

08.02.05 Fish

Authority: Natural Resources Article, §4-2A-03, Annotated Code of Maryland

.23 Bluefin Tuna.

A.—B. (text unchanged)

C. Before removing the bluefin tuna caught for recreational purposes from a boat or removing a boat from the water, a person shall[:

(1) Immediately] report *all required information* to [a reporting station designated by] the Department *in the required electronic format as designated on the Department’s website.*]; and

(2) Obtain and affix a tail tag, provided by the reporting station, between the fifth dorsal finlet and the keel.]

D. *A person shall report all released bluefin tuna, both live and dead, and all required information relating to the release to the Department in the required electronic format as designated on the Department’s website within 2 hours of returning to dock.*

[D.] E. (text unchanged)

.26 Billfish.

A.—C. (text unchanged)

D. Before removing a landed billfish caught for recreational purposes from a boat or removing a boat containing a billfish from the water, a person shall[:

(1) Immediately] report *all required information* to [a reporting station designated by] the Department *in the required electronic format as designated on the Department’s website.*

[(2) Complete a catch information form provided by the reporting station; and

(3) Affix a tail tag, provided by the reporting station, to the billfish.]

E. (text unchanged)

.27 Swordfish.

A.—C. (text unchanged)

D. Before removing a landed swordfish caught for recreational purposes from a boat or removing a boat containing a swordfish from the water, a person shall[:

(1) Immediately] report *all required information* to [a reporting station designated by] the Department *in the required electronic format as designated on the Department’s website.*

[(2) Complete a catch information form provided by the reporting station; and

(3) Affix a tail tag, provided by the reporting station, to the swordfish.]

E. (text unchanged)

08.02.22 Sharks

Authority: Natural Resources Article, §4-2A-03, Annotated Code of Maryland

.02 Recreational Shark Fishery.

A.—E. (text unchanged)

F. Tags and Reporting.

[(1) An individual shall obtain tags and catch information forms from a reporting station designated by the Department.]

[(2)] (1) Before removing a landed shark from a boat or removing a boat containing a shark from the water, a person shall[:

(a) Affix a tail tag, provided by the reporting station, to the shark; and

(b) Complete a catch information form provided by the reporting station] *report all required information to the Department in the required electronic format as designated on the Department’s website.*

[(3)] (2) Before removing a landed shark from the point of landing if caught on shore, a person shall[:

(a) Affix a tail tag, provided by the reporting station, to the shark; and

(b) Complete a catch information form provided by the reporting station] *report all required information to the Department in the required electronic format as designated on the Department’s website.*

[(4)] (3) Upon landing a shark, an individual shall [immediately return the catch information form to a reporting station designated by the Department.] *report all required information to the Department in the required electronic format as designated on the Department’s website.*

G. (text unchanged)

JOSH KURTZ
Secretary of Natural Resources

Subtitle 02 FISHERIES SERVICE

08.02.05 Fish

Authority: Natural Resources Article, §4-2A-03, Annotated Code of Maryland

Notice of Proposed Action

[24-045-P]

The Secretary of Natural Resources proposes to amend Regulation **.29** under **COMAR 08.02.05 Fish**.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this action is to implement a recreational minimum size for sheepshead and a combined catch limit of no more than 10 fish for a single species of snapper listed in COMAR 08.02.05.29. The overall combined catch limit of 20 total fish of the species listed in that regulation would remain the same.

This action proposes a 12-inch recreational minimum size for sheepshead. This change is necessary to allow sheepshead an opportunity to reproduce before being harvested. After their first year, sheepshead in South Carolina average 10 inches, at which less than 50 percent are sexually mature. Most mature at age 2 (12 inches fork length), and all sheepshead are mature by ages 3 to 5 (14 inches fork length). Due to the nature of the commercial fishery, which seasonally harvests sheepshead in trawls, it is likely that establishing a commercial minimum size would lead to increased dead discards. In order to minimize waste, the Department is not applying a minimum size to the commercial sector at this time.

The action proposes to limit a recreational angler to ten of any single species of snapper caught in Maryland waters, while leaving the overall aggregated catch limit of 20 in place. This modification is being taken to address concerns of local depletion of certain species while still maximizing opportunity for harvest across the snapper complex.

Estimate of Economic Impact

I. Summary of Economic Impact. The proposed action may have a minor indeterminable negative economic impact on recreational harvesters by resulting in the harvesting of fewer sheepshead in the short-term but a minor indeterminable positive economic impact on recreational harvesters by resulting in a more robust sheepshead population in the long-term.

II. Types of Economic Impact.

Impacted Entity	Revenue (R+/R-)	Magnitude
	Expenditure (E+/E-)	
A. On issuing agency:	NONE	
B. On other State agencies:	NONE	
C. On local governments:	NONE	
	Benefit (+) Cost (-)	Magnitude
D. On regulated industries or trade groups:		
(1) Recreational Anglers — Long Term	(+)	Indeterminable
(2) Recreational Anglers — Short Term	(-)	Indeterminable
E. On other industries or trade groups:	NONE	
F. Direct and indirect effects on public:	NONE	

III. Assumptions. (Identified by Impact Letter and Number from Section II.)

D(1). The Department believes that this action will ultimately result in more robust sheepshead populations by allowing additional sheepshead to reach sexual maturity prior to harvest. This will ultimately allow recreational anglers additional opportunities to harvest sheepshead. Similarly, capping the catch limit of snapper to a maximum of ten of any single species will hopefully address concerns regarding local depletions of specific species. In the long-term, this will ultimately lead to additional harvest opportunities by avoiding such depletions.

D(2). The Department does not know how many anglers target sheepshead; therefore, the number of individuals this action will impact is indeterminable. It is not clear how much the catch limit will reduce the recreational harvest. Similarly, capping the catch limit of snapper to a maximum of ten of any single species while leaving the overall catch limit of 20 in place may have a minor negative impact on anglers who specifically targeted any single species of those listed.

Economic Impact on Small Businesses

The proposed action has minimal or no economic impact on small businesses.

Impact on Individuals with Disabilities

The proposed action has no impact on individuals with disabilities.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Comments may be sent to Snapper Grouper Complex — Sheepshead Size Limit and Combined Catch Limit, Regulatory Staff, Department of Natural Resources, Fishing and Boating Services, 580 Taylor Avenue, E-4, Annapolis, MD 21401, or call 410-260-8300, or submit comments to <https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/pages/regulations/changes.aspx#snapper>. Comments will be accepted through June 17, 2024. A public hearing has not been scheduled.

.29 Snapper Grouper Complex.

A.—B. (text unchanged)

C. Size Limit.

(1) [There] *Except as provided in §C(2) of this regulation, there is no minimum or maximum size limit for the species listed in §A of this regulation.*

(2) *A recreational angler may not catch or possess a sheepshead less than 12 inches in total length.*

D. Recreational. An individual may not catch or possess more than:

(1)—(2) (text unchanged)

(3) *For species listed in §A(3) of this regulation:*

(a) *Ten of any single species; and*

(b) *20 of any [species or any] combination of the species [listed in §A(3) of this regulation].*

E.—F. (text unchanged)

JOSH KURTZ

Secretary of Natural Resources

Subtitle 02 FISHERIES SERVICE

08.02.08 Shellfish—General

Authority: Natural Resources Article, §§4-2A-03 and 4-901, Annotated Code of Maryland

Notice of Proposed Action

[24-048-P]

The Secretary of Natural Resources proposes to amend Regulations **.06** and **.10** under **COMAR 08.02.08 Shellfish—General**.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this action is to implement the provisions of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Addendum XXIX to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster and Addendum IV to the Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan. The Addenda establish electronic tracking requirements for federally permitted vessels in the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, with the goal of collecting high-resolution spatial and temporal effort data to support several ongoing efforts. More information is available at the following websites:

https://asmfc.org/uploads/file/62473fb1pr10_LobsterAddXXIX_JonahCrabAddIV_TrackingApproval.pdf

https://asmfc.org/files/AmericanLobster/AmLobsterDraftAddendumXXVII_PublicComment_Revised.pdf

The Board initiated the Addenda in August 2021 to address several challenges facing the fishery, including stock assessment limitations, protected species interactions, marine spatial planning efforts, and enforcement in federal waters. Given the critical need for enhanced spatial and temporal data in the offshore fishery to address these issues, the Addenda require federally permitted American lobster and Jonah crab vessels with commercial trap gear area permits to collect location data via an approved electronic tracking device. Specifically, electronic tracking devices for vessels with commercial trap gear area permits for Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and Outer Cape Cod will be required. LCMA 6 (Long Island Sound). The Area 5 waiver permit, which allows Area 5 permit holders to target black sea bass with unbaited traps, is excluded from the tracking requirements.

The data collected through electronic tracking under the Addenda will significantly improve the stock assessment’s ability to estimate exploitation and abundance for American lobster by providing size composition data at a finer resolution than what is currently available. Additionally, the models used to assess the location of vertical lines in the fishery and their associated risk to endangered right whales will be substantially improved, which could impact federal risk reduction requirements for the fishery. With a better understanding of the spatial footprint of the U.S. lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, managers will be better positioned to minimize and mitigate the impacts of other ocean uses, such as aquaculture, marine protected areas, and offshore energy development on the fisheries. Furthermore, vessel tracking data will enhance the efficiency and efficacy of offshore law enforcement efforts.