an increased bag limit would:

- Improve angler satisfaction and participation
- Reduce the number of discarded fish
- Could lower overall release mortality
- Support Rhode Island's charter and party boat fleet
- Keep Rhode Island competitive with neighboring states

Cod fishing used to be 90% of the party boat trips in Rhode Island. Now with a total closure on Southern New England. There is little or nothing to catch for much of the year. We need increased opportunity before the sector goes the way of the dinosaurs.

Additionally, extending the season would provide more consistent access to a species that has shown strong stock abundance in recent years. Anglers are regularly encountering large volumes of Black Sea Bass, yet regulations restrict reasonable harvest opportunities.

I fully support sustainable management practices and science-based decision making. However, I believe adjustments that better align regulations with stock abundance and angler experience would benefit both the resource and Rhode Island's fishing community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask that this request be reviewed during upcoming regulatory discussions.

Sincerely,

Frank Blount

**From:** [Olszewski, Scott \(DEM\)](#)  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Bontito Management - In support of status quo.  
**Date:** Thursday, March 5, 2026 2:48:44 PM

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**Scott D. Olszewski**  
Chief  
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management  
Division of Marine Fisheries  
Fort Wetherill Marine Laboratory  
3 Fort Wetherill Road, Jamestown, RI 02835  
(401)423-1934  
[scott.olszewski@dem.ri.gov](mailto:scott.olszewski@dem.ri.gov)

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**From:** Nick Bocchino <[nbocchino4171@gmail.com](mailto:nbocchino4171@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 5, 2026 2:42 PM  
**To:** Olszewski, Scott (DEM) <[scott.olszewski@dem.ri.gov](mailto:scott.olszewski@dem.ri.gov)>; Lake, John (DEM) <[john.lake@dem.ri.gov](mailto:john.lake@dem.ri.gov)>  
**Subject:** Bontito Management - In support of status quo.

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My name is Nick Bocchino, I am a commercial fisherman in Rhode Island, and I am in favor of keeping bonito fishing status quo without a quota or hard limitation at this time.

My position is based primarily on the lack of scientific data supporting the need for immediate restrictions. At present, we do not have a comprehensive stock assessment, regional biomass estimate, or long-term catch-per-unit-effort trends that demonstrate overfishing or a declining population. Implementing quotas without baseline data risks creating policy based on speculation rather than evidence. Fisheries management should be data-driven, not assumption-driven. If this motion moves forward to impose reductions or limitations without that scientific foundation, it sets a negative precedent for how quotas are established in the future. It suggests that management decisions can be made without sufficient data, **which undermines the integrity of a science-based regulatory process that all sectors depend on for fairness and credibility.**

Bonito are also a short-lived, fast-growing pelagic species, with an average lifespan of around five years. Species with rapid turnover and early maturity are generally more resilient and capable of replenishing populations more quickly than long-lived species. Without clear indicators of stock stress, it is difficult to justify treating bonito as if they were a slow-recovery fishery.

Another concern is that we are discussing proactive regulation without first pursuing proactive research. This is a rare situation where restrictions are being proposed by the recreational sector while additional data collection and scientific assessment are not being prioritized. Normally, management decisions follow science — they do not precede it. I believe the responsible path is to gather the data first, then evaluate whether limits are actually necessary.

There are also economic and practical impacts to consider. For commercial fishermen and dealers, bonito provide seasonal flexibility and income diversification, especially when other fisheries are closed, weather limits access to offshore grounds, or our markets fluctuate. A quota could unintentionally push fishing effort onto other already-restricted or more vulnerable species, increasing pressure elsewhere rather than reducing overall impact.

I would also like to address the perception of abundance that is being presented from the recreational perspective. The recreational sector, while an important stakeholder, is not a direct measure of overall biomass. A large portion of recreational bonito fishing is done either by fly anglers — which is widely recognized as one of the most technically difficult methods to successfully land this species — or by shore-based fishermen who are inherently limited by casting distance, shoreline access, and the productivity of a fixed location. Those limitations do not necessarily reflect the true availability of fish offshore or across the broader region. As a commercial fisherman who is on the water nearly every day, my experience is very different. I frequently encounter bonito even when I am not intentionally targeting them. Around Block Island and along much of our coastline, it is difficult to avoid them when setting umbrella rigs, and the catch can be repeated consistently throughout the day. They are also routinely caught incidentally while tautog fishing with green crabs and while seabass jigging. Based on repeated, unintentional encounters across multiple fisheries and gear types, my firsthand experience indicates that bonito are more plentiful than is being suggested, and that shore-based or highly specialized recreational catch rates may not accurately represent the broader population reality.

I would also urge caution in automatically adopting Massachusetts regulations without region-specific analysis. Migration patterns, local fishing pressure, and stock distribution can differ significantly by area. Effective fisheries management should be adaptive and regional, not a copy-and-paste approach.

I want to be clear that this is not an argument against conservation or monitoring. I fully support enhanced data collection measures such as improved reporting, logbooks, size and age sampling at landing sites, cooperative research with commercial vessels, and annual reviews of landings and effort. A reasonable compromise would be a defined data-gathering period with measurable biological and catch thresholds that, if met, would then trigger discussion of limits. That approach keeps management responsive without locking us into permanent regulations that may later prove unnecessary.

In summary, without clear scientific evidence of stock decline, and given the biological

characteristics of bonito and the economic realities of the commercial fleet, I believe the most responsible course of action is to keep the fishery open while investing in better research and monitoring. Management decisions grounded in solid regional science will ultimately lead to more effective and fair outcomes for all stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Best,

Nick Bocchino  
F/V Estimated Profit

**From:** Gavin Fraser  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** public comment on albie/bonito regs  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:19:09 AM

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Hello Peter -

I am unable to attend next week's meeting but wanted to share a comment via this email, thanks.

I have been recreationally fishing NY/CT/RI/MA my whole life of 60 years and the state of the fishery in general is alarming. I like many others have gravitated towards albies and bonito at the number of blues and stripers have declined, and I love chasing these fish.

Please support some common-sense management regulations so that we can lay the groundwork for a healthy fish stock for many years to come. Minimum size limits (16"), bag limits of one or two fish, and commercial caps.

Thanks.

Gavin

**Gavin Fraser**  
Chief Executive Officer  
[smallplanet.com](http://smallplanet.com) [[smallplanet.com](http://smallplanet.com)]

**From:** Glenn Goodwin  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** bonito proposal  
**Date:** Friday, March 6, 2026 3:20:46 PM

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To the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council,

I am writing to oppose the proposed commercial prohibition on Atlantic bonito and false albacore. I have spent my life in the commercial fishing industry, owning vessels and shoreside businesses here in Rhode Island, and I can say that a possession ban like this will not prevent these fish from being caught — it will only create unnecessary waste by forcing fishermen to discard fish that may already be dead. I believe this prohibition should not be adopted. At a minimum, Rhode Island should include an exemption for unavoidable bycatch from fixed gear fisheries such as floating fish traps.

Glenn Goodwin  
Evan Goodwin  
Commercial fisherman Sent from my iPhone

**From:** GEOFFREY MCNALLY  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** comments on proposed false albacore and bonito regulations  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 2:01:29 PM

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Hi Peter,

I cannot attend the in-person meeting next Tuesday, but I would like to provide written comments instead.

I am a RI resident and shore based angler.

I have read and heard about the proposed false albacore and bonito regulations.

I support the 16 inch minimum size limit.

I feel that the daily combined species catch limit should be 5 fish, not 3 fish.

I also support reasonable commercial catch limits.

Geoffrey McNally  
Tiverton, RI  
[jeff\\_ri@cox.net](mailto:jeff_ri@cox.net)

**From:** Holly Conrad  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment on Albie/Bonito regulations  
**Date:** Thursday, March 5, 2026 4:45:29 PM

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Hello,

I am submitting public comment for the False Albacore and Bonito regulations. I support Proposal 1 that has a combined limit of 3 fish per day and I support no commercial fishery for them, BUT I would like to see a Cap on Commercial landings for these species.

I also support Status Quo for Bluefish regulations as well, at this time the fishery can not support increases.

Thank you,  
Holly Cloutier

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

**From:** Jeff Amberson  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Albie regulations  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:36:27 AM

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Sir,

As a frequent fisherman in RI, I would like to go on record as supporting commonsense regulations for albies and bonito. Specifically, I would like to see the following guidelines implemented.

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)
- A commercial landing cap for both species

Protecting these fish before they are in trouble should be the goal of any responsible stewardship. All too often, efforts to protect a resource occur only after the alarm has been raised (striped bass). I favor a proactive approach to all conservation, and this is no different.

Thank you for your time.

Jeff Amberson  
Northborough, MA 01532

**From:** Joseph Beck  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** 2026 saltwater fishing regulations  
**Date:** Monday, March 2, 2026 2:05:21 PM

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Dear Peter,

I am a saltwater angler from Rhode Island and a member of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA). I am writing to express my support for sound regulations that protect our fishery resources while ensuring sustainable access for the angling community.

Regarding the proposed 2026 Saltwater Regulations for Black Sea Bass Management, I support the option to open the season from May 16 through December 31, with a minimum size of 16" and a daily bag limit of three fish per person.

Additionally, I advocate for the implementation of harvest regulations for bonito and false albacore in both recreational and commercial sectors. For recreational fishing, I suggest adopting standards similar to those in Massachusetts: a 16" minimum size for both species and a combined daily bag limit of five fish per person.

For the commercial sector, I recommend a 16" minimum size and an annual limit based on the average or maximum landings from the last three to five years. Establishing these commercial limits is essential to preventing a significant increase in harvest levels.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph Beck  
206 Shun Pike  
Johnston, RI 02919

**From:** Justin Cordonnier  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False albacore and bonito management  
**Date:** Saturday, February 14, 2026 2:43:21 PM

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Hi,

I am a recreational angler, writing in support of the following for management of false albacore and atlantic bonito.

- 1.) 16 inch minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial fishing
- 2.) Recreational bag limit of 3 fish (both species combined)

Both species are amazing to pursue, and I appreciate your efforts to preserve them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Justin Cordonnier  
Needham, MA

**From:** Jojo Lantiegne  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Bonita and False Albacore Hearing  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 11:14:28 AM

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Hello Sir,

I wanted to write to ask you to please put the proposed regulations on the above species in place.

If there is no regulations place on the harvest of these pelagic fish they to will go the way of the bunker. I'm sure you noticed the sharp decline in bunker in recent years that can be attributed to larger commercial harvests as well as other reasons. When I was a kid they were everywhere. Now I barely see them.

Getting back on point, the Bonita and False Albacore attribute considerable monies to the economy of Rhode Island and other states. I've personally fished for these species for well over 20 years and spend considerable amounts of money doing so.

Please, I implore you to regulate the harvest for both the recreational and commercial fisheries. Stripers, bluefish and most if not all of the ground fish are disappearing faster than they can sustain. These two species add a reason for more people to fish. Although I do not harvest any of these 2 species personally, some do.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. We need to be proactive and fix this before it becomes a larger issue.

Sincerely,

JoJo Lantiegne

Recreational Fisherman.

**From:** JL Charters  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Green Bonito and False Albacore  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 3, 2026 11:34:27 AM

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Peter my name is John Lee and I'm a charter boat captain as well as a hook and line commercial fisherman. I sail out of Point Judith. Although I may not be opposed to a 16-inch size limit and a 5-fish bag for these species I am opposed to how the management is being, very quickly, imposed on us. Same with the commercial end: I am not opposed to having, say a 500-pound daily possession limit, I am strongly against how the regulation is being proposed. I know very little of the Saltwater Guides Association. I do, however, know a few people who have left that group. I don't like how they have come into Rhode Island, rallied a bunch of light tackle guides, and started this movement.

Let's put a fishery management plan together. Let's put a stock assessment together. Let's get the State involved on this. Some industry people too. I think with a little work we can produce a management plan for Green Bonito and False Albacore---then start the talks about fishery limits.

Again it's not so much the limits that I take issue with it's how it's all happening. Leaves a taste in my mouth, not a great one. I hope the State of Rhode Island does not follow Massachusetts on this. Let's give it some more time and thought and put some people on it ----I'll help--and come up with a proper Fishery Management Plan.

Thanks for your time

John Lee  
401-862-0713  
[https://jlcharters.com/ \[jlcharters.com\]](https://jlcharters.com/)

**From:** Juli Perrino  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support To Follow Massachusetts' Lead in False Albacore and Bonito Regulations  
**Date:** Monday, February 16, 2026 1:46:25 PM

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Juliana G. Perrino  
27 Worcester Square  
Boston, MA

February 16, 2026

Dear Mr Duhamel,

As a Massachusetts resident with a second home in Rhode Island, I am very pleased to see RI DEM recognizing the importance to urgently enact regulations to manage false albacore and bonito. These fish are prized and accessible to our inshore recreational anglers, including women anglers like myself. In addition, sustaining the several hundred thousand fishing trips in New England for these pelagic fish is vital to supporting our economies through sales, taxes, and tourism. Massachusetts has led the way with enacting conservation measures for these fish and Rhode Island should do likewise to protect this world class recreational fishery that has huge implications to Rhode Island's economy and the lifestyle that attracts so many of us here.

RI regulations should match or exceed the sensible measures put in place in Massachusetts and include a 3 fish per person bag limit and commercial caps. We can not allow exploitive fishing and harvest practices to be directed onto RI waters.

With the unfortunate state of the inshore fishery along the Atlantic coast and the often troubled management efforts, we need to urgently shift our mindset to sensible precautionary management or face the unfortunate state where short-term exploitation steals long-term sustainability.

Sincerely,

Juliana G. Perrino

**From:** John Yemma  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore Regulations  
**Date:** Friday, February 27, 2026 4:28:38 PM

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Good afternoon Peter Duhamel and the Rhode Island DEM:

My name is John Yemma, I'm an angler from Winthrop Massachusetts who makes many trips to the state of Rhode Island for the chance of catching one of these two species that I do not have access to where I live. I primarily target False Albacore.

I am in support of the proposed regulations because:

1. We should take action to protect any species before there is a "problem to correct", with or without data
2. The arguments against the regulations from the meeting were primarily because "there is no science / data on the species," which itself is an argument that could only lead to assuming it should be protected, and not the other way around and
3. The highest and most widespread economic value of the fish belongs to the recreational sector, not very specific and narrow commercial fishing interests. Targeting False Albacore from shore in 2024 wasn't reasonable, I only spoke to one person who landed one from shore in 2024. As a result I made no trips to the area to fish, period. I have striped bass I can fish for at home. Last year, with opportunity, I made around 20 trips to the area. While I was in the area I visited multiple local tackle shops multiple times. I know the places where it's acceptable to go inside to grab a bite to eat (to go) with my fishing clothes on and. I got on a first name basis with some of the employees of the local gas stations and pharmacies where I bought drinks and snacks and of course gas. I would stay at local lodging if I didn't have a friend I could stay with. None of that is happening without a viable False Albacore fishery and I am one of many people who do this on a regular basis in the fall.

In summary, the proposed regulations are good for the fish and good for the local Rhode Island economy and that is why I support them and I believe you and the Rhode Island DEM should as well.

I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Thank you,  
John Yemma  
Winthrop MA

--

John Yemma  
[j.yemma42@gmail.com](mailto:j.yemma42@gmail.com)  
508.843.0085 mobile

**From:** kenneth cooper  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** February 17 Public Hearing re: Bonito and False Albacore  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 1:35:48 PM

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Mr. Duhamel:

I am a near twenty year resident of Westerly, RI, a Coast Guard licensed captain, and, for more than seventy years, an avid fisherman and spearfisherman. I own and operate a center console boat, but I never charge anyone who comes aboard to fish or dive with me.

I am an active member of RISAA and the Rhody Flyrodders. I recently joined the ASGA and learned about the forthcoming hearing. **I support ASGA's recommendations, to include: A 16 inch minimum for each species; a combined creel limit of three fish; and a commercial landing cap for both species.**

It is critically important that R I take on a leadership role in the cause to assure a healthy biomass of these two great fish. Action now, rather than reaction when it's too late to fix the problem, is the only sensible way to proceed.

Captain Ken Cooper  
19 Rock Ridge Road  
Westerly, RI 02891  
Mobile: 202-302-5490  
Email: [thecoops1@comcast.net](mailto:thecoops1@comcast.net)

**From:** Kurt Freund  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Atlantic bonito and false albacore regulation  
**Date:** Saturday, February 14, 2026 2:31:26 PM

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Dear Mr. Duhamel,

I am writing to express my support for the proposed Rhode Island regulations on the recreational and commercial harvest of atlantic bonito and false albacore. I think we can all agree on how valuable these two species are as a resource, and how important it is to protect and preserve that resource with responsible stewardship. As a fisherman, and as a fishing charter captain, these two species have enormous value to me, personally and professionally. That is why I had always been surprised and, frankly, dismayed that there were absolutely no limits on their recreational or commercial harvest. That is, until 2024, when Massachusetts adopted retention limits on the size and number of these fish. I welcomed these regulations as a much-needed safeguard against over-harvest of this valuable resource. Of course, in order for regulations on migratory species to be effective, they need to be consistent across the range of the fish. So, cooperation among all the states of New England, the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions is essential. I hope Rhode Island will adopt the proposed regulations and help protect these two magnificent gamefish species.

Thank you

Kurt

Captain Kurt Freund  
Fishsticks Charters

508-951-5288 (cell)  
508-645-2832 (home)

[https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_http://www.fishstickscharters.com\\_!!KKphUJtCzQ!KLC93utQ\\_FmFDgIMcK9qJL9eOs-3RA\\_g5cqUjW2zgm25MDoDjYks\\_4J94neFpfPtWBL6Od4NU7-OYN-ZLwm3w9j7jZn9MFKS2-I\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_http://www.fishstickscharters.com_!!KKphUJtCzQ!KLC93utQ_FmFDgIMcK9qJL9eOs-3RA_g5cqUjW2zgm25MDoDjYks_4J94neFpfPtWBL6Od4NU7-OYN-ZLwm3w9j7jZn9MFKS2-I$)[fishstickscharters[.]com]

**From:** Kyle Schaefer  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Bonito & False Albacore  
**Date:** Monday, February 16, 2026 10:43:10 AM

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Good Morning Peter,

I am in support for the following regulations for Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore:

A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries  
An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)  
A commercial landing cap for both species

It's imperative that managers up and down our coast manage our stocks with a precautionary approach. Rec anglers have lost so much opportunity to fish along our coast and we hope this opportunity can be seized by managers and anglers alike to put some basic guardrails in place for these 2 great species.

We the disastrous management of striped bass and their continued decline it's important to protect the species that anglers will likely shift their target to as Bass and Bluefish become less viable to catch.

Best,

Kyle Schaefer

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[Soul Fly Outfitters // Maine Stripers \[soulflyoutfitters.com\]](#) || IG: [@CaptKyleSchaefer \[instagram.com\]](#)

[Fisheries Conservation - ASGA \[saltwaterguidesassociation.com\]](#) || Donate & Get Engaged

Today

**From:** lt.horiuchi  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Rulemaking on new regulations for false albacore and Atlantic bonito.  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 12:19:08 PM

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I along with ASGA supports a set of basic guardrails that reflect what responsible anglers already believe:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)
- A commercial landing cap for both species

These regulations are clear, enforceable, and aligned with the current reality of both fisheries. A commercial cap is not about punishing commercial fishermen, and ASGA has not pushed for a moratorium or a total closure of the commercial fishery for these species. Without a cap, the incentive structure becomes dangerous: the moment these fish gain value at the dock, the management system is already too late to respond. With the state of every other inshore fishery along the Atlantic coast, we need to shift our mindset to precautionary management. As black sea bass and bluefish are going to see significant liberalization in regulations in 2026, basic regulations for albie and bonito will not disadvantage any stakeholders. There were over 740,000 directed trips for albies and bonito in New England in 2025. For perspective, there were only 240,000 trips for bluefish in New England. We support precautionary management to ensure a sustainable future for our fisheries.

Mr. Lon Horiuchi  
PO Box 41130  
Fredericksburg, VA 2240

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**From:** markdcasali@gmail.com  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: RI Bonito and Albie Regulations  
**Date:** Monday, February 16, 2026 2:24:56 PM

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Hi Peter,

I wanted to share a few thoughts on potential regulations for Albies and Bonito:

- Four states (CT, MA, NY, and RI) really need to come together on consistent regulations, as the Albie Project data has shown that the migratory fall New England stock is constantly crossing state lines. This is especially true for CT/RI/NY—it honestly wouldn't surprise me if the same fish swam through all three states' waters in a single day.
- Since the recreational Albie fishing audience is already largely catch-and-release, regulations around tackle could be just as important as daily harvest limits. Mandating a single hook (as opposed to treble hooks) could significantly improve survival rates for released fish. And for the catch-and-keep bonito audience, there's plenty of evidence suggesting that single hooks lead to similar—if not better—hookup rates. Regrettably, and coming from personal experience, I know how badly these fish—particularly Bonito—get mauled by treble hooks.
- I'm not sure how this would realistically be addressed through regulation, but someone needs to take a serious look at the impact that netting has on these species. The nets off Newport and the West Wall have notoriously gone viral with photos showing what looks like *thousands* of fish in a single haul. Do these fish even have meaningful value in the local market?
- RI has seen large pushes of juvenile Bonito in recent years. These fish are easier to catch, and there's been pictures shared across the internet of fisherman filling five-gallon buckets to the brim with catches. A simple size limit or daily bag limit could help address this type of issue.

Thank you,

Mark Casali

**From:** Matthew Cavaco  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on 2026 Finfish Proposed Rulemaking – Public Hearing Feb 17, 2026  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:09:27 AM

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Hi Peter,

I am writing to submit comments on the 2026 Finfish Proposed Rulemaking ahead of the public hearing and comment deadline. I appreciate the Division's transparency in outlining the proposals and options.

Below are my comments by species.

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**STRIPED BASS – Total Length Definition**

I support the proposed clarification of the striped bass total length measurement to align with FMP compliance. Clear, consistent measurement language reduces unintentional violations and improves enforceability on the water. From an enforcement standpoint, standardized and easily communicated rules are critical.

---

**BLUEFISH – Recreational Possession Limit**

I understand that the proposed increase from three to five fish per person per day may be related to FMP compliance. However, I encourage the Council to carefully consider whether increasing the limit meaningfully advances conservation or ecosystem objectives.

Bluefish are an important mid-level predator in Rhode Island's nearshore ecosystem. Their feeding behavior contributes to forage compression and mixed-species feeding events that attract bonito, false albacore, striped bass, and other pelagic species inshore. There is not strong evidence that bluefish are currently ecologically excessive or that increased recreational removals would materially improve ecosystem balance.

From a practical standpoint, bluefish are not widely utilized as a primary food fish. A single decent-sized bluefish provides a substantial amount of meat. Increasing the limit to five fish per person may lead to unnecessary retention and waste, particularly during high-catch events when anglers feel compelled to "limit out" simply because the regulation allows it.

If the increase is not strictly required for compliance, I would recommend maintaining the three-fish possession limit. If it is required, I encourage pairing it with strong outreach on responsible harvest, utilization, and handling to minimize waste.

---

**BLACK SEA BASS – Recreational Options**

Recent stock assessments indicate that black sea bass are not overfished and that overfishing is not occurring, with biomass above target levels and fishing mortality below reference points. This aligns with frequent observations of strong abundance in Southern New England waters.

However, high juvenile presence alone does not necessarily indicate a need for expanded harvest. Seeing large numbers of small fish likely reflects strong recruitment and successful year classes rather than a biological imbalance requiring increased removals. Maintaining a stable age structure and protecting spawning potential remain important for long-term stock resilience.

If possession limits are adjusted for 2026, I encourage the Council to ensure that any increase is clearly supported by current stock assessment data and not based solely on perceived local density. Maintaining conservative limits while recruitment remains strong may provide greater long-term stability than short-term liberalization.

I also do not support reducing the minimum size for party and charter vessels below the general recreational minimum size. Split-size structures create confusion, enforcement challenges, and potential equity concerns. Clear, consistent regulations across sectors are easier to enforce and better understood by the public.

---

## ATLANTIC BONITO AND FALSE ALBACORE – Recreational and Commercial

### Recreational:

I support a 16-inch minimum size and a year-round season, as availability is naturally limited by migration. However, I recommend maintaining the recreational possession limit at three fish per person per day rather than increasing to five. These are short-window, high-visibility fisheries, and higher bag limits may lead to unnecessary retention and waste rather than meaningful food harvest.

### Commercial:

I understand that previously proposed annual poundage caps based on recent averages were considered too small to manage effectively.

For commercial harvest, I recommend an alternative approach that is more practical and enforceable than micro-quotas:

- Allow incidental commercial landings by rod-and-reel only
- Prohibit other commercial gear types for directed harvest
- Establish modest trip limits (for example, 50–100 pounds per vessel per day for bonito)
- Require standard reporting

Rod-and-reel incidental harvest reflects how these species are actually encountered in Rhode Island waters, often while targeting other species, and naturally limits effort and volume. It also simplifies enforcement and avoids incentivizing a directed commercial fishery for short-window pelagic species.

For false albacore specifically, given its low market value and strong recreational importance, maintaining a commercial prohibition or applying even stricter incidental limits would be

reasonable.

---

## EMERGING SPECIES – MAHI (DOLPHINFISH)

Over the past two summer seasons, I have personally observed mahi present within Rhode Island state waters. Encounters that were once rare appear to be occurring more frequently during warm-water months.

While mahi remain primarily a highly migratory offshore species, shifting ocean temperatures and seasonal patterns may continue to increase their inshore presence in Southern New England. Similar patterns have already been observed with Atlantic bonito and false albacore, where increased inshore availability eventually led to regulatory consideration.

I am not advocating immediate regulatory action for mahi. However, I encourage the Division to monitor landings, effort, and reporting trends proactively. Early data collection and situational awareness can help ensure that, if directed effort increases in the future, management discussions begin from a position of information rather than reaction.

---

## GENERAL COMMENTS

Across all species, I encourage the Council to favor:

- Simple, enforceable rules
- Measures that reduce waste
- Avoidance of unnecessary increases in total removals
- Practical structures that reflect how fishing actually occurs on the water

As both a commercial license holder and someone with fisheries enforcement experience, I believe regulations work best when they are biologically grounded, operationally realistic, and easy to explain.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. I appreciate the Division's work and the public process.

Respectfully,

--

*Matthew R. Cavaco*

**Marine Logistics Coordinator**

URI, Graduate School of Oceanography

215 South Ferry Rd - Narragansett, RI 02882

Email: MCavaco@URI.edu

Phone: (401) 580-5948

**From:** mikefontaine2006  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Saltwater Regulations  
**Date:** Monday, March 2, 2026 2:24:52 PM

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I am a saltwater angler and I fish in Rhode Island. I am also a member of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) and I am interested in sound regulations that will protect our fishery resources while allowing proper use of these resources by saltwater anglers. Regarding the proposed 2026 Saltwater Regulations for Black Sea Bass Management, I want to express my support for the option that opens the season on May 16 and keeps it open until December 31 with a minimum size of 16" and a bag limit of 3 fish per person per day during that period. I also support regulations on the harvest of bonito and false albacore both recreationally and commercially. I believe the recreational regulations should be similar to those in MA and should have a minimum size of 16" for each species and have a bag limit of 5 fish total for the 2 species per person per day. The commercial minimum size should also be 16" and the annual limit can be the average of landings over the last 3 or 5 years or even the maximum annual landings over that period, but it is important that you establish a commercial limit to avoid a significant rise in commercial harvest.

Thank you,  
Michael Fontaine  
RISAA Member  
145 Prospect Farm Road  
Portsmouth, RI 02871  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** archangelcharters@gmail.com  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](mailto:Duhamel.Peter@DEM)  
**Cc:** [bjsilvia54@yahoo.com](mailto:bjsilvia54@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** 2026 Black Seabass regulations  
**Date:** Friday, January 30, 2026 6:26:39 PM

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Hello Mr. Duhamel

This email is in reference to the proposed 2026 Black Seabass Regulations. Under Proposal 2, As a Charter Captain based out of Newport RI, I would like to see a start date for the same as the General Recreational from May 22<sup>nd</sup> to August 26<sup>th</sup>. The proposal for Party/Charter June 18<sup>th</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>, we are losing 17days of Black Seabass fishing.

We have clients coming from all over the country, and having the ability to harvest seabass earlier, will benefit our business. Being on charters where we are throwing back stripers because of slot limit, is sometimes stressful and then we have to throw back seabass on top of that because the charter vessels cannot keep the Black Seabass when the recreational fisherman can. Our clients this time of year want to bring home fish they can harvest for the dinner tables.

Thank you for your time

Captain Mike Littlefield  
401-406-9555  
[www.archangelcharters.com](http://www.archangelcharters.com) [archangelcharters.com]  
[www.NBMTRI.COM](http://www.NBMTRI.COM) [nbmtri.com]

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**From:** Michael Lynch  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:44:38 AM

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Hi Peter,

I am writing to express my support for implementing precautionary management measures for false albacore and Atlantic bonito. As a life time Rhode Islander and avid fisherman, this is near and dear to my heart. With the state of the striped bass population, **WE NEED THESE POPULATIONS HEALTHY**. Without these fish, my season would have been dismal in 2025! Please consider the below.

Specifically, I encourage the adoption of:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (combined for both species)
- A commercial landing cap covering both species

These measures are clear, enforceable, and aligned with the current conditions of these fisheries. A commercial landing cap is not intended to penalize commercial fishermen, nor is it a call for a moratorium or closure. Rather, it is a proactive step to prevent future overexploitation.

Without a cap, the incentive structure can quickly become problematic if dockside value increases, leaving management systems reacting too late. Given the condition of many other inshore fisheries along the Atlantic coast, a precautionary approach is both reasonable and necessary.

With black sea bass and bluefish expected to see regulatory liberalization in 2026, establishing basic conservation measures for false albacore and bonito will not place undue burden on any stakeholder group.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued work managing Rhode Island's

marine resources.

Sincerely,

Michael R Lynch

South Kingstown, RI

**From:** Michael Porco  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito management  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 4:59:17 PM

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**To the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management,**

I am writing to express my support for a set of basic, commonsense guardrails that reflect what responsible anglers already believe is necessary for the long-term sustainability of false albacore and Atlantic bonito fisheries.

Like many in the angling community — including the **American Saltwater Guides Association (ASGA)** — I support the following measures:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)
- A commercial landing cap for both species

In my view, these regulations are clear, enforceable, necessary, and aligned with the current reality of both fisheries. A commercial cap is not about punishing commercial fishermen, and I do not support a moratorium or total closure of the commercial fishery for these species. Rather, the goal is to ensure the management system remains responsive, precautionary, and proactive. This approach will also help provide much needed catch and landing data for better management of the stocks in the future. I think precautionary and proactive management is something that is warranted and necessary because the status quo has not been working for the fish. As we have seen with the heavily fished and managed striped bass fishery, where data is robust and abundant, management has failed because management was often too late and using backward looking data. Some have made the argument that we should not manage this fishery because of lack of data. This is like driving without your seatbelt on, I don't think we need data to know that driving without your seatbelt is inherently risky. Proactive management is a commonsense approach because we have an opportunity to potentially mitigate issues before they become serious problems.

Moreover, without a cap in place, the incentive structure becomes increasingly risky. The moment these fish gain significant value at the dock, management may already be behind the curve. Given the condition of many inshore fisheries along the Atlantic coast, we have a unique opportunity with this fishery, and I believe we need to shift toward precautionary management before problems develop.

I also note that black sea bass and bluefish are expected to see significant liberalization in 2026. In that context, these basic guardrails for albie and bonito will not disadvantage any stakeholder group and instead represent a balanced, forward-looking approach.

The level of angler interest underscores the need for proactive management. In 2025, New England saw more than **740,000 directed fishing trips** targeting albies and bonito. For perspective, there were only **240,000 trips** for bluefish in the region. These fisheries clearly matter to the recreational community and deserve thoughtful stewardship.

I respectfully urge the **Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management** to adopt these reasonable measures while the opportunity exists to act proactively. Taking precautionary steps now will help ensure healthy fisheries, stable access, and fair outcomes for all user groups in the years ahead.

Thank you for your time and for your continued work managing Rhode Island's marine resources.

Respectfully,

Michael V. Porco

**From:** Mark Sigman  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False albacore and bonito  
**Date:** Monday, February 16, 2026 4:23:17 PM

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Dear Mr. Duhamel,

I am concerned about the RI Fishery. As you are aware, there are no management regulations in Rhode Island for false albacore and Atlantic bonito. We are currently witnessing declines in bluefish and striped bass while false albacore and bonito remain relatively abundant. Not unexpectedly, fishing pressure is shifting to these populations. Data indicates that in New England in 2025 there were over 740,000 directed trips for false albacore and bonito, compared to just 240,000 trips for bluefish. As history has shown, without clear guardrails, large-scale commercial exploitation could follow resulting in further decline in our fisheries.

I fully support regulations for a simple, precautionary framework encompassing:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of three fish per angler, combined between both species
- A commercial landing cap for both species

New England fisheries have suffered from slow recognition of risk. With proactive action, we have a chance to avoid repeating past mistakes.

Sincerely,

Mark Sigman

30 Kristen Ct

Warwick, RI 02888

**From:** MITCHELL THURMAN  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Fishing limit Regulation  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 1:03:16 PM

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Hello Peter, Thanks taking the time and reading this. We'll be traveling on the 17th so we will not be able to make the meeting or zoom in on the Benito in false albacore size and bag limits. Massachusetts passed the fishing limits for these two species and I'm 100% for managing our fisheries so I do believe we should enact these regulations. Along with every state on the eastern coast. We need to think of the future for generations to come. Thank You, Mitch Thurman Middletown, RI

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

**From:** Mike Wright  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False albacore  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 12:03:33 AM

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Dear Sir,

Fall weekends fishing off Watch Hill and Weekapaugh have been the highlight of my year every year since I was 10 years old. I have watched the striped bass numbers dwindle thanks to the failures of fishery overseers in other states who did not pull back on the reins until it was too late (and are still not pull back enough).

I implore you not to allow the same thing to happen to false albacore and/or bonito ... two of the few bright spots of our inshore fisheries in southern New England these days.

I take dozens of friends out each fall to chase albies and bonito from Labor Day to Veterans Day. Collectively we spend thousands of dollars on gas, on tackle and in the delis (before fishing) and bars (after fishing) around Westerly to chase these fish. With two or three anglers on our boat I don't believe we have ever taken home more than three bonito in on trip, never mind three per man.

My friends drive from Providence, Hartford, Boston and Greenwich to catch them because they, like so many of us, are obsessed with the chase and the thrill of hooking them. Eating a delicious bonito is a wonderful bonus, but not really the driving motivation.

Putting reasonable limits on the number of these fish that can be harvested by anglers is, quite literally, the least the state can do to help start setting a foundation for conservation of our coastal tunas. Many of us don't have the means to take advantage of the great fishing for large tunas we have now and even blackish season is difficult to get very many days at sea in with only an 18 foot skiff. The fall bonito/albie season has come to be the anchor of our sporting endeavors and I would like to see our state be at the forefront of doing everything that can be done to ensure it lasts through the down years of other species.

Thank you for your time and for all that you are doing to maintain our fisheries.

Michael Wright

**From:** Norm Staunton  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment — Precautionary Management for False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito  
**Date:** Sunday, February 15, 2026 11:42:42 AM

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Dear Director and Commissioners,

I grew up in Barrington, Rhode Island, fishing for striped bass and bluefish from my neighborhood shoreline. Those fisheries shaped my childhood. They shaped how I understand the ocean. And they are not what they once were.

We all know that story.

Today, I fish Rhode Island regularly — launching from Point Judith and working between there and the south side of Block Island. Last summer I was on the water 5–7 times. Only one of those trips targeted striped bass or bluefish. Every other trip targeted false albacore and Atlantic bonito on light tackle and fly.

Effort has shifted. The market will follow effort.

When over 900,000 directed trips coastwide are targeting albies and bonito — and when New England effort now far exceeds bluefish trips — that is not a fringe fishery. It is an emerging economic driver for guides, tackle shops, marinas, and coastal communities.

We have an opportunity to do something rare: manage a fishery *before* it declines.

Pulse species like false albacore and Atlantic bonito are particularly vulnerable. When they show up in dense, predictable schools, harvest can scale quickly. Without simple guardrails, the system reacts too late.

I respectfully urge RI DEM to adopt:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit (recreational and commercial)
- A 3-fish aggregate recreational bag limit
- A defined commercial landing cap

These are not extreme measures. They are baseline protections. A commercial cap is not punitive — it is precautionary. Without one, the incentive structure changes the moment dock value increases.

A fish in the water is more valuable than one on the deck. Recreational access to abundant, well-managed fish drives repeat trips, long-term economic value, and public trust in management.

We made difficult mistakes with striped bass and bluefish. We do not need to repeat them.

Rhode Island has the chance to lead. Please choose precautionary management now — while the fish are still abundant, while the opportunity is still intact.

Respectfully,

Norm Staunton



**Norm Staunton, MBA**

He-Him-His ([why \[lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu\]](http://why.lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu))

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in: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/norm-staunton/>  
[\[linkedin.com\]](https://www.linkedin.com/)

**From:** Neal Venancio  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Albies and Bonito  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 11:09:06 AM

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Hi Peter,

I want to let you know I support the below proposed regs for Albies and Bonito.

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of three fish per angler, combined between both species
- A commercial landing cap for both species

We need to stay ahead of this to protect the fishery.

Thank You  
Neal Venancio  
116 Point Rd  
Portsmouth RI 02871



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## **Public Comment on Proposed Rule – Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore Commercial Prohibition**

Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed prohibition on the commercial harvest, landing, and possession of Atlantic bonito and false albacore in Rhode Island waters. At a minimum, fixed gear fisheries—specifically floating fish traps—must be exempted from any such prohibition due to the unavoidable bycatch mortality and lack of conservation benefit associated with this restriction.

This proposal would prohibit commercial fishermen from landing these species entirely, even when caught incidentally in lawful fishing operations. This approach does not reduce fishing mortality; rather, it converts landings into discard mortality and results in unnecessary waste of a public resource without achieving a conservation benefit.

Floating fish traps are passive gear. When schooling pelagic fish enter the trap, the operator has no ability to prevent capture. A possession prohibition does not prevent catch — it only forces discard of fish that may already be dead.

Bonito and false albacore are highly pelagic schooling fish, and when they enter a trap in volume their capture is unavoidable. These species are also particularly sensitive to handling and require continuous swimming to maintain oxygen levels. During the process of hauling and sorting the gear they often cannot be released quickly enough to survive.

As a result, prohibiting possession will not reduce mortality—it will simply require fishermen to discard dead or dying fish that could otherwise be responsibly landed and utilized.

There is also no stock assessment or scientific evidence demonstrating that commercial harvest restrictions are necessary for the conservation of Atlantic bonito or false albacore.

Because these species are highly migratory and move freely between state waters, unilateral restrictions in Rhode Island will not reduce overall fishing mortality but will place Rhode Island commercial fishermen at a competitive disadvantage relative to fishermen in neighboring states.

It is also important to note that Massachusetts recognized these concerns and exempted their fixed gear fisheries when implementing similar management measures. Rhode Island should provide the same consideration.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Council to reject the proposed commercial prohibition. At a minimum, an exemption must be provided for fixed gear fisheries, including floating fish traps, where incidental capture is unavoidable and discard mortality is high.

Ian Campbell,  
Point Judith, Rhode Island  
Floating Fish Trap Owner / Operator

## **Public Comment on Proposed Rule – Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore**

Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

As a co-owner and operator of the floating fish trap operation in Point Judith, I have a direct interest in ensuring that management measures reduce mortality without creating unnecessary waste.

I submit this comment to oppose the proposed commercial prohibition in new Section 3.36.2. As drafted, the rule prohibits all commercial harvest, landing, and possession of Atlantic bonito and false albacore.

The Department's own rulemaking summary indicates that recent commercial landings for these species are extremely small, and that annual caps at recent averages were considered 'too small ... to manage.' A blanket prohibition is therefore not a proportionate response to a small-volume fishery, particularly where a prohibition will convert unavoidable incidental capture into dead discards rather than reducing total mortality.

Floating fish traps are passive gear. When schooling pelagic fish enter the trap, the operator has no ability to prevent capture. A possession prohibition does not prevent catch — it only forces discard of fish that may already be dead.

Under Rhode Island rulemaking requirements, agencies typically evaluate costs and benefits and consider less burdensome alternatives. The public notice asserts that no alternative approach was identified. That conclusion is not supported when a clear, workable alternative exists: Massachusetts adopted precautionary size and possession limits for these same species and explicitly exempted fixed-gear operators because sorting and discarding bycatch would be unduly burdensome, while still maintaining precautionary objectives.

I therefore request that RI DEM withdraw or revise Section 3.36.2 to include, at the Atlantic minimum, a narrow fixed-gear bycatch exception for permitted floating fish trap operations, with mandatory reporting of any retained or encountered fish so the Department can quantify incidental mortality and build the data record needed for future management.

Respectfully submitted,

Stesha Campbell  
Point Judith, Rhode Island

**From:** Paulette Blagburn  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** 2026 saltwater fishing regulations  
**Date:** Monday, March 2, 2026 3:42:14 PM

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Mr. Duhamel:

I am a saltwater angler and I fish in Rhode Island. I am also a member of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) and I am interested in sound regulations that will protect our fishery resources while allowing proper use of these resources by saltwater anglers. Regarding the proposed 2026 Saltwater Regulations for Black Sea Bass Management, I want to express my support for the option that opens the season on May 16 and keeps it open until December 31 with a minimum size of 16" and a bag limit of 3 fish per person per day during that period. I also support regulations on the harvest of bonito and false albacore both recreationally and commercially. I believe the recreational regulations should be similar to those in MA and should have a minimum size of 16" for each species and have a bag limit of 5 fish total for the 2 species per person per day. The commercial minimum size should also be 16" and the annual limit can be the average of landings over the last 3 or 5 years or even the maximum annual landings over that period, but it is important that you establish a commercial limit to avoid a significant rise in commercial harvest.

Thank you,

Paulette Blagburn, RISAA Member  
111 Custer St  
Warwick RI 02889

**From:** Patrick Huban  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito  
**Date:** Saturday, February 14, 2026 8:54:26 AM

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Mr. Duhamel,

I am a fly fishing charter captain based out of Norwalk Connecticut. Although I am in the Western LI sound, what happens in bordering waters directly impacts me and my business. Basic gaurdrails for these species are absolutely necessary, they are simply too important to small businesses. During the fall, every angler on the bow of my boat is eager to have a chance to cast at these remarkable species. Rhode Island has an opportunity to be proactive, Rhode Island can lead the way in protecting the fishing economy, and access for generations to come. In closing, I support basic precautionary regulations for these fish. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Captain Patrick Huban  
[www.albatrossflyfishing.com](http://www.albatrossflyfishing.com) [[albatrossflyfishing.com](http://albatrossflyfishing.com)]  
860-416-1339

**From:** Paul Kameen  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment in Support of Precautionary Management – False Albacore & Bonito  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 1:11:33 PM

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February 17th at 5:00 PM, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management will hold its final public comment period before rulemaking on false albacore and Atlantic bonito. I strongly support the precautionary framework being advanced.

I say that not just as an angler, but as someone who has worked as a fishery biologist and spent years watching how unmanaged abundance turns into reactive regulation. Effort does not disappear; it shifts.

The importance of the striped bass fishery is obvious. It makes up the majority of Atlantic saltwater trips. Following the worst seven years of striped bass spawns in the fishery's recorded history, it would be foolish not to expect major shifts in angler behavior over the coming years. Whether driven by increasing regulation or declining availability, effort will continue to move away from striped bass and toward the next available species.

I think managers sometimes lose sight of how fragile localized abundance can be. While Newport and Buzzards Bay may still be experiencing dense concentrations of fish, that is not the case across the entire region. I personally witnessed how exceptional the fishing was on the Housatonic and Connecticut Rivers in 2022–2023. Speak to any local shop, guide, or angler now and you will hear a very different story. Biomass concentrates, and it disappears, quickly.

Fisheries are already complex systems, and we have balanced ours on a house of cards. We cannot control recruitment. We cannot control environmental conditions. We cannot control where biomass concentrates. In the past, managers understood this when they enacted a moratorium to conserve striped bass. But unless several stars align in our favor, it will continue to become harder to catch a striper in the coming years, and even harder to catch one legal to harvest.

There is ample evidence that this leads to shifting effort.

In 2025 alone, false albacore and bonito drove over 900,000 combined coastwide directed trips. In New England, there were more than 740,000 directed trips for these fish. With every reason to believe that number will increase, the absence of guardrails is a vulnerability.

I often think coastal fishery management lags decades behind inland systems. The lack of regulation here is an example of that; but also an opportunity for Rhode Island to stand as a beacon of science-based conservation.

ASGA's proposal, a 16-inch minimum size, a three-fish aggregate recreational bag limit, and a commercial landing cap, reflects what responsible anglers already understand. These are not

extreme measures. They are structural protections. A commercial cap is not punitive; it is preventative. The moment dockside value spikes, management will already be too late if limits do not exist.

Every major inshore species along the Atlantic coast has taught us the cost of waiting. I look at the stocks of the Atlantic's most culturally and economically important fisheries and grieve.

My father grew up fishing and loved shad. I have countless photos of him holding true hen shad — eight-pound fish. When I worked as a fishery biologist, I sorted through tens of thousands of American shad, removed their otoliths, and aged fish that never came close to that size.

My Uncle Pat was always a striper guy, obsessed enough to own a second apartment on the coast just to stay close to the run. He witnessed the collapse and the rebound. It pains me to think that at 70 years old, he may spend his remaining years watching that cycle repeat because we failed to learn from history.

These fisheries are depleted. What is most troubling is the direction they continue to trend.

I am 24 years old. There is a real possibility I will never experience these fisheries the way my father did. The generation before me must have felt the same way about cod, halibut, and winter flounder. I wonder if fisheries will be so depleted by the time my kids are my age that they end up fighting to conserve what's left of the Sea Robin fishery.

How many times are we going to let the pan get red hot before we finally learn?

We have a rare opportunity to manage momentum instead of chasing collapse. Rhode Island should take it.

Paul Kameen

[Paul@reelInfish.com](mailto:Paul@reelInfish.com)

1(570)439-7813

**From:** Parker Mauck  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on Proposed regulatory Changes - Finfish - 250-RICR-90  
**Date:** Friday, February 20, 2026 3:36:37 PM

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Mr. 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)

Mr. Duhamel,

Thank you and the RI DEM for holding the workshop and the hearing on proposed Finfish regulatory changes.

I am a USCG licensed light tackle guide based in Westport, MA and I have for-hire charter licenses in both RI and MA. The health of finfish populations is intimately tied to the health and long term viability of my small business.

For Finfish (250-RICR-90-00-1)

Item 1. I support Striped Bass length measurement using the fork of the tail squeezed together.

For Finfish (250-RICR-90-00-3)

Item 1. I DO NOT support increasing the daily Bluefish take from 3 to 5 for recreational anglers and 5 to 7 for for-hire vessels. Bluefish are NOT in our waters at the levels they used to be and increases should not be allowed until the population is fully recovered rather than in anticipation of recovery.

Item 3. Bonito and False Albacore. I fully support the following:

Recreational

- Minimum size at 16 inches
- 3 or 5 fish (combined) possession limit. Either number meets the goal of establishing guardrails.

Commercial

- minimum size at 16 inches
- No harvest is unreasonable.
- Open harvest does not establish protective guardrails
- A middle ground should be established until increased data can provide direction. I propose using historical commercial landing data and the number of permitted commercial permit holders to establish a reasonable daily possession limit for commercial permit holders. This would be enforceable.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely, Parker Mauck

Capt. Parker G. Mauck

[pgmauck@gmail.com](mailto:pgmauck@gmail.com)

(508) 496-8682

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**From:** ptsusca@cox.net  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** RI Bonito and Albie Regulations  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 7:54:46 PM

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Hello Peter,

I am writing you to provide my thoughts on the proposed Albie & Bonito regulations which include the creation of guardrail requirements as follows:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)
- A commercial landing cap for both species

Since there are no present regulations for these species, I see them going the route of other species that have commercial value, and that is overharvesting. Commercial and of recreational fisherman have a right to fish without abusing the environment. Unfortunately, when there is money involved this aspect becomes difficult to self-regulate and often leads to forced enforcement and control.

I believe we should get ahead of this with some agreed to guardrails and data collection.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my thoughts.

Thank you.

Pete Susca

**From:** Martha  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Black Sea Bass management decision.  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 3, 2026 4:39:33 PM

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Peter, I Russell Blank would like to add my comments on the proposed rule changes. I'm glad that DEM is considering an increase in the number and season extension for Black Sea Bass. As a charter boat captain this goes a long way as the restrictions on Striped Bass and Cod fish have crippled the for hire industry.

I would like to see the fall season stay the same allowing us 6 Black Sea Bass starting on September 1st and going through December 31st.

Move the summer start date to Memorial Day weekend and increase the limit to 4 fish, maintaining the 16" size limit but would really like to see 15.5" to save on discards as they count as mortality.

Bonito and False Albacore should have a commercial allocation, and the recreational should have a 5 fish limit.

Thank you Peter for considering this proposal.

Russell E Blank  
[Sent from AOL on Android \[aolapp.onelink.me\]](#)

**From:** Ryan Callahan  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Albies and bonito regulation discussions Feb 17th  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 12:01:14 PM

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Hi Peter,

I cannot attend the coming meeting related to potential regulations on albies and bonito so I wanted to drop a note with my recommendation. I'm a RI resident who fishes in this great state both fresh and saltwater.

I support the regulations being considered:

1. 16in min size limit for both recreational and commercial fisheries
2. An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler, combined between both species
3. A commercial landing cap for both species

I want healthy and vibrant fishing in this state to continue and enacting sensible regulations will ensure that me and my family can continue to enjoy this wonderful pastime. Thank you for your work in sustaining this industry.

*Regards,*

*Ryan*

**Ryan Callahan, Ph.D.**  
**FUJIFILM Electronic Materials U.S.A., Inc.**  
**Cell: (401) 644-1481**

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**From:** rjchatowsky@icloud.com  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 3, 2026 9:07:27 AM

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Good Morning [https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_http://Peter.It\\_!!KKphUJtCzQ!Ka-DJXxnOUU4Bxk\\_6bri4Ev9rqJvWkZMfDu4VROjJT4TrsLkKIHRYhGsUCW8xPww1rMryXGOcxZV3Epu9HUqdHvEnBw\\$\[peter\[.\]it\]](https://urldefense.com/v3/_http://Peter.It_!!KKphUJtCzQ!Ka-DJXxnOUU4Bxk_6bri4Ev9rqJvWkZMfDu4VROjJT4TrsLkKIHRYhGsUCW8xPww1rMryXGOcxZV3Epu9HUqdHvEnBw$[peter[.]it]) has come to my attention that there are some proposed changes for Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore in which I am not in favor of. First off there is no data to support any changes that have been brought to the table. Secondly, I can't see how a HMS has anything to do with state management when controlled by a government agency and separate permits are already required to obtain. Both species have become part of my inshore business model in the last few years because unrealistic regulations that have put on the striped bass for the for-hire [https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_http://fleet.At\\_!!KKphUJtCzQ!Ka-DJXxnOUU4Bxk\\_6bri4Ev9rqJvWkZMfDu4VROjJT4TrsLkKIHRYhGsUCW8xPww1rMryXGOcxZV3Epu9HUqeg88iOU\\$\[fleet\[.\]at\]](https://urldefense.com/v3/_http://fleet.At_!!KKphUJtCzQ!Ka-DJXxnOUU4Bxk_6bri4Ev9rqJvWkZMfDu4VROjJT4TrsLkKIHRYhGsUCW8xPww1rMryXGOcxZV3Epu9HUqeg88iOU$[fleet[.]at]) this time my opinion would be to leave this as status quo. Thank you, Richard Chatowsky.

**From:** Echo R  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Our Fishery  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 12:11:08 PM

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Peter,

I know the hearing is coming up very soon, and we will be watching via Zoom. Me and many of my fellow RI fishermen want to see fair and responsible management regulations put into action for all the local breeds of fish in our aquaculture especially now, the Atlantic Bonito and False Albies. These fish are a huge draw to RI. I personally have 5-10 people travel here to hunt these beauties. But there has to be a line that we can all agree upon to save the entire Fishery.

The current proposal of:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of three fish per angler, combined between both species
- A commercial landing cap for both species

seems more than adequate for all of us. When we fish these waters, we go home and cook 'em up. Or get the freezer bags out for some awesome steaks later. When prepared right most of the fish out our waters are delicious, not to mention REALLY fun to catch.

But overfishing kills all of that, all the fun of catching, measuring (and praying for a slot), all the pics we put up on Instagram and Facebook, all the bragging rights and so on. Very much, *unlike* the commercial fishing that drags EVERYTHING from the sea floor up into the boat for cherry picking, while slaughtering a lot of the bycatch. But, I won't go on about that, this is about setting the rules so we can ALL enjoy our fishery and waters.

I just wanted to go on the record and let you know that this proposal is a good deal for all. And more than anything it protects our waters here at home, something that you know took a long time to get back to normal.

Thanks for your attention, and if you need anything from me, please feel free to email me.

Roger Echols  
Riverside RI

**From:** Robin Grossman  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Albie & Bonito Limits  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 1:20:59 PM

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I am a resident of Narragansett RI, from where I fish between 20 and 30 times per year. The vast majority of my fishing is for top water species. I therefore, anxiously await the arrival of the albies and bonito as the highlight of my season. While I strictly practice catch and release, I have no issue with anglers keeping a few fish. I therefore support the ASGA recommendations of 16 inch limits, 3 fish limits, and reasonable but strictly enforced commercial caps.

Robin M Grossman  
20 Narragansett Avenue, Unit 702  
Narragansett RI 02882  
Sent from my iPad

**From:** jawdoc703  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Albie/Bonito regs.  
**Date:** Sunday, February 15, 2026 1:53:39 PM

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Dear sir,

As a recreational angler I support the 16", combined 3 bag limit being proposed for the False Albacore/Bonito fishery. Bonito are a real joy to pursuit and catch. They also make good table fare and three ( 3 ) fish per angler is plenty for a family to enjoy a seafood dinner of fresh fish.

I've been fishing the southside of Cape Cod for many years and have seen a decline in the Bluefish and Striper populations. As our society has become more populated and more affluent, more people can afford more boats, more fish finders, and more tackle. They have more leisure time to pursuit fishing. Some of the popular fishing spots are absolute parking lots when there is a bite on. Our waters are being overfished, no doubt. And when the Bluefish and Striper stocks declined, fisherman targeted other more abundant species such as Tuna, False Albacore, and Bonito.

Timely management is necessary to sustain this fishery for future generations. Economically, these fish are worth more if we can sustain their populations rather than indiscriminately decrease Bonito stock due to a lack of regulatory measures.. Now is the time to manage the Bonito, not when the stocks have been depleted to the point where we can't have a freshly caught fish dinner once in a while. Now is the time.

With Special Regards,  
Richard J. Haskell



To: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), Division of Marine Fisheries

Date: March 4, 2026

**Re: Proposed Management Measures for False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito**

Dear Director Gray and Members of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council,

The American Saltwater Guides Association (ASGA) urges the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to adopt precautionary possession and size limits for false albacore (*little tunny*) and Atlantic bonito. Such action would align Rhode Island with proactive measures recently implemented in Massachusetts and North Carolina. As a state sharing a critical fishery and economic ecosystem with Massachusetts, Rhode Island has a unique opportunity to safeguard this vital recreational resource and establish a regional standard for sustainable management.

**The Case for Precautionary Management**

False albacore and Atlantic bonito are currently unmanaged. There is limited understanding of their life history, Atlantic populations are not assessed, and no federal or interstate fishery management plans govern harvest. Absent such oversight, it is at the discretion of individual states to unilaterally manage these migratory species within their jurisdictions.

Recently, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) enacted a five-fish combined possession limit and a 16-inch fork length minimum size for both species, effective in 2025. This includes targeted exemptions for specific commercial operations (e.g., weir fisheries and mechanized mackerel jig vessels) to address incidental bycatch.

This regulatory shift responds to a significant rise in recreational pressure. In 2024, Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data showed a combined catch of 855,448 fish across Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Without reasonable regulations, these species—highly valued by recreational anglers for their fighting qualities—face a heightened risk of overexploitation during intense, localized seasonal pulses. To date, ASGA has spent in excess of \$280,000 on research programs to supplement the collection of life history information on these two species. Our efforts to cap the fisheries (both commercial and recreational) are designed to avoid a sudden increase in landings that might jeopardize the health of the stocks, while allowing a continuation of the current practices.

### **Addressing the Current Management Gap**

We appreciate the DEM's January 12, 2026, pre-hearing workshop; however, we are concerned by the binary options presented: either no regulation or a complete commercial moratorium. This "all-or-nothing" framing created unnecessary conflict between recreational and commercial fishermen. As DEM has noted, Rhode Island's commercial landings are too small to warrant a moratorium, yet they are significant enough to benefit from balanced, collaborative measures that allow harvest while preventing large-scale expansion.

Furthermore, the claim that there is "no science" to support precautionary regulations overlooks Rhode Island's own management precedents. The DEM and RIMFC previously enacted regulations for sand lance without an analytical assessment or documented catch history, purely to protect a critical forage species. Similarly, the 1996 ASMFC Fishery Management Plan for tautog was developed despite a lack of biological data, poor catch estimates, and no formal stock assessment. The rationale used for tautog in 1996—vulnerability to overfishing, potential for localized depletion, and increasing pressure—is identical to the challenges we face today with Albacore and Bonito.

### **1996 Tautog FMP For Reference:**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

##### **1.1.1 Statement of the Problem**

*The primary rationale for the development of a tautog FMP is the vulnerability of tautog to overfishing. Additional concerns center around localized overfishing and a shift toward increasing commercial fishing pressure since the early 1990's. As stocks of other species decline and entry to other fisheries becomes more restricted, greater pressure may be placed on tautog*

*stocks. Fisheries managers lack most of the biological and fisheries data necessary for effective management of the tautog resource. Estimates of recreational and commercial catches are poor. Information on migration and critical habitat utilization is lacking in most of the species range. Inadequate data are available on size and age distribution, natural and fishing mortality rates, and recruitment. Little information is available on critical habitat availability, current habitat status, or the capability of artificial habitats to expand species abundance. Most states in the species range have few regulations on the harvest of tautog. Because of the uncertainties associated with all aspects of the tautog resource, an interstate cooperative effort is needed to effectively manage this species.*

You could switch “tautog” with “false albacore and bonito” and not have to change another word.

### **Proposed Management Options**

To ensure the long-term health of these fisheries, we propose the following options:

#### **Recreational Measures (Combined Species):**

1. **Possession Limit:** A 3-fish or 5-fish per angler daily limit.
2. **Minimum Size:** A 16-inch fork length minimum size to ensure fish reach maturity (typically 14–16 inches) before harvest.

#### **Commercial Measures:**

1. **Annual Quotas:** A quota of 19,000 lbs. for bonito and 26,000 lbs. for false albacore (based on the 2013–2025 average) or .
2. **Adjusted Quotas:** A quota of 18,000 lbs. for bonito and 23,000 lbs. for false albacore (2013–2025 average, excluding outliers) or.
3. **Trip Limits:** A daily limit of 1,250 lbs. per vessel, with grandfathering provisions for existing fish traps.
4. **Gear Exemptions:** Exemptions for existing fish traps and automated jigging machines, consistent with Massachusetts’ standards.

These options are enforceable, data-informed, and considerably more flexible than the averages previously rejected by DEM. They prevent future crises without imposing undue burdens on commercial operators.

Finally, we note that our request for the public data presented at the January workshop went unfulfilled for weeks. This lack of transparency, combined with the binary options currently on the table, hinders a productive management process. We urge the DEM to move toward a collaborative, regional approach that reflects the high value of these species to the Rhode Island angling community.

Sincerely,

Tony Friedrich

President American Saltwater Guides Association

---



R.I. Party and Charter Boat Association  
P.O. Box 171  
Wakefield, RI 02880  
401-741-5648  
[www.rifishing.com](http://www.rifishing.com)



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Treasurer  
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Capt. Rick Bellavance  
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Capt. Andrew D'Angelo  
Capt. John Rainone  
Capt. Nick Butziger

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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)

RE: Public Comment on Proposed Rulemaking listed for Public Hearing on Feb 17<sup>th</sup> 2026.

Mr. Duhamel,  
On Behalf of the 52 members of the RI Party and Charter Boat Association, I am writing to comment on Proposed Rulemaking listed for Public Hearing on Feb 17<sup>th</sup> 2026.

Regarding recreational black sea bass management for FY 2026.

RIDEM's Black Sea Bass management decisions have direct and immediate economic consequences for Rhode Island's coastal communities, particularly the for-hire sector. Current stock conditions and on-the-water observations support increased access, yet overly conservative regulations continue to limit trip viability, reduce customer demand, and suppress economic activity with little corresponding conservation benefit.

The for-hire fleet functions as a concentrated economic driver, supporting jobs, small businesses, and working waterfronts across the state. Unlike private and shore-based anglers, for-hire operators face specific fixed operating considerations, advance bookings, and limited flexibility to adapt to restrictive regulations. As a result, reductions in possession limits or delayed season openings disproportionately harm this sector.

The existing fall possession limit of six fish per angler per day from September 1 through December 31 is fundamental to sustaining trip demand and must be maintained for the for-hire fleet. We support keeping the current fall season in place.

Moving the summer season opening to Memorial Day weekend, rather than June 18, would restore lost earlyseason economic opportunity and better align regulations with stock availability.

The summer season's (start date to August 31<sup>st</sup>) current possession limits remain misaligned with both biological conditions and economic realities. Increasing the summer limit to at least four fish per angler would materially improve trip quality, sustain participation, and generate broader economic benefits.

Maintaining the 16-inch size limit is appropriate; however, if additional liberalization is warranted, a reduction to 15.5 inches would reduce discard mortality and improve fishery efficiency.

RIDEM is encouraged to adopt management measures that explicitly recognize sector-specific economic impacts. Regulations that fail to differentiate between for-hire and private or shore-based anglers risk imposing

disproportionate economic harm without meaningful conservation gains. Unlike private or shore anglers who may fish as often as they choose throughout the season, for-hire anglers typically participate only once or twice per season, resulting in significantly less access to the fishery.

### Summary of measures the RIPCBA supports and recommends for 2026 BSB regulations for Rhode Island

- Maintain the fall possession limit of six Black Sea Bass per angler per day from September 1 through December 31 for the for-hire sector.
- Advance the season opening date to Memorial Day Weekend to restore early-season access and economic opportunity for for-hire operators.
- Increase the summer possession limit to a minimum of four fish per angler to align regulations with stock conditions and trip viability.
- Retain the 16-inch minimum size limit, with consideration given to reducing it to 15.5 inches if further liberalization is determined to be appropriate.

Regarding the Proposed management of Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore, the RIPCBA is strongly opposed to the proposed management at this time and support status quo,

The RIPCBA, which stands for 52 Rhode Island small businesses, emphatically calls on RIMFC and RIDEM to keep science-driven resource management at the forefront. Bending to the demands of outside special interests—especially when there's no solid scientific backing—not only jeopardizes Rhode Island's recreational and commercial fishing sectors, but also sets a troubling standard.

Claims that RIDEM has neglected its management responsibilities are utterly absurd. In collaboration with ASMFC, RIDEM has reduced striped bass fishing mortality to its lowest point in three decades—a clear example of responsible management, not neglect. The current management of Atlantic Menhaden incorporates the latest ecosystem-based assessment models, and the continued health of summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass populations is a direct result of disciplined, science-based approaches. Tautog management, guided by a robust regional stock assessment, further proves RIDEM's commitment to using the best available science. We have not always agreed with the decisions of the RIMFC or the RIDEM, but we stand by our support for the process and the use of science based decision making.

The narrative that RIDEM has fallen short is simply a tired ploy from those with obvious self-interest—namely, boosting tackle sales and personal gain. The push for ever-increasing abundance is not about stewardship, but as we learned on Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, about growing their own participation and, in some cases, driving their own tackle sales—all at the expense of the legitimate, harvest-focused fisheries that are vital to Rhode Island's coastal communities.

Isn't it ironic to criticize RIDEM's performance while consistently refusing to contribute to a science-based conservation management plan? Much like with striped bass, the suggested regulations won't affect catch-and-release guides or anglers; only those who harvest fish will feel the consequences of this unnecessary, unscientific, "precautionary" approach. How can something be labeled "precautionary" without supporting evidence? These proposed ad-hoc measures could just as easily be seen as punitive.

Opposition to the active management of Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore is warranted given the fundamental lack of biological, stock, and fishery-dependent data necessary to justify regulatory intervention. Effective fisheries management is predicated on reliable information—stock assessments, abundance trends, fishing mortality estimates, and clear indicators of overfishing or stock decline. For both species, these data simply do not exist at a level that would support science-based decision-making. Implementing management measures in the absence of

such information risks substituting speculation for science and undermines the credibility of the management process itself.

Absent evidence of depletion or excessive fishing mortality, there is no clear problem for management to solve. Moreover, premature management can have unintended consequences. Regulatory action taken without adequate data may impose unnecessary restrictions on recreational and commercial fisheries, divert limited management resources away from truly at-risk stocks, and create enforcement and compliance challenges without measurable conservation benefit. As Rhode Island has done with Tautog, precautionary management is most effective when paired

□ Page 3

March 2026

with a robust stock assessment and a monitoring framework. Applying controls without first investing in data collection reverses that logic and risks locking in measures that are difficult to justify or adjust over time.

A more appropriate and defensible approach is to prioritize targeted research and monitoring before considering management action. Improved catch reporting, biological sampling, and cooperative research would allow managers to better understand stock structure, life history, and fishing interactions. Only once sufficient data demonstrate a conservation or sustainability concern should Atlantic Bonito or False Albacore be considered for formal management. Until then, restraint is not only reasonable—it is consistent with sound, science-based fisheries governance.

It is also important to recognize the value of Atlantic Bonito as a healthy and desirable food source for recreational anglers and their families. Rich in protein and omega-3 fatty acids, Atlantic Bonito contribute positively to the diet of those who harvest fish4dinner. Attempts to arbitrarily prescribe a "needed" or uniform number of fish per angler overlook the diversity of angler preferences, family sizes, and the varying reasons people fish. Management decisions should be guided by biological and conservation principles, not by assumptions about what constitutes an appropriate or necessary harvest for all individuals. Respecting this diversity ensures that any future regulations, if warranted by solid data, remain fair, flexible, and sensitive to the entire community's needs.

Many of our members are both for-hire and commercial fishermen. We believe no new commercial measures should be introduced without sufficient scientific data. Thank you for the chance to comment on these species\* We support the agency's proposals for the other items on the docket.

Respectfully Submitted,

Capt. RickBellavmce

Capt. Rick Bellavance, President  
RI Party and Charter Boat Association

**From:** Ron Jawin  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Fishing regulations  
**Date:** Thursday, February 19, 2026 12:48:16 PM

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Hello- the over harvesting of fish stocks has already crashed striped bass and bluefish. Both need protection as do false albicore and bonito. It might be too late already.

Regards

Ron jawin

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Ryan Kim <[rkim@castleislandpartners.com](mailto:rkim@castleislandpartners.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 9, 2026 9:16 AM  
**To:** DEM.MarineFisheries <[DEM.MarineFisheries@dem.ri.gov](mailto:DEM.MarineFisheries@dem.ri.gov)>  
**Subject:** Albie and Bonito - proposed regulations

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To RI DEM:

I am writing to show support for the proposed regulations on Albies and Bonito in Rhode Island. I would also like to express the strong need for a cap on the RI commercial fishery.

As someone who has enjoyed chasing these fish over the past 20 years in MA and RI from my home port of Westport MA, I am often fishing in Newport, Pt Judith, Block Island and Little Compton. Over the past few years, I have observed that during "albie season" (August- October) the RI waters have been more and more crowded with boats with massive numbers of fisherman keeping fish indiscriminately.

I am saddened to see the widespread killing of these fish without much regulation or protection. RI has proposed another option which puts NO cap on the commercial fishery for either species, opening the door for possible large scale commercial fisheries to emerge. This is likely to happen given the already dwindling stocks of striped bass.

Species in New England have a history of being managed in a reactive manner, it would be nice to see officials manage a species more proactively. My home state of Massachusetts has set a precedent here with their implementation of proactive measures for both species, eliminating the possibility of a commercial fishery emerging in those waters. I would urge you to do the same.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call, email or text me at the info below. I urge you to take stronger action to protect these fish!

Respectfully,  
Ryan Kim

mobile (617) 650-6236  
[rkim@castleislandpartners.com](mailto:rkim@castleislandpartners.com)

**From:** robert maietta  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** false albacore and Atlantic bonito hearing  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:37:47 PM

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Hi Peter

While I hope to make Tuesdays hearing in person or via zoom, I wanted to send you my thoughts just in case I can't make the meeting.

I am strongly in favor of regulations protecting small fish (16 in. minimum length limit), as well as a 3 fish per day bag limit for false albacore and Atlantic Bonito. I think these regulations are long overdue.

Both of these species are incredible gamefish which have generated a greatly increased amount of interest from sportfishers over the last 20 years. it seems more and more anglers are pursuing these speedsters every year. While it is my understanding that most sportfishers release false albacore due to their reputation as poor table fare, it is also my understanding that some sportfishers keep them for bait purposes either using their bellies for strip baits or the whole fish for lobster and crab bait. I also know from first-hand experience that most sportfishers keep every Atlantic Bonito they catch due to their reputation as excellent table fare.

It has also been brought to my attention that there might be a growing commercial interest in these species as well. I encourage RIDEM to study commercial interest and limit commercial catch as well.

I understand that Massachusetts has already acted in this regard and I ask that RIDEM please act now and protect these fish before we are all scrambling to 'rebuild' yet another gamefish stock.

Thank you

Robert J. Maietta  
175 Buckeye Brook Road  
Charlestown, RI 02813

**From:** Read McKendree  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Bonito and False Albacore regulations  
**Date:** Saturday, February 14, 2026 9:25:39 AM

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Good morning,

I am a recreational angler and waterman and, along with my fishing obsessed 7 year old, support basic guardrails for Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore.

Thank you,

Read McKendree

401.316.7275

[www.readmckendree.com](http://www.readmckendree.com) [[readmckendree.com](http://readmckendree.com)]

**From:** R Pastore  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\); SNESA@groups.io](mailto:Duhamel.Peter (DEM); SNESA@groups.io)  
**Subject:** fish limits  
**Date:** Monday, March 2, 2026 4:57:02 PM

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pete  
how's things. long time no see

regarding BSB size bag limits.  
there's not much meat on a 16" fish so a size limit of 16" or greater is fine with me. the bag early season bag limit is a problem. the bigger fish are around in the early summer. as the water warms they move to deeper water. the increased bag limit in the later season is useless as the only thing you can catch is 6" fish unless you steam to Cox s where you can find some keepers.

my suggestion - increase the bag limit to 6 fish and the size to 16.5" for the entire season. i don't know how this interfaces with the biomass but you can't catch keepers after about july unless you're fishing 100' of water so it shouldn't make a difference in the sustainability.

cheers  
dick

Richard Pastore P.E.  
RP Engineering Inc  
121 Suffolk Dr  
North Kingstown, RI 02852  
401 885-7255 office  
401 524 1229 cell

**From:** Rob Redinger  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** 2026 RI Saltwater Fishing Regulations  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 3, 2026 9:35:45 AM

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Hello Peter,

I am a saltwater angler and I fish in Rhode Island. I am also a member of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) and I am interested in sound regulations that will protect our fishery resources while allowing proper use of these resources by saltwater anglers. Regarding the proposed 2026 Saltwater Regulations for Black Sea Bass Management, I want to express my support for the option that opens the season on May 16 and keeps it open until December 31 with a minimum size of 16" and a bag limit of 3 fish per person per day during that period. My fishing buddies and I have fished through full bags of bait and caught over 50 Black Sea Bass, none of keeper size. All throwbacks. The size of these fish seems to be decreasing, however there is a glut of 16" and smaller fish.

Thank you,  
RISAA Member  
Robert S Redinger  
20 Moscow Brook Trail  
Hope Valley, RI  
02832

Sent from my iPad

**From:** Robert Wilsterman  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Bonito and falsies  
**Date:** Sunday, February 15, 2026 12:37:05 PM

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Peter please consider implementing a 16" limit as well as a reasonable bag limit of 2 or 3 fish. It would be a tragedy if we lose these fish as it unfortunately looks like we are with striped bass.

Thanks for your consideration

Robert Wilsterman, MD  
[bobwilst@gmail.com](mailto:bobwilst@gmail.com)

**From:** Sam Barnard  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Meeting on Tues.  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 11:45:31 AM

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Hello Peter,

Many thanks for getting this on the agenda. I have been fishing (catch and release) for Bonito and False Albacore for 56 years mostly in MA but now living in Westport I have been crossing the border to your fair state almost every time I'm chasing these marvelous fish. My 1st bonito was caught on a 5wt bamboo fly rod 56 years ago in Edgartown Harbor. Wow! We have seen what happens to striped bass without thoughtful regulation, I would hate that we follow down that failed coastal management effort. Here we have an opportunity in this world of thoughtless regulation and deregulation to make a statement to preserve, not kill, 2 species that drive far more financial gain by a long shot, kept alive, than harvested.

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for both recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of three fish per angler, combined between both species
- A commercial landing cap for both species

Many thanks,  
Sam Barnard

**From:** Steve Gibree  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed rules  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 7:53:09 AM

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Hi Peter

My name is Steve Gibree. I'm a commercial Rod reel fisherman, I also hold a charter Captain's license but not actively chartering and just a guy that loves to fish.

1. I listened to the last call on how to measure fish. I do believe using a tape measure on tuna is very effective however, on any other its it's pretty inaccurate . I've run bass tournaments for the state for many years and what's typically used and what I believe your DEM personnel use is called a golden rule. It's a ruler with a 90° bend on one end that sticks up, you put the nose of the fish firmly against the bend and anyway you can get the tail to cross the line works. I suggest this should be implemented for all other fish than tuna.

2. As a commercial fisherman last year, I did real good with Benito on days where Fluke and Seabass were off. As a commercial fisherman, it really saved the day for me.

I do agree there should be a size limit, but please don't limit the catch as it would negatively affect my commercial business.

Thank you and I look forward to getting more involved in the future!!

Steve gibree  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Stephen King  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** False Albacore and Bonito Regulations  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 10:33:39 AM

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I'd like to add my voice to those along the Atlantic coast encouraging states to regulate this fishery. I regularly fish for both Bonito and Albies and believe that reasonable regulations, as proposed in Rhode Island, will be in the best interests of all interested parties.

Stephen King  
Dallas Texas



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

Tuesday, February 17th

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 opposed to the proposed rule 3.36.2 to prohibit commercial fishing for Atlantic Bonito.

I own Fearless Fish Ikejime, a Rhode Island based fish dealer business focused on procuring and selling ikejime handled fish from small boat, Rhode Island fishermen. Over the past two fishing seasons, we have identified and served a niche selling ikejime handled Bonito to high end restaurants and markets through regional distribution partners. This species contributed meaningful income to my business and to the fishermen we purchase from. This was particularly relevant during the 2025 season, when catch volumes for fluke and black sea bass were down relative to prior seasons for our fleet.

To be sure, I strongly support science based fisheries management to ensure the sustainability of our fish stocks - my business depends on it. If there is concern that the stock health for this species is at risk, I implore the Division of Marine Fisheries to conduct a study and make management decisions based on that information. To adopt this proposed rule without scientific input creates a concerning precedent that opinion versus fact can determine the economic fate of others.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "SJM", written in a cursive style.

Stuart J Meltzer  
Owner  
Fearless Fish Ikejime

**From:** Shaun  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 8:53:08 PM

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Good Evening Mr. Duhamel,

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the zoom meeting earlier tonight regarding public comment to consider regulations for Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore so I hope it is not too late to enter comments.

I am a long time angler from Massachusetts however I was introduced to both species in Rhode Island waters. I work in the marine industry full time and also a charter captain in MA for just over 20 years. Ive seen the cyclical nature of these fisheries as well as the inshore demise of others where conservation measures play an important role in bringing them back. We are at a point where similar actions are desperately needed for striped bass and other species however those reactive conservation measures are often too late to prevent damage causing longer term impact and recovery. With False Albacore and Bonito we have a unique chance to take proactive and preventative action protecting those species before reaching critical concern. I supported the same effort in Massachusetts the year before last by getting behind its 2025 change to minimum length and retention of 5 combined per day (I would have been happy with 3) and would love to see all coastal states take a unified stance towards conservation.

I am in favor of proactive measures in Rhode Island:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)
- A commercial landing cap for both species

My customers and I follow these species west to Rhode Island and Connecticut, even New York as the seasonal patterns shift. If fishing in MA slows, we often fish Sakonnet, Newport, Beavertail, and South County. I would imagine Rhode Island benefits from considerable tourism dollars related to fishing those species each fall and I would hope the state takes measure to protect that income by protecting the species that drive much of it. I look forward to targeting False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito and to teaching my daughters to enjoy the accessibility of those fisheries for many years to come. I truly hope you and the state of Rhode Island, as well as North Carolina and other states decide to take proactive measures, whatever they may be, to protect a valuable resource while they pass through state waters.

Thanks for your consideration,

Capt. Shaun Ruge

MA Resident

**Eidolon Sport Fishing**

**Garmin Marine**

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**From:** Sarah Schumann  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** comment on proposed bonito rule  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 4:43:03 PM

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Hi Pete,

I'm writing to comment on the proposed bonito rule. I fish on the F/V Oceana with Dean Pesante, and we catch some bonito in the fall as an incidental catch in the bluefish fishery. Although it is not our targeted species, it's sometimes what we catch, making a day worthwhile that otherwise wouldn't be.

Therefore, I'm writing to oppose any new regulations of the commercial bonito fishery.

Let me know if I did this right!

Thanks,

Sarah

--

Sarah Schumann

Commercial fisherman, RI & AK

Director, [Fishery Friendly Climate Action Campaign](https://fisheryfriendlyclimateaction.org) [[fisheryfriendlyclimateaction.org](https://fisheryfriendlyclimateaction.org)]

[Read the Fishery Friendly Climate Action Campaign's 2025 Year in Review!](#) [[mailchi.mp](#)]

Email: [schumannsarah@gmail.com](mailto:schumannsarah@gmail.com)

Phone: 401-297-6273

Schedule a [30-minute](#) [[scheduler.zoom.us](https://scheduler.zoom.us)] or [60-minute](#) [[scheduler.zoom.us](https://scheduler.zoom.us)] meeting with me

**From:** Tom Fuda  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comments Regarding RI DEM Proposed Fishing Rule Changes  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026 7:32:01 AM

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Dear Mr Duhamel,

My name is Thomas Fuda. I am a recreational angler who fishes RI waters an average of 20-30 times per year from shore and private boat. I mostly target striped bass, bluefish, Atlantic bonito and false albacore. I wish to provide comments regarding the following proposed rule changes.

Regarding 2026 Recreational Bluefish Management: I oppose Proposal 1 and support the status quo measures. Bluefish stocks are not yet fully rebuilt to target levels, and therefore it is premature to warrant this liberalization. I personally have not been seeing many bluefish at all in the waters of RI, CT and NY, and my fellow anglers have been telling me the same story. We should maintain the status quo regarding bluefish bag limits.

Regarding Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore: I support Proposal 1. I feel that we need a recreational bag limit and should not allow unregulated commercial fisheries for either of these species. Without a formal stock assessment for either species, we have no information regarding the relative health of the stocks, or information about what levels of harvest these stocks can sustain. Therefore we need to take a cautionary approach with both of these popular and economically important species.

Thank You  
Thomas Fuda

March 5, 2026

Mr. Scott Olszewski  
Chief, Division of Marine Fisheries  
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Delivered by email to: [peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov](mailto:peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov)

March 6, 2026

RE: Proposed RI DEM Rules on Atlantic bonito and false albacore

Dear Mr. Olszewski,

Please accept The Nature Conservancy's (The Conservancy) comments on Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RI DEM) proposed regulations on Atlantic bonito and false albacore management. TNC is a global non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We are known for our science-based, collaborative approach to developing creative solutions to conservation challenges. Our fisheries scientists are deeply invested in applying data poor fisheries management tools and techniques in fisheries across the globe, see <https://fishpath.org/>

The purpose of this letter is to support the RI DEM initiative to implement precautionary management of Atlantic bonito and false albacore for both commercial and recreational anglers. Although these species migrate along the Atlantic coast, the lack of management from federal Councils and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission leaves an opportunity for states to lead the way.

The unregulated harvest of Atlantic bonito and false albacore is concerning for species with high economic activity and interest. With the reduction in fishing opportunities for striped bass more anglers, for-hire captains and commercial harvesters are looking to these fish to fill trips and coolers. Some have argued that there is no scientific evidence to support a state harvest limit. While it is true that the scientific literature for both these species is exceptionally limited, studies do exist. Atlantic bonito in particular are widespread in the Atlantic, and there is evidence of substantial genetic differentiation where it has been studied (Turan 2015). Similarly little research exists on the stock status of Atlantic bonito, but according to one study they are likely overfished in the Northeast Atlantic (Petukhova 2020). While neither of these show an immediate crisis, given the growing importance of these recreational fisheries it is appropriate to adopt some precautionary management measures now. Such measures need not be irreversible: if a future stock assessment were to show that a liberalization is warranted, RI DEM could cooperate with other states to modify measures.

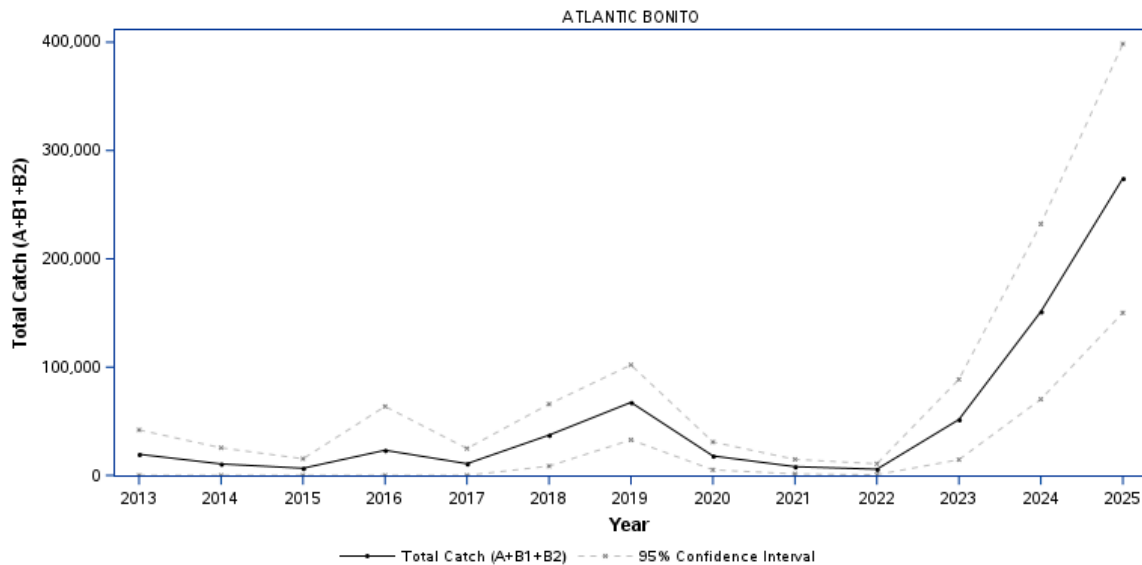
We appreciate the efforts of RI DEM to initiate the citizen science data collection program in the summer of 2025 for false albacore and bonito. The Conservancy is working with academic and

fishing partners to launch a coastwide telemetry tagging project this summer to begin to provide baseline biological information about coastwide movement and timing of Atlantic bonito.

Rhode Island (RI) is an important state for these fisheries. We are historically one of the largest commercial harvesters of Atlantic bonito, with 43% of the coastwide commercial harvest from 2011-2021, and the 4<sup>th</sup> highest recreational landings in the last decade (Calabrese 2023). And those landings continue to increase. Below is a plot of total recreational catch (all modes and areas combined) for Atlantic bonito in RI showing a 10x increase in 2025 over the 2013-2023 average (NOAA MRIP). A rapid increase in catch, lack of regulations and strong economic interest are classic warning signs that can lead to overfishing.

[Return to Query Page](#)

Fishing Year=CALENDAR YEAR (JAN 1 - DEC 31) Common Name=ATLANTIC BONITO

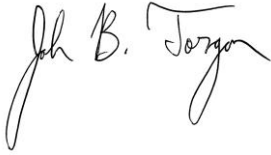


These increases in landings may be due to increased targeting of Atlantic bonito and/or increased availability. Anecdotal reports from along the coast describe instances of high abundance and catchability of this species that may not have occurred in the past. Climate change is altering marine ecosystem dynamics, including the distribution and abundance of fish in this region (Morley et al. 2018; Cao et al. 2024). Anomalies in abundance for species like Atlantic bonito should be treated as the new normal and managed appropriately.

Last year the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries enacted precautionary management measures, after seeing a similar 6x increase in landings, that limit commercial and recreational catch of Atlantic bonito and false albacore. Then the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission recently voted to create a 5 fish recreational bag limit for Atlantic bonito. Rhode Island is poised to be the next state to take on precautionary management. At the RI public hearing in February there was strong support for the 5 fish recreational measures, but there was not a clear path forward for commercial management that supports existing harvest, both the small-scale high-quality hook and line harvesters, and the gillnet bycatch. One management approach to consider, which was not discussed at the hearing, would be commercial trip limits that allow existing landings to continue, and deter the development of a large-scale fishery unless and until the potential impacts of increased harvest to the stock and ecosystem are understood and assessed.

The Conservancy is grateful for the opportunity to provide comments and encourages RI DEM to move forward with precautionary management measures that allow the current recreational and commercial harvest Atlantic bonito and false albacore to continue, Please contact John Torgan at [jtorgan@tnc.org](mailto:jtorgan@tnc.org) or Chris McGuire at [cmcguire@tnc.org](mailto:cmcguire@tnc.org) with questions about our comments.

Sincerely,



John B. Torgan  
Rhode Island State Director  
The Nature Conservancy

References:

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[https://asmfc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2025/01/ISFMPPolicyBoardSupplemental\\_May2023.pdf](https://asmfc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2025/01/ISFMPPolicyBoardSupplemental_May2023.pdf)

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Turan, C. 2015. Microsatellite DNA reveals genetically different populations of Atlantic bonito *Sarda sarda* in the Mediterranean Basin. *Biochem. Syst. Ecol.* 63: 174–182.

**From:** Todd Treonze  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Input on Albie / Bonito Regulations: 2/17 5 pm meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 2:20:13 PM

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Peter,

I hope this message finds you well. I know tonight is an important night for my favorite hardtails. As a hardcore RI based fisherman and owner of Hook'd Fishing Gear, I believe now is the time to act to protect two of our most important inshore pelagic species - Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore. While the Albie arrival and tenancy in local RI inshore waters varies greatly from year to year it has been encouraging to see the early arrival of bonito in good size and numbers the past 2 years. In order to provide these fish a better opportunity to continue to show in numbers, I am supportive of the following new regulations to protect these fish for years to come:

- A 16-inch minimum size limit for recreational and commercial fisheries
- An aggregate recreational bag limit of 3 fish per angler (both species combined)
- A commercial landing cap for both species

Please consider my thoughts as this topic is reviewed. Thanks again for the opportunity to provide input and I look forward to hearing how this all plays out.

Best Regards,

Todd A. Treonze