



March 10, 2026

Michael Bauhs

Edwin Chiofolo

John Davi

Melissa Dearborn

Mark DeJong

Vincent Finalborgo

Thomas Jordan

Hank Lackner

Joseph Paradiso

Elizabeth Peeples

Christopher Squeri

Charles Witek

*Please note: Graphs and figures presented during the meeting have been changed to text in order to comply with Title II Federal regulations

Dr. Frisk welcomed everyone and then went over the agenda followed by introductions by the Councilors present. He also introduced and welcomed our newest Councilor, Elizabeth Peeples. Ms. Peeples will be representing the commercial sector of the Council. She is co-owner of the Little Ram Oyster Company based in Southold and her farm is on the east side of Shelter Island in Gardener’s Bay. They are also part of the South Suffolk Country Aquaculture Lease Program. Mr. Gary welcomed Ms. Peeples too, said that he visited her farm and was quite impressed. He also noted that she and many other fishers are experiencing ice issues due to the extremely cold winter we’re having and thought she might like to articulate some of the struggles they are dealing with at the end of the meeting.

[Meeting Minutes – January 20, 2026](#)

Due to a lack of a quorum for the day’s meeting, the approval of the Minutes will be tabled until a quorum is met.

[Law Enforcement Update](#)

Enforcement Officer Mike Yunger said that the current 30-residential week three program for officers will most likely give us here in the Long Island area between 5-10 new officers based on transfers which will take place late September.

[That South Shore Estuary Reserve](#)

Christopher Clapp, Director of the South Shore Estuary Reserve came to the meeting in the hopes of recruiting members to fill the numerous vacancies within the agency. He gave a brief synopsis of the Reserve’s mission and their management plans. His concern, by not having a full consignment of members, is that they are unable to carry out operations that are needed to protect and restore the estuary and its important natural, recreational, economic and education resources the Reserve is tasked with. The comprehensive Management Plan is comprised of 6 areas: (1) water quality (2) living resources (3) expand public use and enjoyment of the estuary (4) sustain and expand the estuary-related economy (5) resilience (6) increase education, outreach and stewardship. The reserve covers the Nassau-New York City border by Atlantic Beach including the Atlantic Beach inlet all the way to the Village of Southampton and includes all the tributaries of those bodies of water.

Michael Frisk
Chairman

Kim Knoll
Staff Assistant

This is a list of all Council seats

Secretary of State
Nassau County Executive
Suffolk County Executive
City of Long Beach Supervisor
Town of Hempstead Supervisor
Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor
Town of Babylon Supervisor
Town of Islip Supervisor
Town of Brookhaven Supervisor
Town of Southampton Supervisor
Chair of the CAC
Chair of the TAC
Dean of the School of Marine & Atmospheric Sciences
Long Island Builders Institute
Marina Industry rep (Nassau Appt)
Environmental Org (Nassau Appt)
Bayman's Association (Suffolk Appt)

Vacant seats but have hopeful candidates

A Mayor appointed by NYCOM
Former NY Sportfishing Federation – being replaced by NY Coalition for Recreational Fishing*
Property Owners Association Rep (SOS appt)

Vacant seats that need to be filled

Great South Bay Audubon Society
Long island Association
Charter Boat or Party Boat Industry (Suffolk Rep)

It was Mr. Clapp's hope that the day's meeting would bring awareness to the empty seats, in particular, filling the seat of the Charter Boat or Party Boat Industry, which is ultimately appointed by Suffolk Country.

The seat on the Bayman's Association is currently being filled by Mike Kokell, however, they are waiting for confirmation to verify if he will be continuing in this position. This is also an appointee of Suffolk County.

*Please note that the NY Sportfishing Federation no longer exists but there is interest by the New York Coalition for Recreational fishing to take their place on the Council. It will be voted on at the Council's next meeting.

Councilor Peeples feels strongly that there is representation for the aquaculture fishery and should the person who is representing that sector not be fulfilling their obligation, she hopes they can find someone else to fill that need.

Carl LoBue noted that there is another committee – The Citizen’s Advisory Committee which is a body that typically meets remotely and in the evenings. That is another avenue for folks who make a living on the water to get their voices heard which they may find more accessible.

If you are interested or know of someone who would like to serve on the Reserve, you can reach out to Mr. Clapp at Contact: dosSSER@dos.ny.gov or Christopher.clapp@dos.ny.gov (631-449-9178)

Shellfish Aquaculture Highlights – Wade Carden

Mr. Carden presented a slide showing that all the commercial shellfish aquaculture occurs in Suffolk County. NYS Shellfish Aquaculture Industry = Oyster Farms.

2024 NYS Permitting & Production stats:

82 on/off bottom shellfish culture permits issued (**7** new)

56 growers reported production (**68%**)

1 grower reported another *spp.* (sugar kelp)

Annual production = **10.3 million oysters**

Market: **9.8 million**; Restoration: *ca.* **500,000**

92% of all NY oyster landings (wild harvest only 8%)

Dockside Value (Market) = **\$7.4 M**

The main programs are:

Bellport and Moriches Bays

typically small scale

- Town of Brookhaven Mariculture Leasing Program (~7-8 leases)
- Including seaweed farm (sugar kelp)

Long Island Sound

- DEC Temporary Marine Area Use Assignments

Great South Bay

This is roughly a 120-acre lease area. ~120 individual farms, it’s a shallow site

- Town of Islip Bay Bottom Licensing Program

Peconic & Gardiners Bays

- Suffolk Country Aquaculture Lease Program (~10 acres)
- Oyster Grants/Private Ownership

Everyone is farming oysters and what the DEC terms – bottom culture. This means that the shellfish are in a container – whether it’s a cage, rack, bag, etc. Although some are experimenting with hard clams on their lease and/or bay scallops but nothing is being reporting on the landings.

The percentage of farmed oysters in New York relative to wild harvest has definitely increased. We are at 92% of all oysters harvested in the state coming through aquaculture with a dockside value of ~7.5 million dollars.

Mr. LoBue made an observation – he said if you look at the wild extractive fisheries and put them on a graph of trends over time, and then you look at the opportunities, revenue and jobs in aquaculture, it seems to be leveling off in terms of people but it’s a really positive trajectory of people making a living off the water.

ASMFC - MAFMC Recap - John Maniscalco

Mr. Maniscalco highlighted the following points taken from the **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Council’s** winter meeting held in February:

SNE Lobster at an all-time low

Recreational BSB allocation of 20% liberalization among regions

Striped Bass working group – refer to Marty

Mr. Maniscalco highlighted the following points taken from the **Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council** meeting held via webinar in February:

MRIP fees – Ms. Sysak read the report – no tangible changes in the immediate future but believes there will be items in the future that MRIP might look into funding as far as improvements to the survey.

Rec Sector Separation Amendment

NAFO Ilex Squid Quota – any change will take place next year at a minimum

2026 ASMFC Black Sea Bass

From the ASMFC/MAFMC meeting held on February 4th:

- 20% coastwide liberalization was approved at prior meeting
- Allocation was sub-divided among regions to improve equity based on Addendum XXXII
 - Northern region – 27%
 - New Jersey – Remaining share
 - Southern region – 16.5%

States then worked within their regions to divide their regional liberalization with the goal of achieving more equity.

Planned NY Management for 2026 – 2027 (changes in bold):

- **May 16th** – August 31st – 3 fish – **16 inches**
- September 1st – December 31st – 6 fish – **16 inches**

Above measures were approved at the March 5th Board Meeting and represents a liberalization of 29.9% for New York anglers. NY is currently working through the regulatory process to adopt the above measures.

Discussion: Councilor Dearborn was happy to see that Ms. Sysak was able to tweak things a bit from the initial discussion during January’s meeting, however, it was the Council’s understanding that a further

stated that the current discussion would be taking place at this meeting (March's) before a final decision was made. Ms. Sysak answered that it wasn't realized at the time of January's meeting how short a window they would be dealing with was. There was only a 2-week timeframe to make a decision. The discussion and comments from the January meeting along with the Department's survey results did offer guidance and influence the final decision made. With May 16th as the start date for our whole region, we will be coming very close to New Jersey; their start date being May 15th.

Councilor DeJong thanked Ms. Sysak and the Department for their work on this and said the decision that was made will definitely help some fishers. Councilor Witek added his thanks as well.

[Update on Striped Bass Contaminant Testing – Martin Gary](#)

Mr. Gary stated that the New York Department of Health has completed their review of striped bass data for contaminants. That data includes polychlorinated by phenols, methyl mercury and PFAS which were collected from commercial fishing zones surrounding Long Island. Based on their review, they are in the process of drafting a subsection with recommendations for updating consumption advisories. This would be for recreational consumption advisories but there is also a notable closure for commercial fishing (which is also being evaluated). However, this report is not considered complete until the DOH receives the complete data set from New York City waters including Arthur Kill, East Harlem Rivers and Jamaica Bay. It is anticipated shortly. The final report which will include Long Island and New York City water will formalize the DOH recommendation for striped bass consumption. They hope the findings can be reported for the May meeting of this Council, hopefully, worst case scenario, the July meeting. Mr. Gary added that he listened to an open meeting of the Hudson River Estuary Management Advisory Committee and his take away from that meeting was that with more protective guidelines in place, they are still seeing PCB levels low enough to relax some current advisories in the lower Hudson, which is really good news. This includes multiple species not just Striped Bass. Parts per million – definitely trending in a positive measure.

[Recreational Blue fish Possession Limit – new measures put in place](#)

At the joint ASMFC/MAFMC meeting held in August 2025, the Board approved a coastwide increase to recreational possession limits.

Final Federal Rule was published February 19, 2026

New York is currently working through the regulatory process to adopt the new measures. They are **5 fish** for individuals, **7 fish** for anglers aboard licensed party/charter vessels.

This represents an increase of 2 fish for each sector.

[Random Selection Results for 2026 – presentation by Jessica Steve](#)

Random selection took place on February 19, 2026 at 10:00 a.m., which was also live-streamed on Webex.

Permits available:

- 17 Food Fish – resident (79 applicants)
- 9 Crab – resident (37 applicants)
- 3 Whelk – Resident (72 applicants)
- 1 Whelk – non-resident (4 applicants)

- 1 Crab – non-resident (1 applicant)

Eligible applicants were selected and all permits have now been issued. There will be a new form on the website (<http://on.ny.gov/limitedentry>) at the end of March if you are interested in being included next year.

Ms. Steve said there has been an interest for clarification regarding Party/Charter Boat income. This is the language that is quoted from ECL 13-0328 (1) © (iv):

'As used in this subparagraph, "commercial fishing" means the taking and sale of marine resources including fish, shellfish, crustacea or other marine biota and "fishing" means commercial fishing and carrying fishing passengers for hire. Individuals who wish to qualify based on income from "fishing" must hold a valid marine and coastal district party and charter boat license. No more than ten percent of the licenses issued each year based on income eligibility pursuant to this paragraph shall be issued to applicants who qualify based solely upon income derived from operation of or employment by a party or charter boat.'

It is the same language in the sections for Crab and Whelk licenses (13-0328(3)©(iv), 13-0328(4)©(iv))

Depending on the number of available licenses and number of applicants who qualify based on Party/Charter Boat income, this doesn't always impact the Random Selection. The Department will make an effort to increase awareness of this aspect of the law for future applicants.

Councilor DeJong had been asked recently why only 1 out of 17 licenses was being given to someone who made their income as a party/charter fishery? This fisher had reached out to the DEC only to be told that – it's the way it's always been. Mr. DeJong believes that if young people want to get into the fishery, they should be given the opportunity regardless of where they are starting from. If people want to make a full-time living on the water, why discourage that? They should not be excluded from 90% of the licenses.

Ms. Steve said this could certainly be up for discussion regarding a change. This would require a legislative change.

Councilor Chiofolo knows about 5 or 6 contractors who say they want to become a commercial fisher yet they also have another running business. If they get the permit, it dips into his pocket – someone who only makes his living on the water.

ASMFC Advisory Panel Vacancies

There are multiple advisory panels for New York whose members are lax about attending in addition to vacant seats that need to be filled. Bottom line – we are lacking representation on numerous Councils. Mr. Gary will create a list of vacancies and we will be sending that list out in hopes of recruiting members. Paul Farnham is very disturbed about the folks that are currently filling seats – many of them don't show up for meetings and they are not representing the needs of New York, they should be removed.

Rule Making Update

Commercial Striped Bass Tags

Part 40 (Marine Fish) and Part 38 (Marine Fisheries Data Management)

Notice of Proposed Rule Making

Status: proposed in January 21, 2026 State Register

Public Comment Period: January 21 through March 30, 2026

Public Hearing: March 24, 2026 @ 2pm, virtual

Effective Adoption Target Date: last week of April/first week of May 2026

This rule will allow for transfer of striped bass tags between Commercial Striped Bass Harvester permit holders upon directive by the Department.

Additional amendments may include changing the permit application renewal deadline to February (currently set at April 15) and adjusting the unused tag return and trip report due date to January 15 (currently set at December 20), to be consistent with other trip reporting requirements.

Ability to make "non substantive" changes to the rule prior to adopting

Atlantic Cod

Part 40 (Marine Fish)

Notice of Proposed Rule Making

Target filing date: TBD

Status: Chamber Review

Public Comment Period: minimum 65 day, with public hearing no earlier than day 60

Effective Adoption Target Date: TBD

This rule will amend Atlantic cod recreational fishing regulations to prohibit possession in NYS waters.

This rule will achieve consistency with federal regulations and the waters of neighboring states.

Bluefish (Recreational)

Part 40 (Marine Fish)

NOTICE OF EMERGENCY ADOPTION and PROPOSED RULE MAKING

Target filing date: TBD

Black Sea Bass (Recreational)

Part 40 (Marine Fish)

NOTICE OF EMERGENCY ADOPTION and PROPOSED RULE MAKING

Target filing date: TBD

Other Business – John Maniscalco

Tautog Tag Update

Winter 1 Scup Quota Usage – coastal landings through 3/5/26 are over 6,000,00 lbs. A closure could have New York losing some of its fishing access if closed early.

NY Winter 1 Landings:

- 2022 – 1,945,399 lbs.
- 2023 – 1,657,462 lbs.
- 2024 – 1,204,738 lbs.
- 2025 – 914,531 lbs.
- 2026 (to date) 626,720

Mr. Maniscalco reminded everyone that there have been numerous complaints with regard to the current tag being used. The DEC is currently talking with ASMFC about possibly having a second tag for NYS. This could give fishers an opportunity to choose which tag they would prefer to use since not everyone dislikes the current tag. Live market fish. Until a determination is made, the current metal tag will be used.

Legislation

S8823/A9437 (amended HSC Moratorium Bill) was signed into law on 2/13/2026

- CT Bill proposing a ban on all HSC harvest and bait usage (HB 5333). Current CT ban is limited to hand-harvest.

License Transferability Bills:

- S2193(Palumbo)/A6057(Schiavoni) – removes the domiciled clause from: *“in addition, all persons who are related by blood, marriage or adoption to the license or permit holder [and domiciled in the house of the license or permit holder].”*
- S9296 (Palumbo) – allows transferability for whelk, crab (and horseshoe crab), and food fish (and fluke and striped bass) licenses to persons that can show 51% income from commercial fishing for 3 consecutive years. However, this amendment occurs in Article 11 in a section that refers to lifetime licenses for hunting fishing and trapping, NOT Article 13 where marine commercial licenses are defined and described.
- S678 has passed the NYS Senate and has been referred to the Assembly EnCon Committee:
 - This bill includes modifications to the Random Selection and Temporary Emergency Authorization for commercial fishing licenses holders.
 - This is the 3rd time the bill has passed the Senate.
 - The Assembly version of this bill is A3591A.

It was thought that it would be prudent to form a subcommittee to look over the bills and come up with proper verbiage ahead of the Council’s legislative bill meeting. Councilors Chiofolo, Witek Davi have agreed to be on it and it would be good if Councilors Jordan and Bauhs could also be on it. Chairman Frisk will ask them.

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While conversation did mention many vacant seats on various Councils previously, this Council also has two open seats – one recreational, one commercial, both are Senate appointments. Should you wish to become a Councilor or know of someone who would be interested, please reach out.

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May's meeting - due to a schedule conflict with the SSC meeting, which Chairman Frisk sits on – the May 12th meeting is being changed to May 19th.

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**Ice related damage**

The winter's ice wreaked havoc on the industry. Councilor Peoples personally has experienced about a 30% loss already but could be significantly higher. Many others are experiencing extensive loss as well, not only to gear but to animals as well. The industry is working together with the DEC folks (Debra Barnes) to notify people when they find gear or report lost gear. The LIOGA Network is also involved. Fishers are hoping for Federal Disaster Relief monies to help with the numerous losses.

**Upcoming meetings**

- ASMFC Winter Flounder and Tautog TCs (3/17/2026 starting at 1PM)
- MAFMC April 7-9, 2026 in NYC, NY or Webinar
- NEFMC April 14-16, 2026 in Portland ME or Webinar
- MRAC Legislative Session April 14, 2026 2PM in Kings Park or Webinar

See NEFMC.org, ASMFC.org, and MAFMC.org for more information and meeting participation details

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Agenda Tues April 14

- Chairman's Welcome
- Meeting Minutes Approval
- Law Enforcement Update
- Discussion of Relief for LI Shellfish Aquaculture Industry
- MAFMC Summary
- Proposed NYS Legislation
- Rulemaking Update
- *Other Business*
- Upcoming meetings

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For further information about the Marine Resources Advisory Council, past and present bulletins, please check the Council's web page: <https://you.stonybrook.edu/mrac/meeting>.

Should you wish to suggest an agenda topic, contact the Chairman, Dr. Michael Frisk, ([Michael.frisk@stonybrook.edu](mailto:Michael.frisk@stonybrook.edu)) or Staff Assistant, Kim Knoll ([Kim.knoll@stonybrook.edu](mailto:Kim.knoll@stonybrook.edu)), phone 631 632-8656.

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