



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mid-Atlantic Council to Hold Supplemental Scoping Hearings for Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment

Correction: Please note that the phone number for the webinar hearing on 3/4/20 has been updated.

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold eleven supplemental scoping hearings to gather public input for the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment. The Council is developing this action in cooperation with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) in order to (1) update the goals and objectives of the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP); (2) perform a comprehensive review of the bluefish sector allocations, commercial allocations to the states, and transfer processes; and (3) initiate a bluefish rebuilding plan. Scoping hearings will be held between **February 13 and March 4, 2020**. Written comments will be accepted through **March 17, 2020**.

An initial round of scoping was conducted in the summer of 2018 to gauge public interest in the development of an amendment. Since then, recalibrated Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) estimates became available and were incorporated into the 2019 bluefish operational assessment. The assessment concluded that the stock was overfished but not experiencing overfishing. The Council and Commission subsequently recommended including the rebuilding plan into this ongoing amendment. Because the additional issue modifies the scope of the amendment, the Council is holding additional hearings to provide the public ample opportunities to comment on the expanded scope of the amendment.

Public comments during scoping will help the Council address issues of public concern in a thorough and appropriate manner. Some management questions for consideration in this amendment include:

- Are the existing goals and objectives appropriate for managing the bluefish fishery?
- Is the existing allocation between the commercial and recreational sectors based on the annual catch limit appropriate for managing the bluefish fishery?
- Are the existing commercial state allocations appropriate for managing the bluefish fishery?
- Are the existing transfer processes appropriate for managing the bluefish fishery?
- What is the appropriate approach to take for rebuilding?

Learn More

The Supplemental Scoping and Public Information Document contains background information on bluefish management and on issues that may be addressed in the amendment. This document, along with additional information and updates on development of this amendment, is available on the Council's website at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment>.

Contact

Please direct any questions about the amendment to Matt Seeley, (302) 526-5262, mseeley@mafmc.org.

Hearing Schedule

Date and Time	Location
February 13, 2020, 7:30-9:00 PM	Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Admiral's Hall 101 Academy Drive, Buzzards Bay, MA 02532
February 18, 2020, 6:00-8:00 PM	Ocean County Administration Building – Room 119 101 Hooper Avenue, Toms River, New Jersey 08753
February 19, 2020, 7:00-8:00 PM	Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Control Auditorium Richardson & Robbins Building, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware 19901
February 25, 2020, 4:45-6:00 PM	Berlin Library 13 Harrison Ave. Berlin, MD 21811
February 26, 2020, 7:30-9:00 PM	University of Rhode Island Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium South Ferry Road, Narragansett, Rhode Island 02882
February 26, 2020, 8:00-9:00 PM	Connecticut Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection Marine Headquarters Boating Education Center (Rear Building) 333 Ferry Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371
February 27, 2020, 6:00-7:30 PM	NC Division of Marine Fisheries Central District Office 5285 Highway 70 West, Morehead City, North Carolina 28557
February 27, 2020, 7:30-9:00 PM	Stony Brook University, School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences Room 120 Endeavour Hall; Stony Brook, NY 11794
March 2, 2020, 6:00-8:00 PM	Merritt Island Service Center Complex 2575 N. Courtenay Pkwy #205, Merritt Island, FL 32953
March 2, 2020, 6:00-7:00 PM	Virginia Marine Resources Commission 380 Fenwick Road Bldg 96 Fort Monroe, VA 23651
March 4, 2020, 6:00-7:30 PM	Internet webinar: http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/bf_allocation_rebuilding_scoping/ For audio-only access, dial 800-832-0736 and enter room number 5068609.

Please note that some hearings will be held immediately before or after scoping hearings for an ongoing Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment. A schedule for those hearings is available at <http://www.mafmc.org/newsfeed/2020/mafmc-asmfc-sfsbsb-allocation-scoping-hearings>.

Written Comments

In addition to providing comments at any of the scheduled public hearings, you may submit written comments by 11:59 pm EDT on **Tuesday, March 17, 2020**. Written comments may be sent by any of the following methods:

- 1. ONLINE:** <http://www.mafmc.org/comments/bluefish-allocation-rebuilding-amendment>
- 2. EMAIL:** mseeley@mafmc.org
- 3. MAIL or FAX:** Dr. Christopher Moore, Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201
Dover, DE 19901
FAX: 302.674.5399

Please include “Bluefish Scoping Comments” in the subject line if using email or fax, or on the outside of the envelope if submitting written comments. All comments, regardless of submission method, will be compiled into a single document for review and consideration by both the Council and Commission.