

# DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

## DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Statutory Authority: 7 Delaware Code, Section 903 (7 Del.C. §903)

7 DE Admin. Code 3505

### PROPOSED

### PUBLIC NOTICE

SAN# 2023-11

DOCKET # 2023-R-F-0021

### 3505 Striped Bass Commercial Fishing Seasons; Quotas; Tagging and Reporting Requirements.

1. TITLE OF THE REGULATIONS:

Amend 7 DE Admin. Code 3505 Striped Bass Commercial Fishing Seasons; Quotas; Tagging and Reporting Requirements.

2. BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SUBJECT, SUBSTANCE AND ISSUES:

This action is being proposed to modify the spring anchor gill net season by adding two weeks in February and eliminating two weeks in April and May to better synchronize the spring anchor gill net season with the availability of and market for Striped Bass. This action was recommended in a unanimous motion by the Advisory Council on Tidal Finfisheries at its September 19, 2023 meeting.

3. POSSIBLE TERMS OF THE AGENCY ACTION:

N/A

4. STATUTORY BASIS OR LEGAL AUTHORITY TO ACT:

7 Del. C. § 903

5. OTHER REGULATIONS THAT MAY BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL:

N/A

6. NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT:

The hearing record on the proposed changes to 7 DE Admin. Code 3505 will be open January 1, 2024. The virtual public hearing will be held on Tuesday, January 30, 2024, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The web link to the virtual hearing can be accessed through the DNREC Public Hearings site at <https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/public-hearings/>. If prompted, use Meeting ID: 836 4525 0188 Passcode: 607330. To access the audio-only portion of the virtual hearing, dial (305) 224-1968 and enter the Meeting ID and Passcode noted above. Closed captioning is available in over 20 languages, including English and Spanish, to attendees via the Zoom platform utilized for all DNREC Public Hearings.

Those wishing to offer verbal comments during DNREC virtual public hearings must pre-register no later than noon on the date of the virtual hearing. The designated page for this Pre-Registration process can be found here: <https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/public-hearings/comments/registration/>

The proposed amendments may be inspected online starting January 1, 2024 at [https://regulations.delaware.gov/services/current\\_issue.shtml](https://regulations.delaware.gov/services/current_issue.shtml), or in-person, by appointment only, by contacting John Clark by phone at 302-739-9914 or by email at [John.Clark@delaware.gov](mailto:John.Clark@delaware.gov).

Public comments will be received until close of business Wednesday, February 14, 2024. Comments will be accepted in written form via email to [DNRECHearingComments@delaware.gov](mailto:DNRECHearingComments@delaware.gov), or by using the online form at <https://de.gov/dnrecomments>, or by U.S. mail to the following address:

Theresa Smith, Hearing Officer  
DNREC - Office of the Secretary  
89 Kings Highway, Dover, DE 19901

7. PREPARED BY:

John H. Clark

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**3505 Striped Bass Commercial Fishing Seasons; Quotas; Tagging and Reporting Requirements.**

**3505 Striped Bass Commercial Fishing Seasons; Quotas; Tagging and Reporting Requirements.**

(Penalty Section 7 Del.C. §936(b)(2))

- 1.0 It is unlawful for any commercial food fisherman using a gill net to take and reduce to possession any striped bass at any time except when said commercial food fisherman is authorized by the Department to participate in a commercial gill net fishery for striped bass established herein. A commercial food fisherman may use a gill net to take and reduce to possession striped bass during the period beginning at 12:01 A.M. on February 15 and ending at 4:00 P.M. on May 31 next ensuing. It is unlawful to use any gill net having a stretched-mesh size greater than four (4) inches to take striped bass during the period ~~February 15 until and including the last day in February~~ beginning at 12:01 A.M. on April 27 and ending at 4:00 P.M. on May 31 unless the net is drifted. A commercial food fisherman may use a gill net to take and reduce to possession striped bass during the period beginning at 12:01 A.M. on November 15 and ending at 4:00 P.M. on December 31 next ensuing provided at least two (2) percent of the commercial allocation of striped bass for the gill net fishery, as determined by the Department, was not landed in the February - May gill net fishery. In order for a commercial food fisherman to be authorized by the Department to participate in a commercial gill net fishery, said commercial food fisherman shall have a valid food fishing equipment permit for a gill net and shall register in writing with the Department to participate in said fishery by February 1 for the February 15 - May 31 gill net fishery and by November 1 for the December gill net fishery.
- 2.0 It is unlawful for any commercial food fisherman using a hook and line to take and reduce to possession any striped bass at any time except when said commercial food fisherman is authorized by the Department to participate in a commercial hook and line fishery for striped bass established herein. Except as otherwise provided, a commercial food fisherman may use a hook and line to take and reduce to possession striped bass during the period beginning at 12:01 A.M. on April 1 and ending at 4:00 P.M. on December 31 next ensuing. In order for a commercial food fisherman to be authorized to participate in the commercial hook and line fishery, said commercial food fisherman shall register in writing with the Department to participate in said fishery by February 1.
- 3.0 The striped bass gill net fishery in February - May, the striped bass gill net fishery in November - December and the striped bass hook and line fishery in April - December shall be considered separate striped bass fisheries. Each participant in a striped bass fishery shall be assigned an equal share of the total pounds of striped bass allotted by the Department to that fishery. A share shall be determined by dividing the number of pre-registered participants in that fishery into the total pounds of striped bass allotted to that fishery by the Department. The total pounds of the State's ASMFC commercial striped bass quota will be allotted to each fishery by the Department as follows: 95% for the February 15 - May 31 gill net fishery, 5% for the April - December hook and line fishery and, provided that in excess of two (2)% of the February 15 - May 31 gill net fishery allocation was not landed, said remainder for the November - December gill net fishery. Any overage of the State's commercial quota will be subtracted from the next year's commercial quota proportionally to the appropriate fishery.
- 4.0 It is unlawful for any commercial food fisherman to land, during a striped bass fishing season, more than the total pounds assigned by the Department to said individual commercial food fisherman.
- 5.0 It is unlawful for any commercial food fisherman to possess any landed striped bass that does not have locked into place through the mouth and gill (operculum) opening a striped bass harvest tag issued to said commercial fisherman by the Department.
- 6.0 The Department may issue tags to commercial food fishermen who register in writing with the Department to participate in a striped bass fishery. Each participant shall initially be issued a quantity of striped bass harvest tags that is to be determined by the Department by dividing said participant's assigned share in pounds by the estimated weight of a striped bass expected to be landed. If a commercial food fisherman needs additional tags to fulfill his or her assigned share, the Department shall issue additional tags after verifying the balance of the share from reports submitted by an official weigh station to the Department.
- 7.0 It is lawful for a commercial food fisherman who is authorized to be issued striped bass harvest tags by the Department to transfer said tags to another commercial food fisherman, provided said transfer is made prior to said tags being issued by the Department.
- 8.0 It is unlawful for any commercial food fisherman to apply a tag to a striped bass unless said tag had been issued or legally transferred to said commercial food fisherman by the Department.
- 9.0 It is unlawful to apply any striped bass tag issued by the Department to a striped bass if said tag had previously been applied to another striped bass.

- 10.0 It is unlawful for any commercial food fisherman to sell, barter or trade any striped bass, to attempt to sell, barter or trade any striped bass or to transport, to have transported or to attempt to have transported any striped bass out of the State unless said striped bass has been weighed and tagged at an official weigh station.
- 11.0 The Department may appoint individuals and their agents as official weigh stations to weigh and tag all striped bass landed in a commercial striped bass fishery. Official weigh stations, if requested, shall be compensated by the Department for each striped bass weighed and tagged. An official weigh station shall enter into an agreement with the Department to maintain records and report on a regular basis each commercial food fisherman's daily landings of striped bass weighed and tagged at said station. The Department shall provide official weigh stations with tags to be applied to each striped bass weighed.
- 12.0 Each commercial food fisherman participating in a striped bass fishery shall file a complete and accurate report with the Department on forms provided by the Department on all striped bass landed during said fishery. Each report shall be filed with the Department within 30 days after the end date of each fishery. All unused tags issued or legally transferred to a commercial food fisherman shall be returned to the Department with said report. Failure to file a complete and accurate report or failure to return all unused tags may disqualify the commercial food fishermen from future striped bass fisheries.

**1 DE Reg 270 (09/01/97)**

**4 DE Reg 1552 (03/01/01)**

**8 DE Reg 1169 (02/01/05)**

**18 DE Reg. 889 (05/01/15)**

**20 DE Reg. 467 (12/01/16)**

**22 DE Reg. 674 (02/01/19)**

**27 DE Reg. 497 (01/01/24) (Prop.)**