

MRAC BULLETIN- May 19, 2026

Councilors:

Michael Bauhs – Edwin Chiofolo – John Davi – Melissa Dearborn – Mark DeJong – Vincent Finalborgo
Thomas Jordan – Hank Lackner – Joseph Paradiso – Elizabeth Peeples -Christopher Squeri – Charles Witek
Chairman – Michael Frisk Staff Assistant – Kim Knoll

Chairman Frisk opened the meeting at 2:02 p.m. followed by introductions by the Councilors present the day's agenda topics.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 14, 2026

The Minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Law Enforcement Update

ECO Lt. Sean Reilly stated that there are currently 15 new officers being trained with tactical maneuvers that will support the Coast Guard for the upcoming semi quincentennial anniversary celebrations and festivities that will be taking place this 4th of July in New York Harbor and Long Island waters.

Shellfish Aquaculture Update

Marty Gary recalled the extremely cold winter and the havoc it caused to many of the fisheries, especially the aquaculture industry. This brought about a disaster relief funding project, several pathways, actually. Governor Hochul announced that the US Dept of Agriculture (USDA) will be running low-interest emergency loans and disaster assistance. And the second one will be run through NOAA and the DEC will be working directly with them. NOAA's is seeking a 35% threshold of damage in order to be eligible to receive funding.

Mr. Gary also wanted to touch on a request by the industry to test oysters for poor meat quality. This concern began in March where the news was that in the Canadian Maritimes and Prince Edward Island, oysters suffered severe mortality events they believed were related to MSX, a protozoan parasite. There was concern this also was impacting New York oysters. The DEC began working with Stony Brook University partners, specifically Dr. Bassem Allam's lab to begin their testing. Dr. Allam's lab is considered to be a national expert in this field. Testing areas included the Peconics, Shinnecock and The Great South Bay. Findings were that there were very low presence levels of MSX, however, it appears that the shellfish have adapted to it; it has been in NY waters for decades. We do not have an outbreak situation and testing will continue. Mr. Gary will give an update at the July Council meeting.

Councilor Peeples, who is an owner of Little Ram Oyster Company, thanked Mr. Gary for his efforts in helping the aquaculture industry, his efforts are much appreciated by all. She then went on to reference Dr. Chris Gobler's recent talk, State of the Bays, given on April 24th. While she respects and understands the scientific monitoring and the transparency he shares regarding the estuary, unfortunately many lay people who heard the talk came away with deleterious connotations about the fishery and thus, the ensuing impact on consumer's perception. Although possibly unintended, his talk had an immediate negative consequence to the industry; as did the vibrio headlines in August which attributed to a lost revenue of ~30%. (Vibrio outbreak was from physical skin contact and NOT from eating shellfish which was erroneously reported in the media). Ms. Peeples experienced the negativity first hand, her company donated shucked oysters for an oyster bar at a local fundraising event. During the course of the evening, numerous attendees came up to Ms. Peeples and questioned whether or not the oysters were safe to eat. Ms. Peeples, as well as others in her industry, continue to hear that people are quite concerned about the safety of consuming shellfish and she relates it to splashy headlines where lay people can misconstrue information that gets published. She agrees that environmental

concerns should absolutely be communicated to the public, but they need to be honest and completely truthful. There needs to be a more balanced reporting of the actual facts, and her hope is that her industry can work together with the DEC and the Health Department to get the correct information out to the public.

Councilor Chiofalo agrees, he said the press has damaged the integrity and the reputation of many of the wholesalers making folks hesitant to purchase shellfish and seafood.

Mr. Gary just wanted to mention that he did attend Dr. Gobler's talk and his takeaway message was that harmful algae blooms and disease (Vibrio) are becoming more prevalent in NY waters due to warmer waters and nutrients, which is something we need to do something about. They are working on the nutrient aspect and several other projects but it will take time, it's not something that can happen overnight. During his talk, Dr. Gobler used certain words that got the media's attention; he's not saying what is printed is incorrect but may not depict the full picture and gives the chance for misinterpretation by lay people.

Notes from NOAA's National Saltwater Director's Meeting

A meeting was held in late April; over the last several years there have been minimal amount of change, however, under the current administration there are MANY cuts happening, especially to NOAA. These cuts are having drastic changes to management creating substantial lapses in data streaming and a continuation of tests being run and research being conducted.

NOAA discussed ongoing challenges associated with vessel down time, aging survey infrastructure, staffing shortages, and maintaining survey continuity. Short term actions focused on developing regional top 10 science and data priorities. Long term discussions centered on creating durable prioritization frameworks that define critical data streams, implementing partners, and sustainable funding models. Additional recommendations include expanding pilot projects, increasing training and advanced analytical tools, improving state engagement and operational decisions and strengthening coordinated state federal advocacy efforts.

Mr. Gary is happy to say that even though the news received is disheartening, he left the meeting feeling a collegial atmosphere where scientists will collaborate and do the absolute best job they can under the trying circumstances.

ASMFC Summary - John Maniscalco

Spring Meeting Board Proceedings of Interest

Tautog (Blackfish) draft Addendum I is in development:

- Management response to overfishing in NY Bight and DMV Regions
- Allow an alternative tag for live market fish

Striped Bass

- Benchmark: biological reference points and spatial management
- Working group: set up a steering committee and avoid assessment related tasks
- Striped bass aquaculture in Federal waters

Atlantic Menhaden

- Continue development of draft Addendum II: reduction fishery harvest controls within Chesapeake Bay

American Eel

- Preliminary coastwide commercial yellow eel landings are below the coastwide cap, no action needed.

Annual Awards of Excellence

- Marine Resources' Fran McParland was recognized for his outreach and public engagement efforts.

Discussion – Councilor Chiofolo noted that no one is fishing for eels anymore and that would account for the lower landings. Councilor Davi questioned what determines the numbers? He wanted to know if people aren't fishing for these things, where are the numbers being generated from? Are they actually taking the eels out of the water to get a better understanding (i.e., size classes?). You can't lower landings and not expect it to affect the numbers. Mr. Maniscalco said there are a number of ways in which data is collected. There is an assessment, it's not particularly data strong, however, it does suggest there is a coastwide decline. It's not management action that is lowering harvest. The only change has been in 2018 – the size limit changed to a 9" minimum. Councilor Davi said when you make any changes, you need to take that into consideration because they will impact landings. Landing numbers should never be used to give the reference for decision making, it should be based on scientific evidence of what is in the water. Mr. Maniscalco stated that the landing cap was put in place as a precautionary measure but the assessment, which is not landings by itself but surveys that have taken place also suggest the eel population is declining coastwide.

Striped Bass Tag Transferability Program Update - Caitlyn Craig

- Notice of Adoption package is with DEC Executive Staff
- Target Adoption Date: **June 3rd or 10th**
- Once adopted DEC will send detailed instructions and forms to all Striped Bass Permit holders
- Program will still include "application" periods where staff will receive requests to participate and will review for compliance/enforcement issues and to ensure the 5% cap is not exceeded
- In response to the comments received, DEC made non-substantive changes to the express terms, including
 - Adding a third option for documentation of the physical transfer of tags via a signed affidavit
 - Amending the electronic reporting frequency to weekly instead of 48 hours

Councilor Jordan referred to the 12th line in the guidelines regarding enforcement. To him, he feels the penalty is excessive and it's what they were originally trying to avoid and Councilor Chiofolo agrees. Lt. Reilly said it is the same language that is used for the multi-state program. Perhaps there can be a hearing where someone who is denied can present their case. Perhaps someone received a minor infraction in another state, they shouldn't be precluded from the program.

Mr. Maniscalco doesn't believe it can be changed at this time now, we might be able to moving forward but not at this time. This will need to be reviewed by the DEC's legal counsel.

Additional Modifications to Commercial Striped Bass Regulations - Caitlyn Craig

sections in red and/or brackets signify the changes that may take place

- The DEC is **seeking feedback and guidance** on potential modifications to Commercial Striped Bass Regulations as they are currently written in 6 NYCRR Part 40.1(i).
- The main goal of this exercise is to revisit these regulations to ensure they are meeting the needs of the current fishery by consulting with relevant stakeholders.

- For purposes of this discussion, the DEC is seeking comments specifically on whether the following regulations should remain as written, be amended, or be removed:
- Any suggested language change is preliminary

40.1(i)(8):

(ii) Permits to take a full quota share of striped bass will be issued at no cost to persons who currently possess a valid New York State commercial food fish license and who previously held a New York State license to sell striped bass during 1984, 1985, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, or 1995 and who can demonstrate through Federal or New York State income tax records that 50 percent or more of his or her earned income resulted from his or her direct participation in the harvest of marine fish, shellfish, crustaceans or other marine biota in any one year during the period 1994 through 2004. A complete copy of such tax record must be filed with the department upon application. *{DEC recommends to keep as written}*

(iv) Any holder of a partial share permit may apply for a full share permit by demonstrating through Federal or State tax records that 50 percent or more of his or her earned income has been derived from the direct participation in the harvest *{or sale}* of marine fish, shellfish, crustaceans or other marine biota during the preceding year.

- *{include sale of seafood as an option for people to qualify for a full-share (i.e. seafood market owners)}*
- *keep 50% as qualifying amount or should this be replaced with a dollar amount?*

(v) Beginning in 2005, and continuing at five-year intervals, each striped bass commercial harvesters permit holder in the full share category must file with the department a complete copy of his or her Federal or State income tax records from one of the preceding three years. Such tax records must be filed before the June 1st deadline for receipt of applications. Such tax records must demonstrate that the permit holder has, as stated in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, maintained the 50 percent earned income level in order to remain a participant in the full share category. Failure to file a timely and complete copy of Federal or State income tax records which demonstrate that the permit holding has maintained the 50 percent earned income level will result in the permit holding being placed into the partial share category. Thereafter, the rules pertaining to partial share permit holders provided in subparagraph (iv) of this paragraph apply. This requirement shall be suspended in 2015, until either reinstituted upon notification by the department or replaced with an alternate system of determining shares and qualifications for shares.

- *{Continue as DEC currently operates which is to give each new permit holder a partial-share, until they qualify for upgrade to full-share. No downgrades of shares}*
 - *Should we formally include this language in the regulation to acknowledge current practices?*
- *Remove this provision entirely? (or amend to match previous changes to income qualifications, etc.)*

Additional topics for discussion/feedback:

- Shift the opening date of Commercial Striped Bass Season from May 15 to the Monday or Tuesday preceding May 15
 - {DEC supports this change}*
- 40.1(i)(21) Manner of taking. Striped bass may be taken for commercial purposes by using any of the following gear types only: hook and line, pound net, trap net, gill net as specified in section 40.5(e) of this Part, or as by-catch in otter trawls. Permit holders may use any of the legal gears to catch their individual allocation of striped bass. **Otter trawl by-catch is limited to 21 striped bass per vessel per trip and shall be separately boxed.** All other types of gear are prohibited for use in taking striped bass, including but not limited to: haul seines and spears.

Discussion: Councilor Bauhs believes the 21 fish rule is outdated; especially with new rules for transferability being put into place. Transferability is totally alienating the dragger section from benefitting. This has become a gill net fishery and there are probably some fishers in Montauk doing rod and reel. Limiting the otter trawls to 21 fish is ridiculous. He thinks the rule needs to be changed or just abolished completely to even out the playing field. Councilor Chiofolo agrees with everything Councilor Bauhs said.

Councilor DeJong said if you have the tags, what is the difference in the way the fish is harvested? A dead fish is a dead fish. He did want to know what the significance is with the references to the 1990's. How is that coming into play now?

Mr. Maniscalco said qualifying years came into play around 1994, they are still relevant today because your past history should follow you and can play a role at the present time.

Councilor Davi agrees that there needs to be a change, we're actually killing more fish than we are keeping them. The number is outdated.

Councilor Witek opposes it because it was a by-catch limit - it was never meant to be a directed fishery. Otter trawling is not appropriate gear for striped bass, especially when the stock is in such poor shape.

Councilor Jordan is uncertain how to move forward. He believes this could be politically fueled. Bottom line - waste is waste.

Councilor Bauhs isn't looking for a free for all, he just wants to be able to keep the bass that he lands. The net he uses does allow smaller bass to escape, he's not trying to keep the small ones. Trawl gear can be selective. Councilor Witek said even with the net size opening which would allow a smaller fish to get through, if the net is clogged with fish, the smaller fish aren't able to pass through to escape. If you want his personal support, you must convince him that you can reliably exclude fish over 38", which is the size and year class that we are depending on to rebuild the stock; he hasn't heard that yet. Also, if the fish are in 20ft of water off the beach that would make them very easy to avoid. If you don't go in after them, they can remain at the by-catch limit. If you then go out for squid and run into them again that's where you use your by-catch allowance. That's the whole point of this provision – don't waste by-catch. People are already illegally targeting striped bass and taking more fish than allowed; it's wrong to reward those fishers by legalizing what they are doing.

Councilor Davi said more damage is done by going out over and over vs. letting them go out when they are inshore and get all their fish at once, yet you would still have tags left over.

Councilor DeJong said he hates waste and to be able to reduce numbers on waste, no matter what the fishery, that should be the bottom line.

[FYI announcement Maureen Davidson](#)

She said the Department has been receiving phone calls from fishers who are confused about what happens when someone gets striped bass tags through a transfer. She stated that for a family transfer or if someone has designated a family member who then chooses someone else to get their food fishing license and striped bass tags, the final recipient will get a partial share of tags. She felt it necessary to bring this up because people have been very confused because someone's father had a full share and they didn't have a history of fishing so they only received a partial share. The rule is that if the recipient can show an appropriate amount of income from fishing, they will only receive a partial share of striped bass tags.

[Proposal for New Summer Flounder Permit Issuance – Jessica Steve](#)

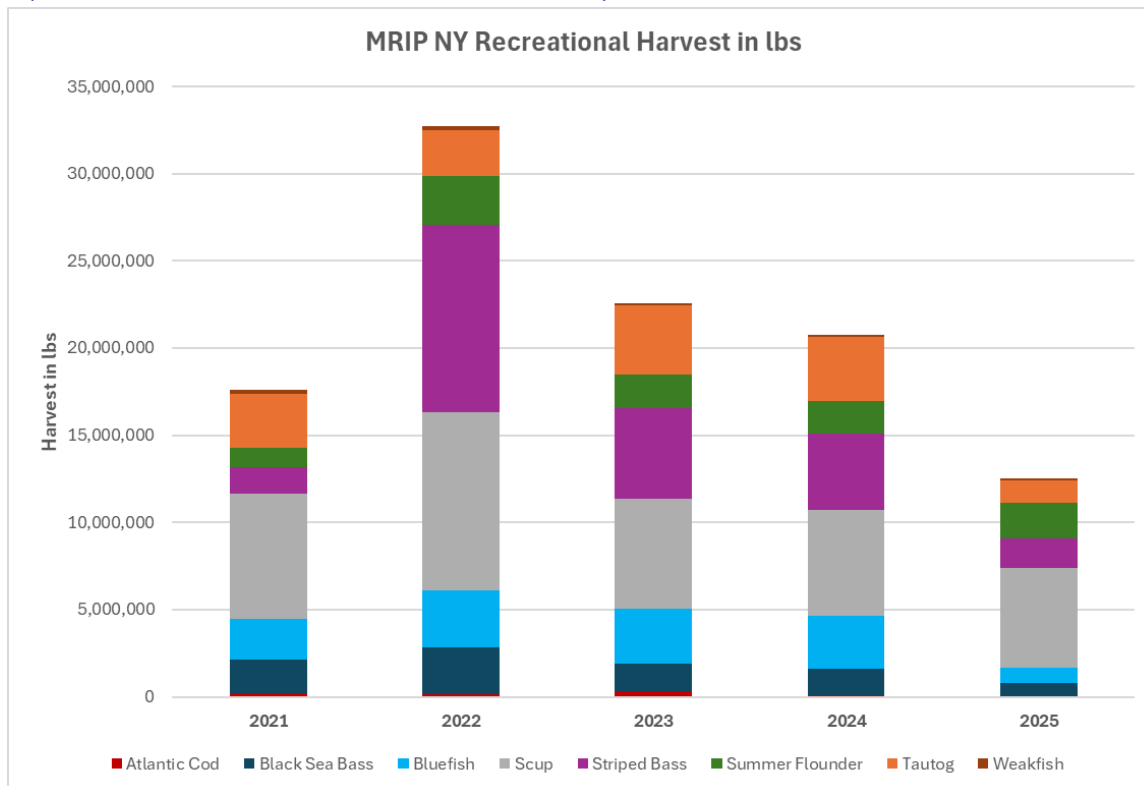
- The Department is drafting a proposal for the issuance of new Summer Flounder (Fluke) Permits.
- New permits have not been issued since 1995; no mechanism has yet been established to allow new permits to be issued.

- The new proposal will be discussed at the July MRAC meeting (July 14, 2026*).
- We will provide a draft proposal to MRAC councilors and the public in preparation for the July meeting.
- Comments will be accepted at the July meeting. Written comments can be submitted to fw.marine@dec.ny.gov.

*Normally July's Council meeting takes place in the evening and it typically gets canceled due to lack of quorum or participation. Since this discussion is very important it is being changed to the afternoon (2:00 p.m.). Mr. Gary believes that the Deputy Commissioner for Natural Resources, Katie Petronis, will also be in attendance at this particular meeting and he hopes for a good turnout. Councilor Davi said what needs to be kept in mind is that for the commercial councilors, the summer is their busiest time and in order to attend the meeting, they will be losing a day out on the water. To them it could mean losing between \$1,500 to \$5,000 – he (they) they can't promise they will be able to attend.

Councilor Jordan stated that while we have taken the first step to make striped bass tags transferable, we need to take the second step to make permits transferable between food fish license holders. As far as the fluke fishery there is 40% latency that needs to be dealt with first. We also need to investigate permit transfer just like striped bass before we can even think about new permits being issued. He's certain that when word gets out about this particular topic, there will be many voices to be heard. Ms. Steve said the July meeting will be the beginning of this conversation, but it will come up again and everyone will get a chance to state their opinions/thoughts/ideas.

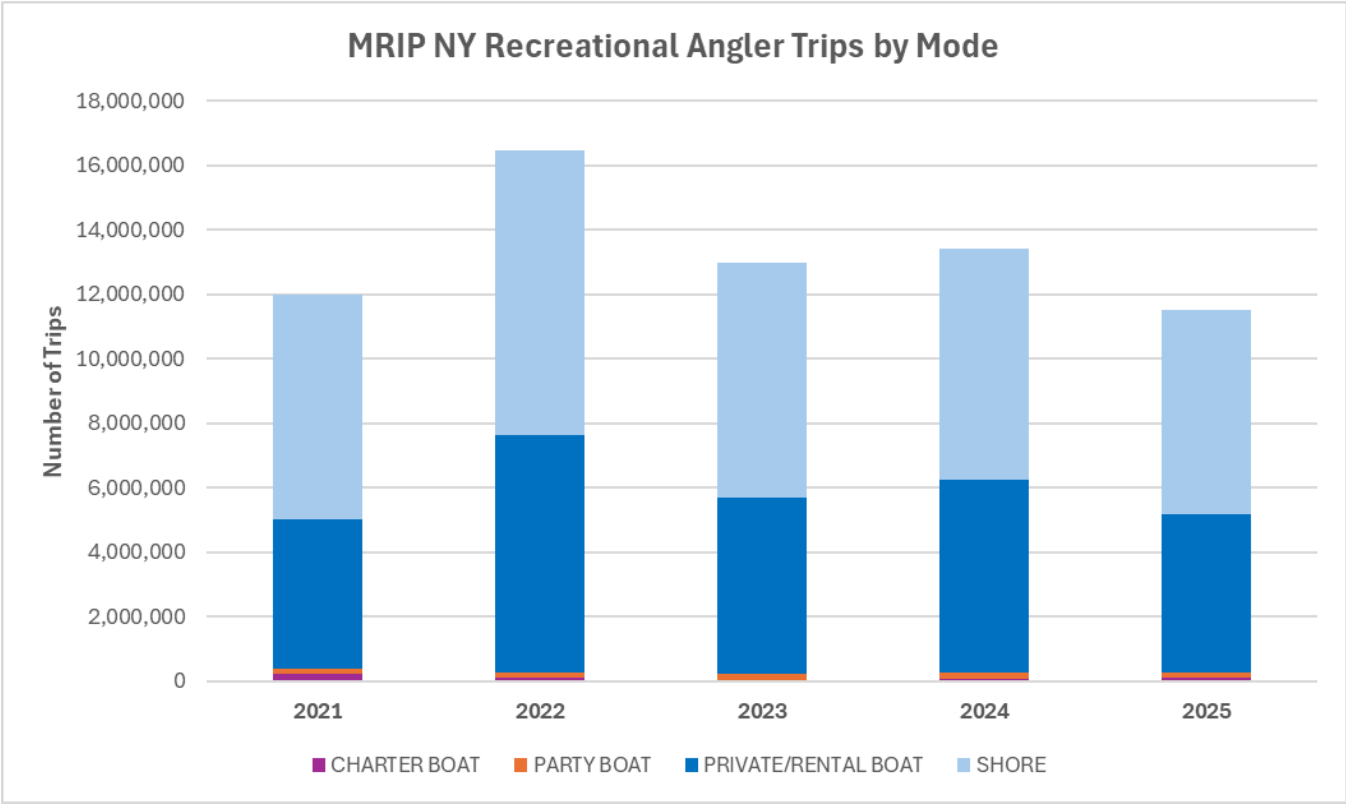
Update of 2025 MRIP Estimates - Rachel Sysak



Key Takeaways from 2025 MRIP Estimates:

- The stacked bar chart on this slide shows estimated MRIP Recreational harvest for NY in lbs. by species for 2021 through 2025. Total harvest peaks in 2022 at roughly 32 million lbs., then declines to about 23 million lbs. in 2025. This represents a 40% decrease from 2024 and a 30% decrease from 2021.
- The largest decreases in harvest are seen in Bluefish, Striped Bass, Black Sea Bass and Tautog. Summer flounder and scup remain relatively stable compared to the other species.
- On the next slide you will see a small drop in effort overall, mostly in the shore and private boat modes.

The DEC is looking for feedback on these trends and if they match on-the-water experience.

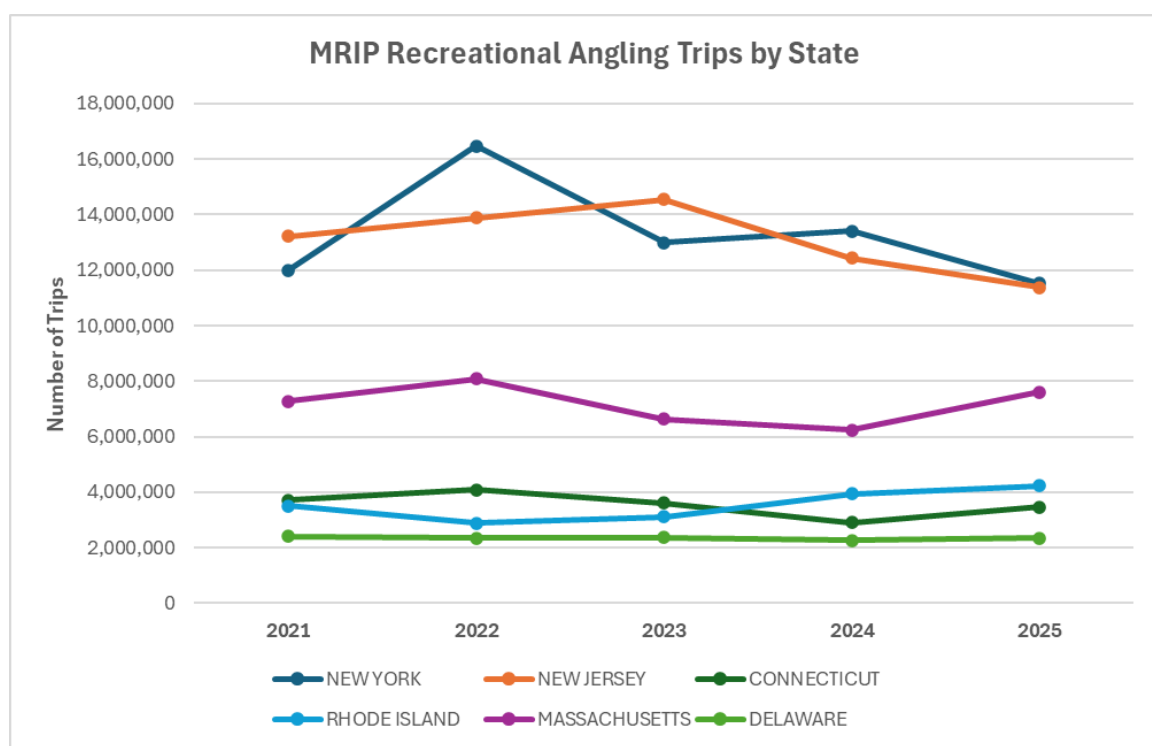


The stacked bar chart and accompanying table on this slide shows the estimated New York MRIP Recreational angler trips by fishing mode from 2021 through 2025.

Shore fishing and private or rental boat fishing account for the majority of trips each year. Total trips increase from about 12 million in 2021 to a peak of 16.5 million in 2022, then decline to approximately 11.5 million in 2025.

The largest decreases from 2024 to 2025 occur in shore fishing and private or rental boat trips, while party or charter boat trips remain relatively stable.

NY Angler Trips	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
CHARTER BOAT	205,478	96,929	18,042	73,270	90,657
PARTY BOAT	193,473	176,024	193,846	173,400	177,070
PRIVATE/RENTAL BOAT	4,632,153	7,354,711	5,481,771	5,991,372	4,912,159
SHORE	6,975,833	8,847,581	7,300,892	7,170,944	6,338,849
Grand Total	12,008,958	16,477,267	12,996,574	13,411,010	11,520,760



This slide shows a line chart comparing recreational angling trips from 2021 through 2025 across New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Delaware.

New York and New Jersey consistently reported the highest number of trips.

- New York has 12 million trips in 2021 then peaks in 2022 at slightly over 16 million trips, before declining to slightly under 12 million trips in 2025.
- New Jersey remained stable from 13 million trips in 2021 to just under 12 million trips in 2025.

Massachusetts remained stable from 6 to 8 million trips between 2021 and 2025.

Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Delaware remained stable from 2 to 4 million trips between 2021 and 2025.

Discussion: Councilor Peebles referred to the first slide and questioned the significant change from 2021 to 2022, landings jumped so much? Ms. Sysak replied that effort as well as harvest was very high for 2022. While not the sole factor, perhaps a large one was that the weather was great in 2022 and perfect for fishing.

Councilor Witek added that the high number for 2022 can be attributed to the 2015-year class of striped bass coming into the slot. The 2018's came in last year but there are so few of the smaller fish that a lot of the serious bass fishers are not fishing anymore. Bluefish are very spotty. He recalls when he grew up the bluefish would blow up every harbor on the Northshore, so many fish that it would change the color of the water. That no longer happens. Mr. Witek is a shark fisherman and bluefish were the plague of sharks; in years past he remembers bluefish lined up by the side of his boat, so much so, he couldn't even get a line overboard. That is no longer the case.

Councilor Squeri asked if the 2020 numbers were available, he was interested in the harvest and trip numbers. Ms. Sysak replied that in 2020 the total harvest was almost the same as for 2021 and effort was almost as high as 2022. Mr. Squeri said the numbers don't make sense as far as effort is concerned. During Covid in 2020, yes, he can see the number being so high but in 2022, life was getting back to normal so to him, these numbers do not represent what was really going on in the world. If you look at the charter boat in 2023, it's showing 18,042; compare it to the surrounding years, in 2022 the number is 96,929 and in 2024, the number is 73,270. He always believes that when you put bad numbers in, you get bad numbers back. These numbers are saying "red flag" to him.

Councilor DeJong agrees with Mr. Squeri. He looks at the number for party boats for 2025 and believes the number shown is way down, much too low. The numbers are not correct. His business alone could account for 12,000 trips.

To Councilor Dearborn, who owns a bait and tackle shop, the numbers seem wrong. She would say 2020 would have had the highest numbers because of COVID, fishing was an activity that families could do together at a time when everyone was distancing themselves from each other, the numbers should reflect the highest of numbers and to see 2022 showing the highest numbers, the sales in her shop do not justify that. The numbers in her shop show a downward trend since 2020.

Chairman Frisk said there is a report that NOAA puts out every year about the ecosystem and folks can look at for a broader scale. It covers everything from water temperatures to whales, but they also have a section on trends and how management measures are impacting landings.

Potential Changes to Tautog Fishery – Jesse Hornstein

- **Addendum I will consider changes to seasons, bag, and/or size limits for tautog in the NY Bight.**
- **A 40% reduction is needed to have a 50% probability of being at or below the fishing mortality (F) target by 2030.**
- **Current Timeline** (subject to change):
 - August 2026- Approval of Addendum I for public comment.
 - November 2026- Final Action on Addendum I
 - 2027- Implement new measures.
- **MRIP Recalibration**
 - Unknown impacts of how recalibrated data will change our understanding of the population and fishing mortality.
 - **2029 Benchmark Assessment**
 - The current assessment has a large retrospective pattern.

- Additional survey data is likely to be added in the next Benchmark Assessment.
- **Fishing Mortality Rates**
 - F rates have declined in 2024 and 2025.
- **Tautog Removals**
 - Tautog removals are variable from year to year and have higher PSEs than other recreationally important species.

Discussion: Councilor DeJong said this fish is variable and extrapolation of data has become difficult and problematic. Because this fish is weather dependent, they can be extremely moody. He does think that 3 fish at 16" seems to be working.

Councilor Dearborn wanted confirmation that the change could possibly be for one year only. Mr. Hornstein replied that if there was a change for 2027 and a new assessment comes out in 2028, the newly received data could warrant another change.

2026 Recreational Black Sea Bass and Summer Flounder Measures Issue (State vs Federal resolved) - John Maniscalco

Federal rulemakings were delayed, prompting concerns that "non-preferred" coastwide measures would be in place in federal waters when recreational seasons for summer flounder and black sea bass began, especially for states south of New York.

On April 30, 2026, NOAA Fisheries published an interim final rule waiving federal measures and approving Conservation Equivalency for 2026 and 2027.

Seasons in many states south of New Jersey open on May 1 at smaller minimum size limits and larger possession limits than current *default* non-preferred coastwide measures.

Scup recreational fishery management doesn't utilize CE and was not impacted.

Rulemaking Update – Caitlyn Craig

Proposed Rules

Federal rulemakings were delayed, prompting concerns that "non-preferred" coastwide measures would be in place in federal waters when recreational seasons for summer flounder and black sea bass began, especially for states south of New York.

On April 30, 2026, NOAA Fisheries published an interim final rule waiving federal measures and approving Conservation Equivalency for 2026 and 2027.

Seasons in many states south of New Jersey open on May 1 at smaller minimum size limits and larger possession limits than current *default* non-preferred coastwide measures.

Scup recreational fishery management doesn't utilize CE and was not impacted.

Emergency and Proposed Rules

Bluefish (Recreational)

- Part 40 (Marine Fish)

- NOTICE OF EMERGENCY ADOPTION and PROPOSED RULE MAKING
- Adopted on April 7, 2026 (expires 90 days from date of filing)
- Public Comment Period: April 22 – June 22, 2026
- *Summary of rule:* This rule increases the recreational Bluefish possession limits for private anglers from three fish to five fish, and for anglers aboard licensed party/charter vessels, from five fish to seven fish.

Black Sea Bass (Recreational)

- Part 40 (Marine Fish)
- NOTICE OF EMERGENCY ADOPTION and PROPOSED RULE MAKING
- Adopted on May 11, 2026 (expires 90 days from date of filing)
- Public Comment Period: May 27 – July 27, 2026
- *Summary of rule:* This rule decreases the minimum recreational size limit of Black Sea Bass from 16.5 inches to 16 inches; and advances the recreational season start date from June 23 to May 16.

Upcoming Rules

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.

Crab (Management Authority)

- Part 44 (Lobsters and Crabs)
- PROPOSED RULE MAKING
- Repromulgates the Crab regulations under the direct authority of ECL 13-0331
- Target filing date: TBD

Discussion: Councilor DeJong wanted to pass along complaints and concerns he has heard from his industry regarding the timing of the regulation announcement. This year the announcement came just four (4) days before the season opened. That is not enough time for businesses to get their affairs in order before the season begins. He asked if the Department could keep that in mind for the future. Mr. Maniscalco said they certainly will try because they do appreciate the position the business' have. Unfortunately, rule-making is never a quick process in general but add to that it's budget season in Albany and that is their top priority.

Other business - John Maniscalco

Vessel Baseline Evaluation

New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils are considering revisions to vessel replacements/upgrades restrictions

- Currently, they must be within 10% of the length and 20% of the horsepower of the permit's baseline vessel.
- It's difficult to replace permitted vessels, especially smaller vessels.
- This issue has been raised by NY license holders.

Legislative Update

A3591 Schiavoni/ S678A Martinez

- GLP recommendations including modified random selection and temporary authorized transfer of license privileges.
- Has been AMENDED.

A03591B (Schiavoni) now only deals with the modified random selection to provide preference to previously unsuccessful qualified applicants.

- New version includes consideration of applications received January 1, 2018 or later.
- No Senate sponsor yet.
- Temporary authorized transfer of license privileges is supposed to be the subject of a separate bill.

Ocean Action Plan (OAP)

The Ocean Action Plan is being updated for the next 10 years (2028-2037)

- The OAP guides many of our management decisions
- And drives a lot of our discretionary spending on research, protection and restoration

Side meetings to gather stakeholder feedback are being held on June 8th at Stony Brook University at this year's State of the Science.

- You do not have to be registered for the entire conference to attend the OAP side meetings.
 - Free and open to the public
- There are 2 2-hour sessions, you only need to attend 1. (9-11AM and 1-3 PM).
- Register here: <https://form.jotform.com/260815136803050>

Other Business

Councilor Witek attended a 3-day meeting for the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel in Silver Springs. Several things were brought up that he wanted to share. The first being bluefin tuna; if you recall last year, it was a very attenuated recreational season that ended very early in August, the quota limit had been lowered to 187.3 metric tons because of overage in the previous year and they wanted to avoid a penalty payback of 125%. That is the requirement by ICAT if you go over 2 years in a row. Last year the landings came in at 101% which is almost perfect. Because of the good number, landings will be increased to 341 metric tons, (approval should be finalized by Labor Day and size will need to be figured out).

They were also talking about using regional management measures, and that might help NY. Last year there were really early harvests off of North Carolina and other southern states that hurt us because by the time our season began, a fair

amount of the quota was already taken. If we can fish regionally, our number will begin at zero. It really would be best for both our region as well as a southern region because when things get hot in Montauk and up in New England, they could lose their fall season. It could be a win-win situation for both.

The bottom line is recreationally, we should be able to fish a full season where we can fish on our full angling quota throughout the fall. The commercial side will also be looking at an increase in quota. The longline by-catch quota is also going to be increasing throughout most of the Atlantic Coast.

Shark regulations for recreational fishers are currently one fish, 54" – they are proposing 48" instead. There was also talk about changing bag limits according to species groups. For instance, black tips, had a very favorable stock assessment, so they would be able to take more than one fish.

~~~~~

Mr. Gary said there has been much discussion to bring back the Shellfish Advisory Council and with Ms. Peebles representing aquaculture it was thought this would be a great time to do so. This is in the works; more information will follow.

~~~~~

Upcoming meetings

Bluefish Advisory Panel, ASMFC 6/9 (webinar only)

Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish Advisory Panel, MAFMC 6/10 (webinar only)

MAFMC in Alexandria, VA 6/16-6/18 (hybrid)

- Scup Winter I Management

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel, ASMFC 6/22 (webinar only)

NEFMC in Mystic, CT 6/23-6/26 (hybrid)

MRAC in Kings Park, NY 7/14 (hybrid)

MRAC Meeting Calendar

July 14th – 2:00 p.m. – DEC Kings Park

September 15th – 2:00 p.m. – Kings Park

November 10th – 2:00 p.m. – Kings Park

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) or Staff Assistant, Kim Knoll (Kim.knoll@stonybrook.edu), phone 631 632-8656.