



Unified Regulatory Plan 2025 – 2026

Prepared by Staff on June 17, 2025

Agency Description

The Marine Resources Commission has jurisdiction over commercial fishing and all marine fish, marine shellfish, marine organisms, and habitat that extends to the fall line of all tidal rivers and streams of the Commonwealth. The Commission also exercises proprietary responsibility for the Commonwealth's submerged lands statewide. It may promulgate regulations and guidelines necessary to carry out the provisions of Title 28.2: Fisheries and Habitat of the Tidal Waters. Law-Enforcement of the Commission is the Virginia Marine Police. The Commission operates under the supervision of the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources.

Action/Stage or Guidance Document Forum ID (if available)		
Title of Proposed Regulatory Action or Guidance Document Revisions to Regulations Pertaining to Shrimp		
Brief Overview Chapter 4VAC20-1390 "Pertaining to Shrimp" This regulatory change is to expand participation in the shrimp trawl fishery.		
Regulatory Stage (check one box)	☐ NOIRA ☐ Proposed ☒ Final	☐ Emergency or Emergency/NOIRA ☐ Revised Proposed ☐ Fast-Track
Additional Description	☐ Expedited Review Requested ☒ Exempt Action	☐ Guidance Document
Legal Authority	☐ Action required by federal statute ☐ Action required by state statute	☒ Discretionary action
Deregulatory Component	None	
Expected Date	July 2025	

Action/Stage or Guidance Document Forum ID (if available)		
Title of Proposed Regulatory Action or Guidance Document Revisions to Regulations for Atlantic Striped Bass		
Brief Overview Chapter 4VAC20-252 "Pertaining to Atlantic Striped Bass" This regulatory change is to comply with Addendum III of the Interstate Fisheries Management Plan for this species.		
Regulatory Stage (check one box)	☐ NOIRA ☐ Proposed ☒ Final	☐ Emergency or Emergency/NOIRA ☐ Revised Proposed ☐ Fast-Track
Additional Description	☐ Expedited Review Requested ☒ Exempt Action	☐ Guidance Document
Legal Authority	☒ Action required by federal statute ☐ Action required by state statute	☐ Discretionary action
Deregulatory Component	None	
Expected Date	December 2025	

Action/Stage or Guidance Document Forum ID (if available)		
Title of Proposed Regulatory Action or Guidance Document Establishment of Regulation Pertaining to Catfish		
Brief Overview Chapter 4VAC20-1420 "Pertaining to Catfish" This regulatory change establishes a regulation pertaining to catfish to create a commercial hook-and-line license for invasive catfish species.		
Regulatory Stage (check one box)	☐ NOIRA ☐ Proposed ☒ Final	☐ Emergency or Emergency/NOIRA ☐ Revised Proposed ☐ Fast-Track
Additional Description	☐ Expedited Review Requested ☒ Exempt Action	☐ Guidance Document
Legal Authority	☐ Action required by federal statute ☐ Action required by state statute	☒ Discretionary action
Deregulatory Component	Increases access for watermen by creating a hook-and-line license that is not limited entry.	
Expected Date	February 2026	

Action/Stage or Guidance Document Forum ID (if available)		
Title of Proposed Regulatory Action or Guidance Document Revisions to the Regulation Pertaining to Bluefish		
Brief Overview Chapter 4VAC20-450 "Pertaining to the Taking of Bluefish" This regulatory change is to require weekly harvest reporting requirements to better track the bluefish quota established by the ASMFC and MAFMC.		
Regulatory Stage (check one box)	☐ NOIRA ☐ Proposed ☒ Final	☐ Emergency or Emergency/NOIRA ☐ Revised Proposed ☐ Fast-Track
Additional Description	☐ Expedited Review Requested ☒ Exempt Action	☐ Guidance Document
Legal Authority	☐ Action required by federal statute ☐ Action required by state statute	☒ Discretionary action
Deregulatory Component	None	
Expected Date	March 2026	

Action/Stage or Guidance Document Forum ID (if available)		
Title of Proposed Regulatory Action or Guidance Document Revisions to Regulations Pertaining to Black Sea Bass		
Brief Overview Chapter 4VAC20-950 "Pertaining to Black Sea Bass" This regulatory change is to comply with the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for this species.		
Regulatory Stage (check one box)	☐ NOIRA ☐ Proposed ☒ Final	☐ Emergency or Emergency/NOIRA ☐ Revised Proposed ☐ Fast-Track
Additional Description	☐ Expedited Review Requested ☒ Exempt Action	☐ Guidance Document
Legal Authority	☒ Action required by federal statute ☐ Action required by state statute	☐ Discretionary action
Deregulatory Component	None	
Expected Date	April 2026	

Action/Stage or Guidance Document Forum ID (if available)		
Title of Proposed Regulatory Action or Guidance Document Revisions to Regulations Pertaining to the Blue Crab Fishery		
Brief Overview Chapter 4VAC20-270 "Pertaining to Blue Crab Fishery" This regulatory change establishes management measures, including season and bushel limits, for the 2026-27 commercial crab fishery and to close the 2026-27 winter dredge season.		
Regulatory Stage (check one box)	☐ NOIRA ☐ Proposed ☒ Final	☐ Emergency or Emergency/NOIRA ☐ Revised Proposed ☐ Fast-Track
Additional Description	☐ Expedited Review Requested ☒ Exempt Action	☐ Guidance Document
Legal Authority	☐ Action required by federal statute ☐ Action required by state statute	☒ Discretionary action
Deregulatory Component	None	
Expected Date	June 2026	

Action/Stage or Guidance Document Forum ID (if available) Not available		
Title of Proposed Regulatory Action or Guidance Document Revisions to Regulations Pertaining to Oyster Harvest Seasons and Limits		
Brief Overview Chapter 4VAC20-720 "Pertaining to Restrictions on Oyster Harvest" This regulatory change establishes the 2025-2026 areas of public harvest, public oyster harvest seasons, and oyster resource conservation measures.		
Regulatory Stage (check one box)	☐ NOIRA ☐ Proposed ☒ Final	☐ Emergency or Emergency/NOIRA ☐ Revised Proposed ☐ Fast-Track
Additional Description	☐ Expedited Review Requested ☒ Exempt Action	☐ Guidance Document
Legal Authority	☐ Action required by federal statute ☐ Action required by state statute	☒ Discretionary action
Deregulatory Component	Expanding season limits to maximize the benefits of the resource.	
Expected Date	August 2025	

Action/Stage or Guidance Document Forum ID (if available) Not available		
Title of Proposed Regulatory Action or Guidance Document Revisions to Regulations Pertaining to Restrictions on the Harvest of Shellfish in Condemned Shellfish Areas		
Brief Overview Chapter 4VAC20-1290 "Pertaining to Restrictions on the Harvest of Shellfish and in Condemned Shellfish Areas" This regulatory change updates tag requirements to protect and promote the oyster broodstock within the condemned shellfish areas and within the tidal waters of the Commonwealth and to protect the public health		
Regulatory Stage (check one box)	☐ NOIRA ☐ Proposed ☒ Final	☐ Emergency or Emergency/NOIRA ☐ Revised Proposed ☐ Fast-Track
Additional Description	☐ Expedited Review Requested ☒ Exempt Action	☐ Guidance Document
Legal Authority	☒ Action required by federal statute ☐ Action required by state statute	☐ Discretionary action
Deregulatory Component	None	
Expected Date	March 2026	