



Rhode Island
Department of Environmental Management
235 Promenade Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02908-5767

News Release

For Release: May 2, 2016

Contact: Gail Mastrati 222-4700 ext. 2402

DEM ADOPTS REGULATIONS TO CURB 'STOCKPILING', ILLEGAL SALE OF ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS

PROVIDENCE – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) announced today it has enacted new [regulations](#) to help prevent the illegal harvest and sale of Atlantic striped bass. The new rules require recreational anglers to clip the right pectoral fin of striped bass 34 inches or larger at the time of harvest.

The new regulations, adopted following considerable public input, help prevent “stockpiling” – which occurs when fish are harvested on a day closed to commercial fishing and then offered for sale on an open day; they also address fish being illegally transported and sold in neighboring states. Block Island Sound, in particular, is a well-known hotspot for large stripe bass that draws anglers from across the region.

“Rhode Island is known for its spectacular angling and abundant fisheries,” said DEM Director Janet Coit. “Our local harvest supports the health of our families, economy and way of life. And protecting the viability of our stock and ensuring fish are legally harvested and sold are responsibilities we take very seriously. These new regulations are critical to supporting the continued vibrancy of the striped bass fishery, and I thank the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council for its leadership in engaging the public around this important topic and working to protect our state’s marine resources.”

Last year, Massachusetts adopted a similar regulation to curb stockpiling; it requires commercial fishermen who fish recreationally for striped bass on a closed commercial day to clip the fin of any striped bass harvested and retained that is 34 inches or larger. In Rhode Island, in addition to the new fin-clipping regulations, complementary [dealer regulations](#) make it unlawful for a licensed dealer to purchase and/or offer for sale any striped bass with the right pectoral fin removed. Combined, these regulations not only bring Rhode Island in line with Massachusetts but also assist law enforcement in applying federal restrictions on this resource and preventing poaching.

Atlantic striped bass has long been an important sportfish in Rhode Island, revered by recreational anglers for its size and “catch” challenge. Currently managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), the striped bass fishery is not considered overfished nor is overfishing occurring; however, there has been a decrease in the amount of spawning stock biomass: fish that reproduce and contribute to the viability of the fishery.

As a result of this trend and its 2013 benchmark stock assessment, ASMFC required coastal states like Rhode Island to take steps in 2015 to reduce 2013 harvest levels by 25 percent; this to reduce fishing

Telephone 401.222.4700 | www.dem.ri.gov | Rhode Island Relay 711

mortality. In Rhode Island, a one-fish bag limit was established for the recreational fishery and a 25-percent quota reduction was set on the commercial fishery.

Rhode Island is well known for its spectacular recreational opportunities. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation in Rhode Island generates \$2.4 billion in consumer spending and supports 24,000 jobs. As part of a larger recreational invitation, local fishing plays an important role in connecting people with nature, promoting health, attracting tourism, and supporting a treasured tradition for Rhode Island families. According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, there are approximately 175,000 recreational anglers (age 16+) in Rhode Island. And recreational fishing contributes more than \$130 million to the economy each year.

For more information about DEM programs and initiatives, visit www.dem.ri.gov or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RhodeIslandDEM or via Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM).