

The Watch (from page 35)

TAUTOG

Tautog are managed by the ASMFC. Rhode Island has been placed in a region with Massachusetts for the 2018 season.

Two changes in last year's regulations have been suggested by DEM to make Rhode Island regulations similar to regional partner Massachusetts.



The first change is to start the spring season two weeks earlier on April 1 (rather than April 15) and run until May 31 with a three fish/person/day bag limit; close June 1 to July 31 during the spawning season; reopen on August 1 to the third Saturday in October with a three fish/person/day limit.

The daily limit will increase to five fish/person/day from the third Saturday in October to December 15. The five fish limit in this period is a reduction from six fish last year and was recommended in part to dovetail with Massachusetts regulations.

In all above periods a ten fish/vessel/day limit applies which is not applicable for party and charter boats.

BLUEFISH

Bluefish are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.



Regulations will likely be the same as last year with no minimum size, a year-round season and a possession limit of 15 fish/person/day.

TIMELINE FOR REGULATIONS

Rhode Island's fishing regulation timeline includes a public hearing on February 19 with a public comment period closing February 26. The public comments, along with DEM recommendations, go before the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council on March 5.

DEM Director Janet Coit is expected to establish official Rhode Island fishing regulations by the second or third week of March.



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